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**Shakespeare's Juliet and her Representations in Spanish
Theatrical Culture (1600s – 1890s)**

**La Julieta de Shakespeare y su Representación
en la Cultura Teatral Española
(desde el Año 1600 hasta Finales de la Década de 1890)**

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Spanish Theatrical Culture (1600s – 1890s)

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**Supervised by Dr. Keith Gregor and Dr. Laura Campillo
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To my loving parents and sisters

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Tracing the steps of the tragic lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage, from the early 1600s until the late 1890s, has allowed me to experience one of the things that I enjoy doing the most: travelling back in time. It has been a very long journey – exhausting at times – but also extremely rewarding. I would not have been able to undertake this literary enterprise without the support of my supervisors, Keith Gregor and Laura Campillo. I am hugely indebted to them for their selfless generosity to accompany me throughout this voyage. Without their advice and great dedication, this thesis would not have been possible.

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For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.
(*Romeo and Juliet*, act V, scene iii)

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis entitled *Shakespeare's Juliet and Her Representations in Spanish Theatrical Culture (1600s – 1890s)* examines the early phase of the reception of the tragic story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage. This study begins in the seventeenth century with Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606 – 1612), a tragicomedy that constitutes the earliest theatrical rendition of the Italian sources of the tale. The dissertation ends in the last decade of the nineteenth century, exploring the final performances of Víctor Balaguer's *Las esposallas de la morta* (1878), the first Catalan adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* and the last written for the nineteenth-century Spanish stage. A diachronic examination and a comparative approach have been adopted, so as to offer a complete and detailed picture of the evolution that the story of the lovers of Verona experimented on the Spanish stage throughout three centuries, paying special attention to the influences derived from other European theatrical milieux. This doctoral thesis argues that during the early phase of the reception of the tragic lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage, the story was largely interpreted as being focused on representing neither the lovers', nor Romeo's, but mostly and ultimately, Juliet's story.

Keywords: Shakespeare; *Romeo and Juliet*; reception; performance

Introduction

Introduction¹.

Shakespeare's play about Romeo and Juliet of Verona is probably the most famous story of doomed young love ever written. In defying paternal authority invested in hatred, Romeo and Juliet have become emblems of adolescent innocence, idealism and transcending romance (Weis 2012, 1).

René Weis is the editor of the latest Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare edition of *Romeo and Juliet* (2012). His words serve as the perfect starting point for this research into the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain. Slightly more than four hundred years have passed since Shakespeare composed his famous tragedy for the Elizabethan stage, but the play has not ceased to captivate readers and theatregoers alike. It is indeed possibly, as Weis highlights, the most famous love story that has ever been written on tragic young love. The universal appeal of the tragedy has often been explained by the different contrasts with which the play confronts its audiences: "love versus hatred; the individual versus the power of destiny; the private versus the social; youth versus adulthood; long-standing feuds between families or clans" (Cerdá, Delabastita, and Gregor 2017, 3). The language also contributes to the fascination and the attraction that the play continues to exert, as Shakespeare paid careful attention to language, as Pujante observes:

In the play there is an abundance of dramatic contrasts, served by a rich utterance in which verse coexists with prose, free verse with rhymed verse, playing on words with direct speech, the cultured with the colloquial, and the lyrical with the dramatic (Pujante 2015, 10).²

¹ The research for this dissertation has been funded by the project "The Reception of Shakespeare's Works in Spanish and European Culture II" (FFI2014-53587-P and PGC2018-094427-B-I00). I am grateful to the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness for its support.

² All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated. "Hay en la obra una abundancia de contrastes dramáticos servida por una rica verbalización en la que el verso coexiste con la prosa, el verso suelto con

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Gordon McMullan, editor of the 2016 Norton critical edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, considers that “*Romeo and Juliet* is arguably the best-known play in the Shakespeare canon, better-known even than *Hamlet*” (2016, ix). Undoubtedly, most Shakespearean scholars would agree with this statement. *Romeo and Juliet* is such an iconic and important play. Not only does it stand out in the Shakespeare canon, but also in the canon of world literature. There are scenes included in the play that any individual immediately associates with Shakespeare’s tragedy. Amongst the different elements included in the play, the balcony scene is probably the most memorable image depicted. In fact, a reference to an image of a man speaking to a woman who is either at a window or at a balcony, automatically brings to one’s mind the unforgettable encounter between Romeo and Juliet in act II, scene ii. The main reason why the mere reference to a female at a balcony conversing with a man is almost inevitably associated with Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is because several of the images depicted and the themes that the play addresses have become embedded within a collective imagery, shared throughout more than four centuries by different generations and cultures all around the world.

As it is widely known, Shakespeare cannot be credited with creating this haunting story of tragic love. Weis’s reference to “Shakespeare’s play about Romeo and Juliet of Verona” (2012, 1) is a direct allusion to the legend of the lovers of Verona which circulated around different European countries during Medieval times. The story has its antecedents in Greek mythology with the myths of Hero and Leander, and Pyramus and Thisbe. Nonetheless, “it is in the *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* by Xenophon of Ephesus (second century)”, as Ángel-Luis Pujante remarks, “where one can appreciate an argumentative scheme which could have originated the story of the lovers of Verona” (2015, 11).³ The happy ending of the love story between Anthia and Habrocomes disappears from the medieval Italian novelle that contributed to spread around Europe the tale of the tragic fate that befell Mariotto and Ganozza – in Masuccio Salernitano’s

el rimado, el juego de palabras con la expresión directa, lo culto con lo coloquial y lo lírico con lo dramático.”

³ Pujante describes the plot of this Greek novel as follows: “Habrocomes and Anthia fall in love, get married, and find themselves separated. The young female is rescued by another man who wishes to marry her; thus, to escape, she takes a narcotic that will make her appear dead. After being buried, she awakens, and manages to reunite with her husband” (Habrócomes y Antia se enamoran, se casan y se ven separados. La joven es rescatada por otro hombre que pretende casarse con ella, por lo que, para librarse, toma un narcótico que la hará parecer muerta. Tras ser enterrada, despierta y logra volver a unirse con su esposo) (2015, 11).

novella (1476) –, and Romeo and Giulietta, in the novelle by Luigi da Porto (1524) and Matteo Bandello (1554). Hence, it is through the Italian sources of the legend that the story of the lovers of Verona is first introduced into Spanish theatrical culture during the Golden Age of Spanish drama.

As Ángel-Luis Pujante and Keith Gregor affirm, “after *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* is, with *Macbeth*, Shakespeare’s most translated play in Spain” (2017a, 102). This statement attests to the popularity that the play has enjoyed in Spanish literature. The play has not only resulted in a large number of translations, but has also served as an inspiration for different stage adaptations of the story of the immortal lovers of Verona. Thus, the popularity that the legend of the Veronese lovers has had on the Spanish stage, since its first incursion into Spanish culture at the start of the seventeenth century, is the main reason why *Romeo and Juliet* has been chosen as the object of study of this doctoral thesis. *Shakespeare's Juliet and her Representations in Spanish Theatrical Culture (1600s – 1890s)* examines the early phase of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the Spanish stage, since its first appearance in the Golden Age between 1606 and 1612, the approximate date of composition of Lope de Vega’s *Castelvines y Monteses*, until its last performances during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

This long journey that covers three hundred years of history aims to offer Shakespearean scholars a detailed analysis of the different circumstances – historical, political, sociocultural, and literary – that played a decisive role in the early reception of the story of the lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage. A full-length study of the Spanish reception of an individual Shakespearean play – throughout different historical and literary periods – has never been undertaken prior to this date. Therefore, the rationale behind this doctoral thesis is to fill in a vacuum in the field of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain and, in turn, to contribute to the larger ever-growing field of Shakespeare’s reception studies. The focus on Spain locates this particular research within the scope of the European reception of Shakespeare outside English-speaking countries.

A mere glance at the titles of the adaptations of the story of Romeo and Juliet of Verona written for the stage since the 1600s until the 1890s, reveals that the vast majority of these dramatic works are named *Julieta y Romeo*, rather than *Romeo y Julieta*, as in Shakespeare’s original. This relevant detail inevitably leads one to assume that if Juliet’s name tends to come first in the titles of stage adaptations, it must be because the authors

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of these rewritings must have, to a certain extent, contemplated the idea that Juliet is more important than her male counterpart. Thus, this doctoral thesis is based on the hypothesis that ever since the legend of the lovers of Verona first entered the Spanish stage in the early 1600s, Juliet, or rather, Julia or Julieta, as the character has been called in Spain, was perceived as the true protagonist of the play. Consequently, an examination of the early history of the reception of the tragic lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage will demonstrate that the story has been largely interpreted as being focused on representing neither the lovers', nor Romeo's, but mostly and ultimately, Juliet's story.

An important question that needs to be addressed in this introduction is why focus on the early phase of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet*. The decision to cover the first three hundred years of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain has not been arbitrary. On the one hand, it is during this first phase of the reception when the play experiments a gradual and progressive evolution from its first manifestation as a seventeenth-century tragicomedy that has its origin in the Italian sources of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona, to a tragedy that can be identified by the general public as being a rewriting of a Shakespearean play. The twentieth century gave rise to a considerably large number of adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, but these new works would be identified as deriving from Shakespeare's Elizabethan tragedy. The identification of a given stage adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* with the author of the tragedy that the world is familiar with nowadays, that is, the awareness that *Romeo and Juliet* was originally written by Shakespeare, is a crucial factor that did not always occur amongst the general Spanish public prior to the twentieth century, as this research will demonstrate. Hence, the need to focus on the complex and diverse factors involved in the early stages of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the Spanish stage.

On the other hand, in ending this doctoral research with the twilight of the nineteenth century, there is an attempt to follow the example set by earlier significant contributions to the field of Shakespeare's reception studies, all of which cover a similar time frame. For instance, Brian Vicker's hugely influential *The Critical Heritage*, six volumes compiled between 1974 and 1981, focuses on the reception of Shakespeare in the United Kingdom from 1623 until 1801. Similarly, Michael Dobson in *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660 – 1769* (1992), concentrates on the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, so as to examine the gradual

evolution of the reception of Shakespeare and his work, since the earliest adaptations of his plays during the Restoration period until the ultimate transformation of the dramatist into a national icon. In Germany, a country that has played a decisive role in the dissemination of Shakespeare's work across the Continent, the reception of Shakespeare in Germany has been examined in two separate volumes, each focusing on a different period: Simon Williams's *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume 1: 1586 – 1914* (1990), and Wilhelm Hortmann's *Shakespeare on the German Stage: the Twentieth Century* (1998). Hortmann followed and continued the work that Williams had initiated. In France, the country which, next to Germany, has largely contributed to facilitate the circulation of Shakespearean material throughout Europe, one of the most notable and recent studies on the reception of Shakespeare in France is John Pemble's *Shakespeare Goes to Paris: How the Bard Conquered France* (2005). In his study, Pemble focuses on the eighteenth century; hence, on the earliest phase of the reception of the playwright. In Spain, recently, Ángel-Luis Pujante has published *Shakespeare llega a España: Ilustración y Romanticismo* [Shakespeare Arrives in Spain: Enlightenment and Romanticism] (2019), an in-depth analysis on the reception of Shakespeare in Spain during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, coinciding with the early stages of the reception of the playwright. The aforementioned studies focus on the early phase(s) of the reception of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist, that is, on the period ranging from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Thus, in analysing the early reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain (1600s – 1890s), this doctoral thesis follows the direction initiated by seminal works published in the field of Shakespeare's European reception.

The interest in the European reception of Shakespeare can be said to consolidate in 1990 with the celebration of "European Shakespeare" in Antwerp (Belgium). This was the first international conference that specifically addressed the issue of Shakespeare's European reception. The success of the event materialised in a volume entitled *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age* (1993), co-edited by Dirk Delabastita and Lieven D'hulst. This publication coincided with another seminal work on the European reception of Shakespeare, Dennis Kennedy's *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* (1993), centred on Shakespeare's reception outside English-speaking countries. In 1994 a similar initiative to the Antwerp conference was born at the University of Sofia (Bulgaria) under the name "Shakespeare in the New Europe". The conference resulted in the publication of *Shakespeare in the New Europe* (1994), edited

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by Michael Hattaway, Boika Solova, and Derek Roper. In 1999 the University of Murcia organised the conference “400 Years of Shakespeare”, where several representatives interested in the European reception of Shakespeare gathered. Since the “400 Years of Shakespeare” conference in Murcia, biannual international conferences have been held devoted to the study of Shakespeare’s European reception.⁴ In 2007 the gradual interest in the reception of Shakespeare in Europe led to the creation of the statutes for the constitution of the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA), which continues, up to this date, to organise biannual conferences, and to promote research on Shakespeare’s reception in Europe. ESRA has significantly contributed to the consolidation of a pan-European research project.

As mentioned earlier in this introduction, important work has been carried out in Germany and France with regards to Shakespeare’s reception in these two countries. Evidently, studies on the Continental reception of Shakespeare are not limited to France and Germany. Similar publications in the field include, to name but a few: Zdeněk, Stříbrný’s *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* (2000), Alexander Shurbanov and Boika Sokolova’s *Painting Shakespeare Red: An East-European Appropriation* (2001), Monica Matei-Chesnoiu’s *Shakespeare in the Romanian Culture Memory* (2006), Veronika Schandl’s *Socialist Shakespeare Productions in Kádár-Regime Hungary: Shakespeare behind the Iron Curtain* (2008), and Nicoleta Cinpoeș’s *Shakespeare’s Hamlet in Romania 1778 – 2008: A Study in Translation, Performance, and Cultural Appropriation* (2010).

Within the large field of Shakespeare’s Continental reception, this doctoral dissertation attempts to offer a valuable and significant contribution to the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. The first full-length discussion on the topic took place in the late nineteenth century in an article by Daniel López published in *La Ilustración Española y Americana* [The Spanish and the American Illustration] (1883). Lopez’s article included

⁴ Since the Murcia conference in 1999, similar thematic conferences have been held at the following cities: Basle (“Shakespeare in European Culture”, 2001), Utrecht (“Shakespeare and European Politics”, 2003), Krakow (“Shakespeare, History, and Memory”, 2005), Iași (“Shakespeare, Nation(s), and Boundaries”, 2007), Pisa (“Shakespeare and Conflict”, 2009), Weimar (“Shakespeare’s Shipwrecks”, 2011), Montpellier (“Shakespeare and Myth”, 2013), Worcester (“Shakespeare’s Europe – Europe’s Shakespeare”, 2015), Gdansk (“Shakespeare and European Theatrical Cultures: Anatomizing Text and Stage”, 2017), and Rome (Shakespeare and European Geographies: Centralities and Elsewheres, 2019). The next ESRA conference, “Shakespeare’s Nature | Art | Politics”, will be held in Athens in 2021. For further information on ESRA visit: <https://www.um.es/shakespeare/esra/>; accessed March 9, 2021).

a list of Spanish adaptations of Shakespearean plays produced between 1772 and 1838. The first two decades of the twentieth century gave birth to two pioneering studies on the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, both of which titled: *Shakespeare en España. Traducciones, imitaciones e influencias de las obras de Shakespeare en la literatura española* [Shakespeare in Spain. Translations, Imitations and Influence of Shakespeare's Works on Spanish Literature] (Juliá Martínez 1918; Ruppert y Ujaravi 1920). Nevertheless, it is Alfonso Par through his exhaustive – albeit not always accurate – studies who is credited with laying the foundations for the creation of a field devoted to the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. This Catalan businessman spent thirty years of his life gathering information on the early Spanish reception of Shakespeare (Pujante 2010, 104). His efforts materialised in the publication of the following volumes: *Contribución a la bibliografía española de Shakespeare* [Contribution to the Spanish Bibliography on Shakespeare] (Par 1930), *Shakespeare en la literatura española* [Shakespeare in Spanish Literature] (Par 1935), and the two-volume *Representaciones shakespearianas en España* [Shakespearean Representations in Spain] (Par 1936; Par 1940).

Shakespeare's reception in Spain through the multiple channels of criticism, translation, performance, and adaptation has consolidated itself as a solid field in the twenty-first century, owing to the contributions of scholars such as Clara Calvo (Calvo 2002; Calvo 2006a; Calvo 2006b; Calvo 2008a; Calvo 2008b), who has analysed the reception of the dramatist on the nineteenth-century stage. A seminal work in the field is *Shakespeare en España: textos (1764-1916)* by Ángel-Luis Pujante and Laura Campillo Arnaiz (2007), an annotated anthology of Shakespeare criticism that examines the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, since the first critical reference to the dramatist in an essay written in 1764 by Mariano Nipho, until the tercentenary of 1916. Keith Gregor's *Shakespeare in the Spanish Theatre: 1772 to the Present* (2010) constitutes the first full-length study on Shakespeare's reception in Spain since the publication of Par's *Representaciones shakespearianas en España* (1936; 1940). In *Shakespeare en España: Bibliografía Anotada Bilingüe. Shakespeare in Spain: An Annotated Bilingual Bibliography* (2015), Ángel-Luis Pujante and Juan F. Cerdá focus on critical responses to Shakespeare published in Spain from 1764 to 2000. Since 2010, Ángel-Luis Pujante and Keith Gregor have co-edited critical editions of the neoclassical adaptations of Shakespearean plays: *Hamlet* (2010), *Macbeth* (2011), *Romeo and Juliet* (2017b) and, recently, *Othello* (2021).

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This doctoral thesis provides a European contextualization of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain. This study adopts a diachronic approach, so as to provide a wide picture of the different factors that have intervened in the reception of the play throughout different stages of Spanish theatrical history. Special attention is paid in each of these phases to the influence exercised by other European versions of the tragedy (both in text and in performance) produced in Britain, and, more importantly, in France, Germany and Italy. These last three countries are the ones that have exerted the highest level of impact in shaping the reception of the play in Spain. This pan-European investigation into the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* will help to detect points of contact and of divergence that have emerged as a result of the different national approaches to the play. Offering a monograph on the early reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain evidences the intention to contribute to the field of Shakespeare's European reception outside English-speaking countries. Hence, this thesis continues and expands the efforts made since the 1990s by European Shakespearean scholars in the construction of a shared European Shakespeare critical heritage.

There are three specific aims that this doctoral thesis proposes. The first is to examine in detail the medieval Italian sources of the tragic legend of Romeo and Juliet, devoting special attention to the portrayal of the earliest representations of Shakespeare's Juliet in each of these Italian novelle. The focus on the construction and evolution in the characterization of the Italian versions of Juliet has not been pursued in the past. This analysis will serve, in turn, as the basis to compare and contrast the different treatment of the medieval sources by Brooke, Painter, and Shakespeare (in England), and by Lope de Vega, Rojas Zorrilla and Rozas (or Rosas), the first Spanish dramatists who adapted the medieval Italian narratives for the Golden Age stage.

The second specific aim is to provide a detailed discussion of the historical, political and cultural factors that played a fundamental role in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain, since the earliest manifestations in the seventeenth century until the final decades of the nineteenth century. Apart from offering a historical and sociocultural framework, the focus on reception includes both textual reception (print) and stage reception (performance). This has involved the location of largely unknown adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, most of which have either never been analysed, or have received little attention in scholarly criticism. It is worth highlighting that none of the Spanish

adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* examined in this thesis constitute examples of canonical plays. Therefore, their inclusion in this research would, hopefully, contribute to foster further research on the assessment and the reevaluation of non-canonical texts of Spanish literature, which have contributed to the dissemination of Shakespeare's works in Spain. The textual reception of each of the plays selected for this study involves, not only an analysis of the text itself, but also of its sources, in those cases in which Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is not the source text, and a careful examination of the different printed editions.

The performative aspect of a text is particularly relevant for this thesis. None of the Spanish translations of *Romeo and Juliet*, translated from the English original, and written up to the year 1899 were ever performed. This is the reason why – albeit mentioned – translations have not been subjected to a detailed discussion in this thesis. In order to study the reception of each play on the stage, when available, contemporary reviews have been consulted to offer the reader a better picture of how audiences reacted to a production at a given period of time. Examining reviews and opinion articles published in the press sheds light on the impact of a production. It is worth noting that the majority of adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* analysed in this study have not been reassessed since the publication of Alfonso Par's pioneering study *Representaciones shakespearianas en España* [Shakespearean Representations in Spain] (1936; 1940). Par often wrote from hearsay and, inevitably, sometimes erred. Accordingly, there has been an attempt to detect and correct some of Par's wrong assumptions on the apparent failure of a particular production, or on the supposedly poor performance of an interpreter.

The third specific – and most important – aim is to examine, as the title of this thesis indicates, the different representations of Juliet written for the Spanish stage since the 1600s until the 1890s. Such an analysis has never been undertaken in the field of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. This thesis provides a close examination of Juliet both in print and on the stage, so as to determine whether or not, in Spain, Juliet has indeed been regarded as the main protagonist of the play. A detailed textual analysis allows to observe the evolution that this originally tragic heroine has experimented throughout different stages of Spanish theatrical history, particularly focusing on those aspects of her personality that deviate from and challenge the image that has been traditionally associated with Juliet. Furthermore, there is also an examination of the different ways in

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which different historical, political and sociocultural scenarios, both national and international, have contributed to reshape and transform the character. A study of the reception of Juliet on the Spanish stage will answer key research questions that have not been addressed before such as: was Juliet an important character on the Spanish stage? Was it a role that actresses particularly sought? Did the role contribute to enhance the popularity of a given actress? Did actresses who played Juliet offer theatregoers memorable performances?

Archival research has been conducted, throughout the different stages of the preparation of this doctoral thesis, in order to compile the corpus of texts and to consult relevant bibliographical works on the topic that could not have been accessed otherwise. The search for documentation in national and international libraries and theatre archives was possible as a result of the realization of four research stays, funded by the project “The Reception of Shakespeare’s Works in Spanish and European Culture II” – currently co-led by Keith Gregor and Juan F. Cerdá. The institutions that have been visited are the following: the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon (February – June 2017), the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. (January – April 2018), the Fundación Juan March and the Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (September – December, Madrid 2018), and the Spanish National Library (July – September, Madrid 2019). In order to analyse the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain, while also providing a wider European contextualization of the early critical reception, a comparative approach has been adopted as part of the methodology for this research, so as to compare and contrast how *Romeo and Juliet* has been adapted in different theatrical milieux across Europe. Special attention is devoted to the foreign influences that strongly contributed to introduce the story of Romeo and Juliet of Verona into the Spanish stage, which, in the case of Spain, mostly derived from Continental Europe, in particular, from Italy, France and Germany. Moreover, a study of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain throughout three centuries implies adopting a diachronic examination of the play through adaptation, criticism, and performance. The methodology also includes close reading of each of the individual plays that compose the corpus of texts.

Each of the four chapters that are part of this doctoral research follow a similar structure. Historical background is provided at the beginning, so as to plunge the reader right into the action of the different periods that he or she will have to navigate throughout

the course of this three-hundred-year journey. The underlying intention is to familiarise the reader with the major political and sociocultural aspects that affected the reception of each play at a given point in time. An examination of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain also implies an evaluation of the reception of Shakespeare and his works in Spain. Therefore, each chapter also offers information on the main events that compose the timeline of the Spanish reception of Shakespeare. The narrative then moves onto a description of who the early Spanish adapters of *Romeo and Juliet* were. The reader will discover that several adaptations were written by playwrights who remain largely unknown. The sources that served as inspiration for the different rewritings of the text are then examined, as the text of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was not always consulted – or even known – prior to the composition of an adaptation. The analysis then moves on to an explanation of the formal aspects of each text. A brief summary of each adaptation is added, as many of these rewritings heavily departed from the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* that the majority of readers are familiar with. A close reading of the character of Julia / Julieta is offered to examine her position within the action of the play, and to examine which new and/or borrowed traits are added to the characterization of each Spanish Juliet. The analysis is completed with a detailed account of the afterlives of a given adaptation, both in print and on the stage.

Chapter 1 “The Spanish Golden Age” begins with an analysis of the creation and development of the European tale on the lovers of Verona, which belonged to a collective European imagination prior to its first appearance on the Spanish stage. The chapter examines how the Italian novelle that offered an account of the legend of the tragic lovers of Verona were mediated by Boaistuau in France in the sixteenth century, prior to the entrance of the story in Spain in the seventeenth century. The chapter then examines the three adaptations of the tale of the Veronese lovers that entered the Golden Age stage through Italy and France: *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606 – 1612) by Lope de Vega, *Los bandos de Verona* [The Factions of Verona] (1640) by Rojas Zorrilla, and *Los amantes de Verona* (1666), by Rozas (or Rosas). Given the strong popularity that comedy had on the Spanish Golden Age stage, the first two recreations of the story of the lovers of Verona offered the public a happy resolution.

Chapter 2 “The Eighteenth Century” takes the reader on a literary tour across different European countries: England, Ireland, France, Germany, and – ultimately –

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Spain. As it is widely known, it is during the Age of the Enlightenment when the reception of Shakespeare in the Continent begins. This is also the century in which Shakespeare is timidly and vaguely introduced into Spanish theatrical culture with *Hamleto* (1772) by Ramón de la Cruz, an adaptation that is not based on Shakespeare's play, but rather on Ducis's adaptation of the tragedy. Nevertheless, not a single new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is written in Spain during the eighteenth century. Given the importance that this century has in the European reception of the Bard, a historical gap would not be acceptable. Consequently, the reader must look out into the foreign European scene to become a first-hand witness of the different ways in which Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was adapted at the time, not only in the playwright's country of origin, but also in the Continent. The detour will allow the reader to observe crucial factors that influenced the different processes that were taking place simultaneously in England, France and Germany, as regards the reception of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The different ways in which *Romeo and Juliet* was rewritten in the aforementioned countries would exert a significant influence on the reception of the tragedy on the nineteenth-century Spanish stage. The journey ends in Spain, where the reader will discover the circumstances that prevented a new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* from being written.

Chapter 2 begins a few centuries earlier, in Elizabethan England, in the mid-1590s, to be precise, and it analyses *Romeo and Juliet* and Shakespeare's treatment of the sources of the play. A detailed discussion is also given on all the stage adaptations written since the Restoration period until the end of the eighteenth century, paying attention to the characterization of each new Juliet and to the English actresses who took on the role. The adaptations analysed are the following: *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680) by Otway, *Romeo and Juliet* (1744) by Cibber, *Romeo and Juliet* (1747) by Sheridan, and *Romeo and Juliet* (1750) by Garrick. When the reader travels to eighteenth-century France, an overview is given of the different versions of *Romeo and Juliet* composed by La Place (1746 – 1749), Ducis (1772), Le Tourneur (1778), and Mercier (1782). Similarly, the German translators and adapters of the tragedy who enter into the discussion are Grynnaeus/Grynäus (1758), Wieland (1762 – 1766), Weisse/Weiße (1767), Eschenburg (1775 – 1782), and Schlegel (1797).

Chapter 3 "The Neoclassical Adaptations" focuses on the two neoclassical adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* written during the early decades of the nineteenth

century: *Julia y Romeo* (1803) by Solís, and *Romeo y Julieta* (1817) by García Suelto. A look into the reception of Shakespeare in Spain at the turn of the century will reveal that, similar to the processes of Shakespeare's reception in the Continent, Shakespearean plays did not enter Spanish theatrical culture intact. On the contrary, Shakespeare arrived in Spain, formerly mediated through France, as part of a controversial neoclassical debate on his supposed virtues and vices, as Pujante explains in his *Shakespeare llega a España: Ilustración y Romanticismo* [Shakespeare Arrives in Spain: Enlightenment and Romanticism] (2019). Therefore, this third chapter closely examines two rewritings of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, which derived from eighteenth-century French and German adaptations of the tragedy that heavily departed from the original Elizabethan text. Once again, close attention is paid to the new representations of Juliet that emerged, and to the Spanish actresses who embodied them.

Chapter 4 "Romantic Echoes" evidences the enormous influence that Spanish Romanticism and Postromanticism exerted over the composition of each of the stage adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* written during the second half of the nineteenth century: *Julieta y Romeo* (1849) by Balaguer, *Julieta y Romeo* (1858) by Dacarrete, *Romeo y Julieta* (1875) by Viñas y Deza and Sunols, and *Las esposallas de la morta* [The Betrothal of the Dead Lady] (1878) by Balaguer. The tragic story of the lovers of Verona with its treatment of death, irrational hatred between rival families, and a passionate love that ultimately leads the individual into utter destruction, perfectly adheres to a Romantic aesthetic. New Spanish adapters of *Romeo and Juliet* were truly haunted by the appeal elicited by Romanticism, and continued to draw on some of its characteristic features and imagery, decades after the movement had already said its final farewell in other European countries. The analysis of the different rewritings of *Romeo and Juliet* includes the first Catalan adaptation of the play, Balaguer's *Las esposallas de la morta*; the text also constitutes the first Shakespearean adaptation written in Catalan. The chapter mostly explores the new versions of Juliet that were created during the period, the consolidation of the character as a tragic heroine, and the history of the different actresses who brought her to life.

Therefore, this doctoral thesis offers a research study of the early reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the Spanish stage. The diachronic examination that covers three hundred years of history, together with the comparative approach adopted, will allow the

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reader to have a broad understanding of the national and foreign factors that intervened in the insertion of the story of the lovers of Verona into Spanish theatrical culture. The focus on the character of Juliet and on her different representations, both comic and tragic, on the page and on the stage, will illustrate how the character has been constructed and why she appears to have been regarded as the true protagonist of the story. The novelty of this study resides in the examination of the early reception of an individual Shakespearean play throughout different periods of Spanish theatrical culture. The choice of a play, *Romeo and Juliet*, ingrained in a shared European heritage since medieval times, would hopefully serve to initiate similar studies on the reception of other Shakespearean plays in Spain, and to lay the foundations for future research into the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries.

1.The Spanish Golden Age

The Spanish Golden Age.

It was during the latter decades of the sixteenth century when the celebrated story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona arrived in Spain. The first Spanish version of *Romeo and Juliet* did not derive from Shakespeare's play, but instead from one of the Italian sources which reproduced the story: the ninth novella found in the second part of Matteo Bandello's *Novelle*, published in 1554 (Prunster 2000, 49).⁵ Bandello's "The Unfortunate Death of Two Most Wretched Lovers" ("La sfortunata morte di dui infelicissimi amanti") is the main work which served as an inspiration for the illustrious Golden Age dramatist Lope de Vega.⁶ The playwright is credited with creating the first Spanish adaptation of the story of Romeo and Juliet of Verona in a tragicomedy titled *Castelvines y Monteses*. As the title evidences, Lope de Vega slightly altered the names of the two rival families, the Capulets and the Montagues. Nevertheless, Bandello was not the first author to write a literary work on the famous lovers of Verona. Prior to the publication of his novella, there were two previous Italian versions of the story available: the novelle "Mariotto e Ganozza" (1476) by Masuccio Salernitano, and "A Tale about Two Noble Lovers" (1524) by Luigi da Porto.⁷

Salernitano's narrative constitutes the thirty-third novella of his *Il Novellino*. Nicole Prunster, following Olin H. Moore, suggests that the two main sources upon which Salernitano drew for the creation of his own novella were the fifteenth-century tale "Istorieta amorosa fra Leonora de' Bardi e Ippolito Bondelmonti", and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, especially III. viii and X. iv (2000, 6). Salernitano's novella is addressed "To my most illustrious Lord Duke of Amalfi" (2000, 19). In his introduction to the story, the

⁵In her *Romeo and Juliet Before Shakespeare: Four Early Stories of Star-Crossed Love* (2000) Nicole Prunster provides a translation into English of four of the sources that narrate the love story of Romeo and Juliet: Salernitano's "Mariotto and Ganozza" (1476), da Porto's "A Tale about Two Noble Lovers" (1524), Bandello's "The Unfortunate Death of Two Most Wretched Lovers" (1554), and Boaistuau's "Of Two Lovers" (1559).

⁶The full title of Bandello's novella is "La sfortunata morte di dui infelicissimi amanti che l'uno di veleno e l'altro di dolore morirono, con vari accidenti", translated into English by Prunster as "The unfortunate death of two most wretched lovers, one of whom died of poison, the other, of grief; and various other unhappy events" (2000, 50).

⁷The full Italian title of da Porto's novella is "Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti con la loro pietosa morte, intervenuta già nella città di Verona nel tempo del signor Bartolomeo dalla Scala", translated by Prunster as "A tale recently come to light, about two noble lovers and their pitiful death, which took place in the city of Verona during the time of Lord Bartolomeo dalla Scala" (2000, 27).

author makes reference to the apparent veracity of this tale, by acquainting his addressee with the fact that “the story was told just recently to a gathering of certain fair ladies by a fellow Sieneſe of yours, of no little authority” (Salernitano 2000, 19). Salernitano’s extremely brief tale is set in Siena, although the narrator is not precise as regards to exact date when the story takes place, and merely uses the vague phrase “not long ago” (Salernitano 2000, 19). The protagonists are Mariotto Mignanelli and Ganozza. The reader is told that the latter was possibly the member of the Saraceni family, but there are no references to rival families. Mariotto and Ganozza are married in secret by a friar. Shortly afterwards, Mariotto kills a man during a fight and is banished from Siena, leading him to seek refuge in Alexandria. In the meantime, as it happens in Shakespeare’s play, Ganozza takes a potion administered by the friar, so as to fake her own death and avoid following her father’s wish to marry another man. Having heard of Ganozza’s death, Mariotto returns to Siena but is captured and eventually beheaded when he attempts to open her tomb. After learning of Mariotto’s execution, the miserable young lady is admitted into a convent where she soon dies of grief.

In 1524 da Porto elaborated and expanded Salernitano’s narrative in his “A Tale about Two Noble Lovers” (“Iſtoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti”). This longer version illustrates the purpose of the ſixteenth-century novella which was, as Levenson argues, less to teach than to delight by presenting audiences “with a series of striking incidents rhetorically embellished” (1984, 328). Da Porto’s narrative closely resembles the story of Romeo and Juliet that most readers are familiar with nowadays. Da Porto is credited with adding most of the crucial elements that the plot has: the names of the protagonists (Romeo and Giulietta), the use of the term *amanti ſfortunati* (star-crossed lovers) to refer to them, the enmity between two rival factions, the Cappelleti and the Montecchi (names borrowed from a line in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*), the change of setting to Verona in the early fourteenth century during the reign of Bartolomeo della Scala, the tragic fight between Romeo and Thebaldo, and the final reconciliation of the rival families after the deaths of the lovers. Possibly following the example of Salernitano, in the first pages of his narrative, da Porto alludes to the popularity and oral transmission of the tale and informs its addressee, “the most beautiful and fair Madonna Lucina Savorgnana”, that he “wished to write down a moving story which [he had] heard ſeveral times and which took place in Verona”(da Porto 2000, 27). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that during the Renaissance period there were individuals who believed in

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the actual existence of Romeo and Giulietta and, thus, in the veracity of the tragic fate that had befallen them.

In 1554 Bandello published his novella “The Unfortunate Death of Two Most Wretched Lovers” (“La sfortunata morte de dui infelicissimi amanti”). According to Levenson “as soon as Bandello’s new embellished version appeared, it supplanted da Porto’s tale in Italy and caught Europe’s attention” (Levenson 1984, 331). Bandello’s novella contains borrowings from the fifteenth-century tale “Istorieta amorosa fra Leonora de’ Bardi e Ippolito Bondelmonti” and from a poem in ottava rima published in 1533 by Cliza (the pseudonym of Gerardo or Gherardo Boldieri), who drew significantly on da Porto’s tale while adding new elements to the story (Prunster 2000, 7). Nonetheless, it is evident that Bandello was heavily influenced by da Porto’s own version of the story of the star-crossed lovers. The addressee in this case is “the most magnificent and excellent Messer Girolamo Fracastoro, poet and most learned doctor” (Bandello 2000, 49). Once more, the author devotes the first lines to recall how he had heard the pitiful story from a man, one Captain Alessandro Peregrino. Even though the allusion to the supposed oral tradition of the story is also present in da Porto, Prunster explains that Bandello prefaced each of his novellas “with a dedicatory letter in which he recalls (or pretends to recall) the circumstances in which he himself heard the tale before committing it to paper” (2000, 4).

Bandello expanded da Porto’s novella and incorporated new elements to the plot such as Romeo’s initial case of unrequited love, the consummation of the marriage on the bench of a garden, and the exchange of love letters between the protagonists during Romeo’s banishment. Bandello also chose to retain one of the innovations introduced by da Porto: a last encounter between the lovers in the crypt before facing their tragic fates. This unexpected final meeting inserted immediately before the star-crossed lovers die generates genuine pathos. Despite not being present in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the inclusion of a last exchange between the young couple will become a common feature used by different adaptors of the celebrated tragedy; examples include Thomas Otway (1680) and David Garrick (1748) in England, and Víctor Balaguer (1849, 1870) and Ángel María Dacarrete (1858) in Spain, to name but a few. Another significant difference between this novella and Shakespeare’s tragedy is that, in Bandello’s version, the rival families are never fully reconciled.

In 1559 Pierre Boaistuau published his *Histoires tragiques*, a collection of adaptations into French of six of Bandello's novellas (Boaistuau 2000). It became extremely popular at the time, giving rise to twenty-one editions of the volume in fifty years (Prunster 2000, 6). Boaistuau wrote on the title page of a special 1559 edition dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I, the one that reached English shores, that his sources were taken from "famous Italian and Latin authors", a suspiciously vague phrase deliberately used in order to hide the fact that his *Histoires* had been adapted entirely from Bandello's novelle; a fact that he acknowledged, as Prunster highlights, in the *editio princeps* (2000, 6). Boaistuau's translation and adaptation of Bandello's novella constitutes the third tale of the volume, and it is entitled "Of two lovers, one of whom dies of poison and the other from grief" (Histoire troisieme, "De deux amans, dont l'un mourut de venin, l'autre de tristesse").

As da Porto and Bandello had done earlier in their own renditions of the tale, Boaistuau also begins his narrative insisting on the veracity of the story of the tragic lovers of Verona, named in this version Rhomeo and Juliette. His adaptation closely follows Bandello's, although he introduced the following changes: the name of Count Paris, a kinder father, the consummation of the marriage in the lady's chamber, a verbal exchange between Juliette and Count Paris, and the reconciliation of the two families. The feature that can be considered the most remarkable innovation added to the tragic story is the iconic image of Juliet committing suicide at the end, by stabbing herself to death with Rhomeo's dagger. Compared to the endings devised by the Italian novellieri, Boaistuau provided a denouement which is considerably more effective, both visually and dramatically. Salernitano's Ganozza merely dies from grief in a convent, da Porto's Giulietta also expires consumed by deep sorrow shortly after Romeo's death, and Bandello retains the image of a Giulietta that dies due to abject misery. It is worth pointing out that, in spite of the radical change added to the ending, Boaistuau forgot to change the title of his tale, where he clearly indicates that one of the lovers dies from grief (*de tristesse*). This slip would certainly not have contributed to his unscrupulous mission of hiding his true sources, as anyone familiar with Bandello's novella would have possibly recalled that this is how his Giulietta dies.

Boaistuau's adaptation functions as a bridge that contributed to the circulation and introduction of the tragic story of Romeo and Juliet into other European countries. Indeed

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it was the text that served Arthur Brooke as the basis for his long poem “The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet” (1562), which all critics agree is the most immediate source of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, as there are several examples of lines that the playwright directly copied or slightly altered from Brooke’s poem (Brooke 1908). Boaistuau’s narrative will also be used a few years later as a source text for another English author, William Painter, who included the story of Romeo and Juliet in the second volume of his collection of tales *The Palace of Pleasure: Elizabethan Versions of Italian and French Novels from Boccaccio, Bandello, Cinthio, Straparola, Queen Margaret of Navarre and Others* (1567) (Painter 1890).

Boaistuau’s version of the story of the lovers of Verona is also a crucial text in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain. Even though Bandello’s novelle had become extremely popular in Europe and circulated in their original Italian version, not until 1589, only a few years before Shakespeare composed his renowned tragedy, was there a Spanish version of the story of Romeo and Juliet available to the public. The aforementioned text was titled *Historia de Romeo y Julieta*, and it was included in *Historias trágicas ejemplares, sacadas de las obras del Bandello veronés. Nuevamente traducidas de las que en lengua francesa adornaron Pierres Bouistau [sic] y Francisco de Belleforest* [Exemplary Tragic Stories from the Works of the Veronese Bandello. Newly Translated from the French ones Embellished by Pierres Bouistau [sic] and Francisco de Belleforest] (Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 173).⁸ This volume contained translations of fourteen of Bandello’s novelle carried out by Vicente de Millis Godínez, who followed Boaistuau’s and Belleforest’s rewritings, altering passages – especially those considered indecorous –, and adding personal comments (Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 173).⁹ The enormous popularity acquired by these translations is evidenced by the fact that the volume was reprinted in the same year by Claudio Curlet and, subsequently, in 1596 and 1603 (Carrascón 2018, 255).

⁸ Universal Short Title Catalogue reference number: 334899 (<https://www.ustc.ac.uk/> accessed, March 10, 2020).

⁹ Pierre Boaistuau and François de Belleforest adapted and published in French 73 of the total number of 214 novelle written by Bandello.

1.1 Comic Beginnings: Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606 – 1612) and Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* (1640).

It is likely that Lope de Vega (1562 – 1635) was familiar with Vicente de Millis Godínez's translations. Thus, he had possibly read *Historia de Romeo y Julieta* before composing his own version of the story. Nevertheless, Lope's correspondence evidences that he could read Italian and knew Latin (Díez Borque 2009, 66), which explains why contemporary critics such as Edwards (2005), Muñoz (2013), and Carrascón (2018) support the idea that the playwright had probably read some of Bandello's novelle in their original Italian. As a matter of fact, Bandello's novelle served as source texts for seventeen of Lope de Vega's plays, most of which were written between 1599 and 1614 (Muñoz 2013, 132).¹⁰ As it is widely known, not only did Lope often resort to Bandello to gain inspiration for his own works, but also truly admired and was heavily influenced by some of the most iconic writers of the Italian Renaissance; examples include Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso or Boccaccio to name but a few (Muñoz 2011, 86).¹¹ Therefore, one could easily assume that it is likely that Lope de Vega had read the original Italian text of Bandello's "La sfortunata morte de dui infelicissimi amanti", and not (only) a Spanish translation, before he composed his own version of what was already a well-known story embedded within Europe's cultural heritage.

It is undoubtable that Lope was heavily influenced by Bandello's own rendition of the tragic story of the lovers of Verona. However, another question that would easily come to any reader interested in the text would be the following: may Lope have also read or been inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*? The Spanish dramatist appears not

¹⁰ Muñoz (2013, 132) provides the following list of plays by Lope de Vega that derive from Bandello: *La mayor victoria* (1615-1624), *¡Si no vieran las mujeres!* (1631-1632), *Los bandos de Sena* (1597-1603), *El castigo sin venganza* (1631), *El perseguido* (1590), *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606-1612), *El desdén vengado* (1615), *La difunta pleiteada* (1593-1603), *El guante de doña Blanca* (1627-1635), *La esclava de su galán* (1626), *El genovés liberal* (1599-1608), *El mayordomo de la duquesa de Amalfi* (1604-1606), *El padrino desposado* (1598-1600), *La reina doña María* (1604-1608), *La viuda valenciana* (1595-1603), *La quinta de Florencia* (ca. 1600) y *El castigo discreto* (1606-1608).

¹¹ For more information on Lope de Vega and the influence that the Italian novellieri, especially Giovanni Boccaccio, exercised on his work see: Muñoz, Juan Ramón. 2011. "Escribía/después de haber los libros consultado: a propósito de Lope y los novellieri, un estado de la cuestión (con especial atención a la relación con Giovanni Boccaccio), parte I." *Anuario Lope de Vega. Texto, literatura, cultura* 17: 85-106. Muñoz observes that Lope drew from the works of the Italian novellieri, but did not attempt to closely follow the texts that served as inspiration for his own plays.

to have left any surviving written testimony acknowledging a possible influence of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

A recent article published by Agnese Scammacca del Murgo, "Gli amanti di Verona tra Lope de Vega e William Shakespeare" ["The Lovers of Verona between Lope de Vega and William Shakespeare"] (2015) attempts to shed some light on the issue. Reminiscences of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are indeed palpable in the first two acts of *Castelvines y Monteses*. Even though echoes of Shakespeare's play could be the result of the fact that both the Elizabethan and the Spanish Golden Age versions of the tale share a common source (Bandello's "La sfortunata morte de dui infelicissimi amanti", 1554), these similarities might not be purely coincidental according to Scammacca del Murgo. For instance, there is a conversation between Lope de Vega's Roselo and Julia, in which the characters seem to paraphrase lines from Shakespeare's balcony scene. Scammacca del Murgo (2015, 197; 201–202) draws our attention to a few speeches in which some of the ideas uttered are present for the first time in Shakespeare (not in Bandello), and which are likewise reproduced by Lope's Julia and Roselo:

Romeo and Juliet

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name,

Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

[...]

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot,

Nor arm nor face, nor any other part

Belonging to a man.

(II. ii. ll. 33 – 36; 38 – 43)¹²

¹² All lines from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* cited in this dissertation are taken from the latest edition of the text edited by René Weis, and published by Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare (2012).

The Spanish Golden Age

Castelvines y Monteses

JULIA

I want you to know that I know
who you are, and it pains me
greatly that you are who you are,
or that I am who I am,

[...]

For I am a Castelví,
as you are a Montés.

(I. II. 903 – 906; 909 – 910)¹³

[...]

JULIA

Do you want my foot?

ROSELO

And your hand too.

JULIA

The arms as well.

(I. II. 1.009 – 1.011)¹⁴

[***]

Romeo and Juliet

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all,

Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,

Which is the god of my idolatry,

And I'll believe thee.

(II. ii. ll. 112 – 115)

¹³ The lines from Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* are taken from the digital edition of the play by Eva Soler Sasera provided by Artelope (2015), a trustworthy source used by scholars of Spanish Golden Age drama due to its fidelity to Lope de Vega's original. JULIA. Quiero que sepas que sé / quien eres, y que me duele / tanto que quien eres seas, / o que yo lo que soy fuese, [...] pues soy de los Castelvines, / como tú de los Monteses.

¹⁴ JULIA. ¿Quieres el pie? ROSELO. Y aun la mano. JULIA. Los brazos también.

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Castelvines y Monteses

JULIA

Do not swear, for those who swear
much credit do they lose.

ROSELO

What shall I say?

JULIA

That you desire me.

(I. II. 1.005 – 1.008)¹⁵

Regardless of the issue of whether or not Lope may have also found inspiration in Shakespeare's renowned tragic love story, what does seem apparent from a comparison between both texts is that his own version of the female protagonist of the story departs from Bandello's Giulietta and Shakespeare's Juliet. Lope's Julia, following the example of other leading ladies from the Spanish Golden Age stage, is considerably much more daring in her answers and much less modest, as she does not hesitate to openly flirt with Roselo shortly after their first encounter at the masquerade.

Scammacca del Murgo also notes that the conversation held between Tybalt and Capulet, in which the former is infuriated when he becomes aware of the presence of young Romeo at Capulet's ball is not present in Bandello, but is also mirrored to an extent by Lope where, instead, Antonio (Julia's father) is the one who shows his opposition to seeing Roselo at the ball (2015, 192 – 196). Indeed, in Bandello's novella, Romeo does not even remove his mask from the face. In Boaistuau's narrative adaptation of Bandello's story, there is no confrontation between the two men. Moreover, although Boaistuau's Rhomeo does remove his mask, none of the Capeletts attempt to attack him. The reader is told that they hide their hatred either to respect those present at the masquerade or Rhomeo's young age.

As it seems unlikely that Lope de Vega could have read or witnessed a performance in England of *Romeo and Juliet*, how could he have been influenced by

¹⁵ JULIA. No jures, que los que juran / mucho del crédito pierden. ROSELO. ¿Qué diré? JULIA. Que me deseas.

Shakespeare's tragedy, if that was ever the case? Scammacca del Murgo works on the hypothesis that Lope's knowledge of the play must have been the result of a possible acquaintance with James Mabbe, a translator and scholar of Spanish literature trained at Oxford (2015, 204). Mabbe arrived in Madrid in 1611, together with dignitaries and other prestigious members of English society, so as to accompany John Digby (Earl of Bristol, and newly-appointed ambassador in Madrid) in a diplomatic mission in Spain, aimed at strengthening strategic relations after the peace treaty of 1604. The main purpose was to negotiate the marriage between the heir to the English throne, Henry Frederick Stuart (Prince of Wales) and Infanta Ana (daughter of Philip III) (Scammacca del Murgo 2015, 203). Pérez Fernández (2013) acknowledges the strong connection between Mabbe, and the theatrical culture of the city of Madrid:

Mabbe's presence in Digby's embassy must have acquainted him with the networks of international diplomacy, and the political situation at the Spanish court; also with the busy world of letters in Madrid, its *corrales de comedias* [courtyard playhouses], and its literary associations, such as the Academia de Madrid, where the popular and controversial Lope the Vega had read his "Arte nuevo de hacer comedias" ["The New Art of Writing Plays"] around 1607 – 1608" (12).

Scammacca del Murgo affirms that the party that accompanied John Digby stayed in a palace located 984 yards (900m) away from Lope de Vega's home at the street formerly known as *Calle de Francos* (later renamed *Calle Cervantes*) (2015, 205). Bearing in mind that textual evidence demonstrates that Mabbe was living in Spain between 1611 and 1616, Scammacca del Murgo claims that Mabbe may have offered Lope de Vega a written Spanish translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, or rather an impromptu oral translation of the play (2015, 210).

Nonetheless, Scammacca del Murgo's hypothesis is merely that: a hypothesis. Historical facts do seem to point in the direction that John Mabbe and Lope de Vega probably knew and might have also been acquainted with one another. However, there is no written evidence of a possible meeting between the two to discuss Shakespeare's famous tragedy, in which the English scholar might have provided some sort of

translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Since there is no written evidence that may prove that Lope de Vega had actual contact with the English text of *Romeo and Juliet*, it remains problematic to ascertain the cause for the presence of those echoes of Shakespeare's text in the Spanish tragicomedy. Perhaps Lope, as Scammacca del Murgo hypothesises, was acquainted with the play owing to a possible friendship with an English-speaking friend that may have translated the text for him, or he might have heard the lines spoken during a conversation on *Romeo and Juliet*.

Pujante's (2019) recent findings also serve to refute Scammacca del Murgo's hypothesis. Pujante has asserted that "already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were English editions of [Shakespeare's] works that entered our country, which, however, did not have the slightest cultural effect" (2019, 11).¹⁶ According to Pujante the two works introduced were, supposedly, an edition of the First Folio, whose actual existence in Spain at the time still remains a mystery, and an edition of the Second Folio (1630s – 1640s) that belonged to the personal library of St. Albans college in Valladolid, until it was sold to Henry Folger in 1928 (2019, 17 – 30).¹⁷ Furthermore, Stone (2020) has lately discovered a collection (dated 1634) brought to Madrid in the late 1630s by Scottish Catholic exiles. The collection contains nineteen early modern plays, including Shakespeare's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which appears to be the earliest Shakespearean text introduced in Spain (2020). In other words, there are no records that attest to the possible circulation in Spain of works by Shakespeare prior to 1623. It is worth remembering that Lope de Vega composed *Castelvines y Monteses* between 1606 and 1612. One also ought to discard the assumption that the playwright might have attended a performance of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* at a Spanish playhouse.¹⁸

Hence, since there is no strong historical evidence that demonstrates that Shakespeare could have been one of the sources used by Lope de Vega, Bandello's novella ought to be regarded as the main source text. Furthermore, even if Lope may have

¹⁶ "Ya en los siglos XVII y XVIII entraron en nuestro país ediciones inglesas de sus obras, que, sin embargo, no tuvieron el menor efecto cultural."

¹⁷ For more information on the uncertainty surrounding the supposed existence in Spain of an edition of the First Folio (1623) see Pujante's latest book *Shakespeare llega a España: Ilustración y Romanticismo* (2019).

¹⁸ 1603 is the year of a performance in Nördlingen of *Von Romeo undth Julitha*, produced by a company of English actors led by Robert Browne. It appears to be the earliest performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in the Continent (Ruiz-Morgan 2017a, 302). There are no written records that attest to a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* by English acting troupes on the seventeenth-century Spanish stage.

borrowed and paraphrased a few lines from the first two acts of *Romeo and Juliet*, he strongly departed and moved in a completely new direction, by adapting an already existing tale to fit the requirements of the new type of comedies that he advocated and created for the Spanish stage of his time.

It is often difficult to ascertain the exact date of composition of Spanish Golden Age plays, and *Castelvines y Monteses* is no exception. Most scholars, including Morley and Bruerton in their influential work *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's Comedias* (1968, 299–300), first published in 1940, coincide in affirming that the play was composed between 1606 and 1612, and that the original text may have suffered alterations prior to its publication. In line with this assumption, most critics have followed Morley and Bruerton in deciding to corroborate these dates of composition, including Prunster (2000), Urzáiz Tortajada (2002), Torres Nebrera (2010), and Muñoz (2013). Further evidence that supports the selection of this time frame can be found in the work of Lope de Vega himself, precisely, in the often quoted prologues to the 1604 and the 1618 editions of his *The Pilgrim of Castile*, known in Spanish as *El peregrino en su patria*, where the playwright included a list of the corpus of plays that he had composed up to 1604, and considerably expanded in the second edition of 1618 (Vega 2016). *Castelvines y Monteses* is absent from the list of plays published in the first edition of *The Pilgrim of Castile*, however, it does appear in the 1618 edition. Hence, it seems safe to assume the view held by the majority of critics, and to assert that the comedy was possibly written any time between 1606 and 1612. There are no doubts, nevertheless, with regards to the date of publication. *Castelvines y Monteses* was published in 1647 in the twenty-fifth volume of Lope de Vega's complete works (Urzáiz Tortajada 2002, 656).

Lope de Vega often boasted about the large amount of works that had given him his widely-acknowledged fame, claiming to have written 1,500 works. The exact figure remains unknown up to this date, but some scholars of Golden Age drama believe it could be close to nine hundred. Nevertheless, within Lope de Vega's ample and well-known corpus, *Castelvines y Monteses* does not occupy a focal position. As a matter of fact, it is almost absent from public knowledge, partly because it has received little scholarly attention. One can definitely affirm that it constitutes a relatively neglected play, even amongst critics working on the field of Spanish Golden Age drama.

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Edward H. Friedman's article "*Romeo and Juliet* as Tragicomedy: Lope's *Castelvines y Monteses* and Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona*" (1989) is the first to offer a complete analysis of the play, focusing on its structure, the places where it deviates from its most immediate source (Bandello's novella), and lastly a comparison with Rojas Zorrilla's own rewriting of the story of the star-crossed lovers; the latter will be examined in detail in this chapter. In the 1990s, *Castelvines y Monteses* elicited the attention of Rodríguez-Badendyck (1991), who published a chapter on the tragicomedy in *Parallel Lives: Spanish and English National Drama, 1580- 1680* entitled "The Neglected Alternative: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses*". She also took on the enterprise of comparing both texts in her PhD dissertation, "The Lovers of Verona in Lope and Shakespeare: Problems in Comparison" (1993). As the title of Rodríguez-Badendyck's dissertation evinces, it proves problematic and complicated to establish a comparison between both texts due to the lack of surviving written records by Lope that may prove that the Spanish dramatist had actually read the English play.

One must move onto the year 2010 to find another critical work that explores Lope's play (Torres Nebrera 2010). Apart from mentioning the possible dates of composition (1606 – 1612), the section devoted to *Castelvines y Monteses* consists merely of an excessively long summary, in which Torres Nebrera describes in detail the plot, highlighting those passages in which Lope significantly deviates from Bandello. Four years later, Rabell (2014) published a book chapter entitled "*Castelvines y Monteses: comedia de orden postridentino*" [*Capulets and Montagues: a Counter-Reformation comedy*], centred on the analysis of the implications of depicting a secret marriage onstage during the Counter-Reformation period. The last piece of scholarly criticism that has been published on Lope de Vega's tragicomedy is the aforementioned article by Scammacca del Murgo (2015). Therefore, the scarce number of scholarly works that have been published on the topic proves that *Castelvines y Monteses* remains, up to this date, one of Lope de Vega's most unknown and less studied plays.

Castelvines y Monteses belongs to the group of plays with which Lope gave birth to the *Comedia Nueva* [New Comedy], the new type of plays which Lope carefully crafted for the public courtyard playhouses of his time, the highly popular *corrales de comedias*. In 1609, Lope ardently defended the features and intricacies of his personal approach to

writing for the theatre in the well-known theoretical text that articulates Spanish Golden Age drama: “El arte nuevo de hacer comedias” (Rozas 2002). The essay is commonly translated into English as the “New Art of Writing Plays”. The action of *Castelvines y Monteses* is written into the three-act structure that Lope perfected, whereby each act or *jornada* is not subdivided into scenes. The play has been defined as an example of the Spanish *comedia de enredo* [comedy of intrigue] (Torres Nebrera 2010), but also as a *comedia palatina* [court comedy] [(Oleza 1997).

In *Castelvines y Monteses*, events develop at a very fast pace, as Spanish audiences demanded speed and vigour, and Lope was a dramatist who was utterly devoted to satisfying the demands of his public. Plunging the spectator straight into the action of the play was, as Edwards (2005, xxxv) remarks, a common feature present in Lope de Vega’s dramatic repertoire. Hence, *Castelvines y Monteses* begins with the masquerade held at the Castelvines’s household in the city of Verona. Roselo Montés and Julia Castelví meet, and are immediately attracted to one another. Doménech Rico (2000) observes that the surnames differ from their Italian counterparts (Cappelletti and Montecchi), and instead sound more Catalan. The scholar suggests that this slight change in the family names might be an allusion to fights between Catalan and Valencian rival factions forgotten nowadays, but certainly known to Lope de Vega’s audiences (2000, 157). During the masquerade, it becomes evident that not only Roselo, but also Otavio (Julia’s cousin) desires her. Roselo and Julia marry off stage and the second act begins with a fight between both families that ends with Roselo killing Otavio. Following Bandello, Julia’s father (Antonio) arranges a marriage between his daughter and Conde Paris (Count Paris). Thus, the young lady also seeks the help of a priest (Aurelio), who makes her drink a soporific, without telling her its intended effect: to make her appear dead.

In the third act, Julia reawakens at a churchyard in the middle of a comic scene in which she is found by Roselo and his loyal servant Marín, who is terrified of the gloomy location. The ending devised by Lope de Vega constitutes the most striking departure from Bandello, as the story moves in a completely new direction. After Julia’s sudden “death”, her old father departs to the countryside to prepare his wedding with his niece Dorotea (sister of the deceased Otavio). Their union is needed to secure a future heir that will inherit the family fortune and properties. Julia approaches her father adopting the identity of a ghost, and threatens him with tormenting his existence every night, if he

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refuses to make peace with her husband Roselo. Julia achieves her goal. She facilitates the happy ending when she reveals that she is very much alive, and arranges two marriages: one between her cousin Dorotea and Anselmo (Roselo's best friend), and another one between Celia (her servant) and Marín (Roselo's servant). In the end, the union between uncle and niece, which could be viewed as incestuous, does not take place. Unlike Bandello's novella, where the families are never fully reconciled, the happy ending is reinforced by joining in matrimony six members belonging to the no longer rival factions. As Pérez Magallón observes, Lope de Vega defended the unity of action, rejected the unity of time and was silent about the unity of place (2009, 35). Indeed, the action of *Castelvines y Monteses* revolves around one main plot line: Julia's personal battle to reconcile the two rival families, while simultaneously and cunningly forcing her father into accepting the husband of her choice. The other two unities are violated, as it was common in Lope. The events depicted onstage develop over a period of at least two months, whereas the characters move from an urban location (acts I and II) to the countryside (act III).

A question that we might ask ourselves is why did Lope de Vega choose to give a happy ending to his play? Díez Borque observes that Lope's obsession with portraying himself as a cultivated author is recurrent in all his works, and appears as an intimate concern in his private correspondence (2009, 66).¹⁹ Bearing this knowledge in mind, together with the idea that tragedy has traditionally enjoyed a higher level of prestige in discussions – albeit old-fashioned – that distinguish between “high” and “low” forms of art, the happy denouement might still strike some twenty-first century readers as surprising, at the very least, if not unacceptable or poorly suited to the nature of the plot. In fact, in the rare instances in which the play is mentioned in scholarly criticism, it is not uncommon to find a disregard for Lope's decision not to adhere to the tragic ending that the story originally had. If Lope de Vega had chosen to rewrite Bandello's novella retaining the tragic fate that befell Romeo and Giulietta, he would almost certainly have succeeded in saving *Castelvines y Monteses* from being consigned to oblivion.

Nevertheless, Díez Borque (2009, 68) also notes that Lope's “cultivated works” did not prove profitable. Then, why would Lope have chosen to radically alter the ending? As Oleza stresses when comparing the theatre of Golden Age Spain with the Elizabethan

¹⁹“El prurito de mostrarse docto se da en toda su obra y aparece como íntima preocupación en sus cartas.”

and Jacobean stage: “both are commercial theatres, subject to the laws of supply and demand, the fluctuations of the market, and the expectations of the public” (2017, 31).²⁰ The theatregoers of Lope de Vega’s time demanded and eagerly devoured comedies. Consequently, it seems reasonable that the dramatist would have chosen to adapt the ending with the sole purpose in mind of pleasing his public. This assumption is reinforced by Pérez Magallón, who stresses that:

[Lope de Vega] finds no justification for theatre other than audience attendance. Since this depends on the taste of those who attend the courtyard playhouses, this is what must be noticed first in order to, immediately, adapt to it. Lope’s modern individuality lies there: in the fact that he does not consider himself subject to *any authority* save for the public that attends the playhouses (2009, 39).²¹

In this sense, Lope de Vega’s *Castelvines y Monteses* holds a crucial position in the Spanish reception of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona, as he is credited with being the first Spanish author to transpose into a dramatic form a tale which had been preserved, up to that point in history, in a narrative format. Furthermore, Lope de Vega was also the first to alter the genre of the original Italian novelle, by turning a tragic story into a tragicomedy which does not lead, ultimately, to the deaths of the lovers. The other salient feature that becomes apparent from a reading of *Castelvines y Monteses* is that Lope de Vega strongly reinforced the character of Julia, turning her into the true protagonist of the play. From the first act, Julia Castelví governs the action – unlike Bandello’s Giulietta –, and controls and deceives the remaining characters, so as to fulfill her own interests. Julia always takes the initiative. The female is often bold and direct, as portrayed in the opening “scene” (the masquerade), which provides a wonderful insight into the lady’s character. Roselo is awestruck by Julia’s beauty. For this reason, he plucks

²⁰ “Ambos teatros, el español y el inglés, son teatros comerciales, que se someten a la ley de la oferta y la demanda, a los vaivenes del mercado y a las expectativas de su público.”

²¹ Italics in the original. Lope “no encuentra otra justificación para el teatro que el éxito de público. Puesto que éste depende del gusto de quien asiste a los corrales, eso es lo primero que hay que observar para, acto seguido, adaptarse a él. La moderna individualidad de Lope radica ahí: en que no se siente sometido a *ninguna autoridad* salvo la del público que acude al teatro.”

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up the courage to sit next to her and opens up his heart about his feelings, much to the dismay of Julia's cousin Otavio (the unwanted suitor). When Roselo offers to leave, Otavio encourages him. However, Julia seizes the opportunity, and uses her sharp tongue to make him stay, while rejecting her cousin's unsolicited attention:

ROSELO

If I tire you, I shall leave.

OTAVIO

You may well do, if you please.

JULIA

What for? Well seated he is

beside you, if the heat he fears.

As from the cold you inflict on me,

I could freeze him in such a way,

that I shall turn him into ice.

OTAVIO

Cousin, watch your speech.

JULIA

I favour a stranger,

for there is no need to favour you.

(I. II. 332 – 341)²²

The love triangle is mirrored to a certain extent in *Bandello*. During the masked ball, *Giulietta* also sits between two men, *Romeo* and his close friend *Marcuccio* (“the

²² ROSELO. Si os canso, levantáreme. OTAVIO. Bien podéis, si gusto os da. JULIA. ¿Para qué? Bien estará / junto a vos, si el calor teme, / que de lo que a mí me heláis, / le podré helar de tal modo, / que le vuelva en yelo todo. OTAVIO. Prima, mirad cómo habláis. JULIA. Favorezco a un hombre extraño, / porque a vos no es menester.

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Cross-Eyed”), known for having cold hands all year round – this explains why Julia associates Otavio with coldness in the play. Bandello’s *Giulietta* also acknowledges the ardent desire that she feels for Romeo, uttering “[you make me] burn all over” and “alas, what can I say to you if not that I belong far more to you than I do to myself” (Bandello 2000, 55).²³ But it is worth nothing that she confides her all-consuming passion to him alone. On the contrary, Lope de Vega’s Julia goes one step further, and openly flirts with a complete stranger, in the presence of a cousin who is also courting her. During the entire conversation, Julia leaves modesty aside, and devises a subtle way of confessing her true feelings to Roselo without Otavio noticing, as expressed in the stage direction quoted below:

JULIA

I wish to satisfy you

that my boldness

turns a blind eye to my honour.

I cannot favour you

with higher praise.

*(Note that JULIA speaks to OTAVIO, but she intends to address
and gestures to ROSELO, and he acts likewise, but OTAVIO
believes it is for him.)*

(I. II. 367 – 373)²⁴

This witty and comic exchange between the characters can be said to be Lope de Vega’s invention, as Bandello’s *Marcuccio* barely speaks. Therefore, Julia and Roselo cunningly manage to express their feelings for one another, without letting anybody else

²³ All excerpts from Bandello’s novella are taken from the English translation provided by Nicole Prunster (2000).

²⁴ JULIA. Quiero que te satisfagas / de que pues mi atrevimiento / llega a no mirar mi honor, / no puedo hacerte favor / de más encarecimiento. (*Adviértase que JULIA hable con OTAVIO, pero la intención y señas sean con ROSELO, y él lo mismo, pero OTAVIO piense que es por él.*).

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know who the true addressee is. Julia's boldness continues throughout the rest of the party, with blunt questions such as "who loves me well?" (I. l. 424) or "will you be mine?" (I. l. 428)²⁵ that are apparently addressed to her delighted cousin. The conversation ends with Julia declaring, as in *Bandello*, that she wishes to marry Roselo. Lope adds symbolic iconography with Julia's act of putting a ring on Roselo's hand; the gesture indicates that *she* is the one giving her hand in matrimony. Julia's behaviour, which would not have been interpreted as lady-like, is acknowledged by the character herself. In fact, when the guests leave her house, she admits to her servant and confidante Celia: "I believe the gentleman was I / as I was daring and flattering" (I. ll. 482 – 483).²⁶ In other words, Julia possesses qualities that were at the time typically associated with men. By acting both as a gentleman and as a lady, her importance throughout the play gains a higher level of significance. The opening scene marks the dynamics of the Roselo-Julia relationship, evidencing that she is the one who does not hesitate to take the initiative. Moreover, it sets the tone for the rest of the play. It becomes apparent that Julia is the leading star, and the one who brings about and controls the key events in the plot.

Examining the relationship between Julia and her father Antonio Castelví evidences another significant departure from *Bandello*. Lope's Julia confronts her father in several occasions, and is not afraid to share her thoughts and feelings, even if such attitude may involve defying filial duty. Julia first rejects her father's authority in a decisive speech delivered after her secret marriage. The scene is Lope's invention. Here, the lady addresses her husband in the presence of the servants Marín and Celia:

JULIA

I no longer have another father,
nor do I have another remedy left.

You are my shelter,
your defence suffices me.

You are the faction I follow,

²⁵ JULIA. ¿Quién me quiere bien? JULIA. ¿Serás tú mío?

²⁶ JULIA. Que pienso que el galán fui, / de atrevida y lisonjera.

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not the one my parents lead.

Castelvín is my body

and my soul is a Montés.

(I. II. 1.620 – 1.627)²⁷

Therefore, after the marriage, Julia redefines her identity proclaiming that Roselo has become her father, and that her soul now belongs to the rival faction of the Monteses. In this version, Antonio Castelví is a kind-hearted man who truly loves his daughter, and wishes to marry her with a wealthy nobleman of her liking. Thus, this may accentuate the feeling of pity for the old man that arises towards the end of the third act, when Julia visits her father making him think she is a spirit that has returned from the realms of death. Her purpose is to instill fear and remorse in the petrified man, so as to achieve her ultimate goal: to obtain her father's blessing for her marriage with Roselo. Her boldness shows up once more from the beginning of their encounter, as she quickly moves from yelling "Father!" (III. I. 2.880), to adopting a more arrogant and disrespectful tone: "Listen, my ingrate Father" (III. I. 2.882).²⁸ She continues displaying a bossy attitude to make clear that she is the one in charge of the situation, and that he can do nothing but follow her orders: "father, from the other world / I have come to speak to you; listen, pay attention..." (III. II. 2.889 – 2.890).²⁹

Hence, their roles are reversed, as the last time that they had seen each other, she had been forced into accepting a marriage with a man whom she does not love (Conde Paris). When her father says that not being able to see her saddens him, she takes it as an opportunity to frighten him, and directs strong accusations at the terrified man to make him feel guilty of her death: "I killed myself because of your cause [the marriage arrangement with the Count]" (III. I. 2.897), or "you wanted me to marry by force" (III. I. 2.899).³⁰ Julia confesses that she had been married for two months when the wedding preparations with Conde Paris were in the making, leaving her no other choice but to take

²⁷ JULIA. Yo no tengo ya otro padre, / ni otro remedio me queda. / En ti consiste mi amparo, / basta que tú me defiendas. / Tú eres el bando que sigo, / no el que mis padres profesan. / Castelvín soy en el cuerpo, / y en el alma soy Montesa.

²⁸ JULIA. ¡Padre!; JULIA. Oye, ingrato padre mío.

²⁹ JULIA. Padre, pues del otro mundo / vengo a hablarte; escucha, atiende...

³⁰ JULIA. Yo me maté por tu causa; JULIA. Tú me casabas por fuerza.

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her own life. So as to guarantee that her father accepts her beloved husband, she does not hesitate to torture the poor old man a little longer by resorting to daring threats:

JULIA

I only ask you to honour,
and to remain friends and in peace
with the one who was my husband,
and that his death you shall not pursue,
as if you do I swear
that the days you live,
with the fire that burns me
each night shall torment you.

(III. II. 2.935 – 2.942)³¹

Antonio is horrified when he is then told that Roselo is her husband, but promises to respect him and regard him as a son. Julia's skillful manoeuvre has its desired effect. Therefore, when the triumphant lady eventually proves that she is very much alive, her father Antonio is more than pleased to welcome Roselo Montés into his family.

Julia Castelví strongly differs from the modest Giulietta devised by Bandello. The higher importance given to the character is also symbolized in the title of the play, *Castelvines y Monteses*, where the name of the house of the Capulets comes first. With Lope de Vega, a new type of audacious, dauntless and outspoken Juliet is born into the history of the Spanish reception of the story of Romeo and Juliet. Her position as true protagonist of the play is reinforced with the ending, as Julia is the one who saves the day, procuring her own happiness and that of her closed relatives and friends. It was not

³¹ JULIA. Sólo te pido que honres, / y que en paz y amistad quedes / con el que fue mi marido, / y que su muerte no intentes, / que si lo haces te juro / que los días que vivieres, / con el fuego que me abrasa / cada noche te atormente.

uncommon to find strong female characters depicted on the Spanish Golden Age stage, and Julia Castelví is a perfect example.

The eminent nineteenth-century bibliographer and scholar of Golden Age drama Cayetano Alberto de la Barrera y Leirado published in 1860 his *Catálogo bibliográfico y biográfico del teatro antiguo español, desde sus orígenes hasta mediados del siglo XVIII* [Bibliographic and Biographic Catalogue of Old Spanish Theatre, from its Origins until the Mid-Eighteenth Century], a crucial guide for scholars interested in the history and the study of Spanish theatre. Barrera y Leirado explains that the last work by Lope de Vega published posthumously by members of his family was *La Vega del Parnaso* (*The Meadow of Parnassus*), a book of poems first available to the public in 1637 (1860, 427).³² After the aforementioned date, the last editions of the complete works of Lope de Vega that saw the light between 1640 and 1649 (parts 24, 25, 26 and 27) were published by editors alien to the Lope de Vega family circle (Barrera y Leirado 1860, 427). This was the case of *Castelvines y Monteses*, first published in 1647 in the *Parte veinticinco, perfecta, y verdadera, de las comedias del Fénix de España Frey Lope Félix de Vega Carpio* [Twenty-Fifth Part, Perfect and Veracious, of the Works of the Phoenix of Spain Frey Lope Félix de Vega Carpio]. The edition was financed by Roberto Deuport, and it was dedicated to Mr. Francisco Antonio Jiménez de Urrea (Lord of Berbedel), who procured the manuscripts from his own valuable library (Barrera y Leirado 1860, 427). The Spanish National Library, often referred to as BNE (Biblioteca Nacional de España), possesses amongst the thousands of titles of its vast collection, an original copy of the 1647 volume.³³

A comparative study of the different extant editions of *Castelvines y Monteses*, which I was able to carry out during a nine-week research stay at the Spanish National Library, revealed that there are hardly no significant variations between the 1647 text and the two subsequent Spanish versions of the text that followed. There were no new editions of *Castelvines y Monteses* published in Spain during the remaining decades of the seventeenth century, nor during the eighteenth century. One must move onto the first half

³² Lope de Vega died in Madrid on 27 August 1635. Two days prior to his death, the author still had the strength to engage in literary activities and, in fact, wrote two poems.

³³ The titles published alongside *Castelvines y Monteses* are the following: *La esclava de su galán*, *El desprecio agradecido*, *Las aventuras de don Iván de Alarcos*, *El mayor imposible*, *La nueva victoria del Marqués de Santacruz*, *Los cautivos de Argel*, *De lo que ha de ser*, *El último godo*, *La necesidad del discreto*, *El juez en su casa*, and *Los embustes de Fabia* (Vega 1647).

of the nineteenth century and to a foreign country, Germany, in order to discover a new edition of Lope de Vega's tragicomedy. As it is widely known, since the Romantic period, Germany took a profound interest in the greatest Spanish authors of the Golden Age; viewed as particularly appealing and worth studying were the works of Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Lope de Vega. In 1839, an edition of *Castelvines y Monteses*, alongside Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* (*The Rival Houses of Verona*), was edited by Count Peter Wilhem von Hohenthal-Stetteln and Deuben (Rojas Zorrilla and Vega 1839). Even though the volume was published in Leipzig and Paris, it contained both texts transcribed in Spanish and not in German or French, as it might have been expected. Count Hohenthal-Stetteln and Deuben was neither a professor nor a professional philologist, but a member of a Protestant family belonging to the high nobility of the – at that time independent – Kingdom of Saxony; he was a highly respected jurist, with studies on Maquiavelo, Rousseau, Natural Law, and Constitutional Law (Tietz 2008, 110–111).³⁴

The 1839 edition contains no commentaries beside a brief preface by the editor, dated 1 February 1839 (Leipzig), in which he acquaints readers with the purpose of his work: “I was able to publish in a new edition both tragic poems, and I have faith that it will be a very agreeable gift to all friends of the truly rich and proportionally little known Spanish literature” (Rojas Zorrilla and Vega 1839, IV).³⁵ A comparison with the 1647 edition of *Castelvines y Monteses* proves that the 1839 text constitutes a faithful word-by-word rendition of Lope de Vega's play. The sole difference between both texts is recorded in the second act. Roselo is telling his close friend Anselmo that Aurelio found himself forced to marry the couple to stop him from “stealing” Julia; which would have put both rival factions in further danger. Whereas in Lope de Vega's play, Roselo mentions that the priest wanted to avoid the destruction of Verona, in the 1839 edition the location changes to Ferrara (Rojas Zorrilla and Vega 1839, 139). Given that this is the only change found in the text, one can venture to believe that it could either be the result

³⁴ “El editor, Peter Wilhelm von Hohenthal-Stetteln y Deuben, no es catedrático ni filólogo profesional, sino miembro de una familia protestante de la alta nobleza del – en aquel entonces todavía independiente – reino de Sajonia, jurista muy respetado en su época, con estudios sobre Maquiavelo, Rousseau y el derecho natural y constitucional.”

³⁵ “Así me fue posible publicar en una nueva edición ambas estas poesías trágicas, y tengo la esperanza de hacer un muy agradable regalo a todos los amigos de la tan rica y proporcionadamente poco conocida literatura española.”

of a slip of the mind, or a whim, perhaps motivated by a personal preference for the city of Ferrara.

Travelling back to Spain, a new edition of *Castelvines y Monteses* appeared in the fourth and final volume of a collection of plays by Lope de Vega edited by the Romantic dramatist and critic Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch (Vega 1860). This important collection, printed in Madrid by M. Rivadeneyra, was part of the *Biblioteca de autores españoles, desde la formación del lenguaje hasta nuestros días* [Library of Spanish Authors, from the Origin of Language until The Present]. As Hartzenbusch recalls in the prologue, the publication of the fourth volume put an end to a grand enterprise that had begun seven years earlier in 1853 (1860, v). A total number of 112 plays by Lope de Vega were incorporated in the influential compilation. Indeed, the four volumes edited by Hartzenbusch, despite not including all the titles from the vast collection of dramatic works composed by Lope de Vega, strongly contributed to the dissemination of the reception of his work in Spain, up to the final decades of the twentieth century (Valdés Gázquez 2020).

The publisher (M. Rivadeneyra) expressed in a brief letter dated 13 November 1860, his will to dedicate the fourth volume, as the title of his note indicates, “To the Spanish Army in Africa” (“Al ejército español de África”) (Vega 1860). *Castelvines y Monteses* occupies the first place amongst the twenty-four plays included in this last edition. Hartzenbusch provides in one sole paragraph bibliographic information on the publication of the twenty-fifth volume of the complete works by Lope de Vega, the one that includes *Castelvines y Monteses* (1860, xx). The text had been copied word-by-word from the previously discussed work by Barrera y Leirado (1860). The reference to the 1647 edition can be taken as an indication that this was the source text used by Hartzenbusch.

Considering the plot, Hartzenbusch’s edition constitutes a faithful rendition of the original story devised by the Golden Age dramatist. The editor also divided the play into three acts but, unlike Lope, he further subdivided it into scenes. The only place of invention is found in act I, scene iii, and it merely serves as a means to introduce the masquerade which is about to commence. This brief scene, comprised of nine lines, portrays a masked man (Celio) conversing with another party guest (Fabio) and Antonio Castelví about his desire to dance. The only relevant changes added to the text are those

concerning its formal structure. The number of stage directions is considerably enhanced, particularly those incorporating information on the setting. This would have helped theatre companies interested in producing the text in decisions regarding performance or the set design. Hartzenbusch also devotes special attention to the metre, adding several endnotes to comment on mistakes that he spots, or to highlight that a line has been left incomplete in the source text. The majority of the slight changes that are observed in the speeches are the result of an effort to update both the grammar and the spelling, so as to accommodate it to the language spoken during the mid-nineteenth century. One can conclude that Hartzenbusch chose to remain loyal to Lope de Vega's play, and that the insignificant modifications present derive from a revision of the text that certainly entailed a high degree of philological rigour.

An English version of *Castelvines y Monteses* was published in 1869. It retains the original title in Spanish, and acknowledges the authority of Lope de Vega. The translator was Frederick William Cosens (1819 – 1889).³⁶ Cosens's translation of *Castelvines y Monteses* was printed in London at the Chiswick Press. There were 150 copies printed for private distribution. The one that I have consulted is the fifty-fourth copy held in the collection of the Spanish National Library in Madrid (Vega 1869). The fact that the edition was for private distribution suggests that the translation was primarily intended for private reading rather than for performance. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that Cosens was not a man of letters, but instead a businessman. For this reason, he might have deliberately decided to avoid public scrutiny by circulating the text amongst a closer, and perhaps carefully chosen, circle. In fact, Cosens ends the brief introduction to his edition resorting to the rhetorical stylistic device known as *captatio benevolentiae*:

To those interested in Shakespeariana it may be of value to note how two great contemporary dramatists treated the same story for the stage. It is to be regretted that the work has not been undertaken by other than

³⁶ Geoff West, former Lead Curator of the Hispanic Collections of The British Library, provides the following relevant information on Cosens: "Frederick William Cosens (1819 – 1889) had a very successful career in the sherry and port wine trade between Britain and Spain and Portugal. The profits from his businesses permitted him to develop his interests in both fine art and literature" (West 2016). This allowed him, not only to purchase an important art collection that included Spanish and Italian drawings dated from the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also to comply a library comprised of nearly 5.000 titles, which included rare editions and manuscripts of major Spanish works (West 2016).

an amateur hand, being worthy a better fate, but unfortunately the fact remains that it could never prove commercially profitable to a competent translator or publisher” (1869, vii).

The text used by Cosens as a model for his translation was the 1860 version edited by Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch, which he describes as “a most carefully collated edition” (1869, vii). Nonetheless, this was not the first contact that the literary enthusiast had had with Lope de Vega’s play. In the introduction he refers to an anonymous translation from 1770, handed in to him by a Mr. J. O. Halliwell, and printed in London for William Griffin (Cosens 1869, v). I have not been able to access what now appears to be a lost translation, so as to compare it with the other available editions of Lope’s play. However, from Cosens’s words, we learn that it constitutes a very selective translation, as the editor merely “contented himself with giving a general plan of Lopez de Vega’s [sic] piece and a translation of such scenes only as answer to others in Shakespeare’s tragedy” (1869, v – vi). The fact that the anonymous translator was only interested in a reading of *Castelvines y Monteses* as an alternative version of Shakespeare’s tragedy is evident from the title which is rechristened as *Romeo and Juliet*.

Hartzenbusch’s edition was the model that inspired the 1869 translation, but Cosens does not strictly follow his source text, and cut and altered entire speeches according to his own taste, often enlarging them. Furthermore, the division into acts and scenes differs from the one present in Hartzenbusch’s version. Regarding characterization, Cosens’s Roselo and Julia are much closer to Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet than to the actual characters they embody. Thus, from the first act, Roselo is strongly portrayed, as the character himself utters, as “a careless, wild, and silly fool, a stupid clod of earth” (I. ii. p. 8). In this sense, he strongly echoes Romeo at the beginning of act I: an innocent foolish youth, whose mind cannot truly focus on anything because he is madly in love with Rosaline. This definition cannot truly be applied to Lope de Vega’s Roselo. Likewise, Julia is shaped from act I to assimilate her to her Elizabethan counterpart. This becomes apparent from her several references to death, which abound in the speeches spoken by Shakespeare’s Juliet but are almost non-existent in the lines delivered by Lope de Vega’s Julia. Similarly, even if Cosens’s Julia retains part of her boldness, her language and attitude have been moulded in order to adhere to an ideal of femininity more suited to Victorian standards. For instance, in a scene from act one, Julia

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appears anxious waiting for the arrival of her beloved Roselo. Both in Lope and in Hartzenbusch's edition, the lady merely asks herself a simple question that can have no connotations: "what shall I do?" (I. xi. p.7).³⁷ On the contrary, Cosens chooses to introduce concerns about modesty and decency by making her utter: "what can an honest maiden do?" (I. iv. p. 31). Another evident example can be found towards the end of act I, when Julia daringly offers different parts of her body to her not yet husband Roselo. Hartzenbusch's edition transcribes the scene as follows:

CELIA

My lady, they are coming.

JULIA

Do you want my foot?

ROSELO

And your hand too.

JULIA

The arms as well.

(I. xii. p. 8)³⁸

Hartzenbusch here directly copied the exact words from Lope de Vega. On the contrary, Cosens opts for an alternative version in which Julia displays a more lady-like behaviour:

ROSELO

They come, sweet girl! Farewell.

JULIA

Carest thou to kiss mine hand?

ROSELO

³⁷ JULIA. ¿Qué haré?

³⁸ CELIA. Señora mía, que vienen. JULIA. ¿Quieres el pie? ROSELO. Y aun la mano. JULIA. Los brazos también.

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Yes; but much more, thy lips.

JULIA

Nay, nay! Away, my love, begone!

(I. iv. p.35)

The reference to Julia's feet is omitted, as it is not a delicate part of the body, and it can also sound vulgar. Furthermore, Cosens might have deleted that line to prevent readers from interpreting it as Julia trying to literally kick Roselo out of the scene. Roselo instead becomes bolder. Also, Julia's refusal to accept a kiss offers another opportunity to make her appear modest in the reader's eyes. Cosens has also embellished their language to make it sound more poetical and, possibly, to strengthen the resemblance with *Romeo and Juliet*. There is also an effort to employ terms spoken in England during the Early Modern period. For instance, words such as "thou", "thee", or "thy", to name but a few, flourish throughout the text. It is also curious to notice that the translator seems to be particularly fond of the word "sweet", which is recurrently used by both Roselo and Julia as a term of endearment. In contrast, the adjective only appears twice in Lope's work, and it serves to describe two nouns ("hope" and "relics").

Cosens asserted in the introduction the following: "such [the anonymous 1770 translation] appearing to me eminently unsatisfactory, and a very traitorous rendering of the original, I have attempted a more faithful translation of the complete play" (1869, vi – vii). However, the actions, language and attitude of his Roselo and Julia mirror Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to a considerably higher extent than what he is prepared to admit. In the several echoes that one finds of Shakespeare's play, Cosens' translation proves that it is indeed an attempt at translating, rather than strictly a faithful rendition of Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses*.

A recent translation into present-day English of *Castelvines y Monteses* was published in 2005 by the specialist in Spanish theatre and cinema Gwynne Edwards in his *Three Spanish Golden Age Plays: The Duchess of Amalfi's Steward, The Capulets and Montagues by Lope de Vega. Cleopatra by Rojas Zorrilla* (Vega and Rojas Zorrilla 2005). It is worth noting that, in the introduction, Edwards wrongly assumes that 1604 is the latest possible date of completion of *Castelvines y Monteses*, and even suggests that the play could have been written prior to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (2005, xxxiii). The

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latest available versions of *Castelvines y Monteses* in Spanish are the digitised critical editions carried out by the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (Vega 2003) and Artelope (Vega 2015).

After this journey throughout the afterlife of *Castelvines y Monteses* in print, one may wonder whether the play was successful on the seventeenth-century Spanish stage. Unfortunately, there is no surviving written evidence – reviews in periodicals, letters from possible attendees, etc. – that could offer a picture of how well the play might have been received amongst Lope de Vega’s contemporaries. Unlike dramatists such as Rojas Zorrilla, who was primarily a court dramatist, Lope mainly wrote for the public courtyard playhouses (*corrales de comedias*). Hence, one can assume that *Castelvines y Monteses* was probably performed at one of the two popular courtyard playhouses situated in the city of Madrid: the Corral de la Cruz or the Corral del Príncipe. With regards to their location, Amelang affirms:

The Corral del Príncipe and Corral de la Cruz, named after the streets in which they were found, were located in the upper side of the capital’s second largest *parroquia* (parish), an area nowadays known as el *barrio de las letras* (the poets’ quarter) due to the many famous writers who lived and communed in this parish” (2018, 628).³⁹

As for the different members of the social spectrum that gathered to attend the performances, Oleza observes the following:

The crowd capacity normally exceeds one thousand spectators, and it could be over two thousand. [...] The public is socially diversified, possibly more so in Spain, due to the higher presence of the nobility,

³⁹ As Amelang explains, the existence of theatres in Madrid was possible owing to their position as principal sources of funding for the capital’s general hospital: “Madrid’s *corrales* were overseen by both royal and civic governments, whose doubts about the moral legitimacy of popular theater were assuaged by its serving as the main source of funding for the *Cofradía de la Soledad* (Confraternity of Solitude) and the *Cofradía de la Pasión* (Confraternity of the Holy Passion), two religious brotherhoods whose charitable duties included financing the capital’s general hospital” (2018, 618).

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although the highest proportion of attendees seems to correspond to a middle class of gentlemen, clergymen, students, and members of the different administrations (2017, 31).⁴⁰

Castelvines y Monteses is rarely seen on stage in Spain nowadays. A performance of the play took place on 13 November 2004 in Madrid at the theatre of the RESAD, the Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático (the Royal Higher College of Performing Arts). It was produced by the theatre company José Estruch, and directed by Aitana Galán (Vallejo 2004). More recently, in July 2016, the theatre company Tres Dos Uno Teatro staged a production titled *Verona* – a free version of *Castelvines y Monteses* performed in modern dress (n.a. 2016). In England, there was a performance of Lope de Vega's play at the Dell Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in August 2006, directed by Heather Davies (West 2016).

The playwright Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla (1607 – 1648) can be credited with creating the second Spanish theatrical adaptation of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona. Once more, the regular theatergoer of the seventeenth century was presented with a tragicomic version of the story, re-christened in this occasion *Los bandos de Verona* (*The Rival Houses of Verona*). González Cañal stresses that Rojas Zorrilla's theatrical trajectory is peculiar when compared to that of his contemporaries, precisely because his career lasts barely longer than a decade; beginning either in 1632 or 1633, and ending on 6 October 1644, the date when the theatres were officially closed to mourn the death of Queen Isabella of Bourbon (2015, 139). In spite of enjoying a short-lived career on stage, the Toledan author proved to be both a prolific and a highly successful writer. Even though the total number of works that he composed remains uncertain to this day, the critics assign to the dramatist a corpus that includes, at least, 42 comedies, 5 *autos sacramentales* (a specific type of religious play), and 14 plays written in collaboration

⁴⁰ “El aforo sobrepasa normalmente los mil espectadores y puede superar los dos mil. [...] El público es socialmente diversificado, quizá algo más en España, por la mayor presencia de la nobleza, aunque la mayor proporción de los asistentes parece corresponder a una clase media de caballeros, eclesiásticos, estudiantes y cargos de las distintas administraciones.”

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with some of his contemporaries (González Cañal 2015a, 25–26). Unlike Lope de Vega, Rojas Zorrilla wrote mostly for the court. As a matter of fact, his first play, *Persiles y Segismunda*, premiered on 23 February 1633 at the Pardo Palace in the presence of the monarchs Philip IV and Isabella of Bourbon (Madroñal Durán 2015, 16). It is precisely his position as court dramatist what can be considered the principal factor that explains his fortunate theatrical career.

According to Pardo Molina and González Cañal, *Los bandos de Verona* was probably written either towards the end of 1639, or in the earliest days of the month of January 1640 (212, 171). The period ranging from 1630 to 1640 is described by the scholar Gutiérrez Gil as the “golden decade” of Spanish theatre (2015, 52). Indeed, the circumstances that prompted the appearance of this new adaptation of the story of Romeo and Giulietta were far from ordinary, and were instead rather spectacular, possibly influenced by this golden period that the Spanish stage was experiencing at the time. As Friedman observes, “Rojas Zorrilla was a favourite of King Felipe IV, who commissioned him to write a play for the opening of the coliseum theater in the Buen Retiro palace in Madrid” (1989, 88–89). Nonetheless, not only was Rojas Zorrilla favoured by King Philip IV, but he was also a favourite with his spouse, Queen Isabella of Bourbon (Madroñal Durán 2015, 17). As a consequence of the advantageous position held at court, it does not come as a surprise that a play composed by Rojas Zorrilla was the one chosen by the Habsburg monarchs for the inauguration of such a magnificent building. *Los bandos de Verona* premiered on 4 February 1640 at the coliseum theatre of the Buen Retiro palace, performed by the theatre company named Bartolomé Romero (Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 171). The premiere of *Los bandos de Verona* at the newly-opened coliseum consolidated Rojas Zorrilla’s favourable position at court, eventually surpassing Calderón’s fame amongst royalty (González Cañal 2015b, 141).

It is hard to imagine a more suitable event than the inauguration of the coliseum theatre of the Buen Retiro palace for the opening of *Los bandos de Verona*. The event itself was indeed idyllic for any playwright interested in attracting a large and varied audience at a first performance since, as Doménech Rico explains, “the inauguration was not a private party for the court, but instead the new theatre was opened to the public of

Madrid” (2000, 152).⁴¹ The fact that since its opening in 1640 the general public, and not only the sovereigns and their court, were granted access to the performances held at the coliseum strengthened the competition between the already popular courtyard playhouses and royal locations as sites for performance; the latter had increasingly gained more importance since 1632 and 1633 (Varey and Shergold 1971, 42).

As González Cañal observes, Rojas Zorrilla was involved in the process of publication of the first and second volumes of his plays, the first of which was published in Madrid in 1640 (2015, 27). Nevertheless, the text of *Los bandos de Verona* first saw the light five years later, once again in the city of Madrid, coinciding with the publication of the *Segunda parte de las comedias de don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* [Plays by Mr. Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla. Second Part], a copy of which is held at the Spanish National Library in Madrid. The tragicomedy occupies the second position amongst the long list of titles included in the aforementioned volume.⁴² In the prologue to the second edition of his complete works, Rojas Zorrilla promised his readers the publication of a third volume; however, that event never occurred.

Even though there are no surviving documents recording performances of Lope de Vega’s *Castelvines y Monteses*, a specialist reader interested in approaching Rojas Zorrilla’s text may wonder if the latter ever knew about the existence of Lope’s play and, if this was the case, whether it may have influenced this new rewriting of the story of the lovers of Verona. It is known that Rojas Zorrilla admired, and may have also been a friend of, Lope de Vega (Madroñal Durán 2015, 16). Furthermore, scholars such as Palacios Fernández even describe Rojas Zorrilla as “the famous Toledan dramaturg from the School of Lope” (2000, 350).⁴³ Nonetheless, the few scholars who have taken an interest in the text do not consider *Castelvines y Monteses* as the major influence. For instance, Doménech Rico, highlights the following significant information:

⁴¹ “La inauguración no fue una fiesta privada de la Corte, sino que se abrió el nuevo teatro al público de Madrid.”

⁴² The other plays included in the vast collection are the following: *Lo que son mujeres*, *Entre bobos anda el juego*, *Sin honra no hay amistad*, *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, *Abrir el ojo*, *Los trabajos de Tobías*, *Los encantos de Medea*, *Los tres blasones de España*, *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, *Lo que quería ver el marqués de Villena*, and *El más impropio verdugo por la justa venganza* (Rojas Zorrilla 1645).

⁴³ “El famoso dramaturgo toledano de la Escuela de Lope.”

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Occasionally, it has been assumed that *Los bandos de Verona* derives from *Castelvines y Monteses*. It cannot be denied that there are certain influences [...] but it is improbable that this is its direct source. The fact that the names of the families, Capeletes y Montescos, are taken from the translation [published in] Valladolid, indicates that Rojas was directly following Bandello's novella (2000, 157).⁴⁴

The Valladolid translation refers to the previously mentioned text *Historia de Romeo y Julieta* (Millis Godínez 1603), first published in 1589. Both Pardo Molina and González Cañal share a similar view with regards to the works that influenced Rojas Zorrilla: “the source of the story is Bandello, although it also has an antecedent, Lope's comedy *Castelvines y Monteses*, which, even if it was published late in 1647, it may have been known to Rojas through a performance” (2012, 173).⁴⁵ Indeed, there are certain similarities between both plays. For instance, Rojas Zorrilla choice of the name Antonio (Julia's father) might not have been purely coincidental, and it might indicate that the dramatist had attended a performance of *Castelvines y Monteses*.

Let us now take a closer look at the text of *Los bandos de Verona* (Rojas Zorrilla 1645). In this new rewriting the lovers are called Alejandro Romeo and – perhaps following Lope's example – Julia, but her surname has been changed to Capelete. The rival families instigating violence and a long-lasting enmity in the city of Verona are the Capeletes and the Montescos, surnames which are much closer, in terms of spelling and pronunciation, to Bandello's Cappelletti and Montecchi than to Lope de Vega's Castelvines and Monteses. *Capeletes y Montescos* will become a common alternative title for Rojas Zorrilla's play throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, both on stage and in print. This change in the title serves to draw attention to the existing enmity between the factions. It is worth mentioning the variation incorporated by Rojas Zorrilla with regards to the surname Montesco, as the surname that is used in the text to refer to

⁴⁴ “En ocasiones, se ha supuesto que *Los bandos de Verona* deriva de *Castelvines y Monteses*. No cabe negar alguna influencia [...] pero es improbable que ésta sea su fuente directa. El hecho de tomar el nombre de las familias, Capeletes y Montescos, de la traducción de Valladolid, indica que Rojas estaba siguiendo directamente la novela de Bandello.”

⁴⁵ “La fuente de la historia es Bandello, aunque cuenta también con el antecedente de Lope, la comedia *Castelvines y Monteses*, que, si bien fue impresa tardíamente en 1647, pudo ser conocida por Rojas a través de alguna representación.”

the members of this faction is Romeo rather than Montesco. The other two characters that besides Alejandro Romeo share this trait are: Carlos Romeo (his loyal friend) and Elena Romeo (his sister).

In this three-act tragicomedy Rojas Zorrilla departed from the original source text (Bandello's 1554 novella) even further than Lope had done. The play opens at the Capelete palace. The spectator encounters Julia conversing with her confidante Elena Romeo about her ill fate. Julia laments the impossibility to marry Alejandro Romeo, owing to the feud that arose four years ago between the Capeletes and the Montescos. The unfortunate rivalry originated when Otavio Romeo (Alejandro's and Elena's father) killed Luis Capelete (Julia's brother). This is the first time in the Spanish reception of the story of the lovers of Verona that the lovers, not only know each other already, but are also in love, immersed in deep suffering because of the existing enmity. Moreover, Julia is not the only female affected by the feud. Rojas Zorrilla further complicates the plot introducing the character of Elena Romeo. The lady is both Alejandro's sister, and the wife of Conde Paris (Count Paris). Whereas Julia cannot marry the man that she loves, Elena is repudiated by her own husband. The count is a member of the Capelete faction, who no longer loves his wife because he accuses Elena of having been born a Montesco; thus, he desires Julia instead. Furthermore, Julia has a third suitor: her cousin Andrés Capelete. The conflict erupts in act one when the count expresses his wish to marry Julia, a proposal that Antonio Capelete (her father) willingly approves of. This leads to a fight between Montescos and Capeletes that prompts Julia to openly confess her true feelings for Alejandro. In spite of the violence, no lives are lost. The act ends with Julia begging Alejandro to save her father from being killed by Carlos Romeo, while Elena pleads with her brother for her husband's life.

In the second act, Antonio Capelete provokes his daughter making her choose between marrying a Capelete – either the count or her cousin Andrés – and death; she chooses the latter and drinks what they believed to be poison. Nonetheless, she had merely ingested a sleep-inducing drink that Andrés had prepared earlier. Julia is buried by her father, who simply intended to test her feelings. The lady will later reawaken in the presence of Alejandro and his servant Guardainfante (the *gracioso* or comic figure) at a churchyard during a scene which, as it happened in *Castelvines y Monteses*, offers comic relief. The second act ends in a state of confusion. All characters coincide at the cemetery.

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Alejandro's intention was to be by Julia's side when she woke up. Nonetheless, he wrongly leaves the place with his sister attached to his cloak, whereas Julia exits the churchyard holding onto Andrés's cloak, but believing it to be Alejandro's. The third act takes place first in the mountains outside Verona, and lastly at the tower in front of the Capeletes's castle. Julia escapes from Andrés's attempt at raping her, but she is captured by her family, together with Elena. Believing Julia to be dead, Alejandro resolves to avenge her death by killing all members of the Capelete faction. Nevertheless, Julia eventually reappears at the top of the tower, and convinces him to forgive her kin. In addition, Antonio agrees to their marriage and Count Paris accepts Elena. Once more, the audience gets their desired "happily-ever-after ending".

Los bandos de Verona is often described as a tragicomedy. One of the few scholars who has explored the text in depth, Doménech Rico (2000), opted for a more vague term, that of "serious comedy", which sounds less convincing to define the genre of the play. Gutiérrez Gil (2015) prefers to describe it as an example of a *comedia palatina* (court comedy), a term which seems adequate, together with the notion of tragicomedy, to define Rojas Zorrilla's play. Gutiérrez Gil defines the *comedia palatina* as follows: "a series of plays whose action takes place in territories and/or times distant from the spectator's contemporaneity, which depicts characters belonging to the higher social classes interwoven with those from a lower social status" (2015, 51).⁴⁶ In fact, the exact time when the action of *Los bandos de Verona* takes place is uncertain, but the spectator gets the impression that it does not refer to the present. This becomes apparent when Guardainfante (the *gracioso*) exclaims that he has accidentally come across the tomb of the Lord of Verona during his night visit to the churchyard in act III. His knowledge of the figure of the former ruler can be interpreted as a sign that the story might be set during the Renaissance period.

Similarly to Lope de Vega's Julia Castelví, this new version of Bandello's Giulietta also acquires significant prominence throughout the play. Even though the first time that the spectator encounters Julia Capelete onstage, she is depicted crying in despair due to her present misfortunes, she soon proves to be a clear example of a valiant and powerful woman that has little in common with Bandello's Giulietta. According to Pardo

⁴⁶ "Una serie de comedias cuya acción se situaba en territorios y/o tiempos alejados de la contemporaneidad del espectador y a través de personajes de las más altas clases sociales entremezclados con otros de un estatus inferior."

Molina and González Cañal (the latest editors of the text), “Julia stands out for her strong character and her determination. She is capable of defending her love and of confronting her father, breaking with the social norms and the behavioural code typical of the ladies of the period” (212, 198).⁴⁷

Julia’s daring nature is displayed from the opening scene, when she shows little regard for the notion of decorum. Through Julia’s narration of the circumstances that led her to fall in love with Alejandro, we learn that he was the first to initiate the period of courtship, paying recurrent visits to her balcony. Therefore, it could be said that the young couple enjoyed several “balcony moments” before Alejandro was eventually admitted into Julia’s room and, to be more precise, her bed. Having sexual intercourse before marriage is a new element incorporated into the plot of the play, as in *Bandello* the protagonists solely consummate their love after being lawfully joined in matrimony.

As in *Castelvines y Monteses*, there are no motherly figures in this play. Nonetheless, this may not only be the result of a possible influence of Lope de Vega’s text, as the absence of a mother is a common feature in Rojas Zorrilla’s dramatic universe. As a matter of fact, as Julio observes, “there is a brutal superiority of a fatherly presence over a maternal one: as opposed to the nine comedies without a father, we find twenty without a mother” (2015, 118).⁴⁸ Julia’s strong resistance to paternal authority becomes evident from the initial conversation that she holds with her friend Elena. Julia ends her long lamentation stating that there are no solutions to her problems, but makes clear that obeying her father is not an option that will satisfy her interests:

JULIA

To forget him [Alejandro Romeo] is not possible,
to marry another is violence,
to obey my father

⁴⁷ “Julia, destaca por su carácter fuerte y su personalidad decidida. Es capaz de defender su amor y de enfrentarse a su padre, rompiendo con las normas sociales y el código de comportamiento habitual en las damas de la época.”

⁴⁸ “Observamos una superioridad abrumadora de la presencia paterna sobre la materna: frente a las 9 comedias sin padre encontramos 20 sin madre.”

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is not to obey my star.

(I. II. 355 – 358)⁴⁹

It is worth noting that the reference to the stars constitutes the first example in the Spanish reception of the Italian tale in which the protagonists are deliberately associated with the image of the star-crossed lovers, an idea which had been introduced by da Porto in his “*Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti*” (1524). The influence that the stars had in the fate of mortals was also a common theme present in Spanish Golden Age drama. Returning to the aforementioned speech, it is apparent that the female protagonist shows signs from the beginning of her desire to act according to her own free will. This is a common characteristic shared by the heroines of most of Rojas Zorrilla’s plays. Scholars such as Julio (2015) have gone one step further, as she remarks that one ought not to be misled into assuming that the author himself might have advocated the defence of the ideals that his female characters embody:

“Being owners of their free will” is one of the features that the ladies of Rojas’ comedies have. All of these ladies claim their right to love whom they desire and to start an amorous relationship, as men do; hence, their protest against arranged marriages [...] They are women that incarnate those ideals that today we would call emancipation, liberty, equality, and even thirst for vengeance. That is to say, they rebel against the corseted system in which they belong, but those ideals are not defended by Rojas, but rather by his protagonists (111).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The quotations from *Los bandos de Verona* are taken from the latest available text of the play, edited by Pardo Molina and González Cañal (Rojas Zorrilla 2012). JULIA. Olvidarle no es posible, / casar con otro es violencia, / obedecer a mi padre / no es obedecer mi estrella.

⁵⁰ “Ser dueñas de su albedrío es uno de los rasgos de las damas de las comedias de Rojas. Todas estas damas reclaman su derecho a amar a quienes desean y a iniciar una relación amorosa, tal como hacen los varones, de ahí su protesta ante los matrimonios concertados [...] Son mujeres que encarnan esos ideales de lo que hoy llamaríamos emancipación, libertad, igualdad, e incluso sed de venganza; esto es, se rebelan contra el encorsetado sistema en el que se encuentran, pero esos ideales no los defiende Rojas, sino sus protagonistas.”

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The conflictive relationship between father and daughter is a decisive element in the play since act I. The apple of discord revolves, as expected, around the question of marriage. The fight to marry the husband of one's choice is inherent in the nature of most of Rojas Zorrilla's female protagonists. Nevertheless, in "Para acabar con el feminismo de Rojas. Una visión crítica a la crítica" ["An End to Rojas's Feminism. A Critical Revision of Criticism"], Julio asserts that most of Rojas's heroines, despite showing some reluctance at first, end up obeying their parents' decision and "perhaps the only woman who is capable of disobeying and openly defying her progenitor in the issue of marriage is Julia in *Los bandos de Verona*" (2008a, 318).⁵¹ The recurrent friction that exists between Julia and her father is recurrent throughout the play, and it serves to reinforce her strong character and determination to act according to how she deems suitable. This becomes doubly relevant in the crucial scene depicted in the middle of the second act when Julia takes her own life, pressured by her father's desire to marry a man whom she cannot love. In the absence of a mother, her defiance to the prevailing patriarchal ideology of her time acquires more relevance. Since the start of their long and heated discussion, Julia recurrently refutes and denies the validity of her father's arguments and makes clear that he has no say regarding whom she ought to marry:

JULIA

The decision falls on me,

on you no more than the advice.

Fair it is that you try to marry me,

I am your daughter, you love me.

Persuade me, lord;

but to exert violence is wrong.

(II. II. 1.355 – 1.360)⁵²

⁵¹ "Tal vez la única mujer que es capaz de desobedecer y desafiar abiertamente a su progenitor en la cuestión marital es Julia en *Los bandos de Verona*."

⁵² JULIA. A mí toca la elección, / a ti no más del consejo. / Justo es que casarme intentes, / soy tu hija, tiénesme amor. / Persuádeme, señor; / mas no es bien que me violentes.

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Nevertheless, her anger reaches its climax when she openly proclaims her utmost wish to follow her heart's desire and to execute her own independent will:

JULIA

Thus, how am I to blame
for the influence of a star?

ANTONIO

My honour before a star.

JULIA

Remedy there is in danger:

I am mine.

ANTONIO

Well said,
but your honour is only mine.

JULIA

Free will to love
the benign sky has given me.

ANTONIO

And to kill you
it has also given me free will.

(II. II. 1.533 – 1.542)⁵³

⁵³ JULIA. Pues ¿qué culpa tengo yo / de lo que un astro ha influido? ANTONIO. Mi honra es antes que una estrella. JULIA. Remedio hay en el peligro: / yo soy mía. ANTONIO. Dices bien, / pero tu honor solo es mío. JULIA. Albedrío para amar / me ha dado el cielo benigno. ANTONIO. Y para darte la muerte / también me ha dado albedrío.

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Incapable of reasoning with her own father, she eventually chooses to drink the poison that Antonio presents her with; characters are surprised when it later turns out to be a harmless soporific. Julia's apparently final words are a mixture of negative nouns that reflect her destructive feelings, and the anguish she is experiencing during what she believes are her last minutes on Earth. She finally appears to portray herself as a martyr to the cause of freedom of love:

JULIA

... Venom, dagger, steel,
vengeance, strength, crime,
pain, cruelty, anger, betrayal,
heart, death, martyrdom.

She falls onto the floor.

(II. II. 1.603 – 1.606)⁵⁴

Another remarkable feature present from the beginning of the play is Julia's fiery nature. This is first noticed through her strong opposition to her other two suitors (the count and her cousin Andrés), owing to the threat that they pose to the possibility of establishing a blissful union with her beloved Alejandro Romeo. *Los bandos de Verona* reinforces from the very beginning the feud, highlighting how it affects the relationship amongst different characters in the play, including the close friendship that exists between Julia and Elena. Hence, when the fight erupts between members of both factions towards the end of act one, Julia shows neither compassion nor kindness. For instance, when Elena implores Alejandro not to kill her husband, Julia's blunt response is no other than: "kill him, / as he is my enemy!" (I. II. 1.018 – 1.019).⁵⁵ An inner fire erupts inside Julia in situations in which tension reaches dramatic and worrying levels. The thirst for vengeance, together with the desire to execute violence against ones' enemies, are

⁵⁴ JULIA. ...veneno, puñal, acero, / venganza, fuerza, delito, / dolor, crueldad, rabia, engaño, / corazón, muerte, martirio. *Cae en el suelo.*

⁵⁵ JULIA. ¡Dale muerte, / que es mi enemigo!

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innovative elements that add a new unexpected dimension to the character of Juliet, completely detaching her from any possible associations with an image of a docile and calm woman.

A new episode introduced by Rojas, which reinforces Julia's valiant character, is her escape from her cousin's attempt at raping her. The first time that Julia refers to her cousin, she explicitly calls him an "enemy", an adjective whose meaning becomes fully understood in act III. Possibly intending to assuage the unpleasant feelings that may have aroused in the audience if a rape scene had been depicted onstage, Rojas chooses to narrate rather than to show the event. The comic character of Guardainfante is employed with the sole purpose to tone down the gravity of the situation. It is when Andrés is incapable of persuading Julia with words, when he attempts to force her violently. Andrés does not hide his intentions, and even alludes to Tarquin to warn her that he will make her suffer Lucrece's fate:

GUARDAINFANTE

Violence did Andrés want,
said she: "Andrés, stop yourself",
and he replied: "the Tarquins
are a joke where there are Andreses";
but I, who from the cart
can see her resisting strongly
and him, though he knows how to force her,
she knows how to defend herself.

(III. II. 2.231 – 2.238)⁵⁶

⁵⁶GUARDAINFANTE. Violencia quiso Andresillo, / dijo ella: "Andresillo, tente", / y él respondió: "Los Tarquinos / son chanza donde hay Andreses"; / pero yo, que desde el coche / la veo resistirse fuerte / y que, aunque él sabe obligarla, / ella sabe defenderse.

What eventually saves Julia from being sexually assaulted are the noises made by the approaching presence of Antonio Capelete and the count, which force Andrés to flee the scene. Therefore, Julia proves time after time her mental and her physical strength, which become an inherent component of her ability to fight adversity. The possible influence of *Castelvines y Monteses* might explain why the seventeenth-century spectator is presented once more with a play in which more attention is devoted to the character of Julia. Her focal position is evinced from the start of the play, as Julia is at the centre of several conflicting interests. The only daughter of the Capelete faction becomes the object of desire of four men: Alejandro Romeo, whom she regards as her husband; her tyrannical father, who would rather kill her than see her married to a Montesco; her cousin Andrés, who attempts to rape her because that is the only means whereby he can possess her, and Conde Paris, who cannot stop loving her in spite of knowing that she has given her heart to Alejandro. Thus, she is undoubtedly the true protagonist of *Los bandos de Verona*. In the end, this new version of Giulietta is also the one who allows the play to have its desired happy ending, as it is Julia who assuages Alejandro's thirst for vengeance. Antonio's final acceptance of the marriage between his daughter and Alejandro Romeo leads, after a four-year conflict, to the peaceful reconciliation between the Capeletes and the Montescos.

Since its first publication in 1645, *Los bandos de Verona* has attracted little attention amongst scholars interested in the study of Spanish Golden Age drama. The first analysis of the play was conducted by Friedman (1989) in the article mentioned earlier in this chapter, which compares Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* with Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona*". Friedman lamented the happy ending that Rojas gave to his play. The second in-depth study that exists is Doménech Rico's chapter (2000) "*Los bandos de Verona, comedia áulica*" ["*Los bandos de Verona, Golden Age Comedy*"]. What can be regarded as Doménech Rico's most significant contribution is his assumption that the main purpose of the play was to "exalt the glory of the Hispanic monarchy [within the] context of the Philippine propaganda in which it is inscribed" (2000, 167).⁵⁷ Doménech Rico offers an insightful interpretation, in which he identifies the Capeletes with the French monarchy, and the Montescos with the Spanish monarchy. In fact, these two royal houses were related through marital liaisons at the time *Los Bandos de Verona* was first staged. According to this analysis, Alejandro Romeo and

⁵⁷ "Exaltar la gloria de la monarquía hispánica [dentro del] contexto de propaganda filipina en que se inscribía."

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Julia Capelete are meant to represent King Philip IV and his spouse Queen Isabella of Bourbon. It is worth remembering that Rojas Zorrilla was a particular favourite of the Queen, which strengthens the feasible possibility that the dramatist might have indeed intended Julia, the true protagonist of his play, to indirectly personify the monarch. Queen Isabella and King Philip IV were present during the premiere at the Buen Retiro Palace, and might have detected similarities between their real lives and the fictional events depicted onstage:

If Philip the Great, the Hispanic Jupiter, is the model for Alejandro Romeo Montesco, Julia can be no other than Queen Isabella of Bourbon. This concurs with one of Rojas's strange innovations: the symmetrical relation Alejandro / Julia and Paris / Elena. That two rival families were joined in matrimony is strange in itself. But this was the real situation between the royal houses of France and Spain: Louis XIII, King of France, was married to Anne of Austria, sister of Philip IV, whose wife was Isabella of Bourbon, Louis's sister. Elena's dangerous situation within the Capelete household could not have seemed unfamiliar to the characters of the Spanish court, who knew Anne of Austria's position inside the Parisian court; she was a permanent enemy of Cardinal Richelieu, always conspiring in favour of Spain (Doménech Rico 2000, 163).⁵⁸

González Cañal (2009) published a chapter on the reception of the play in print and on the stage titled "La fortuna editorial y escénica de *Los bandos de Verona* de Rojas Zorrilla" ["The Fortune of Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* in Print and on the Stage"]. The latest analysis of the tragicomedy can be found in the prologue to the edition

⁵⁸ "Si Felipe el Grande, el Júpiter Hispano, es modelo de Alejandro Romeo Montesco, Julia no puede ser otra que la reina Isabel de Borbón. Lo cual concuerda con otra de las extrañas innovaciones de Rojas: la relación simétrica Alejandro / Julia y Paris / Elena. Que dos familias enemigas estén unidas por un matrimonio es extraña por demás. Pero era la situación real entre las casas reales de Francia y España: Luis XIII, rey de Francia, estaba casado con Ana de Austria, hermana de Felipe IV, quien, a su vez, tenía por esposa a Isabel de Borbón, hermana de Luis. La situación de peligro de Elena en casa de los Capeletes no debía de sonarles muy extraña a los personajes de la corte española, que conocían la posición de Ana de Austria en la corte de París, enemistada permanentemente con el Cardenal Richelieu y conspirando a favor de España."

of *Los bandos de Verona*, edited by González Cañal and Pardo Molina (2012). Despite the scarce amount of scholarly works published on *Los bandos de Verona*, the text enjoyed a considerably successful afterlife in print. As González Cañal and Pardo Molina explain, “the work had a certain degree of dissemination and editorial fortune, as there are four printed testimonies dated from the seventeenth century, six printed editions and three manuscripts from the eighteenth century, two editions from the nineteenth century, and one more edition in the twentieth” (2012, 193 – 194).⁵⁹ During the research stay that I conducted at the Spanish National Library I was fortunate to have access to eight of the aforementioned texts, which I carefully examined and compared in order to assess whether the original text, first published in 1645, had undergone any significant alternations throughout the successive versions that appeared.

According to González Cañal and Pardo Molina, beside the 1645 text, three other editions of the play reached the public in the last quarter of the seventeenth century: the first in 1646 in the 41st part of *Comedias de diferentes autores* [Plays by Different Authors], the second in 1679 in the 45th part of *Comedias nuevas, escogidas de los mejores ingenios de España* [New Plays, Selected from the Best Wits in Spain], and the last in 1680 in a new edition of *Segunda parte de las comedias de don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* [Plays by Mr. Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla. Second Part] (2012, 200). In these aforementioned editions, the play retains its original title, *Los bandos de Verona*, unlike some of the eighteenth-century versions of the text which add the subtitle *Montescos y Capeletes*. I was unable to find copies of the volumes published in 1646 and in 1680. Nonetheless, the fact that the latter bears the same title as the 1645 edition suggests that this is probably a reprint containing the same or a very similar text. Indeed, Pardo Molina and González Cañal assume that both the 1646 edition and the 1680 edition directly derive from the one published in 1645 (2012, 203). This assumption acquires more strength after a comparison between the 1645 and the 1679 editions of the play revealed that there are hardly any significant changes made to the original (Rojas Zorrilla 1645; Rojas Zorrilla 1679). It is only worth mentioning that in the initial conversation between Julia and Elena, several lines are omitted, probably because of their sensual tone, best exemplified in the words that Elena resorts to in order to describe her ardent desire for her husband.

⁵⁹ “La obra tuvo cierta difusión y fortuna editorial, ya que contamos con cuatro testimonios impresos del siglo XVII, seis impresos y tres manuscritos del XVIII, dos ediciones del XIX y una edición más en el XX.”

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The three manuscripts dated from the eighteenth century – the exact date is unknown, – are kept in the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid. González Cañal (2009, 345) provides the ending included in these three versions, and affirms that it strongly differs from the one that Rojas invented. Nonetheless, although the characters speak different lines, they also reproduce and merely enhance the bliss that emerges during the final reconciliation of the two households. What is interesting, as González Cañal highlights, is that in the first manuscript it is Julia, rather than Alejandro Romeo, who closes the play (2009, 347). In Rojas Zorrilla's version the play ends as follows:

ALEJANDRO

Thus a merry ending shall have

Capeletes and Montescos.

And Mr. Francisco de Rojas

to this grand Coliseum

for an ovation he asks, and that always

he shall deserve its applause.

(III. II. 3.115 – 3.120)⁶⁰

Nevertheless, in the eighteenth-century manuscript, the last words assigned to Alejandro are changed and crossed out. Instead, a new speech that bears a strong resemblance to the one quoted above replaces Alejandro's lines:

JULIA

Sweet peace in so much risk!

Who could turn into an owl!

And thus a merry ending shall have

⁶⁰ ALEJANDRO. Pues tengan dichoso fin / *Capeletes y Montescos.* / Y don Francisco de Rojas / a tan grande Coliseo / pide el vitor, por que siempre / merezca el aplauso vuestro.

Montescos and Caperuzas.

(González Cañal 2009, 347)⁶¹

In the final speech the adaptor added a humorous note by referring to the Capeletes as *Caperuzas*, which literally means hood, and which rhymes with the Spanish term for owl (*lechuza*). These manuscripts were used as promptbooks by some of the acting companies who took the play to the stage. The act of making Julia speak the last lines can be taken as evidence of the fact that the female lead was considered the actual protagonist in the eighteenth century. The other six versions of the text of *Los bandos de Verona* that saw the light in this century appeared in a format commonly known in Spanish theatrical jargon as *sueeltas*. It is difficult to find a definition for this particular type of editions. Mcknight's description is useful due to its simplicity: "the term *comedia suelta* [...] designates a play issued as a separate unit rather than in volumes or *partes*" (1965, VI). Therefore, these editions deviate from the common practice that existed throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whereby plays were edited in volumes consisting of collection of plays written either by a single author or by different dramatists. Pardo Molina and González Cañal (2012, 201 – 202) refer to each of the editions of Rojas Zorrilla's play as S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 and S6. With the exception of S1, titled *Montescos y Capeletes*, the remaining editions bear the title *Los bandos de Verona, Montescos y Capeletes*.

Following Pardo Molina and González Cañal, S1 (a folio edition) appears to derive from the text of *Los bandos de Verona* published in 1680 (2012, 201).⁶² S2 was printed in Salamanca, and according to the database of the Spanish National Library, possibly between 1741 and 1779 (Rojas Zorrilla, n.d.). It offers in thirty-two pages a shorter version of the play, with more than 500 lines from the 1645 text cut. Apart from the differences in length, there are also notable changes made to the plot, some of which reflect an influence of the ideas embodied in Neoclassicism. First, there is a clear interest in respecting the notion of decorum, exemplified in the deletion of references to sexual desire or love making. For instance, the "rape scene" is almost deleted, leaving no room

⁶¹JULIA. ¡Dulce paz en tanto riesgo! / ¡Quién se volviera lechuza! / Y tenga dichoso fin / Montescos y Caperuzas.

⁶² There are no copies of this *suelta* edition at the Spanish National Library.

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for the interpretation of Andrés's actions as an attempt at sexual assault. Secondly, the adaptor shows a higher concern with portraying a Christian-like attitude. This possibly explains why allusions to the stars, together with all references to their status as deities are omitted. Moreover, the Christian notion of forgiving those who wrong us is the message foregrounded at the end of the play. These two major changes mostly affect the characterisation of Julia, and particularly her relationship with her father. Her defiance of and resistance to paternal authority is considerably reduced, and some of her most powerful lines, such as the blunt "I am mine", are cut in order to offer a more morally appropriate version of female behaviour and filial obedience.

According to the catalogue of the Spanish National Library, S3 was printed in Seville between 1741 and 1779 (Rojas Zorrilla, n.d.). The text is almost identical to S2, as it retains all of the variations incorporated in the former. In fact, there are only three slight changes that differentiate both versions. Firstly, Alejandro is newly baptized as Alejandro Romero, instead of Romeo; the addition of an "r" might have been due to a typing mistake. Secondly, but in line with S2 and its rejection of the idea that stars govern our destiny, there is a variation, almost imperceptible, in a speech given by Julia in act one, when she utters "to obey my father, / is not to obey my star" ("obedecer a mi padre, / no es obedecer mi estrella"). In S3 capital letters are added to the words "Father" and "Star", and the particle "not" is moved purposefully after the verb to remark that, in following her father's wishes, Julia chooses *not* to follow her star ("obedecer a mi Padre, / es no obedecer mi Estrella"). Lastly, in a verbal attack directed at the Capeletes at the end of the play, in which Guardainfante calls them "cowards", the word *maricas* – pejorative term used to refer to an effeminate man or one without courage – is changed to *gallinas* (chickens).

S4 was also printed in Seville – the date is unknown. As in the case of S3, it also contains twenty-eight pages. According to Pardo Molina and González Cañal, this *suelta* edition derives from S2 (2012, 203).⁶³ The title page of S5, a folio edition containing sixteen sheets, indicates that it was published in Madrid in 1745 (Rojas Zorrilla 1745). A comparison with the previous texts reveals that it is exactly the same as S2. Finally, S6 was printed in Valencia in 1780 (Rojas Zorrilla 1780). Pardo Molina and González Cañal

⁶³ There are no copies of this text at the Spanish National Library.

(2012, 203) suggest it derives from S3; nonetheless, I would disagree and affirm instead that it also derives from S2 (as S4 and S5). Not only does S6 contain the same number of pages as S2 (thirty-two), but also does not incorporate the only three variations mentioned above that distinguish S3 from S2. The considerable differences found between the *suelta* editions (excluding S1) and the 1645 text explain why Pardo Molina and González Cañal conclude that they might derive from a lost source, possibly a copy owned by a theatre company (2012, 203).

The first nineteenth-century edition of *Los bandos de Verona* was the previously mentioned volume published in 1839 in Leipzig and Paris by Count Hohenthal-Stetteln y Deuben, which also included, as it has been discussed, *Castelvines y Monteses* (Rojas Zorrilla and Vega 1839). The title adds in parenthesis the year 1679, which indicates that the Count seemed to have wrongly assumed that this was the year when the text was first published. This mistake also explains why Pardo Molina and González Cañal (2012, 203) suggest that this new edition derives from the 1679 text, and it does seem to be the case. The 1839 text, as the 1679 play, bears little changes with regards to the 1645 text, the most notable one is also found in the initial exchange between Julia and Elena, where the lines that reflect the ardent passion that the ladies feel for their respective lovers have been cut. In spite of the fact that this new edition made *Los bandos de Verona* available to the German public, the works of Rojas Zorrilla did not obtain much success in German theatres. As Tietz affirms, “Rojas found in Germany a series of high-quality propagandists. Nonetheless, in spite of their efforts, these propagandists were never able to remove his works from the shadows that his friend and collaborator Pedro Calderón was casting over his work from the same Golden Age” (2008, 133).⁶⁴ In 1861 the Spanish writer and journalist, Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, included *Los bandos de Verona* in his *Comedias escogidas de don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* [Selected Plays by Mr. Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla] (Rojas Zorrilla 1861). It constitutes an exact reproduction of the first edition of the play (Rojas Zorrilla 1645).

The last edition of *Los bandos de Verona* published in the nineteenth century stands out for being the first English translation of the text. It was published in 1874 by

⁶⁴ “Rojas encontró en una Alemania una serie de propagandistas de alta categoría. Sin embargo, a pesar de sus esfuerzos estos mismos propagandistas no lograron nunca sacar sus obras de la sombra que su amigo y colaborador Pedro Calderón está proyectando sobre su obra desde el mismo Siglo de Oro.”

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Frederick William Cosens, who had already taken an interest in the Golden Age versions of the story of the lovers of Verona in 1869, when he embarked on the task of translating *Castelvines y Monteses*. Cosens preferred to use the title that had prevailed in the previous century, that is to say, *Los bandos de Verona. Montescos y Capeletes*. The translated play was once again published in London at the Chiswick Press, for private distribution only. The Spanish National Library holds a copy dedicated to Pascual de Gayangos y Arce, an eminent arabist, historian, bibliophile and bibliographer (Rojas Zorrilla 1874). Cosens made clear in his introduction (dated September 1874) that he was not particularly fond of this play. He not only considered it “inferior in every way to the *Castelvines y Monteses* of Lope de Vega”, but also thought it was “certainly [...] not one of [Rojas Zorrilla’s] best productions” (1874, viii). Following the example initiated with his translation of *Castelvines y Monteses*, Cosens admits that he is once again motivated solely by his interest in establishing a connection between *Los bandos de Verona* and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*:

I have only translated at length such portions of this play as bear some reference to Shakespeare’s tragedy, connecting the scenes so as to render the whole work intelligible to those who feel an interest in every scrap that in the slightest degree can claim to be illustrative of the great dramatist’s work (1874, viii).

Cosens mentions in his introduction that *Los bandos de Verona* had been printed in the second volume of Rojas Zorrilla’s collected works in 1680; he seemed unaware that this is its second edition, and later in 1861 (1874, viii). Hence, it is logical to assume that he almost certainly took as a source text either of the two editions, or perhaps both, given their close similarities, as the latter derives from the former. Cosens takes considerable liberties in his abridged rendition of Rojas Zorrilla’s work. Thus, it ought to be considered an adaptation rather than a translation. There is an excessive amount of narrative passages incorporated in order to provide a summary, or a personal commentary on the writing and/or the actions that unfold. Examples include “here follows a somewhat tedious dissertation upon hatred and revenge, in which Elena and the Gracioso take part” (I. p.9), or “Count Paris delivering a somewhat tedious and elaborate speech” (I. p.10).

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As in his 1869 translation, Cosens modified the language so as to make it sound more “Shakespearean”. Furthermore, Alejandro and Julia are also more akin to Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet than to Rojas Zorrilla’s lovers. Julia’s personality is shaped in accordance with the Victorian ideal of womanhood, which particularly affects her relationship and her verbal exchanges with her progenitor. Even though Julia continues to give signs of her rebelliousness, she shows more respect for her father. For instance, the iconic line in which she utters that she is her own mistress (“I am mine”) is omitted and, instead, the following lines are added:

JULIA

My faithful and most honour’d lord.

I suffer for my crime of loving much;

So let my love prove expiated crime.

(II. p. 20)

Although Cosens was “inclined to think that English students of Shakespeare will scarcely value, as German commentators appear to do, this Spanish play” (1874, viii), he must be credited with being the first to introduce and make available *Los bandos de Verona* to English-speaking audiences. During the last two centuries, only two further editions of *Los bandos de Verona* have been published in Spanish. The first in 1953, edited by Herbert Koch (cited in Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 203), and the last in 2012, the thorough critical edition carried out by Pardo Molina and González Cañal.

The performance history of the second Spanish adaptation on the rival houses of Verona is also worth noting. During the seventeenth century, Rojas Zorrilla’s play was performed several times in different theatres across Spain. In some occasions with its original title (*Los bandos de Verona*), and in other instances under its alternative title (*Montescos y Capeletes*). Regarding its memorable first performance at the Coliseum of the Buen Retiro Palace on 4 February 1640, opinions differ as regards to how it may have been performed onstage. Critics such as Pedraza Jiménez (1998) or Pardo Molina and

González Cañal (2012) defend the thesis that, in spite of the new staging possibilities that the Coliseum afforded, it was possibly performed as if the production had taken place at an ordinary courtyard playhouse. On the contrary, Doménech Rico claims that the presence at court of the scenographer Cosme Lotti, together with the newly-opened courtly theatre, points in the direction that the company of Bartolomé Romero probably chose to represent it following the Italian style, and employing a more sophisticated staging (2000, 170).

A year after its premiere, *Los bandos de Verona* was performed in Toledo (Lobato 2008, 35–36; González Cañal 2009, 343–344; Madroñal Durán 2015, 18), and in 1644 in Valencia (González Cañal 2009, 344). During the last quarter of the century, Rojas Zorrilla's prestige at court remained intact. The data on the corpus of works by Rojas Zorrilla staged during this period is incomplete. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that attests that *Los bandos de Verona* consolidated its position on the late seventeenth-century stage (González Cañal 2015b, 142). Pedraza Jiménez provides information on seven performances of the play that took place in Madrid between 1679 and 1687 (2013, 175–176). Referring to these performances, González Cañal adds that they all took place either at the Coliseum of the Buen Retiro or at court (2009, 344). Pardo Molina and González Cañal, quoting Shergold and Varey (1979), mention an eighth performance in Madrid at the popular Corral de la Cruz, one of the city's major courtyard playhouses (2012, 196). It was also performed four times in the period ranging from 1686 to 1699 in the city of Valladolid (González Cañal 2009, 344; Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 196). Rojas Zorrilla did not lose his popularity with the arrival of the eighteenth century, as González Cañal observes:

Rojas becomes one of the preferred authors, together with Calderón and Moreto, and the three will be indispensable for the theatre programmes of the playhouses. Furthermore, Rojas was one of [Spain's] most imitated dramatic poets abroad, especially in France (2015, 144).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ “Rojas se convierte en autor de referencia junto con Calderón y Moreto, y los tres serán imprescindibles en las programaciones de los Coliseos. Además, fue Rojas uno de nuestros poetas dramáticos más imitados en el extranjero, principalmente en Francia”.

Throughout the century, the tragicomedy continued to be known either as *Los bandos de Verona* or as *Montescos y Capeletes*. The play appears thirty-five times in the detailed study conducted by Andioc and Coulon (2008) on the Madrid stage from 1708 until 1808, occupying the ninth position in a list of twenty-four works by Rojas that were taken to the stage during that period. According to Pardo Molina and González Cañal, “it appears that its fortune was larger during the first quarter of the century, and that later its frequency decreased on the Madrid stage” (2012, 196).⁶⁶ Apparently, its last performance in the capital took place on 27 August 1797 at the Teatro del Príncipe, produced by the company of Francisco Ramos. The title roles were played by Antonia Prado and Isidoro Máiquez (González Cañal 2009, 348); the latter constitutes one of the most renowned actors in the history of Spanish theatre. *Los bandos de Verona* also maintained its presence in provincial theatres. González Cañal (2009, 345) provides records of performance dates occurring in the following cities: Valladolid (1703, 1708), the Corral de la Olivera in Valencia (1716 – 1744), Barcelona (1718, 1744, 1718 – 1799)⁶⁷, and Seville (1775).

The situation changes drastically in the nineteenth century, as *Los bandos de Verona* almost disappears from the Spanish stage. In the extensive study carried out by Vallejo González (2008) on Rojas Zorrilla and his presence on the Madrid stage throughout the nineteenth century, there is not a single reference to *Los Bandos de Verona*. The situation hardly improves if we compare it to its fate in Barcelona. In her analysis of Rojas Zorrilla’s dramatic production in the theatres of Barcelona (1718 – 1900), Julio only mentions three performance of the play, all of which took place in 1814: 18 and 19 January, and 28 March (Julio 2008b, 52). A few years later, in 1839, there is documented evidence of a production of *Los bandos de Verona* in Valladolid (González Cañal 2009, 345). Thus, it seems that the presence of the play on the stage was significantly reduced, with apparently only four performances in total taking place, all of which in the earliest decades of the century. Rojas Zorrilla’s presence decreased on the twentieth century, as González Cañal affirms:

⁶⁶ “Parece que su fortuna es mayor en el primer cuarto del siglo y que luego desciende su frecuencia en las carteleras madrileñas”.

⁶⁷ González Cañal does not provide the exact date for the third performance in Barcelona, but indicates that it occurred between 1718 and 1799.

Rojas Zorrilla was quite a forgotten dramatist. In the first seventy-five years of the century only three titles were taken to the Spanish stage: *Del rey abajo, ninguno*, *Entre bobos anda el juego*, and *Donde hay agravios no hay celos* (2015b, 149).⁶⁸

Despite having enjoyed an enormous success onstage and in print during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, *Los bandos de Verona* followed the fate of countless of dramatic works, which have also been condemned to lose the privileged status that they once had. Therefore, the play gradually vanished from the stage and, almost, from the collective memory of an entire nation.

1.2 Tragedy Arises: Rozas's (or Rosas's) *Los amantes de Verona* (1666).

Los amantes de Verona (*The Lovers of Verona*) is the last seventeenth-century adaptation of the story of Romeo and Juliet, and the first which retains its original tragic ending. It was published in 1666 by an author who remains to this day almost a stranger to, not only the general public, but also experts on Golden Age drama. The state of almost complete anonymity in which the author has remained throughout time, even affects his surname, as it is still uncertain whether it should be spelled Rozas or Rosas. It is worth noting that Rozas is the surname that appears on the cover of *Los amantes de Verona* (Rozas 1666), and it is also the form with which the author is registered in the catalogue of the Spanish National Library.

Barrera y Leirado (1860) is the first scholar to provide a brief account on the mysterious author: “ROSAS (DON CRISTÓBAL DE). Dramatic poet from the seventeenth century; possibly from Seville, quoted by Luis Vélez de Guevara in his

⁶⁸“En el siglo XX Rojas Zorrilla fue un dramaturgo bastante olvidado. En los primeros 75 años de este siglo solo tres títulos suben a los escenarios españoles: *Del rey abajo, ninguno*, *Entre bobos anda el juego* y *Donde hay agravios no hay celos*.”

[novel] *The Limping Devil* (Madrid, 1641)".⁶⁹ After quoting a passage from the aforementioned novel, Barrera y Leirado asks himself: "could this don Cristobal be the don Cristóbal de Rozas (author of the play *Los amantes de Verona*, printed in the *Twenty-Fourth Part*), changed to z the s of his surname as a result of the Andalusian pronunciation?" (1860, 344).⁷⁰ The scholar also informs of the existence of two other dramatic works written by Rozas: *El desierto de San Juan* [Saint John's Desert], and *Lo que mienten los indicios* [How Deceitful Evidence Is] (1860, 346). Some years later, Lasso de la Vega y Argüelles (1871, 379) merely stressed that Barrera y Leirado's assumption that the Rozas brothers (Cristóbal and Diego) were born in Seville is plausible. No further bibliographic details on the life and literary work of Cristóbal de Rozas/Rosas have been given in the few scholarly references that exist from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁷¹

There only exists one printed edition of *Los amantes de Verona* dated 1666. This folio edition is included in the volume *Parte veinte y cuatro de comedias nuevas y escogidas de los mejores ingenios de España* [New Selected Plays from the Best Wits in Spain. Twenty-Fourth Part], published in Madrid by Mateo Fernández de Espinosa Arteaga (Rozas 1666).⁷² Taking into account Cristóbal de Rozas's status as a considerably neglected writer, it sounds ironic nowadays to discover that he once appeared to have been regarded as a renowned author, as one of the best wits in the country. As opposed to Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla, Rozas chose to preserve the tragic ending and, hence,

⁶⁹ "ROSAS (DON CRISTÓBAL DE). Poeta dramático del siglo XVII; probablemente sevillano, citado por Luis Vélez de Guevara en su [novela] *Diablo Cojuelo* (Madrid, 1641)."

⁷⁰ "¿Será acaso este don Cristóbal el don Cristóbal de Rozas (autor de la comedia *Los Amantes de Verona*, impresa en la *Parte veinte y cuatro*) trocada en z la s de su apellido, por efecto de la pronunciación andaluza?"

⁷¹ Méndez Bejarano (1994) verifies the assumption that both Cristóbal de Rozas and his brother Diego de Rozas were indeed born in Seville. Méndez Bejarano reproduces the information facilitated by Barrera y Leirado (1860) and Lasso de la Vega y Argüelles (1871), and opts for spelling the surname as Rosas. Méndez Bejarano also affirms that it is reasonable to adopt the assumption that the Cristóbal de Rosas mentioned in *The Limping Devil* (1641) must be the same as the author of *Los amantes de Verona* (1666), as "no other Cristóbal de Rosas, or Rozas, illustrious figure of dramatic poetry, is remembered from this century" ("De este siglo no se recuerda otro Cristóbal de Rosas, o Rozas, insigne en la poesía dramática") (1994, 330). Regarding Diego de Rosas, he laments that none of the titles of his works have survived (1994, 330). Sánchez-Arjona (1994) briefly referred to the Sevillian dramatists, but did not contribute to shed light on the identity of the authors, nor on their dramatic corpus. More recently, *Los amantes de Verona* has been analysed by González Cañal (2006), and Torres Nebrera (2010).

⁷² Other authors included in this volumen are Agustín Moreto, Manuel de León Marchante, Diego de Calleja, and Pedro Rosete Niño.

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remained more loyal to the Italian sources of the play. The few scholars who have approached the text of *Los amantes de Verona* agree on the fact that Bandello's 1554 novella constitutes its main source.

One can even venture to go one step closer and affirm that Rozas did not have direct contact with Bandello's novella, but rather became acquainted with it through the modifications that Boaistuau incorporated to the plot in 1559. One need only look at the ending of *Los amantes de Verona* to arrive at this conclusion. The lovers, Clorisel and Aurisena, die in the same manner portrayed in Boaistuau's adaptation of the novella: Clorisel poisons himself believing his loved one to be dead; immediately afterwards, Aurisena stabs herself with a dagger. However, the audience is spared from having to witness the unpleasant act, as specified by a stage direction. The presence of the dagger, Boaistuau's invention, is what evidences that Rozas's source text must have been Millis Godínez's *Historia de Romeo y Julieta*. Rozas could have read the Spanish translation of the novella in any of its several editions (1589, 1596, or 1603).

A reading of *Los amantes de Verona* suggests that Rozas had almost certainly read or attended a performance of *Los bandos de Verona*. The main proof can be found in the character of Vitoque, the main comic figure of the play, who is heavily influenced by Guardainfante, the *gracioso* in *Los bandos de Verona*. It is also significant that from the third sheet onwards, the title printed on the upper margin of the page is not *Los amantes de Verona*, but instead *Los bandos de Verona*. Could this have been an unconscious mistake caused by the strong resemblance between both titles? It seems unlikely. As González Cañal observes, “[the] prestige acquired by the Toledan wit meant that time after time the printers from the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century used his name as enticement to printing and selling plays” (2015a, 26).⁷³ The close parallels that exist in the relationship between the pair of servants Vitoque / Lucela and Marín / Celia, which offer a comic counterpart to the relationships exemplified by their masters, Clorisel / Aurisena and Roselo / Julia, also suggests that Rozas might have been familiar with the text of *Castelvines y Monteses*.

⁷³ “Esta notoriedad adquirida por el ingenio toledano hizo que una y otra vez los impresores de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII y del siglo XVIII utilizaran su nombre como reclamo a la hora de imprimir y vender comedias.”

In its depiction of a feud between two rival factions, *Los amantes de Verona* perfectly fits within the category of dramatic works that González Cañal (2006) defines as *comedias de bandos* (“faction dramas”), which also applies to *Castelvines y Monteses* and *Los bandos de Verona*. González Cañal offers the following explanation on the features that characterize this particular type of seventeenth-century drama:

If we browse the lists of titles of dramatic works from the Golden Age, we discover a handful of texts based on the confrontation between two families or factions: we could group them under the category *comedias de bandos*. It is undoubtable that there is a common denominator that these plays share, and that the formula of interweaving an amorous plot within the frame of a confrontation or rivalry between families or factions enjoyed considerable success during some decades of the seventeenth century (2006, 405).⁷⁴

Furthermore, *Los amantes de Verona* constitutes a unique specimen within this category because it is the only one that offers a tragic denouement. As a matter of fact, as González Cañal points out, “the rest of rivalries between families and factions are almost always resolved through marriages and reconciliations”, but never tragically (2006, 417).⁷⁵ Cristóbal de Rozas not only changed the outcome of the story, he also provided two completely different surnames for the rival houses: the Castelvines/Capeletes faction is renamed Güelfos, whereas the Gebelinos represent the house of the Monteses/Montescos. As extravagant or anomalous as they may sound when compared to their preceding counterparts, the names are not arbitrary. In fact, both names derive from the historical Güelfos and Gibelinos (not Gebelinos with an “e”), two rival political factions that inhabited the north and centre of Italy from the twelfth until the fifteenth century (Santillana 2018). Rozas’s contemporaries would have been familiar with the

⁷⁴ “Si acudimos a los listados de títulos de obras dramáticas del Siglo de Oro, descubrimos un puñado de textos que se basan en el enfrentamiento entre dos familias o bandos: podríamos agruparlos bajo la denominación de ‘comedias de bandos’. Es indudable que hay un denominador común en este tipo de obras y que la fórmula de urdir una trama amorosa en el marco de un enfrentamiento o rivalidad entre familias o bandos gozó de cierto éxito durante algunas décadas del siglo XVII.”

⁷⁵ “El resto de las rivalidades familiares y de bandos se resuelven casi siempre en casamientos y reconciliaciones.”

existence of this historical parties. Indeed, only a few years earlier, in 1640, an anonymous spectator present at the Coliseum of the Buen Retiro for the first performance of *Los bandos de Verona* had described the play as “a *comedia de bandos*, such as the Biamonteses (and Agramonteses), or the Jebelinos (and Güelfos)” (cited in Doménech Rico 2000, 159).⁷⁶

There are no surviving records that attest to a possible performance of *Los amantes de Verona*. Nonetheless, the public might have been familiar with the text, owing to its publication in a volume containing plays composed by “the best wits in Spain”, as the cover reads (Rozas 1666).⁷⁷ If the play was ever performed, Rozas offered such an extremely bleak vision of the story of the star-crossed lovers that it becomes difficult to envision it as a box office success, especially when compared to *Los bandos de Verona*. One must remember the vogue for comedies that characterised the Golden Age and, consequently, the preference that existed for happy endings.

Rozas provided the smallest *dramatis personae* created up to that point in history, as only nine characters make their appearance throughout the play. In this respect he is closely followed in ascending order by Rojas Zorrilla, who included eleven members in his ensemble. As in the previous rewritings of the story, the play is also characterised by the absence of mothers and motherly figures. *Los amantes de Verona* retains the key events depicted in *Bandello*: the masquerade, the arrangement of a marriage between Aurisena/Giulietta and an aristocrat (in this case, a Marquis named Teodoro), and the final tragic deaths of the lovers. Aurisena and Clorisel would also share a brief encounter at the churchyard before expiring. This final encounter between the lovers heightens the pathos, and it is an element that will also be present in Spanish nineteenth-century adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. In England, Thomas Otway will be the first to inaugurate this tradition in *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (1680). Thus, the main difference between *Bandello*'s novella and Rozas's rewriting is the pessimistic atmosphere present from the opening scene, as the author loses no opportunity to incorporate the characters' thirst for vengeance and references to death in almost every single scene.

⁷⁶ “Una comedia de bandos, como los de los Biamonteses (y Agramonteses) o los de los Jebelinos (y Güelfos).” As Doménech Rico explains, the Biamonteses were the Beamonteses, supporters of the Beaumonts in the wars between factions that occurred in Navarra between Beamonteses and Agramonteses during the fifteenth century (2000, 158).

⁷⁷ “Los mejores ingenios de España.”

The Spanish Golden Age

Rozas's tragedy is also written in the three-act structure characteristic of Spanish Golden Age drama. The opening scene bears a strong resemblance with the one portrayed in *Los bandos de Verona*. The play also begins with two ladies, Aurisena and her cousin Rosaura, suffering as a consequence of being in love. Furthermore, Aurisena and Clorisel already have amorous feelings for one another. The masquerade held at the Güelfos's household, ruled by Teobaldo (Aurisena's father), sets the gloomy atmosphere that will remain until the end. The only existing members of the Gebelinos arrive at the masked ball uninvited: Clorisel, his close friend Ricaredo, and his servant Vitoque. The discovery of their presence arouses ire in Teobaldo and Federico (his nephew), who is in a quest for Aurisena's love. The arrival of the Duke of Verona does not serve to assuage their heated temper. The Lord of Verona also features in *Castelvines y Monteses*. However, this is the first time that he has ties of kindred with one of the factions, the Güelfos, but the exact relation is not specified. Far from being a benevolent figure, the Duke's first reaction on hearing that there are intruders present is to order for the tower to be searched, so that he can tear the men into tiny pieces. Throughout the entire play, the Duke is a figure full of hatred and resentment, who constantly displays a belligerent attitude. Clorisel, Ricaredo and Vitoque eventually manage to escape with the help of Aurisena, Rosaura and Lucela (Aurisena's servant). Aurisena and Clorisel spend the night together at her chamber. The act ends with an explosion of male fury. On the one hand, owing to Federico's intense jealousy, after overhearing Aurisena conversing with Clorisel. On the other hand, as a result of Clorisel's desire to kill the mysterious man who has intruded upon their private meeting.

The second act begins at a country villa owned by the Güelfos. The scene then moves outdoors to the surrounding idyllic landscape. Nonetheless, the act is far from being peaceful. Firstly, Teobaldo agrees to marry his daughter to a marquis. Secondly, after an apparent sexual encounter between Clorisel and Aurisena at a pastoral setting, a fight erupts between Clorisel and Federico, ending with the death of the latter. The third act begins with the news of Clorisel's banishment as a punishment for his crime. In order to avoid marrying the marquis, it is Ricaredo who devises the plan to make Aurisena drink a liquid (containing henbane) that will make her appear dead. As in *Bandello*, the decisive letter never reaches Clorisel, who also poisons himself. A new detail introduced is the attempt at a reconciliation, as Teobaldo is heard at the churchyard saying that he will agree to offer his daughter to Clorisel. The man eventually dies in Aurisena's arms, who

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soon follows him into the realms of death by stabbing herself. Vitoque ends the play directly addressing the audience and announcing the characters' fates. Teobaldo departs for the desert, whereas Ricaredo, Rosaura and Lucela opt for following a religious path; thus, they become a clergy, a nun, and a friar, respectively. However, considering Vitoque's position as a comic figure, one cannot truly know whether or not his words should be taken seriously, or perhaps as a mere attempt at providing comic relief. The humble servant ends his brief speech assuring the spectators of the veracity of the story, an idea directly borrowed from Bandello's novella.

Los amantes de Verona presents the first Spanish tragic Juliet, or rather Giulietta, considering that Bandello's novella is the main source text. Unlike its previous dramatic predecessors, the action of *Los amantes de Verona* is embedded within a bleak atmosphere. Every move revolves around the threatening presence of death, and the ardent desire to destroy one's enemies. In fact, the words "death" and the verb "die" in its various verbal forms permeate the speeches of Clorisel, Aurisena, the Duke of Verona, Federico and Teobaldo. It is only Vitoque who provides the few comic instances present, either alone or in conversation with his dearest Lucela. The opening lines of the play already foretell the tragic ending:

AURISENA

Dead I come, with deep sorrow!

ROSAURA

Thus, has it been a pleasant day?

AURISENA

Bad omen, my cousin,

that I begin talking to you about death.

(I. f. 127)⁷⁸

⁷⁸ AURISENA. Muerta vengo, ¡a pena fuerte! ROSAURA. ¿Pues ha sido alegre el día? AURISENA. Malagüero prima mía, / que empiece a hablarte con muerte.

The Spanish Golden Age

The tragic mode of the play considerably darkens the personality of Aurisena Güelfo. Furthermore, her constant references to death in her premonitory speeches become excessive and tiring to the reader/spectator's ear. Love as an impossible ideal is also evident from the beginning. In other words, no character seems entitled or allowed to embrace love. The only members of the Gebelinos are three males – Clorisel, Ricaredo, and Vitoque – all of which are in love with women belonging to the rival faction: Aurisena, Rosaura and Lucela, respectively. From the beginning, Aurisena is the vivid image of a miserable woman in love. For instance, she does not even dine as a result of her misfortunes. The exchanges with her beloved Clorisel are often extremely long, but also overtly emotional, with both lovers using every single resource that language offers to express how much they adore one another. Nevertheless, they also use their encounters to lament their ill fortunes. Clorisel becomes an equally important participant in this spectacle in which both lovers appear to revel in their infinite misery:

CLORISEL

Thus affection and ardour join us,
in one day, in one hour, in one instant
triumph death will in one blow from us both.

(I. f. 130)⁷⁹

Rozas chose to avoid depicting the conflictive relationship that exists between Giulietta and her male progenitor. Nevertheless, Aurisena displays signs of her brave nature in act two, in a series of events which are Rozas's invention. During the tense fight that occurs between Federico and Clorisel, Aurisena desperately offers her cousin to take her life so as to protect her lover: "Ah, fierce Federico, / if you shall murder him, murder me first" (II. f. 137).⁸⁰ A few minutes later, she calls her cousin traitor, orders him to release her, and utters that his sword will either end her life, or be used by her instead to avenge herself by taking his. After Federico's death, Aurisena is the one who secures

⁷⁹ CLORISEL. Pues nos junta un afecto, y un ardor, / en un día, en una hora, en un instante / triunfe en un golpe de los dos la muerte.

⁸⁰ AURISENA. Ah, Federico fiero, / si has de matarle, mátame primero.

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Clorisel's safety by hiding him in a grotto, and lying to her father about his whereabouts. These added details serve to reinforce her strength, and offer a sharp contrast with the remaining scenes where her more melancholic self is the feature that predominates. Moreover, unlike Bandello's Romeo and Giulietta, both Clorisel and Aurisena are considerably more vindictive and fiercer as a result of the thirst for vengeance and feeling of hatred that predominate in this bleak tragedy.

This chapter has made evident that the narrative of Romeo and Giulietta, which had acquired enormous popularity in Europe since the publication of Bandello's novella in 1554, had to be readapted in order to incorporate it into the Spanish theatrical culture of the seventeenth century. With the exception of Rozas, whose play might not have been performed, the most significant variation was the change of genre, motivated by the vogue for comedy that existed at the time. In turn, this change of genre affected the characterization of the earliest Spanish Giuliettas whom, in the tragicomedies of Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla, become the absolute protagonists of the play. In spite of being the heiresses of Bandello's Giulietta, both Julia Castelví and Julia Capelete depart from their modest Italian predecessor and are more akin to the outspoken, ingenious and fearless females present on the Golden Age stage. In their strong resistance to paternal authority, and in their desire to follow their own free will in order to secure their own happiness, Julia Castelví and Julia Capelete prove their strong determination and their desire to not fully adhere to the behavioural code assigned to women at the time. Rozas's Aurisena Güelfo does not overshadow her male counterpart. This sombre and melancholic version of Giulietta shows a certain disregard for decorum in her sexual behaviour, as she does not hesitate to have sexual intercourse with her lover (prior to marriage) in more than one occasion throughout the course of the play. In other words, with the advent of the Golden Age, a new Giulietta is born in Spain.

As the seventeenth century was slowly drawing to an end, it became clear that the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona had permeated Spanish theatrical culture. Most importantly, the start of the reception of the story of Romeo and Juliet in Spain begins with the creation of two tragicomedies in which more importance is assigned to a strong female lead, who emerges as the true protagonist. This change obeyed the needs of the Golden Age stage and was, inevitably, also a strategy to lure spectators into attending the courtyard playhouses. Since the actresses were the main stars of the companies, more

emphasis had to be placed on increasing the visibility of women on the stage, and on making female characters attractive and desirable. The allure of Julia Castelví and Julia Capelete will initiate a pattern followed by subsequent Spanish adaptors of the tragedy, who will also transform Juliet into the unmistakable protagonist, and the main source of interest of the play.

The following chapter will take the reader on a tour around different European countries. The journey will begin on the Elizabethan stage, so as to examine the earliest reception of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in England. The Restoration period marks the start of the first British adaptations of the tragedy, which strongly departed from the original source text, and which were also completely different from the type of reworking that the Spanish Golden Age adaptors were doing with the Italian sources of the play. Thus, since the seventeenth century, the history of the reception of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona in Europe does not constitute a homogeneous process. Neither the Elizabethan nor the Restoration stages acted as the main referents for the Spanish Golden Age, as this chapter has demonstrated. In the following chapter, the reader will witness the arrival of the eighteenth century. First, in Britain and Ireland, joined by the different adaptors of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and also surrounded by the main actresses who took on the role of Juliet. Before landing in Spain (our final destination), the reader will have the opportunity to explore the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in France and Germany. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the story of *Romeo and Juliet* on the Spanish stage cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the influential work carried out by eighteenth-century French and German devotees of the story of the tragic lovers of Verona.

2. The Eighteenth Century

The Eighteenth Century.

The first chapter illustrated that the story of the lovers of Verona was incorporated into the pages of Spanish theatrical history at the onset of the seventeenth century, the period described in literary history as the glorious Golden Age of Spanish drama. Lope de Vega, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla and Cristóbal de Rozas became the first Spanish dramatists who found inspiration in the Italian sources of the tale, mainly Bandello, and shaped it so as to transform the original novella into a theatrical text. In spite of the fact that nowadays it is William Shakespeare who holds the great privilege of having popularised the tragic story worldwide, those early Spanish theatregoers who could have witnessed a performance of any of the three available versions of the tale would not have been able to establish any associations between the events depicted onstage and Shakespeare's tragedy. Therefore, Shakespeare was neither a decisive nor an influential figure in the early stages of the dissemination of the story of the lovers of Verona in Spanish culture.

In spite of the evident success achieved onstage by at least one of the seventeenth-century theatrical adaptations of Bandello's novella, Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona*, it is curious that no further versions of the story appeared in Spain during the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the play had not entirely vanished from the stage, as the previous chapter has demonstrated. Indeed, *Los bandos de Verona* was performed until the latter decades of the eighteenth century, both in Madrid and in provincial theatres. Therefore, we might ask ourselves why no other Spanish playwright attempted to create a new rewriting of the increasingly popular play, a question that becomes more intriguing if one takes into account that this is the century when Shakespeare became the "Bard", that is, when he was elevated within his own country to the status of "national poet", as evidenced by Michael Dobson's influential work *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660-1769* (1992). In order to provide a full picture and, in turn, a better understanding of the circumstances that led to the absence, not only of rewritings, but also of translations of *Romeo and Juliet* for the eighteenth-century Spanish stage, one must look outside Spain's theatrical milieu to find the answer. Undoubtedly, our journey will begin in England to explore how since 1660 Shakespeare's

Romeo and Juliet had to be considerably adapted for the stage prior to its incorporation into the lively theatrical life of the nation. After stopping by in the British Isles, and before entering Spain, the “detour” will force the reader to land firstly in the two countries which mostly contributed to the reception of Shakespeare in continental Europe: France and Germany.

2.1 Britain and Ireland.

William Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet* in the mid-1590s. Opinions differ as regards to the earliest possible date, but most scholars agree on the fact that it could not have been written prior to 1594. In fact, the latest editor of the play for Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, René Weis, highlights the following documented detail: “that it is unlikely to have been written before 1594 is suggested by the demonstrable presence in the company only by then of Will Kemp; and Kemp the actor is listed instead of ‘Peter’ (the role) in the Q2 stage direction at 4.5.95 (2012, 36). Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells signal towards 1595, as a possible date, based on “the Nurse’s remark that ‘Tis since the earthquake now eleven years’ (1.3.25), which may be a topical allusion to the earthquake which shook England in 1584” (2001, 397).

There are no written records that provide an exact date of the very first performance of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in England. However, the title page of the First Quarto edition, printed in 1597, does offer a clue that can help to give an approximate date of the time when the earliest performance might have taken place. The title page of this unlicensed quarto edition displays the following information: “*An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet. As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicquely [sic], by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Servants*” (Shakespeare 2012, 343). Taking into account that Shakespeare’s company was only named after Lord Hunsdon between 22 July 1596 and 14 April 1597 – the year when the company regained the name of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men –, Weis ascertains that this is probably the period when the tragedy was first taken to the stage (2012, 33 – 34). If we

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assume the information provided on the title page of the First Quarto is truthful, one may ascertain that the play appears to have enjoyed at least some degree of popularity during its first performances on the Elizabethan stage. Regarding the male actors that played each of the different parts, with the exception of the character of Peter, the assignment of actors to the remaining roles strictly falls within the realm of speculation:

We can only guess who played which parts then, with the exception of Will Kemp's appearance as Peter. The other roles may have been played by Richard Burbage (Romeo) and Master Robert Goffe (Juliet), with, perhaps, Shakespeare as the Prince, Thomas Pope as Mercutio and William Sly as Tybalt. This is necessarily speculative, based on what we think we know about the personnel of the Lord Chamberlain's Men in the period, although there cannot be much doubt about the casting of Burbage as Romeo, as he was the star of the company. If a 1596 date for [the earliest performance of] *Romeo and Juliet* is correct, then Burbage would have been a 28-year-old Romeo to Goffe's Juliet (Weis 2012, 53 – 54).

As it is widely agreed, Shakespeare's most immediate source text was Arthur Brooke's poem "The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet", published in 1562. There are indeed several similarities shared between this poem of 3,020 lines – roughly the same length as *Romeo and Juliet* –, and Shakespeare's play, which contains passages directly copied from Brooke (Weis 2012, 44). Although it is certain that Shakespeare had read Brooke's poem, one must not forget that the poem contains elements present in the plot of the previous narrative versions of the tale, as Brooke's most immediate source text was Pierre Boaistuau's "Histoire troisieme de deux amants, don't l'un mourut de venin, l'autre de tristesse" (1559). Even though Brooke closely followed Boaistuau and barely altered the plot, the former deserves credit, as Levenson argues, for reinventing the medium through which the story had been transmitted up to that point in history, by turning it into a poem, and for assigning deliberate argument to characters other than the protagonists (1996, 48–49). The main difference between the texts of Brooke and Shakespeare is that the latter eliminates the blame thrown by the poet upon the wretched pair of lovers. As McMullan explains, "the blame, for Brooke, lies fairly and squarely

with Romeo and Juliet themselves [...] for transgressing social codes, for failing to honor father and mother, for unchastity” (2016, xv). Moreover, as Pujante highlights, “Shakespeare imbued the story with a passion that was unprecedented until then” (2015, 13).⁸¹

Brooke’s Juliet is significantly shyer and more modest, when compared to her Italian and French counterparts, but still retained the courage and part of the defiant attitude that defines her. It is worth mentioning the ending of Brooke’s long poem, as it is particularly significant. The author can be held responsible for introducing, even in a manner which might be defined as almost imperceptible, the idea that the tragic story of the lovers of Verona can be interpreted as being truly Juliet’s rather than Romeo’s story. The poem’s closing lines read as follows: “there is no monument more worthy of the sight, / Than is the tomb of Juliet and Romeus her knight” (ll. 3.019 – 3.020). As most readers familiar with the text of *Romeo and Juliet* will recall, these final remarks are strongly echoed by the Prince, who ends Shakespeare’s tragedy uttering “for never was a story of more woe/ Than this of Juliet and her Romeo” (V. iii. ll. 309 – 310). Thus, Shakespeare reinforces and strengthens the idea that this is a play about “Juliet and her Romeo”. When Shakespeare decided to transform the poem into a play, he extremely reduced the time span of the action to four days, as opposed to Brooke’s poem where events take place throughout a long period that encompasses several months. This drastic reduction in the duration of the action strongly contributes to enhance the play’s dramatic effect, particularly towards the end, as the lovers’ plans to find true happiness are gradually thwarted by a series of tragic and unfortunate events. Shakespeare’s decision to compress the action into four days also affects the characterization of Juliet in a significant manner. As Pujante observes, “Juliet is younger in Shakespeare (thirteen years old as opposed to Brooke’s sixteen-year-old Juliet). [...] Her youth makes her more intense and vulnerable, and it allows to accentuate the rapid maturity that she reaches led by the events” (2015, 13).⁸² While Salernitano (1476) omits references to Ganozza’s age, we do know the ages of her subsequent counterparts: da Porto’s Giulietta is eighteen (1524), Bandello’s Giulietta is seventeen (1554), whereas Boiastuau’s Juliette is not yet

⁸¹ “Shakespeare imbue a la historia de una pasión inédita hasta entonces”.

⁸² “Julietta es más joven en Shakespeare (trece años, frente a los dieciséis de la Julieta de Brooke). [...] Su juventud la hace más intensa y vulnerable, y permite acentuar la rápida maduración a que la llevan los acontecimientos.”

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eighteen (1559). Shakespeare's Juliet is not only the youngest created up to that point in time, but also the youngest heroine in the entire Shakespearean repertoire.

The 1660s coincide with the reappearance of *Romeo and Juliet* on the English stage, in two different adaptations deriving from the pens of James Howard (c.1640 – 1669) and William Davenant (1606 – 1668). Howard's adaptation saw the light "before 1665" (Vickers 1974b, 189). Although the adaptation has not survived, a particularly relevant detail about its productions was recorded by John Downes (c.1640 – 1719), prompter to Davenant's company for over forty years, in his *Roscius Anglicanus, or an Historical Review of the Stage from 1660 to 1706* (1708). As Vickers specifies, Downes' "memoir has evident inaccuracies but is one of our main sources of information for the productions of this period and their reception" (1974b, 188). Downes wrote down that "this tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* was made some time after into a tragi-comedy by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive so that when the tragedy was revived again 'twas played alternately, tragical one day and tragi-comical another, for several days together" (cited in Weis 2012, 58). This dual ending that allowed two contrasting denouements will not be found in Spain until 1803 with the arrival of the first nineteenth-century theatrical adaptation of the play, Dionisio Solís's *Julia y Romeo*, which will be analysed in detail in the next chapter. Going back to the Restoration period, it is worth noting that assigning a joyful ending to a Shakespearean tragedy was not an uncommon practice. For instance, in 1681 Nahum Tate also chose a happy ending for his now notorious adaptation of *King Lear* (Davidson 2012, 185). It was the brutality of the civil war what contributed to the emergence of tragi-comedy as a fashionable genre (Holland 2016, 506).

In 1662 the Duke's Company, under the ownership of William Davenant, produced *Romeo and Juliet*. Together with Thomas Killigrew, Davenant had been rewarded for his loyalty to the monarchist cause during the Interregnum, receiving a royal patent "that established their duopoly control of the emergent London theatre business" (Shaughnessy 2012, 169). *Romeo and Juliet* was amongst the Shakespeare plays given to the Duke's Company at the end of 1660. According to Downes it constituted part of the company's "Stock-Plays" during their first five years, alongside *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *King Henry VIII* (Taylor 1991, 29). In scholarly criticism this revival of *Romeo and Juliet* is often accompanied by the well-known negative assessment made

by Samuel Pepys, who attended a performance of the play at Lincoln's Inn Fields, home to the Duke's Company. In the entry of his famous *Diary* that corresponds to 1 March 1662, Pepys noted down his personal judgement on the production that he had witnessed:

The first time it was ever acted. But it is the play of itself the worst that I ever heard in my life, and the worst acted that I ever saw these people do; and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less (cited in Weis 2012, 57 – 58).

Weis remarks that Pepys might have witnessed “an under-rehearsed première (being ‘out’ means not having mastered the lines)” (2012, 58). Despite not meeting Pepys' standards, the performance poses a particular interest because it is very likely that this was, as several critics have pointed out, the first time on the English stage that the role of Juliet was performed by a woman instead of an actor disguised as a female.⁸³ The fortunate actress who appears to have held this privilege was Mary Saunderson (1637 – 1712). Miss Saunderson played Juliet to Henry Davies' Romeo, alongside her future husband (the renowned Thomas Betterton) who acted the role of Mercutio (Weis 2012, 57). Her participation as Juliet in Davenant's adaptation, together with her marriage to one of the greatest actors of the period, are the only two facts on the figure of Mary Saunderson that are recorded in scholarly criticism.

The third and most important adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* produced during the Restoration period was Thomas Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*, first performed in 1679 and published the year after. As different scholars have remarked, Thomas Otway (1652 – 1685) was one of the greatest dramatists of his age and, as a tragedian, often compared to Shakespeare owing to his special ability to arouse emotions from the audience (Vickers 1974a; Marsden 2008). The production of Otway's play in the autumn of 1679 coincided with the Exclusion crisis “when the hysteria surrounding Titus Oates's allegations of a Catholic conspiracy against king and nation was at its

⁸³ One must bear in mind, as Shaughnessy observes, that “the productions that Pepys liked were the spectacular ones. He saw Davenant's musical extravaganza *Macbeth* nine times between 1664 and 1669” (2012, 170).

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highest” (Kewes 2008, 364).⁸⁴ As Dobson explains, this heavily charged political climate had an inevitable impact on the type of plays produced for the stage:

The Exclusion Crisis, with its multiple paranoias about aristocratic Catholic conspiracies to destroy the Church of England and Dissenting schemes to restart the English Revolution, generated a theatrical climate in which every play produced was potentially controversial, certain to be scrupulously interrogated by censors and audiences alike for covert or explicit propagandist intentions, secret plots or dangerous sympathies, and this flurry of adaptations demands to be read not as an anthology of inept Shakespeare criticism but as a series of often astute experiments in politicizing and depoliticizing the contemporary stage (1992, 63–64).

The fear of an outburst of a new revolution motivated some Restoration authors to use their writings so as to reinforce the image of the newly restored monarchy, as Munns observes in relation to Otway:

Otway, undoubtedly a loyal royalist, provided support through negative images of republican states: Rome in a state of violent civil disorder in *Caius Marius* (Duke's Theatre, 1679), and a corrupt and weak Venetian republic in *Venice Preserv'd* (Duke's Theatre, 1682) (2008, 121).

The tension between opposing sectors of society (mainly between Whigs and Tories), the fear of a second civil war, and the underlying support of the monarchy as an institution are concerns that echo throughout the pages of Otway's bleak tragedy. *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* clearly illustrates the “vogue for politicized adaptations

⁸⁴ The Exclusion Crisis was radicalized as a struggle between two newly founded parties: the Whigs and the Tories. The former supported Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, and his claim to exclude from succession the Catholic heir to the throne: James, Duke of York (brother of Charles II). On the contrary, the Tories supported King Charles II (1660 – 1685). The tension prevailed until 1681 when the Exclusion Bill was defeated in the House of Lords (Innocenti 2016).

of Shakespeare's tragedies and history plays" that existed during this forty-year period in British history (Owen 2008, 135).

Otway borrowed the plot of *Caius Marius* from Plutarch's lives of Gaius Marius and Sylla (Innocenti 2016, 205). Set in the final years of the Roman republic, *Caius Marius* portrays the struggle for power between two rival factions: the plebeians (led by the old Caius Marius), and the patricians (led by Metellus). Nonetheless, the focus of the entire play does not reside on the rivalry between Caius Marius and Metellus, but instead on the strong enmity that exists between Caius Marius and Sylla. The latter is a Roman noble and Metellus' personal candidate to occupy the position of consul. As Dobson highlights, "neither side is morally superior to the other: indeed, the original cause of the mortal hatred between Marius and Sylla is throughout the play left as obscure as possible, their rivalry serving only as a general warning against civil conflict itself" (1992, 78).

It is the play's subplot what justifies the categorisation of *Caius Marius* as an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. The political tension between patricians and plebeians inevitably affects the play's young pair of lovers: Marius Junior (son of Caius Marius) and Lavinia (Metellus's sole daughter). As it may be inferred, the strong hatred that their parents hold towards one another prevents them from giving their consent to a lawful marital union. Moreover, Metellus wishes to marry his daughter to Sylla (Otway's Count Paris). Hence, their chances of obtaining true happiness are doubly thwarted, as these Roman Romeo and Juliet face, not only the hatred that exists between their male progenitors, but also opposition motivated by antagonistic class relationships.

Besides reproducing a relationship doomed to tragic failure as a result of the enmity between two rival factions, Otway copied several lines from *Romeo and Juliet* in his five-act tragedy. Motherly figures are absent, but there are several characters whose role mirrors that of a Shakespearean character in *Romeo and Juliet*: Lavinia / Juliet, Metellus / Capulet, Nurse / Nurse, Marius Junior / Romeo, Caius Marius / Montague, Granius, brother to Marius Junior / Benvolio, Mercutio / Sulpitius, Sylla/ Paris, and Priest of Hymen / Friar Lawrence. In addition, there are several passages in *Caius Marius* which Otway adapted from *Romeo and Juliet*: the Queen Mab speech delivered by Sulpitius ("Mercutio"), a conversation between Lavinia and one of her progenitors on the nobleman she ought to marry (Sylla), the balcony scene, a marriage (offstage) between the young lovers, a reduced version of Juliet's "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds" soliloquy

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delivered by Lavinia, the consummation of the lovers' marriage, Lavinia's drinking of the contents of a phial to avoid marrying a noble, Marius Junior's death from taking poison, and Lavinia's death by stabbing herself (with Caius Marius' sword). In total there are nine scenes containing lines which are either directly borrowed from *Romeo and Juliet* or slightly altered. In some instances lines are assigned to a different character than the one expected from Shakespeare's play, whereas in other occasions a scene in *Caius Marius* becomes a combination of different scenes derived from *Romeo and Juliet*. Nonetheless, one ought not to forget that the focus of the entire play lies on the rivalry between Sylla and Caius Marius and, precisely, as the title of the play indicates, on the downfall of the latter.

Otway is credited with introducing two important innovations which have had a considerable impact on the reception of *Romeo and Juliet*. Firstly, Otway is responsible for the name with which scholars and lovers of the play alike refer to Shakespeare's memorable act II, scene ii: the balcony scene. In Shakespeare all references point towards a window; in fact, the word balcony never appears in the text.⁸⁵ Otway was the first to incorporate the iconic object into the scene by introducing the stage direction "Lavinia in the Balcony" (II. [ii.] p. 18).⁸⁶ Otway's second significant innovation had a lasting impact on subsequent productions of the play on the British stage. In *Caius Marius* the ending could be said to cause a higher dramatic impact than the one devised by Shakespeare in act V, scene iii. The churchyard scene begins with Marius Junior killing the Priest, who had arrived to deliver him the news that Lavinia will reawaken. Much to their dismay, they solely recognize one another immediately after the Priest has been mortally wounded. Otway then introduces his second most significant innovation: a final encounter between the lovers, as Lavinia wakes up from her sleep minutes before poison takes Marius Junior's life forever:

MARIUS JUNIOR

Come, bitter Conduct, thou unsavoury Guide:

⁸⁵ One need only read the first words spoken by Romeo at the beginning of the "balcony" scene: "He jests at scars that never felt a wound. / But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?" (II. ii. ll. 1 – 2).

⁸⁶ All quotations from *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* are reproduced from the first edition of the play (Otway 1680).

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Here's to my Love...

[*Drinks the Poison.*]

And now Eyes look your last.

Arms take your last Embrace, whilst on these Lips

I fix the Seal of an eternall Contract...

She breaths and stirs...

[LAVINIA *wakes.*]

[LAVINIA *in the Tomb.*]

Where am I? Bless me, Heav'n!

'Tis very cold; and yet here's something warm...

MARIUS JUNIOR

She lives, and we shall both be made immortall.

Speak, my Lavinia, speak some heav'nly news,

And tell me how the Gods design to treat us.

(V. [iv.] ll. 387 – 397)

Despite seeing each other one last time and interchanging some final thoughts that show the strong love they hold for one another, Marius Junior expires without knowing that Lavinia was never truly dead. Thus, it could be said that he dies in peace, believing that he had awoken in heaven in the company of his sweetest angel Lavinia:

LAVINIA

The Gods have heard my Vows; it is my Marius.

Once more they have restor'd him to my Eyes.

Hadst thou not come, sure I had slept for ever.

But there's a sovereign Charm in thy Embraces,

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That might do Wonders, and revive the Dead.

MARIUS JUNIOR

Fate no more, Lavinia, now shall part us,

Nor cruel Parents, nor oppressing Laws.

Did not Heav'n's Pow'rs all wonder at our Loves?

And when thou toldst the tale of thy Disasters,

Was there not Sadness and a Gloom amongst 'em

I know there was: and they in pity sent thee,

Thus to redeem me from this vale of Torments,

And bear me with thee to those Hills of Joys.

This World's gross air grows burthensome already.

I'm all a God: such heav'nly Joys transport me,

That mortal Sense grows sick and faints with lasting.

[*Dies.*]

LAVINIA

Oh! To recount my Happiness to thee,

To open all the Treasure of my Soul,

And shew thee how 'tis fill'd, would waste more time

Then so impatient Love as mine can spare.

He's gone; he's dead; breathless: alas! My Marius.

(V. [iv.] ll. 407 – 427)

This scene considerably enhances the dramatic tension, strengthening the pathetic ending even further than Shakespeare had done. Lavinia wakes up from her sleep to be a first-hand witness of the death of her beloved Marius. Shortly after she has to face a second tragedy: the death of her dear father Metellus, stabbed by her own father-in-law.

After a brief conversation with Caius Marius in which Lavinia reproaches him for his evil deed, she stabs herself with the old man's sword. According to Ritchie and Sabor, "the last-minute reunion between Romeo and Juliet [...] survived on stage into the early nineteenth century" (2012, 5). Dobson stretches the ending date even further affirming that "Otway's hyper-affective version of the tomb scene is elaborated and retained in all eighteenth-century acting versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, and would continue to be part of most performing texts of the play as late as 1875" (1992, 92).⁸⁷ Sheridan will be the exception to this general rule, as he decided not to follow Otway in his 1747 adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy. Unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, where the rival families are eventually reconciled, the ending of *Caius Marius* offers no prospect of a peaceful future for either of the factions. Sylla returns to Rome with his army, while Caius Marius blames his ambition for all his misfortunes and chooses to await death. The old man's final words denote his heavy defeat and the acknowledgment of his own downfall: "a hopeless vessel bound for the dark land / Of loathsome death, and loaded deep with sorrows" (V. [iv]. ll. 519 – 520).

Despite the fact that Otway's tragedy is mostly centred on the history and fall of Caius Marius, the character of Lavinia deserves special attention because, as Dobson stresses, "Otway produces a Shakespeare adaptation with a suffering, innocent woman at its centre" (Dobson 1992, 79). Otway's personal portrayal of Juliet is embodied in the figure of a fifteen-year-old girl, whom we are told will turn sixteen in a month. She does not offer a strong departure from the image envisioned by Shakespeare for his tragic heroine. For instance, she is unable to confront her father in act IV when Metellus orders her to marry Sylla, and she pretends instead that a conversation with a priest will make her repent her initial slight reluctance. Nonetheless, in a scene which contains reminiscences of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the spectator witnesses a new quality added to her personality: her extreme kindness. As Shakespeare's Juliet, Lavinia also has a resolute nature. Thus, in act IV, after the consummation of their marriage, Marius Junior leaves Lavinia to help restore his father Caius Marius to power, while she flees Rome and seeks refuge in the woods to prevent her own father from forcing her to marry Sylla. In the woods she encounters Caius Marius by surprise, who is in a pitiful state that strongly

⁸⁷ As mentioned in chapter 1, da Porto (1524) and later Bandello (1554), were the first to introduce a final encounter between the lovers before they pass away.

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echoes that of King Lear in the dramatic and heartbreaking storm scenes. After realising that he is Caius Marius, Lavinia addresses the defenceless man as “father”. Her tenderness, however, is met with a misogynistic reply from her interlocutor:

MARIUS SENIOR

Now thou art Woman;

For Lies are in thee. I? Am I thy Father?

I ne’r was yet so curst; none of thy Sex.

E’re sprung from me. My Offspring all are Males.

The Nobler sort of Beasts entit’led Men.

(IV. [ii.] ll. 329 – 333)

As soon as Lavinia delivers the news that she is indeed his son’s wife, the old man gladly welcomes her. Her act of offering him fruit warms the vulnerable man’s heart even further, as he completely changes his tone and attitude towards her: “What? All this from Thee, / Thou Angel, whom the Gods have sent to aid me?” (IV. [ii.] ll. 348 – 349). This scene also serves to highlight Lavinia’s capacity to sacrifice herself, as she leaves the comforts of her patrician home in the city because she is prepared, as she later tells her beloved Marius Junior, “to bear a Part in every Thing that’s thine / Be’t Happiness or Sorrow” (IV. [ii.] ll. 376 – 377). Marius Junior displays a more hesitant attitude throughout the play, as he is hopelessly unable to properly confront the series of unfortunate events that he is forced to face. As a matter of fact, as Dobson brilliantly expresses, it is Lavinia who becomes “the source of limitless pathos” (1992, 78). This becomes more apparent in the final scene, when the innocent victim helplessly witnesses the deaths of the two most important men in her life: her dearest husband and father. Ultimately, Lavinia rather than blaming the irrational hatred between both factions, considers that her beauty is the real cause of her deep misfortunes: “My blooming Beauty conquer’d many Hearts, / But prov’d the greatest Torment of my own” (V. [iv.] ll. 457 – 458). Her death scene becomes more pathetic than in Shakespeare. Not only does she witness two deaths, but also stabs herself with the sword of her father’s murderer,

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inevitably impregnated with his own blood. Her final words are full of bitterness, as she abandons the world cursing mankind in a manner which evokes the image of Pandora opening her cursed box containing all the evils of humanity:

LAVINIA

This Sword yet reeking with my Father's Gore.

Plunge it into my Breast: plunge, plunge it thus.

And now let Rage, Distraction and Despair

Seize all Mankind, till they grow mad as I am.

[Stabs her self *[sic]* with his Sword.]

(V. [iv.] ll. 491 – 494)

The History and Fall of Caius Marius was first printed in London in 1680. The title page indicates that the play was at the time being “Acted at the Duke’s Theatre” (Otway 1680). The same text was reprinted twelve years later, once again, in London (Otway 1692). In 1725 a new reprint appeared in Dublin (Otway 1725). This third edition does not bear on its title page the “acted at...” reference displayed in the previous editions, which can be taken as an indicator that the text was distributed for reading purposes only rather than for performance. In the early years of the 19th century the play was reprinted in the second volume of *The Works of Thomas Otway*, edited by Thomas Thornton (Otway 1813). This edition proves particularly useful for an exercise in intertextuality, as it provides footnotes that comment on those passages that Otway borrowed from Shakespeare. The editor, however, does not consider it Otway’s best production, as he believes that “the play appears to have been rather a hasty composition” (1813, 110). Entering the 20th century one finds at least two further editions of the text: the first edited by Cornmarket Press (Otway 1969), and the second edited by Chadwyck-Healey (Otway 1994). According to Innocenti, “Otway’s play is always mentioned as an adaptation of Shakespeare, and not one of the best” (2016, 206). *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* might not be the best adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that the world has

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seen, but at least it managed not to fall within the realm of oblivion. The editions of the play that exist can be deemed scarce, but Otway's bleak tragedy managed to survive in written format more than three hundred years after its debut in print.

If we examine the early reception of Otway's particular rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*, it becomes evident that fortune was benevolent with the dramatist on stage. As Weis remarks, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* "would effectively usurp [Shakespeare's tragedy] for the next six decades" (2012, 59).⁸⁸ Its premiere at the Duke's Theatre took place "in September or October 1679, with repeated success on the stage" (Vickers 1974a, 295). The company that produced the play was the United Company. This was the sole theatre company active in London in the early 1680s, after the political turmoil created by the Exclusion Crisis forced the only two companies that existed to unite; a situation that remained intact for over a decade (Marsden 2002, 29). The 1680 edition of the play reproduces the names of the entire cast. The role of Caius Marius was performed by Thomas Betterton, whom many scholars regard as the greatest actor of his age. A Mr. Smith, whose name is not given, played Marius Junior, whereas the actress who succeeded Mary Saunderson in taking on the role of Juliet was no other than the actress and theatre manager Elizabeth Barry, one of the most remarkable actresses of the Restoration stage.

As Fisk explains, "Elizabeth Barry [c.1658 – 1713], the most famous actress of the late seventeenth-century stage, excelled in tragedy, but her abilities were such that she could play almost anything, from ingénue, to jealous mistress, to villainess, to wife or widow" (2008, 86). The other Shakespearean role that she performed during her long career on the stage was that of Cordelia (De Bruyn 2012, 400). Mrs. Barry would have been in her early twenties when she first played the character of Lavinia. Her young age was perfectly suited to portray a young girl in her teenage years. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find reviews of *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* to properly assess

⁸⁸Of the total number of nine Shakespearean adaptations produced during the Restoration period, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* belongs to the group of plays that would remain in the repertory for over forty years together with Edward Ravenscroft's *Titus Andronicus, or The Rape of Lavinia* (1678), John Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found Too Late* (1679), Nahum Tate's celebrated *The History of King Lear* (1681), and Thomas Durfey's *The Injured Princess* (from *Cymbeline*, 1682)" (Dobson 1992, 62 – 63).

the performance. Bearing in mind that both Mrs. Barry and Mr. Betterton were known during their time for their fine acting, it may not be too adventurous to assume that their performances might indeed have been received favourably by the public.

The 1680 edition reveals that whereas Mr. Betterton spoke the prologue, the privilege of being the last player onstage was given to Mrs. Barry, who delivered the twenty-seven line epilogue. Addressing the audience constituted a common theatrical practice during the period. As Dharwadker asserts, “by invoking the audience persistently and extensively in prologues, epilogues, printed addresses to the reader and metatheatrical plays, Restoration playwrights certainly make their viewers and readers an intrinsic part of their craft” (2008, 144). Mrs. Barry’s youth might have been one of the reasons whereby she was chosen to close the play because, as Fisk highlights, “to appease hostile audiences a young girl might deliver the epilogue” (2008, 82). Otway did seem to have the need to justify his choice of subject to remove all thoughts leading towards the direction that he might be instigating violence and, thus, the advent of another civil war. Consequently, Mrs. Barry makes clear that the topic was merely motivated by the fact that the author himself “had nought but Drums and Trumpets in his Head”, a reference to the political turmoil surrounding the Exclusion Crisis:

EPILOGUE

Spoke by Mrs. Barry, who acted LAVINIA.

A mischief on't! Though I'm agen alive,

May I believe this Play of ours shall thrive?

This Drumming, Trumpetting, and Fighting Play?

Why, what a Devil will the People say?

The Nation that's without, and hears the Din,

Will swear w' are raising Volunteers agen.

For know, our Poet, when this Play was made,

Had nought but Drums and Trumpets in his head.

(p. 67)

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The actor who played the role of the Nurse also deserves special mention. It was indeed a man, Mr. Nokes, instead of a woman the candidate chosen for such purpose. James Nokes (c.1642 – 1696) acquired fame after his appearance in different productions of *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*, as Thornton observes in a footnote of his 1813 edition of the text: the “actor obtained so much celebrity from his parts that, afterwards, he was commonly termed Nurse Noakes [sic]” (Otway 1813, 197). One may wonder why it was a man who played the Nurse, since the performance of Shakespeare’s female roles by women had been instigated by a revival of *Othello* in 1660 (Dobson 1992, 3). The decision could have been motivated by a desire to introduce a touch of “authenticity”, reproducing one of the most iconic acting patterns of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage: the use of (young) boy actors for the performance of female roles. Nevertheless, given the taste of the age for tragicomedy, this unusual choice could have also been the result of wanting to introduce a humorous note, as the Nurse is one of the few comic characters present in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The figure of the Nurse in Otway’s play strongly mirrors that of Shakespeare’s Nurse. According to Innocenti, the “role was successfully played by a famous transvestite actor, James Nokes, and his acting in drag intensified the comic part of the play. [...] Sexual innuendoes, puns, ironic cues or base expressions were added by Otway to the Shakespearian text, probably having this interpreter in mind” (2016, 209). The choice of Nokes for the depiction of the Nurse would also have had its implications on the general portrayal of femininity in the play, as Nokes would have offered a sharp contrast to the character of Lavinia in terms of the representation of femininity. The Nurse’s comic nature was doubly enhanced in performance, owing to the fact that audiences could have easily identified that it was a man who was performing the role. Consequently, it must have been difficult to take the character seriously. This was indeed the main purpose of having Nokes embodying the Nurse: to make audiences laugh. In distorting and ridiculing the depiction of the Nurse for purely comic purposes, the actress playing Lavinia would have been viewed, in turn, as a more credible and convincing version of femininity. Thus, this would have contributed to enhance the importance of Lavinia’s character on the stage.

Thanks to the title page of the 1692 edition of the tragedy, it is known that twelve years after its first performance, the play was still present on the London stage. But its location shifted to “the Theatre Royal”, often referred to as Drury Lane (Otway 1692).

This second edition contains exactly the same cast as the one reproduced in the 1680 edition. This coincidence may be explained by the fact that this is a reprint of the first edition of the play and, thus, it may not necessarily imply that the same actors and actresses were performing the same roles twelve years later. Nonetheless, there is a factor that can explain why there might have been no changes made to the original cast. It was not until 1695, as Marsden explains, “when Thomas Betterton along with a number of other actors of his age [including Elizabeth Barry], seceded from the United Company along with a number of other actors and set up a rival company [Lincoln’s Inn Fields Company] in a small, older theatre at Lincoln’s Inn Fields” (2002, 29). In other words, in 1692 the United Company remained the only company present in the London theatrical scene, which reduced the possibilities of introducing changes in the cast of a play that had been in the company’s repertoire for over a decade. In spite of the emergence of three new adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* in the following century, Otway’s tragedy did not entirely disappear from the stage. In fact, after 1700 *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* was performed twenty-nine times (De Bruyn 2012, 393). The play would eventually vanish into thin air circa 1740 (Weis 2012, 59).

Romeo and Juliet was revived in 1744 by the eighteenth-century actor and dramatist Theophilus Cibber (1703 – 1758). He was the son of Colley Cibber (playwright, actor and theatre manager) and, as an actor, worked at all the theatres in London and Dublin (Vickers 1976, 250). Unlike his father “his behaviour, both in theatrical circles and private life, was considerably more unpleasant and quarrelsome” (De Bruyn 2012, 401). In the front matter of his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, first published in 1748, Cibber acknowledges that he has adapted his text from Shakespeare’s tragedy: *Romeo and Juliet, a Tragedy, Revis’d, and Alter’d from Shakespear [sic], by Mr. Theophilus Cibber* (Cibber 1969).⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the playwright deliberately omits his great debt to another source text: Otway’s *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*.

This version is indeed heavily influenced by Otway’s play, as there are not only passages clearly inspired by and adapted from Otway’s work, but also lines copied from his Roman tragedy. In fact, the only two instances in which Cibber departs from Shakespeare are those in which he prefers to follow Otway instead. The first is the

⁸⁹This edition is a facsimile from a copy of the original 1748 text held in the Birmingham Shakespeare Library. All quotations from the play are taken from this edition.

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opening scene set in the hall of Lord Capulet's household. The old man greets Paris, who has arrived to ask for Juliet's hand. Lord Capulet then informs Paris that Montague wished Romeo could marry Juliet, a thought that infuriated both wives and merely served to increase the enmity between the rival families. This is definitely inspired by the opening scene of Otway's tragedy, where Metellus is furious because Caius Marius has asked him if he would give his consent to marry his daughters with his own offspring. One must remember that, despite belonging to opposite factions, Caius Marius' mortal enemy is Sylla and not Metellus (Lavinia's father). The second scene that Cibber copied from Otway was the final exchange between the lovers at the churchyard, where their conversation is copied almost word by word. The fact that Cibber decided to retain this last conversation between the young lovers can be taken as an indicator of the popularity that this additional scene was beginning to acquire.

Cibber chose not to copy Shakespeare's play line by line, and added no major changes to the plot, besides the two aforementioned passages. Cibber's work as an adaptor mostly affected the language. That is to say, he cut those speeches which he regarded as being too long, incorporated or eliminated words and sentences, and slightly paraphrased most of the remaining text. The instances in which Cibber adds new dialogue to the original source text are scarce. One example is found in act IV, scene i, which constitutes an adaptation of the parting scene between Shakespeare's lovers (act III, scene v), which reads as follows:

JULIET

Oh! I cou'd find out Things to talk to thee for ever.

ROMEO

Weep not, the Time

We had to stay together has been employ'd

In richest Love.

JULIET

We ought to summon all

The Spirit of soft Passion up, to chear,

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Our Hearts, thus lab'ring with the Pangs of parting.

Oh! My poor Romeo!

ROMEO

Ah! My kindest Juliet!

[...]

JULIET

All good Angels guard thee.

[Exit ROMEO.]

(IV. i. ll. 63 – 71; 81)

There is a character, nonetheless, whose personality is altered: Lady Capulet's. Following Shakespeare's act I, scene iii Lady Capulet approaches her daughter in order to become acquainted with her thoughts on the idea of marrying Count Paris. Instead of the sweet-tempered mother found at the start of Shakespeare's play, Metellus becomes the model for the parental figure in this scene. Cibber adapted from *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* most of the heated conversation held between Metellus and his daughter Lavinia at the beginning of the second act, where the man shows his towering rage on discovering that his daughter does not comply with his wish of seeing her married to Sylla. Given that the harsh words spoken by Metellus throughout the scene are given to Lady Capulet, Cibber adds a fierce side to her character that is not present in Shakespeare's play. Hence, Juliet's initial refusal to agree to a marriage with Count Paris is met with profound discontent and ire:

LADY CAPULET

Oh early Disobedience!

Debauch'd already to her Sex's Folly;

Perverseness, and untoward head-strong Will.

[...]

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LADY CAPULET

Has then some other taken up your heart,

And banish'd Duty, as an Exile, thence?

What sensual lewd Companion of the Night,

Have you been holding Conversation with,

From open Window, at a midnight Hour,

When wanton Wishes wou'd not let you sleep?

JULIET

If I should love, is that a Fault, in one

So young as I? I cannot guess the Cause, –

But, when you first nam'd Paris for my Love,

My Heart shrunk back, as you had done it wrong.

(I. iii. ll. 323 – 325; 334 – 343)

Deeply displeased with her daughter's reaction and disobedience, Lady Capulet strikes back with the fearful and unpleasant idea of casting Juliet off, a threat also uttered by Metellus in a long monologue from which Cibber solely borrows the first three lines quoted at the beginning of the following extract:

LADY CAPULET

No more of this; 'twill make thy Father mad:

If thou art mine, resolve upon Compliance,

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Or think no more to rest beneath my Roofs.

JULIET

Will you then quite cast off your once loved Juliet / **poor Lavinia?**

And turn me like a Vagrant out of Doors,

To wander up and down Verona's Streets; / **the streets of Rome**⁹⁰

[...]

LADY CAPULET

Graze where thou wilt, but think no more of me,

Till thy Obedience welcome thy Return.

(I. iii. ll. 344 – 349; 364 – 365)

Cibber's thirteen-year-old Juliet strongly resembles Shakespeare's. One of the most identifiable features of the language used by Shakespeare's Juliet throughout the entire play is that she is constantly referring to death. Her recurrent references to death do not disappear from Cibber's adaptation, but there appears to be a conscious desire on the part of the adaptor to make the spectator associate Juliet with a more optimistic feeling that also describes her situation: love. For instance, in act IV, scene i, after the Nurse exits the stage, a new soliloquy is added to replace Juliet's condemnation of the spiteful comments that Shakespeare's Nurse gives about Romeo's character after the killing of Tybalt:

JULIET

Thou and my Bosom, henceforth shall be 'twain:

How hateful is this Place in Romeo's Absence?

Remov'd from what we love, a Court's a Prison;

⁹⁰ The expressions in bold correspond with the words uttered by Otway's Lavinia (II. [i.] ll. 146; 148).

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But with our Loves the least Spot's a World:
Then, finding Romeo, I enjoy the World.
Oh! Love, how mighty is thy Power! My Heart
Grows resolute, inspir'd by thee: 'Tis Love
Makes wise Men weak, and silly Women cunning;
Cowards courageous, and the Hero tremble:
Love can with sudden, and resistless, Power,
Abash the Learned; or make an Orator,
Of unskill'd Youth; – Humanise the Brute;
Exalt the Slave, enslave the Conqueror:
Love can make Juliet shun her Father's House,
Who ere she knew Love's Influence, thence to have fled,
Had broke her Heart; no, I'll not tarry here:
I'll to the Friar, and consult with him.
If for my Griefs he finds no Remedy,
Let the worst come, I still have Power to die.

[Exit.]

(IV. i. ll. 213 – 230)⁹¹

This desire to soften the image of Juliet by introducing more references to the notion of love in her speeches is also present in the final words that she utters in the play, which reinforces the assumption of the underlying intention of “sweetening” her personality. While composing the scene that portrays the last appearance of Juliet onstage, Cibber definitely had Otway's Lavinia in mind. As it has been shown, Lavinia does not wish to die in vain. Hence, before she expires, she curses the entire world. Cibber does

⁹¹ The lines in bold signal the sentences added by Cibber. The remaining lines paraphrase the sentences uttered by Shakespeare's Juliet in III. v. ll. 241 – 243.

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not copy a speech that is full of bitterness and resentment, but does retain part of her necessity to pass onto the world the misery into which she sinks in after the unexpected loss of her beloved Romeo:

JULIET

Let Heart felt Rage, Distraction, and Despair,

Seize all the World till they grow mad as I am.

(V. iii. ll. 258 – 259)

Unlike Otway, Cibber preferred not to make the previous extract Juliet's final speech and, thus, consciously avoids retaining in the audiences' eyes the image of a woman who leaves the world holding a grudge against humanity. Following Shakespeare, Cibber's Juliet also decides to act hastily to prevent intruders from stopping her from taking her own life. Similarly to the speech extracted from act IV, scene i, Juliet speaks once again about love, used here as a substitute for the name of Romeo. Therefore, in the choice of words for Juliet's final speech before she joins Romeo in death, Cibber deliberately included the term love:

[*Watch. Within.*]

Lead Boy. Which way?

JULIET

What Noise is that – **I will have no Prevention.**

Then I'll be brief. **Come well-secreted Dagger.**

[*Stabs herself.*]

This is thy Sheath, there rust and let me die?

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'Tis o'er; – my Eyes grow dim. Where is my Love?

Have I caught you! Now, now, we'll part no more.

[Falls on ROMEO, and dies.]

(V. iii. ll. 260 – 265)⁹²

The exclamation mark included after the line “this is thy sheath, there rust and let me die?” might have been an error on the part of the adaptor or the printer, as it does not seem truly coherent to turn that line into a question. However, if the exclamation mark was indeed added on purpose, it may serve to reflect Juliet’s doubt regarding her own strength and, hence, her ability in accomplishing her wish to commit suicide. Shakespeare’s Juliet acts much quicker, and devotes no time to inquiring about her Romeo, whose tragic death she is obviously clearly aware of. At this point, her despair is such that she only yearns for death and, consequently, has no time to spare. The most significant difference when both final speeches are compared lies in the fact that the last word uttered by Shakespeare’s Juliet is “die”:

JULIET

Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!

[Takes ROMEO's dagger.]

This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

She stabs herself, falls [and dies.]

(V. iii. ll. 169 – 170)

The comparison evidences that in Cibber’s adaptation, the last words uttered by Juliet during her final moments onstage contribute to offer a more romantic image that contrasts with the one offered by Shakespeare’s Juliet, whose final words create a bleaker

⁹² As in the previous quote, the lines in bold indicate the sentences added by Cibber.

picture in the spectator's mind. Undoubtedly, the audience is still confronted with the unpleasant act of having to witness the death of two young innocent lovers. Nonetheless, Cibber's Juliet in her more overt longing for Romeo, expressed particularly with the expressions "where is my love? [...] Now, now, we'll part no more", helps to appease the audiences' feelings. The change introduced by Cibber and the rationale behind it can be easily explained. The dramatist wants his audience to abandon the theatre with the idea that it is love rather than death what reunites the unhappy pair. This is, without doubt, a more reassuring thought with which to allow theatregoers to go back to their daily routines after the tragedy that they have just had to endure.

Another interesting aspect of Cibber's adaptation which is worth nothing is that his version of the play removes at the end the interpretation that this is Juliet's rather than Romeo's story, as the last two lines spoken by the Prince to close the play are altered. This is a tragic love story is the message that is given at the end. Most importantly, neither of the lovers acquires more importance than the other member in their relationship:

PRINCE

Never true Lovers Story did impart

More real Anguish to a humane Heart.

(V. iii. ll. 381 – 382)

In a section entitled "A Serio-Comic Apology, Et Cetera", which accompanies the text of the 1748 edition, Cibber provides an account about his life on the stage, which includes details regarding the reception of his *Romeo and Juliet* amongst his contemporaries. The playwright first acquaints readers with the date of its first performance, which took place "at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket [London] on Sept. the 11th, 1744", coinciding with the date in which Cibber inaugurated a season at the aforementioned theatre (1969, 72). As Weis remarks, "the cast was a family affair", since Cibber, who was forty-one at the time, played Romeo to his fourteen-year-old daughter Jenny, while his sister Charlotte acted the role of the Nurse" (2012, 61). This will not be the first time in history that father and daughter performed the roles of lovers onstage, as

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within a few days after the premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, on 22 September, the Haymarket Theater welcomed once more Cibber playing Othello to his daughter's Desdemona (De Bruyn 2012, 401). According to Cibber the revival of *Romeo and Juliet* that he and his fellow actors undertook was a complete success:

This Play was acted, at the aforesaid Theatre, twelve Nights with Success. I undertook the Part of *Romeo*, and performed to the Satisfaction of my Auditors. *Jenny* nightly improved in the part of *Juliet*. Our audiences were frequently numerous, and of the politest sort (Cibber 1969, 74).⁹³

The writer Eliza Haywood complimented Cibber's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, whom the author regarded as the best play within Shakespeare's tragic repertoire: "the whole Piece [...] is, in my Opinion and that of many others, the very best and most agreeable of all the Tragedies of that excellent Author [Shakespeare]" (cited in Vickers 1976, 164). Her personal assessment on Cibber's revival of *Romeo and Juliet* was expressed in *The Female Spectator* (1744 – 1746), considered the first periodical written for women by a woman (Vickers 1975, 162). Haywood's opinion regarding this particular production appeared a year after the premiere in an issue dated 1745 (Book VIII, ii). Nonetheless, her comments are based on the text, which she personally believes constitutes a considerable improvement of Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*:

I was a little surprised when I heard that Mr. *Cibber* junior had reviv'd the Tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* as it was first acted; *Caius Marius* being the same Play, only moderniz'd and clear'd of some Parts of its Rubbish by *Otway*, appearing to so much more Advantage that it is not to be doubted but that the admirable Author, had he lived to see the Alteration, would have been highly thankful and satisfied with it. [...] He had improved and heightened every Beauty that could receive

⁹³ Italics in the original.

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Addition, and been extremely tender in preserving all those entire which are above the reach of Amendment (cited in Vickers 1975, 163).

Although Haywood's comments fall within the realm of the textual, it can be assumed that she must have attended one of the performances, as in 1745 the text had not yet appeared in print, unless there was a preliminary version of the text circulating in the form of a promptbook. The fact that Cibber was not only the adaptor, but also at the time the person in charge of the season run at the Haymarket Theatre implies that one cannot regard his evaluation as impartial and without bias. Cibber's comments lose further credibility if one takes into consideration that "Garrick thought it was the worst show he had ever seen" (Weis 2012, 61). Garrick's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* will be examined in detail in this chapter, but suffice it to say at this point that his version, the one that will eventually triumph above all others, premiered in 1748.

Cibber himself was aware of Garrick's disapproval, and in his "Serio-Comic Apology" he attributed Garrick's dislike to jealousy: "our little Campaign opened with such Appearance of Success, my much-superior rival Potentiate, the Monarch of *Drury Lane*, began to be jealous of what he at first laughingly affected to despise" (Cibber 1969, 75). In other words, Cibber wanted his readers to believe that the fact that his production constituted an earlier adaptation of the play that Garrick later produced was the sole reason why the latter rejected it. Nevertheless, from his choice of words, it is unmistakable that Cibber himself was considerably jealous of Garrick. One need only look at the long expression used to deliberately avoid naming Garrick – "my much-superior rival Potentiate, the Monarch of *Drury Lane*" –, which noticeably reflects his contempt vis-à-vis the fame that the actor, playwright and theatre manager was starting to acquire.

Jane Cibber (b. 1730), who was often referred to as Jenny, was the eldest daughter of Cibber and his first wife Jane. She may not be currently one of the most-well known Juliets, but the actress holds an important position in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the English stage as she probably is, as Weis highlights, "the actress closest in age to Juliet ever to have played the role on the public stage" (2012, 61). In the prologue uttered in 1744 the fourteen-year-old girl was presented to the audience as "Young Jane, the blooming Promise of our Spring" – the allusion to spring was possibly added merely to emphasise her youth, as spectators would have evidently been aware that they were at the

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end of the summer season (Cibber 1969, 73). In his extensive “Serio-Comic Apology” Cibber deemed it appropriate to remark that his daughter’s acting had gained the approval of an anonymous gentleman, who devoted words of praise to the young actress in the contemporary press. Cibber did not share with his readers the name of the periodical, all that they are told is that the article was entitled “To Miss Jenny Cibber, in the character of Juliet”. The anonymous author was particularly pleased with her rendering of the phial scene. This constitutes one of the instances of the play for which subsequent eighteenth-century Juliets will also receive appraisal for:

What Pain I felt to hear the fond One grieve
When banish’d *Romeo* took his early Leave!
Fix to remain a true and faithful Bride,
How resolute the sleepy Charm she try’d,
And, waking, plung’d the Poniard in her Side!
So just her Accent, so correct her Air,
My Soul confess’d a very *Juliet* there. (cited in Cibber 1969, 75).⁹⁴

The author congratulates the young Jenny Cibber on her “rising fame” (cited in Cibber 1969, 74), and the remaining article unfolds in a similar manner; that is to say, there is no attempt at offering any aspect of her performance that may have displeased the anonymous admirer. The absence of negative comments merely increases the intense subjectivity of the article, making one doubt whether the assessment can be taken as truly valuable and as actual evidence of the acting techniques of the actress being evaluated. Nevertheless, it was not uncommon in the press of the period to find articles of this sort where gentlemen doted on the apparent extraordinary talents of a given actress, whose possible flaws were either non-existent or utterly irrelevant. In several occasions such

⁹⁴ Italics in the original.

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articles, filled with all the expected and required hyperbole, share more similarities with letters of courtship than with actual performance reviews.

Nonetheless, there may have been some truth in this marvellous description of her talents, as six years later in 1750 Jenny Cibber was once more the recipient of words of praise in a review published in *The Actor*. Unsurprisingly, the main issue that the reviewer found in the production that he had seen some years earlier at the Haymarket Theatre was the portrayal of a young Romeo in the body of a man in his forties. The incongruity of the situation undoubtedly clashed with the reality that father and daughter were trying to represent through their words and actions onstage, and negatively affected Jenny's depiction of Juliet, as the review humorously points out:

We remember a little Juliet, of very considerable merit, at the Hay-Market; and nothing is more certain, than that she would have appear'd, even with the same share of genius and accomplishments, much more pleasing than she did, if there had been some gay young fellow for her lover, instead of a person whom we could not remember, at every sentence she deliver'd concerning him, to be too old for her choice, too little handsome to be in love with, and, into the bargain, her father (cited in Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans 1975, 241).

Less than two months after the inauguration of the Little Theatre at Haymarket, Cibber is informed in a letter (dated 8 November 1744) written by Thomas de Veil ("a Justice of the Peace") that he must proceed to the closure of his theatre (Cibber 1969, 84). This should not come as a surprise, as Cibber was in fact running an illegal season at the Haymarket (McGirr 2018). A month after the arrival of such unpleasant news, the dramatist decides to publish an advertisement entitled "To the Nobility, Gentry, Et Cetera" asking this privileged sector of English society "to honour [his] Child with their Presence on Monday Night the 17th [December] Instant, to see the Tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* (with the Farce of the *Mock Doctor*, & c.) acted for her Benefit" (1969, 85). Contrary to the appraisal that Cibber bestowed upon the first twelve-night run of his production, he remained silent this time regarding how well the play may have been received. His only comment is attributed to the "brilliant audience" that attended the

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performance, which suggests that this last performance may not have been as successful as he had expected, especially if one takes into account that his letter addressed to the nobility was an undercover plea to the upper-middle classes of society so that he could maintain his position in the theatre business, after the scandals that surrounded both his personal life and his professional career.

Conscious of his undesirable position in the public eye, the cunning dramatist used his own daughter to arouse sympathy from the audience. Acting the play for her benefit was already a strategy. In fact, he hinted in his letter that, if the play was well received, he would arrange another performance for his own benefit. Miss Cibber began the epilogue thanking “those generous patrons, – whose applause deigns to support a young attempter’s cause” (cited in Cibber 1969, 86). She then devoted the first half of her speech to remembering her “dear mother gone” – a fellow actress who died at the age of twenty-seven –, and wishing that she was still alive so that she could follow her great example and become “a second Jenny Cibber on the stage” (cited in Cibber 1969, 86 – 87). The remaining part of her epilogue is a direct plea to the audience to take pity on her father by granting them the opportunity to perform one last night:

Ye bounteous Fair, – to you I plead his Cause.

[...]

He struggles ’gainst Misfortunes, hard oppress’d:

Smile on his Wants, bestow one happy Night

(Cited in Cibber 1969, 87).

This type of pitiful episodes in which Jenny Cibber visibly became in the eyes of the public a mere puppet employed by her father to make amends for his notorious reputation, undoubtedly affected and overshadowed Miss Cibber’s own aspirations. As McGirr affirms, “Jenny was unable to escape her father’s orbit to forge an independent identity or career. Regardless of her individual merits, Jenny Cibber could not make a name for herself, for she was always perceived as her father’s daughter and her attempts to extend the Cibber dynasty to a third generation failed” (2018).

There were no further performances of Cibber's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* held at the Little Theatre at Haymarket. The play was revived in 1748, coinciding with the publication of the only printed edition of the play that remains up to this day, but the location was shifted to a new venue. The title page informs its readers that *Romeo and Juliet* is "Now Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane" (Cibber 1969). Cibber does not provide any information concerning how this 1748 revival was received by his peers. Given his tendency towards self-praise, the absence of references to this matter is in itself suspicious, and the first indicator of an unwelcome reception. The accusations from which he felt obliged to defend himself in 1748 as a result of his quarrelsome behaviour, both publicly and privately, had seriously affected his personal reputation and also ought to be taken into consideration.

Only two years before Garrick's widely acclaimed adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* took the London stage by storm, a new production of the play appeared in a location distant from London and its vibrant theatrical scene: Ireland. In the tenth issue of the journal *Prompter* (11 November 1789), James Fennell gave account of the existence of "another alteration" of *Romeo and Juliet* produced by "Mr. Sheridan, of the Dublin Theatre" which had not appeared in print (cited in Vickers 1981, 518). Nevertheless, Fennell was wrong in asserting that the text had never been printed, a misconception held by other scholars in the twentieth century such as Branam (1984). The play was indeed published in Dublin in 1747, a year after its first performance. However, the only writer mentioned on the cover of that edition was its legitimate creator: "Mr. William Shakespeare" (Shakespeare 1747). The connection with Sheridan can be found in the subtitle: "A Tragedy. Now acting, with the greatest Applause, by his MAJESTY's servants, at the Theatre Royal in Smock-Alley" (Shakespeare 1747). As De Bruyn observes, "Thomas Sheridan (1719 – 1788) [was an] actor, educator and orthoepist. He began his theatrical career in Dublin, where he played Richard III in 1743, and he subsequently managed the united companies of the Aungier Street and Smock Alley theatres" (2012, 404).⁹⁵ Thus, it is the knowledge of Sheridan's occupation as theatre

⁹⁵De Bruyn also informs that, as an actor, "[Sheridan] had an uneven career in London, where he made his debut as Hamlet in 1744. Though he elicited comparisons to Garrick, he was a lesser performer who was not very well suited to heroic leading roles" (2012, 404).

manager of Smock Alley what allows us to identify the 1747 edition with the text employed by his company for the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

A detailed look at this printed version reveals that the text is almost an exact copy of Shakespeare's original. The text contains some of the changes introduced by Cibber; this would corroborate the assumption pointed out earlier about the possible circulation of a performance copy of Cibber's play prior to its publication in 1748. Another possible explanation, as Branam suggests, is that Sheridan may have attended a performance of Cibber's production, as he was present in London during the 1744 – 1745 season (1984, 171). When the play premiered at Smock Alley in 1746, the title roles were played by Thomas Sheridan himself and George Anne Bellamy, who would take on the role of Juliet once again in 1750 alongside Garrick (Shakespeare 2002, xi). It is known that the production received a warm welcome from Dublin theatregoers. The fact is not only acknowledged by the words "now acting, with the greatest applause" printed on the front matter of the 1747 edition, but also by Benjamin Victor (treasurer and deputy manager to Sheridan) who affirmed that "*Romeo and Juliet* was at last brought on, and proved the *only* successful Play of the [1746 – 1747] Season" (1761, 93).

If there was a version of *Romeo and Juliet* that would set the standard for subsequent generations was David Garrick's adaptation, first printed and acted in 1748. As it is widely known Garrick (1717 – 1779), actor, writer and theatre manager, owes most of his fame and reputation to Shakespeare. The origin of the strong connection between Garrick and the Bard can be traced back to January 1741, when the monument to Shakespeare was incorporated into the prestigious Poets' Corner located in Westminster Abbey. According to Ritchie "this was almost certainly the beginning of Garrick's deliberate strategy to enhance his own reputation by allying himself with Shakespeare's burgeoning fame" (2014, 32). Indeed, only a few months later, on 19 October of that same year, Garrick made his debut on the London stage acting the part of Richard III at Goodman's Fields (Ritchie and Sabor 2012, 6).⁹⁶ Since his stage debut Garrick strongly contributed to the dissemination of Shakespeare around England, and to

⁹⁶ In the introductory section to *The Dramatic Works of David Garrick*, the anonymous author of "The Life of David Garrick, Esq." offers the following comments on Garrick's widely acclaimed debut: "his acting was attended with the loudest acclamations of applause; and his fame was so quickly propagated through the town, that the more established Theatres of Drury Lane, and Covent Garden, were deserted" (Garrick 1798, i).

the eventual rise of the Bard's status as national icon. Indeed, Garrick championed Shakespeare throughout his career, culminating in 1769 with the celebration of the legendary Stratford Shakespeare Jubilee where, ironically, not a single Shakespearean play was performed.

In April 1747 Garrick became a joint patentee, alongside James Lacy, in the management of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane (Garrick 1798, ii).⁹⁷ Drury Lane Theatre proved, as Taylor explains, "more adroit [than the Theatre Royal Covent Garden] in appropriating the national dramatist" (1991, 118).⁹⁸ Only a year after Garrick had become the theatre manager of Drury Lane his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* premiered and was published in London under the following title: *Romeo and Juliet. By Shakespear. With Some Alterations, and an Additional Scene*. In its often quoted section entitled "To the Reader" Garrick explained the purpose of the cuts and changes made to Shakespeare's tragedy: "The Alterations in the following Play are few and trifling, except in the last Act; the Design was to clear the Original, as much as possible, from the Jingle and Quibble which were always thought the great Objections to reviving it" (cited in Branam 1984, 173). Garrick remained largely faithful to the action of Shakespeare's play, as the changes introduced mostly consisted of reducing the length of some of the speeches. The additional scene mentioned in the title refers to a funeral procession that takes place to add more pomp and grandeur to the carrying of Juliet's supposedly dead body. In fact, this feature was regularly advertised in the press and playbills throughout the remainder of the century as a grand spectacle. It was first introduced by John Rich on 28 September 1748 in the productions of *Romeo and Juliet* held at Covent Garden Theatre, and cunningly copied by Garrick, only three days later, at Drury Lane (Haywood 1960; Branam 1984).

In 1750, two years after the success of Garrick's production, a second edition of his adaptation was published titled *Romeo and Juliet. By Shakespear. With Alterations, and an Additional Scene: As it is Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane*. The 1748 text was reprinted with further minor changes, such alterations "appealed to the sentimentality of the eighteenth-century audience and were much acclaimed" (Lennox-Boyd, Shaw, and Halliwell 1994, 50–51). As a consequence, in his newly revised tragedy,

⁹⁷ James Lacy (1696 – 1774) was a fellow actor and theatre manager (Brayne 2020).

⁹⁸ In fact, as Shaughnessy highlights, "by 1751 Garrick was calling his theatre 'the house of William Shakespeare'" (2012, 163).

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Garrick chose to eliminate the characters of Lady Montague and, particularly, that of Rosaline. The presence of the latter created discomfort and a feeling of bewilderment amongst the audience, as it distorted their understanding of Romeo's love for Juliet.⁹⁹ Garrick himself felt the need to justify the omission of Rosaline in the "Advertisement" to his new edition:

When this Play was reviv'd two Winters ago, it was generally thought, that the sudden Change of Romeo's Love from Rosaline to Juliet was a Blemish in his Character, and therefore it is to be hop'd that an Alteration in that Particular will be excus'd; the only Merit that is claim'd from it is, that it is done with as little Injury to the Original as possible (Garrick 1994).¹⁰⁰

Two features present in the first edition that Garrick retained, owing to their popularity amongst contemporary audiences, were the funeral procession and a final farewell between the lovers at the churchyard. As discussed above, the latter had been introduced into the British textual and stage history of *Romeo and Juliet* by Otway and later copied – almost word by word – by Cibber in his own adaptation of the play. Garrick justified its inclusion in the "Advertisement" asserting the following: "Bandello, the Italian Novelist, from whom Shakespeare has borrow'd the Subject of this Play, has made Juliet to wake in the Tomb before Romeo dies" (Garrick 1994). In other words, he justifies the scene on the basis of authenticity and fidelity to the Italian sources. Nonetheless, his statement evidences that Garrick ignored that it is da Porto who is credited with its invention, as the encounter first appeared in 1524 in the novella "Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti". Garrick also acknowledged its presence in Otway's *Caius Marius*, but believed that "it is a matter of Wonder, that so great a dramatic Genius did not work up a Scene from it of more Nature, Terror, and Distress" (Garrick 1994). As a matter of fact, Garrick borrowed the idea from Otway, but recreated the final encounter according to his own taste.

⁹⁹ In 1744 Cibber had also eliminated Rosaline from his stage adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*.

¹⁰⁰ All quotations and excerpts copied from Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* (1750) are taken from an edition of the text published in 1994 by Chadwyck-Healey.

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In Otway, the conversation between the lovers is briefer and, most importantly, Marius Junior dies completely ignorant of his tragic finale. After taking poison, he blissfully believes that he has awoken from the dead so as to accompany his dearest Lavinia to Heaven or, as he himself defines it, “those Hills of Joys” (V. [iv.] p. 63). Thus, he dies comforted with the thought of having been reunited with his true love. On the contrary, Garrick, aware of the powerful effect of this final encounter, lost no opportunity to enhance the pathos contained in the scene. Hence, he considerably enlarged the conversation between the unfortunate pair to increase, not only their suffering, but also that of the spectators. Garrick’s Romeo is fully conscious of his immediate death, and does not spare Juliet from the knowledge that he is about to depart from this world. Her shock and despair at learning the news can be taken as a mirror of the expected reaction from any theatergoer first attending a performance of the tragedy in 1750:

ROMEO

I thought thee dead; distracted at the sight,

(Fatal speed) drank poison, kiss’d thy cold lips,

And found within thy arms a precious grave –

But in that moment – Oh –

JULIET

And did I wake for this!

(V. v. ll. 111 – 115)

The changes made to Shakespeare’s text proved to be highly successful, and well received amongst Garrick’s contemporaries and subsequent generations alike. These are the major reasons why, as De Bruyn affirms, “[Garrick’s] innovations held the stage until well into the nineteenth century” (2012, 394).

Following Shakespeare, the action of Garrick’s *Romeo and Juliet* unfolds in five acts. Nevertheless, the adaptor further subdivided each act into a higher number of scenes in comparison with Shakespeare’s text – with the exception of act IV, made of five scenes

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in each version. Although Garrick remained largely faithful to the source text, he introduced some variations which affected the characterization of his own personal Juliet. These changes become more relevant when one takes into account that the “attention to characterization was to become an eighteenth-century obsession: Shakespeare was the great master of character” (Lynch 2012, 42). While Garrick’s *Romeo* mostly mirrors Shakespeare’s, with the exception that his love for Juliet becomes more credible thanks to the removal of Rosaline, Garrick did not fully imitate Shakespeare in his portrayal of Juliet. As a result of the influence of Neoclassicism, in the hands of Garrick, Juliet becomes a considerably more modest woman, and loses part of the strength that defines her. Nonetheless, concerns with propriety did not apply to all works of eighteenth-century English literature, which offered examples of women who strongly deviated from what was regarded as acceptable female behaviour. One need only think of *Moll Flanders*, the eponymous heroine of Daniel Defoe’s novel (1722), who resorts to unscrupulous methods in order to survive.

The first change that becomes apparent is her older age compared to Shakespeare’s Juliet. In the conversation on marriage held between Capulet and Paris in act I, scene iii, the former acquaints his interlocutor with the following information:

CAPULET

But saying o’er what I have said before,

My child is yet a stranger in the world,

She hath not seen the change of eighteen years;

Let two more summers wither in their pride,

Ere we may think her ripe to be a wife.

(I. iii. ll. 64 – 68)

Garrick raised Juliet’s age to almost eighteen, turning her into the oldest Juliet created up to that point in history. A peculiar choice given that *Romeo and Juliet* are now considered emblems of adolescent love. Strictly speaking *Romeo*’s age is never given in

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Shakespeare's play, but it is widely assumed that he is probably in his teenage years, as his female counterpart. Elevating Juliet's age to turn her into a young woman entering the realm of adulthood could not have been an ill-motivated decision. Garrick was possibly aware of the fact that eighteenth-century audiences were far detached from medieval Catholic Italy, the period when the play is originally set. Thus, spectators may have found it hard to relate to the love embodied by Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet – the latter is barely fourteen. Their teenage romance may have been deemed inappropriate and rash, doubly so when it ends in a marriage which would probably have been viewed as premature. These assumptions justify why Garrick's Capulet initially believes that waiting "two more summers", that is, once Juliet turns twenty-one, is a more suitable time period to arrange her wedding.

Garrick's concerns with the notion of decorum become more apparent when one examines his depiction of Juliet. Her more modest behaviour is evident from her first encounter with Romeo during the masked ball, which takes places in this version in act I, scene vi (rather than in the fifth scene). The conversation in which Romeo and Juliet address one another as holy pilgrims is shorter. Even though the lovers also kiss, the eroticized atmosphere of the passage is toned down owing to the omission of some of the most daring lines uttered by Juliet. Consequently, lines such as "then have my lips the sin that they have took" (I. v. l. 107) or "you kiss by th' book" (I. v. l. 109) have been cut. Nevertheless, references to a more adequate religious imagery are retained in this first brief encounter between the innocent lovers:

ROMEO

If I prophane with my unworthy hand

[To JULIET.]

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this.

[Kiss.]

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,

For palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss.

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ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

Thus then, dear saint, let lips put up their prayers.

[*Kiss.*]

(I. vi. ll. 60 – 66)

In the iconic balcony scene, set in a garden in this adaptation, some of Juliet's most memorable lines have disappeared: "what's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot, / nor arm nor face nor any other part / Belonging to a man. O be some other name!" (II. ii. ll. 40 – 42). Even though there is nothing overtly sensual about the aforementioned lines, Garrick preferred to remove explicit references made about parts of a male body. Nonetheless, the last line uttered by the young lady, in which she passionately offers herself to an imaginary Romeo uttering "take all myself", remains (l. 36). The reason why this line was not cut may be due to the fact that this is the last sentence delivered by Juliet before Romeo reveals his presence. Hence, Garrick may have thought it was not entirely inappropriate for Juliet to show her passion for Romeo, as she was unaware of his company. Despite the fact that Juliet is almost eighteen, Garrick anticipates the last stage direction present in their conversation, making her exit the stage prior to Romeo's allusion to wanting to peacefully rest on her breast:

JULIET

Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I shall say good night 'till it be morrow.

[*Exit.*]

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine Eyes, peace in thy breast;

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Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

(II. ii. ll. 68 – 71)

During the first speech uttered by Juliet after her marriage to Romeo, a scene where she is mentioned but not present onstage, some of her boldest lines have been cut. Examples include sentences such as “and learn me [civil night] how to lose a winning match, / Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods” (III. ii. ll. 12 – 13) or “and though I am sold, / not yet enjoyed” (III. ii. ll. 27 – 28). In spite of the several cuts made to reduce the number of references to the act of having sexual intercourse, the newlywed’s ardent desire and urgency at wanting to consummate her marriage are palpable from her words; as shown in the following lines that Garrick maintained from the often quoted soliloquy:

JULIET

Give me my Romeo, night, and when he dies

Take him and cut him out in little stars,

And he will make the face of heav’n so fine,

That all the world will be in love with night,

And pay no worship to the garish sun:

O, I have bought the mansion of a love,

But not possess’d it; so tedious is this day.

(III. iv. ll. 62 – 68)

It is not solely propriety that concerned Garrick in his portrayal of the play’s heroine, as the anger expressed by Juliet in certain crucial scenes is also toned down. This feature first emerges towards the end of the aforementioned scene, when the nurse acquaints Juliet with the tragic news of Tybalt’s death at the hands of Romeo. For instance, several lines in which Juliet reveals through language her stylistic artistry, by

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employing several examples about Romeo's apparently hidden evil, are cut.¹⁰¹ The omitted lines also appear to comply with Garrick's wish to "clear the Original, as much as possible, from the Jingle and Quibble" (Garrick 1994). Juliet is not the only character whose anger is diminished, as so is Lady Capulet's ire. In act III, scene viii, the scene in which a tearful and miserable Juliet is visited by her mother at her chamber, all the lines in which Lady Capulet shows her crave for revenge calling Romeo a "villain" whom she wishes to see dead have disappeared from the eighteenth-century adaptation. In fact, Garrick did not seem particularly keen on having his female characters use the term "villain" to attack or insult Romeo. The adjective is uttered a total number of nine times in the play, in all instances by a male character. Garrick's personal preference to avoid depicting women displaying an excessive amount of passion, and negative feelings such as rage and hatred, arises once again during the confrontation scene between Juliet and her progenitors. Juliet's lines, in which she openly expresses to her mother her strong opposition to marrying a man whom she does not love, have been cut to eliminate her defiant attitude. Instead, Garrick retains the nicest lines of her monologue, where she mostly begs her mother to convince her father not to go ahead with such a scheme:

JULIET

Now by Saint Peter's church and Peter too,

He shall not make me there a joyful bride!

I wonder at this haste, that I must wed

Ere he that must be husband comes to woo.

I pray you tell my lord and father, madam,

I cannot marry yet; and when I do, I swear

It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,

Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

¹⁰¹ The lines omitted are the following: JULIET. O serpent heart hid with a flowering face! / Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? / Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical, / Dove-feathered raven, wolfish-ravens lamb, / Despised substance of divinest show, / Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st, / A damned saint, an honourable villain (III. ii. ll. 73 – 79).

Garrick preferred to offer a milder version of Juliet's character, portraying her as a more lady-like and modest woman. Even though allusions to sex have not been completely removed, they have been considerably reduced from her speeches. Rather than strengthening the character, Garrick appears to have chosen to make her, perhaps, more likeable by eliminating her definable fierceness and boldness. Nonetheless, this was not always the norm in the depiction of womanhood during the eighteenth century. One cannot forget that the literature of the period offered examples of women who strongly deviated from what was regarded as acceptable female behaviour, as is the case of Moll Flanders, the eponymous heroine created by Daniel Defoe in his 1722 novel.

The lasting afterlife of Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* in print is evident from the large number of editions published following the 1750 edition of the play (1754; 1758; 1763; 1766; 1769; 1784; 1785; 1788; 1790; 1793; 1794; 1798).¹⁰³ All the aforementioned editions were published either in London or in Dublin, with the exception of the 1767 text, which was printed in Belfast. In addition, the 1785 edition was also made available to Scottish theatre aficionados, owing to the fact that this particular text was printed in London, but sold "by all Booksellers in England, Scotland, and Ireland" – as mentioned in the cover (Garrick 1785).

The editorial success that Garrick's adaptation enjoyed in print was mirrored in the theatre. The first performance of Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* took place on 29 November 1748 at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, starring Spranger Barry and Susannah Cibber in the title roles (Vickers 1975, 333). Branam records the success of the production: "the play run for twenty performances that season, thirteen of them consecutive. Garrick the manager of Drury Lane had a clear hit on his hands" (Branam 1984, 176). If the play had had a phenomenal start since its first appearance, its revival two years later would become a memorable moment in the history of the London stage. *Romeo and Juliet* had become so popular during the mid-eighteenth century, mostly

¹⁰² The lines in bold correspond to the words uttered by Garrick's Juliet. The remaining part of the speech has been taken from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (III. v. ll. 116 – 117; 121 – 123).

¹⁰³ It is worth noting that there may exist other editions of Garrick's *Romeo and Juliet* published after 1750, besides the texts that I have managed to retrieve and consult.

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owing to Garrick's version, that in 1750 the rival companies of Covent Garden (managed by John Rich) and Drury Lane (directed by Garrick) ran a fierce competition for twelve nights, which ended only when Susannah Cibber – Covent Garden's Juliet – fell ill, an unfortunate event which allowed Garrick to emerge victorious from the theatrical battle (Vickers 1975, 374). Dobson signals towards exhaustion as the possible cause for Cibber's illness (Dobson 2016, 219). Hence, during a total number of twelve nights London theatergoers became first-hand witnesses of the fierce competition between the productions of *Romeo and Juliet* conducted by Garrick and John Rich, albeit the latter also employed Garrick's adaptation as script.

The two rival productions of *Romeo and Juliet* opened on the same night: 28 September 1750 (Weis 2012, 62). In order to trace the cause that started the rivalry between both companies, one must travel slightly further back in time. As mentioned previously, when Garrick first staged *Romeo and Juliet* in 1748, he chose Spranger Barry and Susannah Cibber for the portrayal of the two principal tragic roles. However, at the end of the 1749 – 1750 season, both actors left Drury Lane and went instead to Covent Garden, managed by John Rich (Burden 2012, 217). The major rivalry, however, existed between the actors who played the role of Romeo: Spranger Barry (at Covent Garden), and Garrick himself (at Drury Lane). In his edition of *Romeo and Juliet* Loehlin (2002) refers to the iconic episode, quite righteously, as “the Battle of the Romeos”. Indeed, it was in the depiction of Romeo where eighteenth-century audiences perceived the source of the enmity laid. As Shaughnessy vividly explains, “from 28 September to 11 October, these were the only shows in town (enabling the cannier spectator to watch Barry's first three acts, then slip down Russell Street to catch Garrick's finale)” (Shaughnessy 2012, 167).

Undoubtedly, there was an air of expectation and great curiosity surrounding both productions, which implies that they were evidently also subject to criticism. Garrick was accused of his exaggerated gestures, this has become a recurrent attack on his particular acting style in the press of the period. Arthur Murphy (actor, essayist, and prolific dramatist) denounced the main actors of both productions according to a completely unrelated subject: their old age. Hence, in his “Free Remarks on the Tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*”, printed in *The Student* (1750), Murphy made the following observations:

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In my opinion neither of them are fitted for the characters as drawn by the poet, but particularly the hero and heroine of Covent-Garden. They all seem to want what no actor can truly feign, no spectator can thoroughly be deceived in; I mean that degree of puberty, which is but just to be distinguished from childhood” (cited in Vickers 1975, 374).

“The hero and heroine of Covent-Garden”, as Murphy calls them, were indeed much older than the characters that they were attempting to represent: Spranger Barry was thirty-one, whereas Susannah Cibber was thirty-six. At Drury Lane, a thirty-three-year-old Garrick was playing Romeo to a much younger Juliet. George Anne Bellamy was in her early twenties at the time; thus, her features were more suited to play Garrick’s eighteen-year-old Juliet.

George Anne Bellamy (1731? – 1788) was an actress “best known for her performances of tragic parts, including Desdemona and Cordelia” (De Bruyn 2012, 400). Similarly, her Covent Garden rival, the actress and singer Susannah Maria Cibber (1714 – 1766), “was considered one of the finest tragic actresses of her day. She specialised in pathetic and sentimental roles” (Ritchie 2014, 39). As Lennox-Boyd, Shaw, and Halliwell observe “her performance as Juliet to Barry’s Romeo during the remarkable twelve-night battle with Garrick and George Anne Bellamy in 1750 was greeted with delight” (1994, 13) . The proof of her success is evident from the fact that her fine performance as Juliet was still being remembered decades later. In *Imperfect Hints towards a New Edition of Shakespeare, written chiefly in the year 1782* (1787), Samuel Felton (author of several works) was particularly fascinated by the actress’ sublime technique in her portrayal of the scene in which Juliet drinks the sleeping potion, as Garrick named the beverage:

The natural terror which [Mrs.] Cibber gave to this scene (which she performed with all the enthusiasm of her soul) – her start, and wild distracted aspect at exclaiming “*O, look! Methinks I see my cousin’s ghost* –“, accompanied with a shriek that really chill’d the blood, and made the audience fancy “*the bloody Tybalt*” and the “*spirits of the night*” were fleeting before her – her sudden transition from perturbed horror, to the mournful and entreating tenderness with which she cried

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“*Stay, Tybalt, stay!*”, her momentary pause of recollection, which recalled her scattered senses, and fixed her thoughts on him, for whose sake she cheerfully swallowed the potion, and the affectionately mournful voice with which she pronounced this last line:

“*Romeo I come! THIS DO I DRINK TO THEE.*”

[...] Her fine conceptions of the Poet, and her display of unattainable excellence in *Juliet*, still lives in the memory of her fear-struck but delighted auditors (cited in Vickers 1981, 469).¹⁰⁴

Susannah Cibber played a significant role in the popularization of Shakespeare on the English stage. As Ritchie stresses, together with the actresses Hannah Pritchard and Catherine Clive, she “contributed significantly to the presentation and popularization of Shakespeare in the mid-eighteenth century” (2014, 52). The productions of *Romeo and Juliet* based on Garrick’s adaptation initiated a decisive period in the reception of the tragedy. As Weis highlights, “between 1750 and 1800 *Romeo and Juliet* was performed some four hundred times, which made it the most popular play of Shakespeare’s during that period” (2012, 64). The famous twelve-day battle held between Barry and Garrick, who continued playing Romeo for a number of years, not only strongly captivated theatregoers, but also individuals who saw the potential and profit that could be gained adapting *Romeo and Juliet* for the stage. One example was Charles Marsh, a clerk in the War Office who had attended Trinity College London and Cambridge University (Campillo Arnaiz 2008). Unfortunately for Marsh, his wish to see his adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* performed at Covent Garden in 1752 was not fulfilled:

In the summer of 1752 I waited on Mr. Rich at Cowley, and read to him an alteration of *Romeo and Juliet* wherein I had separated the Tragedy from the Comedy, and thrown the latter quite away. He approv’d of what I had done, but being undetermin’d as to accepting it, advis’d me to shew it to Mr. Barry and Mrs. Cibber. When I came to Mr. Barry he told me he was sorry he could not assist me, for the House was to be

¹⁰⁴ Italics in the original.

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open'd with *Romeo* as the stage then possessed it. But in Order to make me Amends, if I wou'd alter *Cymbeline* he wou'd engage for the Performance of it (cited in Vickers 1976, 393).

Mr. Rich's doubts about Marsh's offer, together with Mr. Barry's refusal to perform *Romeo and Juliet* in an adaptation that was not the one devised by Garrick, clearly demonstrate the extent of the success that Garrick's version had acquired outside the boundaries of Drury Lane Theatre. Indeed, since the mid-eighteenth century, Garrick's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* triumphed above all others, no rival could equal the amendments that he had done to Shakespeare's text.¹⁰⁵

The immense popularity that *Romeo and Juliet* had on the stage explains why the character of Juliet would gradually become a particular favourite amongst actresses, a process that culminated in the Victorian period, when playing Juliet was seen as the perfect vehicle for young actresses to gain fame and recognition. After George Anne Bellamy and Susannah Cibber, whose popular performances highly benefited from the productions that they starred in, different actresses took on the role of Juliet during the remaining half of the eighteenth century. The first actress who succeeded them was Maria Isabella Nossiter (1735 – 1759). Thus, in 1753 an eighteen-year-old Miss Nossiter played Juliet alongside Spranger Barry at Covent Garden Theatre (Loehlin 2002). This constituted Nossiter's debut on the English stage. The only detailed record of her performance that appears to have survived is the long pamphlet written by the dramatist McNamara Morgan entitled "A Letter to Miss Nossiter" (1753). Following other forms of theatre criticism characteristic of the century, the document cannot be labelled as an adequate exercise in objective criticism, as it mostly constitutes a token of male appreciation for a given actress. In fact, at times, the excessive praise makes the pamphlet

¹⁰⁵ Besides the British versions of *Romeo and Juliet* described in this chapter, there appears to have been another production performed prior to 1789, the year in which James Fennell briefly alluded to it in an issue of the journal *Prompter* stating that "Mr. Lee made another [*Romeo and Juliet*] for the Edinburgh Theatre: but [it has not] appeared in print" (cited in Vickers 1981, 518). In the early nineteenth century, in the third volume of *Biographia Dramatica*, an encyclopedia on British and Irish dramatic writers, there is a reference to Mr. Lee (manager of the Edinburgh Theatre) who "made some supposed amendments in this play [*Romeo and Juliet*]" for his company; once more, it is mentioned that the text has not appeared in print (Baker and Reed 1812, 233).

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more akin to a letter of courtship written by an ardent and/or secret suitor. Remarks such as “her Look and Voice melt into bewitching Softness” prove that Morgan appeared to be much more interested in and mesmerized by Miss Nossiter’s presence and beauty onstage than with her acting itself. (Morgan 1753, 12).

However, in what can be regarded as an effort to mask his letter of appraisal under the form of a theatrical review, Morgan provides his opinion on the way in which the young actress performs different scenes. As the above quote by Samuel Felton had shown, Morgan also delighted in Nossiter’s depiction of the phial scene, which he believes it to be “the best [scene] in the Play, so was it played the best” (1753, 29). According to eighteenth-century critics “Shakespeare was the great master of character. [...] Rather than judging Shakespeare by his ability to depict human nature, critics had come to explore human nature by reading Shakespeare” (Lynch 2012, 42). The special attention placed on Shakespeare and characterization explains Morgan’s fascination with the way in which Nossiter brilliantly performs different emotions during the act of drinking the phial:

But here, here, you who delight in true Representations of Nature apply all your Attention; watch the sudden Changes of her Look, her Eye, her Voice and every Part. Mark the Gradations of her Passions, from Doubt to Fear, from Fear to Horror, from Horror to Desperation, and from thence to Phrenzy [sic], and you will see the greatest Acting that has been exhibited upon the Stage, by Man or Woman, since [Thomas] Betterton went off (1753, 31).

Morgan will further remark on a different page of his long letter that “nothing was ever finer imagined or executed in a more masterly Manner” (1753, 33). Conscious of the hyperbolic tone of his letter, the devout admirer deemed necessary to excuse himself stating “that, notwithstanding all this, she must not look upon herself as perfect, nay, or as absolutely free from Faults; for she hath many Things that want to be corrected”, only to add a few lines after that he wishes to “have the Pleasure of kissing MISS NOSSITER’S Hand (an Honour I shall soon solicit)” so as to “whisper [those Faults] in her own Ear, if [he] can possibly remember them” (Morgan 1753, 53). In other words,

the underlying intention of his letter clearly seems to establish an acquaintance with a newly discovered beautiful young actress.

In spite of Morgan's magnificent review, the dramatist shows his dissatisfaction at reading some not so joyous reviews published by his peers: "and here I have one Favour to ask the common News-paper Writers, [...] that they will treat her with a little more Delicacy (if they can) than others have been mentioned in their Papers; left, as she is not yet grown callous to Censure, though undeserved" (1753, 54). Furthermore, Morgan also takes the opportunity to petition that her name is never mentioned again in the *Gray's-Inn Journal* and the *Craftsman* (1753, 55). The adverse opinions found in the press of the period indicate that Miss Nossiter's apparently wondrous portrayal of Juliet was possibly not as perfect and ideal as Morgan wanted the public to believe.

Three years later a playbill for *Romeo and Juliet* dated 17 September 1756 reveals that at Drury Lane the title characters were now being played by two actors named Mr. Holland and Mrs. Palmer (Weis 2012, 65). The fact that the play was performed at the theatre that housed Garrick's adaptations, together with the reference in the advertisement to a funeral procession, leave no doubts with regards to which acting text had been used for the performance: Garrick's version. Mrs. Palmer may not have been a very successful or convincing Juliet as, merely a few weeks later, on 9 October Drury Lane renewed its cast to reincorporate Garrick, who played Romeo to Miss Hannah Mary Pritchard's Juliet.¹⁰⁶ John Joseph Knight, in an entry of the *Dictionary of National Biography, 1885 – 1900*, asserts that Miss Pritchard's debut as Juliet "caused a sensation", but he does not regard the role as one her chief successes (Knight 1896, 409). In spite of her successful debut, Knight also notes that, unfortunately, Miss Pritchard "lacked her mother's higher gifts, and never fulfilled expectations" (1896, 409).

Some decades later on 10 December 1776, Drury Lane opened its doors to welcome once again the debut of a very young actress, whose age coincided with that of Garrick's eighteen-year-old Juliet. The chosen candidate on this occasion was Mary Robinson (1785 – 1800), who would end up being known as Perdita, owing to the popularity that she acquired after her performance of that role in *The Winter's Tale* (De

¹⁰⁶ Miss Pritchard was the daughter of the renowned actress Hannah Pritchard (1709 – 1768), Garrick's strongest stage partner. The iconic status acquired by Hannah Pritchard during her lifetime was celebrated after her death with a marble commemorative tablet erected in Westminster Abbey, and placed next to Shakespeare's monument (Shaughnessy 2012, 161; De Bruyn 2012, 404).

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Bruyn 2021, 404).¹⁰⁷ Mary Robinson played Juliet to William Brereton's Romeo. Her performance constituted "an instant success" for the young actress (Knowles 2014). In her *Memoirs*, published in 1894, the actress recalls how Mr. Garrick, who had retired from the stage for some seasons, "kindly promised protection, and as kindly undertook to be [her] tutor" and prepare her for the role (Robinson 1894, 127). Robinson reminisces the warm welcome she received on the opening night, and the deep feeling of satisfaction that she experienced after her very first attempt at acting:

The night was concluded with peals of clamorous approbation. I was complimented on all sides; but the praise of one object, whom most I wished to please, was flattering even to the extent of human vanity. I then experienced, for the first time in my life, a gratification which language could not utter. I heard one of the most fascinating men, and the most distinguished geniuses of the age, honour me with partial approbation (1894, 131).

Given that Robinson had made reference two lines above to Garrick and his "penetrating eyes" as "the objects most conspicuous" (1894, 130), one can easily assume that the distinguished genius that honoured her on that glorious night with partial approbation was no other than Garrick himself.

In mid-1780 the two main theatres located in London continued hosting new performances of *Romeo and Juliet*. For two consecutive years – in 1784 and 1785 – Drury Lane maintained the same pair of actors in the leading roles: Miss Elizabeth Farren (c. 1759 – 1829) and Mr. William Brereton (Garrick 1784; Garrick 1785). On the contrary, during that same period, Covent Garden changed the protagonists of the play. In 1784 the tragic pair was portrayed by Mrs. Elizabeth Kemble (1763 – 1841) and Mr. Richard Wroughton, whereas in the following year, the protagonists were embodied in the figures of Miss Elizabeth Young (c. 1740 – 1797) and Mr. Joseph George Holman (Garrick 1784; Garrick 1785). In November 1785 Covent Garden welcomed a new Juliet played by the

¹⁰⁷ De Bruyn informs that Mary Robinson "also performed numerous other Shakespearean roles, beginning in 1776 with Juliet, and she went on to play Ophelia, Lady Anne, Lady Macbeth, Viola and Rosalind. She subsequently had a career as a poet and, perhaps most importantly, novelist" (2012, 404).

actress Anne Brunton Merry (1769 – 1808). Juliet was the third role that the actress had rehearsed for that year's fall season at Covent Garden (Doty 1971, 14). At the age of sixteen Merry seemed, thanks to her young age and appearance, ideally suited to play Shakespeare's teenage heroine. Nonetheless, Doty observes that her early performances "drew censure":

One critic objected to her declamatory delivery, while another writer recognized that the young girl did not have the emotional depths to comprehend Juliet's feelings nor a sufficiently mobile face to reveal the emotions. [...] Other critics would undoubtedly concur [...] that if she had the youthful simplicity and ardor of the early scenes, it was nearly impossible for her to possess the maturity and skill required in the later scenes (1971, 15).

In spite of the initial adverse reaction from the critics, Anne Brunton Merry ended up performing the iconic role fifty-seven times throughout her career, both on the British and on the American stage (Doty 1971, 140). As a matter of fact, Merry debuted on the American stage playing Juliet on 5 December 1796 at New Theatre in Philadelphia (Durang 1966, 157).

The most famous British actress who played Juliet in the decade of the 1780's was Sarah Siddons (1755 – 1831). Sarah Siddons (née Kemble) was the eldest child of the eminent Kemble acting family. After her unsuccessful London debut as Portia in 1775, Siddons turned to the provincial stage, making her reputation in Bath from 1778 to 1782 (De Bruyn 2012, 404). During a period of eight months (from October 1778 to May 1779), Siddons, who was within weeks of giving birth to her second daughter, rehearsed and performed nearly thirty characters, including Juliet (Manvell 1970, 56–57). As Kennard observed a century later, the young Siddons "brought tragedies into fashion, and in *The Mourning Bride*, Juliet, the Queen in *Hamlet*, Jane Shore, Isabella, succeeded in gaining the suffrages [approval] of her Bath audience" (1893, 56). Siddons first played Juliet on 4 March 1779, she was twenty-four at the time and well suited for the role. Four days later, a letter signed A.B. appeared. Its author, who was familiar with the way whereby Juliet had been represented on the stage, praised Siddons's talented portrayal of

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Shakespeare's heroine: "I think I never beheld a Juliet till Mrs. Siddons showed me one at that time, and yet for these 30 years past I scarce ever miss'd this favourite play, both in London and elsewhere" (cited in Manvell 1970, 319).

In the early 1780s, Sarah Siddons returned to the London stage and "she swept all before her with the intensity of her performances, especially in tragic roles" (De Bruyn 2012, 404). Her London debut as Juliet took place on 11 May 1789 at Drury Lane; she was accompanied by her brother John Philip Kemble who played Romeo (Loehlin 2002, 20).¹⁰⁸ As Parsons informs, "Mrs. Siddons first assumed it for her benefit night" (Parsons 1909, 131). Nevertheless, her second attempt at playing Juliet was met with profound criticism.

Pascoe stresses that "the subject of actors ageing out of their ability to perform at peak effectiveness surfaces repeatedly in romantic era memoirs and diaries" (2008, 7). Unmistakably, the fact that Siddons was now thirty-four did not escape the spectators' judgement, whom considered her too old a woman to embody Shakespeare's young heroine. In the final years of the nineteenth century Wingate, a newspaper editor based in Boston, perfectly put into words the mostly undesirable reaction obtained from Siddons's contemporaries on witnessing her performance of Juliet on the London stage:

When Mrs. Siddons undertook Juliet her tragic face, through time and study, had lost the youthful freshness necessary for the part; for she was then thirty-four years old, and by nature too dignified and thoughtful to affect a maidenly love. Impassioned, terrific, sublime, was the verdict in her tragic scenes, but the love portions were not received with favour. That was in 1789 at Old Drury, when the Romeo (equally unsuccessful) was Juliet's brother, John Kemble (1895, 12).

¹⁰⁸ Other roles played by Sarah Siddons during the 1788 – 1789 season were: Queen Katharine in *King Henry VIII*, Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, the Princess in Jephson's *The Law of Lombardy*, the Fine Lady in Garrick's *Lethe*, and Mary Queen of Scots in St. John's *Mary Queen of Scots* (Ffrench 1954, 252).

The Eighteenth Century

Another pair of actors who played the famous lovers after 1789 were Dorothea Jordan (1761 – 1816) and Charles Kemble (Dobson and Wells 2001, 401). The Georgian actress gained fame in her lifetime mostly thanks to her comic roles. Nonetheless, Dorothea or Dorothy – as she was also known – played other prominent female Shakespearean roles besides Juliet, including Viola, Rosalind, Ophelia and Imogen (De Bruyn 2012, 402). Another actress who played Juliet in the final decade of the eighteenth century was Harriet Pye Esten (c.1761 – 1865). In the early 1790's Esten, who was in her late twenties, acted Juliet at Covent Garden to the Romeos of Joseph George Holman and, subsequently, James Middleton (Garrick 1793; Garrick 1794).

Thus, since the Restoration period, *Romeo and Juliet* gradually acquired increasing popularity amongst theatregoers across the British Isles. The play was first revived in a heavily-adapted format in the hands of Otway, but it was Garrick who took the text in 1748, adapted it to suited to eighteenth-century audiences, and turned it into one of the most performed Shakespearean plays in the period. The English Shakespearean commentator George Steevens affirmed in the *General Evening Post* (2 – 4 June 1772) that “in *Romeo*, capital as the lover is made, Juliet is entrusted with the most interesting part of the business” (cited in Vickers 1979, 499). The allure of playing such a young, but at the same time powerful, heroine attracted a wide range of actresses throughout the British Isles. The character of Juliet evidently delighted and fascinated the audience, who were particularly captivated by scenes such as the final encounter that Garrick added towards the end of the play, which allowed spectators to revel in the pathetic feeling of seeing the star-crossed lovers one last time. Actresses were often complimented for their ability to exhibit their technical skills in scenes such as the one in which Juliet drinks the beverage that will drive her into a lethargic state. Undoubtedly, if there was an issue that drew critics and spectators alike from relating to the character was that of age, as the older actresses were rarely accepted as being adequate representations of Juliet as a result of their more mature appearance.

2.2 France.

The eighteenth century marks the start of the reception of Shakespeare in the Continent. Furthermore, as Pujante asserts, “France and Germany [are] the two European countries which mostly contributed to the knowledge and dissemination of the playwright” (2019, 253).¹⁰⁹ Therefore, after our journey around the British Isles, we must at this point travel to France so as to examine the gradual introduction and reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in the neighbouring country. Even though the earliest adaptations of Shakespearean plays in French date from the age of the Enlightenment, evidence that attests to knowledge of *Romeo and Juliet* can be traced back to the late seventeenth century, more precisely, at the English College at Douai:

Romeo and Juliet is among the 1694 – 5 transcripts of six Shakespeare plays that originated with the English College at Douai, near Reims. Although there is no record of performances at Douai, there were in all probability originally prepared for some kind of theatrical production. [...] The English of the Douai *Romeo and Juliet* was extensively modernized. [...] Changes to the text such as “Friar” to “Father” point to a Catholic hand (Weis 2012, 59–60).

The existence of these six transcripts of Shakespearean texts demonstrate the interest that existed at the time in English cultural artifacts. But, as Pujante observes, “it was in the France of the Enlightenment where anglomania ignited with special force” (2019, 37).¹¹⁰ Voltaire is credited with the introduction of Shakespeare into France through the eighteenth letter of his *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), in which he declared that Shakespeare was the Corneille of the English (Pujante 2007, XXXI). This fascination with Shakespeare occurred after Voltaire’s exile in England (1726 – 1728), a period during which he learnt English, and subsequently promoted the dramatist’s work in France, in what constitutes Voltaire’s early phase of admiration for the Bard (Schwartz-

¹⁰⁹ “Francia y Alemania, los dos países europeos que más contribuyeron al conocimiento y difusión del dramaturgo.”

¹¹⁰ “Fue en la Francia de la Ilustración donde la anglomanía prendió con especial fuerza.”

Gastine 2017, 78). Hence, it was in the eighteenth century when *Romeo and Juliet* would become widely known to French theatregoers. This was the result of the work of six writers who took an interest in the Shakespearean tragedy, and sought to adapt it for the public.

The first translator of Shakespeare into French was Pierre-Antoine de La Place (1707 – 1793). La Place dedicated the first four volumes of his eight-volume collection of English drama, *Le Théâtre Anglois* (1745 – 1748), to Shakespeare. His particular rewriting of the tragedy of the star-crossed lovers, *Romeo, & Juliette*, is placed at the end of the third volume (Schwartz-Gastine 2017, 78). Nevertheless, La Place did not attempt to provide a faithful rendition of the original source texts, and tended to resort to adaptations or summaries of the English works instead. For instance, as Schwartz-Gastine observes, *Romeo, & Juliette* “is summarised in a mere five and a half pages” (2017, 77).

The decade of the 1770’s proved to be particularly productive owing to the appearance of four different versions of *Romeo and Juliet*. The first appeared at the start of the decade with the performance of a new adaptation composed by le Chevalier de Chastellux (1734 – 1788), who was fluent in English. As Schwartz-Gastine explains, “his happy-ending prose play, *Roméo et Juliette*, [was] performed in the private theatre of the Château de la Chevrette in 1770 in front of the most distinguished society of the time” (2017, 79). This comic version of the play was influenced by Lope de Vega’s tragicomedy *Castelvines y Monteses*, and it was revived some years later on 17 October 1775 (Schwartz-Gastine 2017, 79 – 80). The original tragic ending was restored in 1771 thanks to the publication in Paris of *Roméo et Juliette. Drame en cinq actes et en vers libres*, a text attributed to one d’Ozicourt (a nom de plume) (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 105; Schwartz-Gastine 2017, 81).

The best known version of *Romeo and Juliet* that reached the French public in the eighteenth century was the adaptation created by Jean-François Ducis (1733 – 1816). As it has been widely acknowledged Ducis holds an important position in the history of the reception of Shakespeare in France. Indeed, his importance in helping audiences gain access to Shakespeare was paramount, as his adaptations were influential not merely in his own country, but also abroad, where his versions circulated for several years in other European countries, including The Netherlands, Russia, and, evidently, Spain (Pujante 2007, XXX).

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In 1772, as Schwartz-Gastine affirms, Ducis “presented his own version of *Roméo et Juliette* before the Reading Committee of the Comédie-Française (on Sunday, July 5) where it was accepted unanimously. It was his second Shakespeare imitation [after *Hamlet*]” (2017, 82). Ducis, as he himself acknowledged, was barely familiar with the English language; hence, his knowledge of Shakespeare and his work mostly derived from what he was told or from the selective versions of La Place (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 29). Curiously, even though through his adaptations Ducis strongly contributed to incorporate his much admired Shakespeare into the French theatrical repertoire, the writer cunningly opted for the convenient option of publishing the adaptations under his own name; Shakespeare “was completely omitted from the books or theater bills” (Schwartz-Gastine 2003, 225). Ducis heavily altered Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in order to adapt it to the rigid neoclassical conventions that prevailed at the time. Furthermore, the love story between Roméo and Juliette almost becomes a subplot in this rewriting of the play, as the focus lies mostly on Montegu and his desire to avenge himself from the ill treatment received in the past at the hands of Juliette’s family (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 29).

Ducis’s *Roméo et Juliette* premiered on July 27 1772 in the vast Salle des Machines of the Tuileries, which could accommodate over 1.200 people, and it went on for an exceptionally long run of nineteen performances (Schwartz-Gastine 2017, 83). Critics concurred that Ducis’s work surpassed Shakespeare’s (Pujante 2019, 154). However, in spite of the critical acclaim and the several published editions of the text, the play gradually lost interest amongst theatre attendees. As Schwartz-Gastine explains, “after the success of the initial production the play did not fare very well on the stage”; its final performance “took place in 1827, with no follow-up as times and tastes had changed” (2017, 84 – 85).

Between 1776 and 1783 Pierre Le Tourneur (1737 – 1788) published his twenty-volume collection entitled *Théâtre de Shakespeare*, a translation into prose of the complete works of Shakespeare (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 29). His *Roméo et Juliette* appeared in 1778. Being a fervent admirer of the Bard Le Tourneur remained faithful to the original, and closely followed Shakespeare’s text but, as Schwartz-Gastine remarks, “however successful his translations were as readings, they never found their way onto the stage” (2003, 225). Despite the importance and influence exercised by the translations

and adaptations of Ducis and Le Tourneur throughout the eighteenth century, around 1830 there were French critics and Romantic writers who accused both authors of having betrayed and travestied Shakespeare. These critical voices considered that their versions of *Roméo and Juliette* were poor, obsolete and did little justice to Shakespeare's original creation (Gury 1993, 187–188). The last adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that saw the light in eighteenth-century France was carried out by the novelist, dramatist and translator Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740 – 1810). In 1782 Mercier published in Neuchâtel *Les tombeaux de Vérone*, a play written in prose which offers a happy ending to the five-act story (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 17).

2.3 Germany.

In Germany the culmination of the reception of Shakespeare occurred, as it is widely known, during the Romantic period when the Bard was elevated to the status of national icon. German writers such as Schlegel would refer to Shakespeare as being *ganz unser*, that is, “entirely ours” (Williams 2017, 61). However, the first contact that the German population had with English theatre began in the latter decades of the sixteenth century as a result of the arrival of English comedians who, despite initially performing in their mother tongue, were immensely popular amongst German citizens (Seidler 2016, 141).¹¹¹ Around the turn of the seventeenth century the English comedians started performing in German and, after the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618 – 1648), the companies mostly consisted of German players who, regardless of this fact, retained the name *Englische Comödianten* for publicity purposes (Seidler 2016, 141). The *Englische Comödianten* included in their repertoire heavily distorted adaptations of Shakespearean

¹¹¹ Seidler provides the following historic information on the arrival of the first English actors: “the earliest recorded performance of English comedians took place in Leipzig in 1585. From the 1590s onwards, English strolling players are recorded in various cities and also, occasionally, at courts. Although they first performed in their mother tongue, the English comedians were extremely popular with Germans of different social standings” (2016, 141).

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plays; thus, the public did not associate Shakespeare's name with the players, as Williams observes:

[The comedians] performed the palest and most distorted reflections of Shakespeare's work, but the name Shakespeare was not even associated with them. It is generally accepted that the first mention of Shakespeare's name in German dates from 1682 when D. G. Morhof just refers to him in passing (2017, 63).

According to Williams "it is most likely that *Romeo and Juliet* was among the very first plays by Shakespeare to be performed in German-speaking lands, by the *Englische Comödianten*" (2017, 62). Williams points towards Robert Browne, leader of one of the most prominent of these acting troupes, and 1603 as the year of the earliest performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which took place while Browne's travelling players toured the south west region of Germany (2017, 62). In 1620 a German version of *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in a collection of English tragedies and comedies entitled *Engelische Comedien und Tragedien* (Seidler 2016, 142). Williams asserts that "the text had clearly been compiled by an individual or a group of actors who had some knowledge of the original", and adds that "while this early version of *Romeo and Juliet* follows Shakespeare's plot fairly closely, the text reads as if the English original is only a distant memory" (Williams 2017, 62). Six years later, the tragedy was performed twice at the Saxon court in Dresden; the text employed by the acting company has not survived (Williams 2017, 62).

There is one last instance of *Romeo and Juliet* present in seventeenth-century Germany: the extant manuscript *Romio und Julieta* (circa 1680) (Seidler 2016, 144). The play was performed by the extremely popular English comedians who, following the treatment of previous versions of Shakespearean texts, adapted the play to the needs of the *Wanderbühne* or "wandering stage" (Seidler 2016, 143). For instance, in *Romio und Julieta* "the feud and the resulting generation conflict remain subdued in comparison with Shakespeare's text" (Seidler 2016, 143). A major innovation introduced by this adaptation was the addition of the character Picklhäring, the clown. His speech incorporates lines from Peter, the Nurse and other servants, and he reached such a high

degree of fame that, as Seidler affirms, “not only did ‘Picklhäring’ become a synonym for the clown, but he also features in numerous plays and even has the title role of several interludes” (2016, 144).

With the arrival of the eighteenth century Shakespeare starts to become a more prominent figure in German culture. During this new age, as Paulin highlights, “the ultimate aim of German interest in Shakespeare during the eighteenth century was to see him performed on the stage, in versions perhaps only tenuously linked to the original” (2012, 314). The majority of information on Shakespeare that was introduced into the country during this period derived from French sources (Paulin 2012, 315). Coincidentally, as it happened in France, there were also five German versions of *Romeo and Juliet* produced in Germany throughout the course of the eighteenth century. The first appeared in 1758 in a three-volume collection of plays published in Basel by Simon Grynäus o Grynaeus (1725 – 1799), which is entitled *Neue Probstücke der englischen Schaubühne, aus der Ursprache überset-zet von einem Liebhaber des guten Geschmacks* (New specimen plays from the English stage, translated from the original by a devotee of good taste) (Engler 2003, 26). The collection included translations into German of nine English tragedies, one of which was *Romeo and Juliet* in Garrick’s adaptation; the text constitutes “the first translation of a Shakespeare play into German blank verse” (Engler 2003, 26). As Williams observes, Grynäus closely followed Garrick, which implies that he also imitated the British adaptor in his more modest depiction of Juliet:

Both Garrick and Grynaeus eliminated [...] all the “jingle and quibble” that was considered to mar the text. Hence, all word play, double entendres, puns and, especially, any joke that even borders on the obscene, let alone revels in it, is excised. Juliet’s age is altered from 14 to 18, no doubt to make both her love for Romeo and the negotiations with regard to her marriage to Paris more credible; she does not, however, seem to have as much knowledge of her body as Shakespeare’s Juliet does, and any reference to her sexuality, such as her comment that death, not Romeo, will take her maidenhead, disappears (2017, 66).

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According to Williams “Grynaeus’ translation was of symbolic importance, but of minimal influence” (2017, 66). In the mid-1760’s Christoph Martin Wieland (1733 – 1813), defined by Williams as “the most prominent poet of the middle decades of the eighteenth century” (2017, 65), offered the public new translations of Shakespeare’s plays. Wieland was a profound admirer of Shakespeare (flaws included), and between 1762 and 1766 he translated into German prose twenty-two of Shakespeare’s plays – with the exception of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, rendered in verse (Paulin 2012, 317). Wieland’s translation of *Romeo and Juliet* includes few cuts, the majority of which are, as Williams asserts, “because of the word play, which is either untranslatable or considered childish, or because of tastelessness, which often resides in Shakespeare’s penchant toward mixing the comic and pathetic” (2017, 67). Even though Wieland’s translations were not intended for the stage, his *Romeo und Julia* was first staged in Biberach in 1774 (McCarthy 2018, 26). The performance did not “find a wider audience”, and Williams suggests that the reason behind poor attendance was “possibly because there was already a highly popular version of the play written by the very man who had questioned the wisdom of a complete translation of Shakespeare, Christian Felix Weisse” (1990, 58).

Christian Felix Weisse (1726 – 1804) is the author of the first truly successful German version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Weisse’s doubts on the quality of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* explain why his *Romeo und Julie* “is not a translation of an existing play, but a totally new dramatic work” (Williams 2017, 68). The play was an instant success since its first performance in Leipzig by the Koch company in April 1767, and it was acclaimed whenever it was performed around Germany (Williams 2017, 68). One of the most interesting new features that this adaptation offers is that Julie, who strongly departs from Shakespeare’s Juliet, is the absolute protagonist of the play:

Julie, who is unambiguously the central character of the play, is quite different from her Shakespearean counterpart. She is older and bears several of the marks of an eighteenth-century sentimental heroine; she is deeply in love with Romeo, is constantly bewailing her fate, and had none of the agency of Shakespeare’s Juliet. She had distinctly hysterical tendencies and, in particular, is obsessed by death (Williams 2017, 69).

As Williams points out, Weisse's *Romeo und Julie* "held the stage until well into the nineteenth century" (2017, 68). As a matter of fact, its enormous popularity extended well beyond Germany and even reached Spain at a time, the early decades of the nineteenth century, when France still maintained its position as the principal cultural referent in Spain. As Gregor explains, "by the second half of the [eighteenth] century, French plays had become enshrined as models worthy of imitation and as an inevitable point of reference for any playwright wishing to both please and instruct" (2010, 9). This "frenchification" (*afrancesamiento*) – to use Gregor's term –, of Spanish culture persisted in the nineteenth century, which makes the influence of a German play doubly extraordinary. Indeed, Weisse's *Romeo und Julie*, as it will be explained in the following chapter, acted as the main source text for the earliest nineteenth-century Spanish adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*: Dionisio Solís's *Julia y Romeo* (1803).

The next important figure in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Germany is Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743 – 1820). As Pujante affirms, Eschenburg "obsessed with Shakespeare, joined the anti-Voltaireans, and between 1775 and 1782 translated for the first time into German the complete works of Shakespeare" (2019, 97).¹¹² The translator followed the work of Wieland; hence, he also "accepted the general principle of fidelity to the original text (no omissions of characters, no happy endings)" (Paulin 2003, 309). Eschenburg corrected and completed Wieland's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* (Paulin 2012, 317). In spite of adhering to the general principle of fidelity to the source text, Eschenburg could not avoid ignoring "the passages where the language tended towards obscenity" (Williams 2017, 67). Eschenburg's translations of Shakespeare's plays were in prose, but in *Romeo and Juliet* he offered verse translations of the Chorus and of the sonnet that Romeo and Juliet recite when they first meet at the masquerade (Williams 2017, 68).

August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767 – 1845), member of the Romantic generation, provided the last German translation of *Romeo and Juliet* of the century. As Paulin asserts, during the Romantic period Schlegel emerged "not only as Germany's best-

¹¹² "Obsesionado con Shakespeare, se unió a los antivolterianos, y entre 1775 y 1782 tradujo por primera vez al alemán todo el teatro de Shakespeare."

known Shakespearean critic [...] but also as its leading translator” (Paulin 2012, 325). Between 1797 and 1810 Schlegel translated into German seventeen Shakespeare plays; *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* are the only two tragedies that were translated (Paulin 2012, 325). Between 1825 and 1833 Schlegel’s translations were revised and completed under the supervision of his friend Ludwig Tieck in the so-called “Schlegel-Tieck translation” (Habicht 1993, 45; Paulin 2012, 325). The joint efforts of Schlegel and Tieck resulted in the creation of “the first complete translations of Shakespeare into verse and prose” (Williams 2017, 72).

Schlegel’s first approach at translating the text of *Romeo and Juliet* was in 1796, when he published in Friedrich Schiller’s periodical *Die Horen* “Scenen aus *Romeo und Julie* von Shakespeare”, a translation of the first three scenes of the second act of *Romeo and Juliet* (Paulin 2003, 320). The following year he published his full translation of the tragedy: *Romeo und Julia* (Paulin 2003, 305). In an essay on *Romeo and Juliet* published on that same year, Schlegel expressed his positive views on the play, which he considered “both enchantingly sweet and painful, pure and ardent, delicate and violent, full of elegiac tenderness and convulsively tragic” (cited in Williams 2017, 73). As his predecessors had done when confronted with Shakespeare’s bawdy language, Schlegel preferred to “look the other way”, and merely included mild examples of sexual allusion or innuendo (Paulin 2003, 324). According to Greiner, the reduction of the ribald jokes and puns found in the original affects the characterization of figures such as Romeo who, in the hands of Schlegel, is transformed into a “romantic, spiritualized figure” (1993, 211).

2.4 Spain.

As it has been shown in this chapter, *Romeo and Juliet* played a visible role in the theatrical milieu of the eighteenth century, not only in Great Britain and Ireland, but also on the Continent. At this point, any reader would wonder what the situation was like in Spain. The Golden Age of Spanish drama gave birth to three distinct adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, all of which were heirs of the Italian routes of the play. Given that the

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reception of Shakespeare in the Continent begins in the eighteenth century, it would be logical to assume that this ought to be the appropriate time for Spanish theatregoers to witness for the first time adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* directly influenced by Shakespeare's play. Unfortunately, this was not the case. In fact, the Spanish public would have to wait another century to see that significant change happen. During the eighteenth century not only were there no Spanish adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* that derived from Shakespeare, but also no new versions of the play whatsoever. Let us dive into the eighteenth century to discover why Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers did not leave Spanish audiences star-struck.

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* was not entirely absent from the Spanish eighteenth-century stage. Nonetheless, the protagonists that spectators could watch onstage were not Shakespeare's tragic lovers of Verona, but instead the Spanish tragicomic characters Alejandro Romeo and Julia, who had gained popularity in the preceding century. It is worth remembering at this point that Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* (1640), also known under the alternative title of *Monstescos y Capeletes*, continued circulating around Spanish theatres. The majority of performances of the play occurred in Madrid during the first quarter of the century. Nevertheless, there are surviving records of productions of the tragicomedy that took place in other important Spanish theatres, including Valladolid, Valencia, Barcelona, and Seville.

Even though there were no new adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* created in the eighteenth century, similarly to what happened in other European countries, the century also marked the timid start of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. The first approach to a Shakespeare-related item in the eighteenth century takes place in 1742, when an ecclesiastical inspector belonging to the Inquisition authorises – not without expressing his religious concerns –, the introduction of a book into the country, possibly Lewis Theobald's second edition of *The Works of Shakespeare in Eight Volumes* (London, 1740) (Pujante 2019, 35).

The first critical reference to Shakespeare dates from 1764, when he was mentioned by Nifo, founder of journals such as *Diario de Madrid* (Madrid's Diary). Nevertheless, Nifo, “did not write about Shakespeare because he was interested in his work itself, but rather disseminated the [French] debate on Shakespeare and integrated it into another that was taking place in Spain [between classicists and traditionalists]”

(Pujante 2019, 43).¹¹³ Therefore, as Pujante explains in detail, when Shakespeare was first introduced into Spanish culture, there was no interest in his work *per se*. Instead, his figure became intertwined with the arguments employed by those, such as Nifo, who were opposed to French Neoclassicism:

In Spain [...] the Voltairean debate on Shakespeare was mostly used to incorporate it to the one that confronted classicists, supporters of classical French drama, with traditionalists, defenders of Spanish Golden Age drama. As a writer for a popular stage such as the Elizabethan, Shakespeare was equivalent to Lope de Vega or Calderón and, like them, incompatible with playwrights of an aristocratic theatre as the French neoclassical stage. In other words, at least during the early decades of his presence in Spain, Shakespeare's work was interesting not in itself, but rather as part of a French debate incorporated to a Spanish controversy (2019, 12).¹¹⁴

Despite the lack of interest in Shakespeare's work, less than ten years after Nifo introduced Shakespeare into the feud initiated by Voltaire, Spanish theatregoers were able to witness the first production of a "Shakespearean" play. The play was *Hamlet* in Ducis's adaptation. It premiered on 4 October 1772 at the Corral del Príncipe in Madrid, in a translation titled *Hamleto*, assumed to have been undertaken by Ramón de la Cruz (1731 – 1794) (Gregor 2010, 7). Contrary to what it has been thought up to the present day, Gregor demonstrates that it should not be assumed that the production was a fiasco:

¹¹³ "Nifo no escribió sobre Shakespeare porque le interesara su obra por sí misma, sino que se hizo eco del debate shakespeariano [francés] y lo integró en otro que discurría en España [entre clasicistas y tradicionalistas]."

¹¹⁴ "En España [...] el debate volteriano sobre Shakespeare se utilizaría en buena parte para incorporarlo al que enfrentaba a los clasicistas, partidarios del drama clásico francés, con los tradicionalistas, defensores del teatro áureo español. Como escritor para una escena popular como la isabelina, Shakespeare era equiparable a Lope de Vega o Calderón y, al igual que ellos, incompatible con dramaturgos de un teatro aristocrático como el neoclásico francés. Para decirlo con otras palabras: al menos en la primeras décadas de su presencia en España, la obra de Shakespeare no interesó por sí misma, sino como parte de un debate francés incorporado a una controversia española."

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For a play to run for five consecutive nights was in itself a significant achievement in the normally prolific and strongly profit-driven Madrid theatre scene of the early 1770s; for it to be revived for a further two-night run a couple of months later could be considered a moderate success (2010, 12).

Ramón de la Cruz's *Hamleto* will not be published until 1900 (Pujante 2007, XXIXn). In 1798 one of the most influential Spanish authors of the Enlightenment, Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760 – 1828) published a direct translation of *Hamlet*, the earliest Spanish translation of a Shakespearean play. This translation also constitutes the first that used the English play (in its eighteenth-century editions) as a source text (Deacon 2012, 2). Unlike Ramón de la Cruz, whose *Hamleto* was specifically intended for the stage, Moratín conceived his translation as a text to be read and even studied (Deacon 2012, 2). The fact that Moratín had translated *Hamlet* does not imply that the Spanish playwright was an admirer of Shakespeare; on the contrary, his main purpose was to evince Shakespeare's defects, as Campillo Arnaiz observes:

This is not a declaration of admiration, born from Moratín's devotion to Shakespeare, but a declaration of hostility, whose ultimate aim is to revile the English public for the literary backwardness in which it finds itself, and to demonstrate Shakespeare's authentic "poetic merit", that is, his mediocrity in the composition of *Hamlet* (2010).¹¹⁵

This is the reason that explains why in the preface to his translation, titled "Vida de Guillermo Shakespeare" ["Life of William Shakespeare"], Moratín clarified, as Gregor states, that Shakespeare was "unworthy of the Spanish stage" (2010, 15). Moratín's translation of *Hamlet* would not be performed until 2004 during the Almagro Classical Theatre Festival (Gregor 2010, 159n).

¹¹⁵ "Ésta no es una declaración de admiración, nacida de la devoción de Moratín hacia Shakespeare, sino una declaración de hostilidad, cuyo fin último es denostar al pueblo inglés por el atraso literario en que se encuentra y mostrar el auténtico 'mérito poético' de Shakespeare, es decir, su mediocridad en la composición de *Hamlet*."

Chapter 2

There will be no more translations nor performances of Shakespearean plays in Spain until 1802. Therefore, the earliest references to Shakespeare in Spain had originated vis-à-vis a debate which had its origin in France, but which soon was incorporated into the parallel dispute held at the time between classicists and traditionalists. *Hamlet* was the only text which elicited a certain degree of interest. However, the play that enjoyed a moderate success on the stage was not the Jacobean tragedy, but a translation of Ducis's adaptation, proving that France served as the main vehicle to introduce Shakespeare into Spanish culture. The only *Hamlet* directly translated from the English derived from "a neoclassical mind divided between Shakespeare's beauties and defects, but more prone to censure his defects than to excuse them" (Pujante 2007, XXXIII).¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Moratín was not the only important cultural figure in Spain opposed to Shakespeare. Indeed, as Gregor affirms, "the few critical studies which make any reference to Shakespeare in the period could be said to share [the] Voltaire-inspired distaste for the social context and potential addressees of [Shakespeare's] drama" (2010, 14).

Therefore, in this climate of mostly aversion and rejection to Shakespeare and his work there was little space for the emergence of new translations or adaptations; the only exceptions are the two aforementioned translations of *Hamlet*. Spanish audiences will have to continue waiting patiently throughout time for the moment when they will be able to associate the fascinating story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona with the genius of Shakespeare. Nonetheless, the public did not have to wait long to see *Romeo and Juliet* back on stage. At the turn of the century Spanish theatregoers will welcome two new productions indirectly inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Those spectators familiar with Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* will be able to find echoes of the plot in the two neoclassical adaptations that will be served onstage to delight and entertain. Significantly, these new versions can no longer be directly associated with the Italian sources of the play, but instead with the eighteenth-century versions produced by Weisse (1767) and Ducis (1772). It is in the midst of the vogue for neoclassicism and taste in anything French where the next chapter begins.

¹¹⁶ "Una mente neoclásica dividida entre las bellezas y los defectos de Shakespeare, pero es más dado a censurar los defectos que a excusarlos".

3.The Neoclassical Adaptations

The Neoclassical Adaptations.

This chapter explores the convulsive early decades of the nineteenth century. A period governed by instability in the political sphere, and dominated by Neoclassicism in the arts. Even though Shakespeare continued being a relatively unknown figure amongst the Spanish public, the nineteenth century became witness to the advent of new Shakespearean plays on the stage. Nonetheless, these new instances of Shakespearean drama were not reproductions of the English original, but instead were rewritings of eighteenth-century adaptations, mostly the works of Ducis. This peculiarity, together with the fact that these “Shakespearean” plays were not always advertised as being from the pen of Shakespeare, explains why the identity of the dramatist continued being almost a mystery amongst the general public. Nevertheless, this situation will gradually begin to change after 1828 with the premiere of Ventura de la Vega’s *Shakespeare enamorado*, a translation-adaptation of Alexandre Duval’s one-act comedy *Shakespeare amoureux* (1804), which initiated an interest in the consumption of plays featuring Shakespeare as character.

The period saw a remarkable interest in *Othello*, since the 1802 premiere of Ducis’s *Othello, ou le More de Venise* (1792), first performed in Spain following a translation carried out by José María de Carnerero (Gregor 2010, 17). The enormous success that the play acquired amongst theatregoers, particularly in the city of Madrid, gave rise to an unprecedented phenomenon in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain that has been defined by Calvo (2008a) as “Othellomania”.¹¹⁷ Apart from the allure of *Othello*, there were two other Shakespearean plays served up on the early nineteenth-century stage – *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* –, both staged for the first time in 1803, within days of one another. This chapter examines the two new adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* that reached the Spanish public at the time: the neoclassical plays *Julia y Romeo* (1803) by Dionisio Solís, and *Romeo y Julieta* (1817), by Manuel Bernardino García Suelto. Before entering into an analysis of these two plays and their portrayal of Juliet, and in order to

¹¹⁷ As Calvo details, *Othello* achieved an enormous popularity: “in the period 1802 – 33. In 1806, 1808, 1813, 1816, 1819, 1829, 1831, and 1832, *Otelo* was regularly performed in Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville. The success of *Otelo* also reached the provinces” (2008a, 113).

guarantee a better understanding of the two texts, one must first delve into a discussion of the decisive social, cultural and political circumstances taking place at the time when these versions were composed, and subsequently performed.

Since the latter decades of the eighteenth century France had exercised a considerable impact over Spain, acting as the major source of influence in matters concerning the improvement of the cultural sphere. Thus, the prevalence of the ideals defended by Neoclassicism during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The lasting influence of Neoclassicism and its strict and rigid principles accounts for the late arrival of Romanticism in Spain, a movement which was introduced as late as 1834, coinciding with the premiere of Francisco Martínez de la Rosa's play *La conjuración de Venecia* (The Venice Conspiracy). The ideals defended by neoclassical theorists were inevitably applied to the theatre since, as Rubio Jiménez explains, "amongst urban pastimes, none had more importance and social presence than the theatre during the nineteenth century" (2003, 1.803).¹¹⁸ Undoubtedly, this implied that the main principles that playwrights and, in turn, plays, had to observe were those of "verisimilitude, decorum and the three unities" (Gies 1994, 42).

The Neoclassicists' attempt to exert a significant influence and, thus, change the manner in which Spanish theatre functioned and was conceived can be traced back to 1799. This is the year when Spanish Neoclassicists devised what is known as the Plan for Reform of the Public Theatres in Madrid (Gies 1994; Gregor 2010). As Gregor explains:

A group of Spain's most forward-thinking intellectuals, with Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos at their head, had pressed for government intervention in the theatres to purge them of the amoral dross currently being served up to audiences. Amongst the works to be vetoed were those which diverted the citizens' attention from the enduring values of civilized society. [...] Jovellanos's recommendations, steeped in the blend of anti-hierarchical Enlightenment skepticism and religious conservatism which was the hallmark of Spain's post-revolutionary

¹¹⁸ "Entre las diversiones urbanas ninguna tuvo tanta importancia y presencia social como el teatro durante el siglo XIX."

bourgeois ideology, found an echo and willing executor in the figure of Leandro Fernández de Moratín (2002, 323 – 324).

As a consequence of the intention to purify the stage by purging this public space of “the amoral dross currently being served”, Gregor observes that “Spanish neoclassical theorists and critics tended to favour tragedy not just on formal grounds (as the purest embodiment of the rules) but as socially the most ‘elevated’ of dramatic modes” (2010, 10). One must bear in mind that since the seventeenth century Spanish theatregoers had shown a clear preference for comedy over tragedy. Two centuries later, public taste had barely altered in that regard, as Golden Age plays continued being extremely popular and in demand, and put on stage by so-called *refundidores* (rewriters) who refocused the original drama “to fit new aesthetic or political demands” (Gies 1994, 89). Thus, it should not come as a surprise that, “in the absence of a native tradition of tragedy, the classical French model presented itself as the most distinguished” (Gregor 2010, 10). Unfortunately for the Neoclassicists, “most of whom were driven by a genuine concern to renovate and modernize the nation’s means of production”, they solely “managed to push their reforms through at a political level but failed to significantly modify public taste, which stayed loyal to the tried and tested forms of popular entertainment (the *comedia*, although adapted, and the *autos sacramentales*) and spectacular modern forms such as the *comedia de magia*” (Gregor 2010, 26).¹¹⁹

In spite of the ambitious and enormous efforts made by neoclassical thinkers, Spanish theatre at the turn of the century remained in a deplorable state. With the exception of outstanding figures such as Isidoro Máiquez – one of the greatest actors of his time –, in general terms, the acting style was execrable and mediocre (Gies 1988, 5). Acting in Madrid had become the highest achievement for any actor since the reign of King Philip IV (1605 – 1665); nonetheless, as Gies affirms, “in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, actors struggled for respectability and for stability in a city [Madrid] beset by war, censorship, turmoil, and general indifference to their offerings”

¹¹⁹The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* provides the following definition for *autos sacramentales*: “performed outdoors as part of the Corpus Christi feast day celebrations, *autos* were short allegorical plays in verse dealing with some aspect of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, which the feast of Corpus Christi solemnly celebrated” (2020). The *comedias de magia* are described by Gregor as “plays involving magic and miraculous events effected by quite elaborate stage mechanisms” (2010, 12).

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(1988, 4). In other words, a situation of extreme precariousness and lack of recognition dominated the everyday lives of Spanish actors. Furthermore, one ought to bear in mind the political instability that governed the country at the time, starting with the invasion of Napoleonic troops that led to the confrontation between France and Spain in the so-called War of Independence (1808 – 1814). Six years after the military conflict had come to an end, the reign of the Bourbon monarch King Ferdinand VII (1814 – 1833) was interrupted in 1820 by the three-year revolutionary experiment named Constitutional Triennium, which ended in 1823 with the restoration of King Ferdinand VII and his absolutist regime.

The reception of Shakespeare and his work in Spain had a timid start, partly as a result of the tumultuous political situation. Parallel to the reception processes taking place in other countries around the Continent since the eighteenth century, Ducis played a decisive role in the introduction of Shakespearean drama into Spanish theatrical culture. In 1772, with the production of Ramón de la Cruz's *Hamleto*, Spain had become “the first country outside France to play host to a Ducis adaptation of Shakespeare” (Gregor 2010, 12). Carnerero's 1802 *Otelo* was the second adaptation of a Shakespearean play based on Ducis that reached the Spanish public. Trained in France by the renowned actor François Joseph Talma, the renowned Isidoro Máiquez cast himself in the title role. His outstanding performance even granted him praise from his fellow peers, Talma and John Philip Kemble, during their visit to Spain in 1802 (Calvo 2006a, 121). It was not solely Máiquez who exceeded himself in the interpretation of the Moor of Venice, the production itself achieved an enormous popularity, as Gregor highlights:

The success of the production, which led to a virtually unprecedented 19 performances in 1802 alone, 7 of them on successive nights (1–7 January) as well as to a long series of revivals in both the capital Madrid and Barcelona and Seville, sparked the first stirrings of interest in an author (Shakespeare) whose original tragedy had, it was felt, been so grievously traduced by Ducis (2010, 25).

Although the true (and few) *connoisseurs* of Shakespeare's original works felt that his *Othello* had “been so grievously traduced by Ducis”, the French adapter was paramount in facilitating the arrival of Shakespeare and his plays, even if his mediation

and heavy alteration of the original material often prevented the public from being able to make the connection with Shakespeare. For instance, as Calvo explains, “in 1802 the advertisement of the first performance of *Otelo* in Barcelona assumed it was a translation of a new, contemporary French play” (2008a, 112). One must not forget that Ducis himself omitted Shakespeare’s name in the cover of his publications, contributing to the resulting confusion.

Only a year after the premiere of Carnerero’s *Otelo*, another translator resorted to Ducis so as to introduce a new Shakespearean play – in this occasion *Macbeth* – into the limited Shakespearean repertoire displayed so far on the Spanish stage. The author in question was Teodoro de Lacalle, who had been ordered by Máiquez to write a translation of the tragedy, with the hope that it would achieve the same success as *Othello* (Calvo 2002, 63). The first performance took place on 25 November 1803 at the Caños del Peral Theatre in Madrid. Unfortunately, as Calvo observes, “the premiere of *Macbeth* did not achieve the expected success, as there were only four performances [25 – 27 November; 8 December], it was revived the following year and it did not reach, unlike *Otelo*, the provinces” (2002, 63).¹²⁰

3.1 Melodrama and Sentimentality: Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* (1803).

A month after the first staging of Ducis’s *Macbeth*, the city of Madrid welcomed a new Shakespearean drama: *Julia y Romeo*. Unlike his predecessors, the adapter Dionisio Solís did not employ a Ducis adaptation as his source text; hence, breaking the general pattern established since 1772 whereby Ducis acted as the main referent in lieu of Shakespeare. This was not the only innovation added by Solís, as his adaptation provides two alternative endings: one tragic and one comic. In his choice not to remain entirely faithful to the tragic ending with which contemporary British, French or German theatregoers were familiar, he brought back the possibility of a blissful resolution, albeit

¹²⁰ “El estreno de *Macbeth* no tuvo el éxito esperado ya que solo hubo cuatro representaciones [25 – 27 nov; 8 dic], se repuso una vez al año siguiente y no trascendió, como *Otelo*, a provincias.”

in an entirely different manner, in comparison with the happy endings devised by Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla two centuries earlier.

According to Pujante's recent findings vis-à-vis the author of the text of *Julia y Romeo*, "although the critics have not agreed on its authorship, one can propose with considerable certainty Dionisio Solís, pseudonym of the poet, dramaturg and translator Dionisio Villanueva y Ochoa (1774 – 1834) (2019, 148).¹²¹ Although relatively unknown in the present, Dionisio Solís was, as Gies states, "one of the most admired poets and dramatists of the day" (1994, 58). As the son of two theatre players, he had been linked to the stage since his infancy (Herrera Navarro 2020). A prolific writer, Solís authored more than fifty plays, which include original works, *refundiciones* (rewritings) of Golden Age drama, and translations, most of which were performed (Herrera Navarro 2020).

Solís's *Julia y Romeo* (1803) was the fourth Shakespearean play produced on the Spanish stage – after *Hamlet* (1772), *Othello* (1802), and *Macbeth* (1803). It was not, however, a Ducis-adapted play. Thus, which source or sources did Solís employ instead of the habitual one used up to that point in time in the rewriting of a Shakespearean play? Taking into account that Solís was, as Gies affirms, "the acknowledged master of the *refundición* in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century" (1994, 88), it would not be too irrational to point towards Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* (1640) as a probable source, given that there are certain similarities shared by both texts, especially in the early scenes.

Indeed, act I, scenes i and ii of *Julia y Romeo* contain echoes of Rojas Zorrilla's drama. The opening scenes are closely related, as each play begins with the character of Julia crying in despair as a result of her love for Alejandro Romeo (in *Los bandos de Verona*) / Romeo (in *Julia y Romeo*). Furthermore, in both plays Julia is accompanied by her confidante Elena / Laura, with the only difference that in *Julia y Romeo*, the tearful

¹²¹ "Aunque los críticos no se han puesto de acuerdo sobre su autoría, se puede proponer con bastante certeza a Dionisio Solís, pseudónimo del poeta, dramaturgo y traductor Dionisio Villanueva y Ochoa (1774 – 1834)." Daniel López (1883) in his pioneering series of articles entitled "Shakespeare en España", the first study on the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, was the first to, apparently, wrongly assign the text of *Julia y Romeo* (1803) to García Suelto, author of *Romeo y Julieta* (1817) according to Pujante and Gregor (2017b). López's assumption was shared by Par (1930; 1936). However, other contemporaries of Par contradicted this view in the early twentieth century indicating that the author was instead Solís (Juliá Martínez 1918; Ruppert y Ujaravi 1920; Cotarelo 1932), and, more recently, Andioc and Coulon (1996) and Pujante and Gregor (2017b). For a detailed account on the debate of the authorship of *Julia y Romeo* (1803), and *Romeo y Julieta* (1817) see Pujante and Gregor (2017b, 47–51).

lady opens the play on her own uttering a soliloquy and, immediately afterwards, Laura makes her first entrance in act I, scene ii. Another similarity in these early scenes is the preference for diegesis over mimesis during the exposition of the main meetings between the young pair of lovers, which are narrated by Julia to her close friend, rather than shown onstage. Nonetheless, there are differences in the nature of the events recounted, such as the fact that Solís's Julia does not admit her lover into her private chamber, unlike her Golden Age counterpart, who confesses that the moon had been witness to her nightly encounters with Alejandro Romeo. The differences between both scenes can be explained by the fact that Solís used Christian Felix Weisse's (also Weiße's) *Romeo und Julie* (1767) "not only as a direct source, but even as its main source" (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 106).

There are other coincidences between the texts of *Los bandos de Verona* and *Julia y Romeo*. Not only are the two female protagonists named Julia, but also both plays provide a happy ending, as the comic variant of Solís's play could automatically transform the text into the same genre of Rojas Zorrilla's play, that is, into a tragicomedy. Thus, there is evidence that attests to a probable influence of *Los bandos de Verona*. In fact, Solís could easily have had first-hand access to Rojas Zorrilla's play, either by reading one of the six printed editions of the text published in the eighteenth century, or merely by attending a performance. The latter possibility could have taken place in 1797, when the play was staged in the city of Madrid under its alternative title, *Montescos y Capeletes*, a production that Pujante suggests may have inspired and been the rationale behind the creation of the happy variant (2019, 152).

Even though Weisse's *Romeo und Julie* (1767) constitutes the main source text of *Julia y Romeo*, Solís did not read the play "in the German original, but in its French rendering by Georges-Adam Junker" (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 106). It would not have been an issue for the Spanish adapter to have a full understanding of material written in a foreign language since, as a man who belonged to the field of translation, Solís "mastered French, Italian, English, and Greek" (Herrera Navarro 2002, 333).¹²² The main difference that exists between Weisse's play (an eighteenth-century domestic drama) and Shakespeare's tragedy is the shift of focus from the feud between the rival families – rechristened Capellets and Montecchios – to the "relationships within the family, in this

¹²² "Dominaba los idiomas francés, italiano, inglés y griego."

case between parent [Herr von Capellet] and child [Julie]” (Williams 1990, 61). This departure from Shakespeare was the result of Weisse’s wish to remain more faithful to the Italian sources of the play. Likewise, Solís also centred the action of his play on the character of Julia, particularly in the conflicting relationship that she has with her tyrannical father, who strongly resembles Weisse’s Herr von Capellet.

In spite of the prevailing influence of Weisse’s *Romeo und Julie*, Pujante and Gregor (2017a; 2017b) also point towards two other possible sources that Solís may have consulted: d’Ozicourt’s *Roméo et Juliette, drame en cinq actes & en vers libres* (1771), and Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s *Les tombeaux de Vérone* (1782). As Pujante and Gregor affirm, both *Roméo et Juliette* and *Julia y Romeo* “coincide in their beginnings and in part of the action, both do away with Montaigne [...] and both add a servant to Romeo. In both plays the name of the heroine coincides – ‘Juliette’ featuring only in the title, whereas ‘Julie’ is used throughout the text” (2017a, 105). Similarly, both Mercier’s prose play – published in Neuchâtel in 1782 –, and Solís’s rhymed verse text “coincide in their beginnings, in a number of scenes and, above all, in their choice of a happy ending” (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 104).¹²³ This assumption implies that all the foreign material that Solís may have consulted prior to the composition of his own version of *Romeo and Juliet*, that is, the plays written by Weisse (in Junker’s translation), d’Ozicourt and Mercier, was in French.

The full title of Solís’s play is *Julia y Romeo. Tragedia urbana en cinco actos* (Julia and Romeo. Urban Tragedy in Five Acts), which constitutes an almost word-to-word translation of *Roméo et Julie, tragédie bourgeoise en cinq actes* – the title provided by Georges-Adam Junker in his French translation of Weisse’s play. The popularity that the genre of the *tragédie bourgeoise* – also known as *tragédie populaire* or *domestique* – had acquired, particularly in France, in earlier decades persisted in Spain at the turn of the century. According to Weis: “the Capulets and Montagues seem to be upper bourgeoisie rather than nobility (the latter represented by Paris and the Prince). However, the Prologue’s *alike in dignity* could imply that they are nobility” (2012, 119).¹²⁴ The fact that the members belonging to the rival houses of Verona can be considered as being part

¹²³ Leaving the happy ending aside, “such is the debt [to Weisse’s *Romeo und Julie*] that some critics have been in no doubt in calling Mercier’s text a plagiarism” (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 105).

¹²⁴ Italics in the original.

of the upper bourgeoisie is one of the features that makes Shakespeare's tragedy perfectly suited to the label *tragédie bourgeoise*.

Nevertheless, that is not the category employed in the title of Solís's play. In fact, Spanish readers may find it slightly odd to discover that the term *urbana* stands for *bourgeoise*, as most native speakers would probably expect to find instead the direct equivalent in Spanish, that is, *burguesa*. Nonetheless, *tragedia urbana* was a well-established term in eighteenth-century Spanish drama. It is worth remarking, so as to avoid unnecessary confusion, that the term *urbana* can be misleading, as the adjective here is not used to designate an urban environment; instead, it refers to the social status of the characters. In 1793 the theorist Díez González defined the characters depicted in such tragedies as follows: "individuals must not be as elevated as those of heroic tragedy, nor vulgar or ridiculous as those of comedy. They must be citizens distinguished by their honourable birth, or by a notable virtue" (cited in Checa Beltrán 2012, 71).¹²⁵ Furthermore, as Checa Beltrán asserts, an urban tragedy "differs from tragedy in that it must have a happy ending" (2012, 71).¹²⁶ This second aspect is particularly relevant to Solís's adaptation, whose comic variant eludes the tragic deaths of the protagonists, and it further explains the choice of the category *tragedia urbana* to define the play.

Let us now examine in depth the text of *Julia y Romeo* (1803). Solís's play owes most of its features to the play upon which it is modelled, Weisse's sentimental drama *Romeo und Julie* (1767), albeit filtered through Junker's French translation. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind, as Pujante and Gregor highlight, that "*Julia y Romeo* is a free version and not a rigorous translation of its source" (2017b, 20).¹²⁷ The fact that *Julia y Romeo* is mostly an adaptation – rather than a translation – is understandable, if one takes into account Solís's personal approach to the task of translating: "regarding his attitude as a translator, it must be affirmed that Solís adapts rather than translates: he retains the

¹²⁵ "Las personas no han de ser tan elevadas como las de la tragedia heroica, ni vulgares y ridículas como las de la comedia. Deberán ser ciudadanos distinguidos por su honrado nacimiento, o por alguna notable virtud."

¹²⁶ "Difiere de la tragedia en que su final debe ser feliz."

¹²⁷ "*Julia y Romeo* es una versión libre y no una traducción rigurosa de su fuente."

spirit of the original work, but incorporates variations, either forced by the metre or in order to adjust it to a given situation and to Spanish customs” (Herrera Navarro 2020).¹²⁸

The text of *Julia y Romeo* has been preserved in two manuscripts, one of which belongs to the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid, and the other one to the Spanish National Library; “neither contains indication of the date, nor the name of the author” (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 16).¹²⁹ The play was never published during Solís’s time. As a matter of fact, it was first printed and made available to the general public as late as 2017, thanks to the publication of *Romeo y Julieta en España: las versiones neoclásicas* (Pujante and Gregor 2017b), a critical edition containing the two neoclassical versions of *Romeo and Juliet* analysed in this chapter.¹³⁰ The title page of the two manuscripts contain the famous line from Virgil: *Omnia vincit amor* – which perfectly suits the tragic love story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona. The Latin quote is borrowed from *Romeo und Julie* but, as Pujante and Gregor remark, “the difference [is] that the Spanish adapter corrects Weisse in assigning the quotation to Virgil, its true author”, whereas the German playwright wrongly assigns it to Ovid (2017b, 106).

Following Weisse – although present also in d’Ozicourt and Mercier (Pujante 2019, 150) –, Solís’s version of *Romeo and Juliet* begins *in media res* with a brief soliloquy uttered by Julia in which the audience finds her crying in despair because Romeo, whom she has already married in secret some unspecified time in the past, has been banished from Verona. Once that her confidante Laura makes her first appearance in act I, scene ii, the miserable young lady acquaints the audience with the main events that have taken place up to that point in time, including her first meeting with Romeo at her birthday party (a masked ball), the balcony scene, the death of her cousin Teobaldo, and her secret wedding with her beloved Romeo.¹³¹ The remaining part of the plot closely resembles Shakespeare’s story. Julia is told by her father Capelio that she must wed count Paris. Therefore, in order to prevent such an unfortunate event from threatening her

¹²⁸ “Respecto a su actitud como traductor, cabe afirmar que Solís adapta más que traduce: mantiene el espíritu original de la obra, pero incorpora modificaciones, ya sea obligado por la métrica o para adecuarla a la situación y costumbres españolas.”

¹²⁹ “En ninguno de ellos hay indicación de fecha, ni consta el nombre del autor.”

¹³⁰ All textual quotations from Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* (1803) and García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta* (1817) derive from this critical edition.

¹³¹ For information on different strategies employed in the portrayal of the iconic balcony scene in Spanish adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* see: “Recreating the *Romeo and Juliet* balcony scenes on the nineteenth-century Spanish stage” (Ruiz-Morgan 2017b).

happiness, the heroine also seeks help elsewhere. In this case, the man in question is not a friar, but a doctor named Bentivoglio. He is the one who will provide the harmless liquor that ought to make Julia appear dead, so as to later allow Romeo to rescue her from the Capelios's family vault.¹³²

The most remarkable feature present in this nineteenth-century adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is its two alternative endings.¹³³ The tragic variant included in the manuscript owned by the Spanish National Library resembles Shakespeare's ending. However, it incorporates a version of Garrick's famous final farewell between the lovers at the cemetery, the scene that had enchanted eighteenth-century audiences in Britain. Weisse who, as Williams observes, "acknowledged Garrick's influence over his thinking of the play" (1990, 58), had retained this pathetic scene in his *Romeo und Julie*, successfully managing "to draw copious tears from its audiences" (Williams 1990, 62). In borrowing the idea from its main source text, Solís's *Julia y Romeo* becomes the first Spanish adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* to depict a final encounter between the lovers in the last act. The adapter must have been aware of the pathetic potential of such a scene, as it features in both the tragic and the happy endings.

Thus, in the tragic ending Julia reawakens from her slumbers to discover in horror that her beloved Romeo is on the verge of dying. The dying man explains that, believing her to be dead, he had resolved to kill himself by drinking poison. After the painful realisation that there is no poison left, and despite Bentivoglio's efforts to convince her to stay alive, Julia stabs herself with Romeo's sword. Solís omits the two subsequent scenes included in the first edition of Weisse's *Romeo und Julie* (1768) whereby, "after commenting and lamenting the tragedy, the rival families admit their responsibility and are reconciled" (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 25).¹³⁴ Thus, the tragic variant does not offer the desirable reconciliation between the Capelios and the Montescos. In the happy ending Julia also reawakens before Romeo believes that he is about to die. In this occasion, Bentivoglio immediately appears on stage to save the day, informing that he had procured

¹³² It is d'Ozicourt who "add[s] Benvoglio as a character up to then unknown" (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 105). The doctor's name is slightly altered to Bentivoglio in the Spanish adaptation.

¹³³ The text of the 2017 edition of *Julia y Romeo* (Pujante and Gregor 2017b) is mostly based on the manuscript located at the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid. This manuscript ends the play with a happy ending, whereas the two scenes that follow, a copy of the tragic denouement of the manuscript from the Spanish National Library, function as an alternative ending.

¹³⁴ "Tras comentar y lamentar la tragedia, las familias enemigas reconocen su responsabilidad y se reconcilian."

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Romeo a harmless potion. The doctor then proceeds to encourage the lovers to flee to Vienna. This happy ending is in consonance with the idyllic scenario encapsulated through the powerful words by Virgil that are printed on the title page, *Omnia vincit amor*, a quote that perfectly illustrates the triumph of love exemplified with the happy ending. Apparently, this is the alternative that was favoured during performances of the play, as it will be discussed in the present chapter.

Julia y Romeo constitutes a perfect illustration of the dominant presence that Neoclassicism exercised in Spain at the turn of the nineteenth century. Spanish Neoclassicists' eventually failed in their strong efforts to completely renovate the stage and modify public taste, but their postulates influenced plays such as Solís's adaptation, which did not escape the rigid constraints imposed by Neoclassicism. Following Weisse the play unfolds in twenty-four hours, centres the action on the conflict between Julia and her progenitors, and the unity of place is less rigidly observed, as the last act transfers the scene from Julia's chamber in the Capelios's Palace to the family vault. Another feature strongly influenced by Weisse's domestic drama, which Solís enhances, is the melodramatic and sentimental tone – excessive at times – which approximates *Julia y Romeo* to the sentimental genre. This becomes obvious from the tearful opening scene and, from that moment onwards, there is a constant flow of tears that permeates the characters' main speeches, especially those delivered by Julia.

Whereas Solís kept his play within the realm of a sentimental or domestic drama, and also copied Weisse in his decision to remain as faithful as possible to the neoclassical unities, he did not, however, maintain the metre of the German play. Instead, Weisse's prose text has been transcribed into rhymed octosyllabic lines, the measure typical of Spanish romance. In a text where the entire action develops in the foreign city of Verona, the metre stands out as a fully autochthonous element. The decision to alter the established metre and, consequently, lighten up the tone in order to adjust it to the formal conventions of Spanish romances might have been motivated by the author's desire to draw the audience to the figures on stage. Spectators were indeed familiar with the sound of a romance, a type of composition recurrent throughout the history of Spanish Literature.

The eight characters from Weisse's play are further reduced to seven in this nineteenth-century adaptation. The *dramatis personae* enumerates the characters as follows: Julia, Madama Capelio, Capelio, Romeo, Bentivoglio, Laura, and Pedro. The

play also features servants of Capelio, but they are not assigned a given name. Having a glance at the names of the characters reveals that the majority are related to Julia. The doctor Bentivoglio stands in between as a mutual friend of the couple, whereas solely Pedro (Romeo's servant) is directly connected with Romeo. In fact, none of his parents appear throughout the play, and Romeo only mentions his father in act V, scene iii when he believes that he is about to die. This further strengthens the visibility and the importance of Julia in contrast to Weisse's play, which features Montecchio (Romeo's father). The bourgeois genre known as *drame*, which rose during the eighteenth century, was characterised by "its extreme cultivation of emotions and its praise for the family as the seat of all virtues" (Pujante and Gregor 2010, 18).¹³⁵ Hence, the considerable decrease in the number of characters, reduced almost to a single family unit, ought not to come as a surprise, given that both *Romeo und Julie* and *Julia y Romeo* can be labelled as sentimental – also domestic – dramas that put the focus on the realm of the domestic sphere.

Consequently, the feud between the two rival families becomes a minor theme. Not only does the emphasis fall on the family relations between members of the Capelio household, but also, and most importantly, Julia's eyes become the window through which we witness and become acquainted with the main events taking place onstage. Thus, the inversion of the lovers' names in the title seems far from being an arbitrary choice. In fact, one of the most salient features of *Julia y Romeo* is that Solís turns Julia into the absolute protagonist, as she becomes the principal figure around which the action of the play develops. Her increased prominence is established from the moment the curtains are drawn. Not only does Julia open the play with a brief soliloquy, but she also appears in a significantly higher number of scenes than Romeo does. With the exception of act IV, in which neither of the lovers appear, – Julia is supposedly dead, while Romeo is on his journey to Mantua, a destination that he never reaches –, Julia intervenes in all the remaining acts. In total, she is present in nineteen scenes throughout the entire play, as opposed to Romeo, who only intervenes in acts I and V – as in Weisse's *Romeo und Julie* – and is included only in seven scenes. As these figures demonstrate Romeo is notably absent throughout most of the action of the play. Since Romeo barely appears onstage, his actions become less relevant. Nevertheless, he is constantly present in Julia's

¹³⁵ "Su cultivo a ultranza de las emociones y su ensalzamiento de la familia como sede de todas las virtudes."

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thoughts, and recurrently mentioned in her speeches. It soon becomes evident that spectators are mostly asked to shift their focus from Romeo to Julia. Empathy for the tormented lady is drawn from the audience, as they witness from the start the deep anguish that Julia experiences as a result of her sweetheart's banishment, and the consequential threat of eternal separation.

The sharp contrast in the uneven presence assigned to each of the lovers becomes more remarkable, if one compares Solís's Julia and Romeo with Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers. First and foremost, by measuring the length of their speeches, it becomes apparent that in *Romeo and Juliet* it is Romeo who has the longest part in the play, followed by Juliet and Friar Lawrence, who have the second and third longest parts, respectively. In addition, Shakespeare's Romeo features in a slightly higher number of scenes than Juliet does, fourteen, whereas Juliet stars in eleven. Therefore, the visibility of Juliet is notably enhanced in her first incursion into the nineteenth-century Spanish stage.

The sentimental genre of the play inevitably alters the portrayal of Julia Capelio, who is akin to an eighteenth-century sentimental heroine. The opening scene sets the tone for the remainder of the play. "This is a lachrymose melodrama" seems to be the message given to spectators from the first minute. Julia's opening lines offer a clear representation of the permanent state that she will have throughout most of the twenty-four hours in which the action of the play is framed. In this first scene the audience encounters Julia crying and agonizing in her private chamber, waiting for Romeo to say his farewells before he commences a life of banishment in Mantua:

JULIA *alone.*

It is already midnight and

in distress Romeo has me.

Heavens, how long the hours are

for those who wait!

He ought to come. All

sleep in tranquil slumber,

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and I alone weeping

bitter tears stay awake.

(I. i. p. 59)¹³⁶

The following scene portrays Julia in conversation with her confidante Laura. The incessant flow of tears on Julia's part does not cease and, as Pujante and Gregor remark, "Julia's insistence on crying and her restlessness in waiting for Romeo have no parallel in [Weisse, d'Ozicourt and Mercier]" (2017b, 25).¹³⁷ It is during the conversation held between the two women when the audience learns that Julia is already married to Romeo, and that her beloved husband has been banished as a punishment for the death of her cousin Teobaldo. As a reading of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* evidences, the play can easily be regarded as a comedy until the murder of Tybalt in act III, scene i, which constitutes the turning point that precipitates the succession of unfortunate events that eventually lead into the tragic ending. *Julia y Romeo* works in reverse, that is to say, it initially presents a tragic scenario, which is happily resolved at the last minute.

The beginning of the play provides a pitiful sight, one where there appears to be no hope whatsoever for the wife of a banished man. Hence, Julia is presented from the start as a suffering heroine, and little does her despair diminish as the action progresses. In Solís's hands, Julia becomes an overtly melodramatic Juliet. The pessimistic atmosphere is not unique to the first two scenes, as this adaptation is characterized by its extremely melodramatic tone and lachrymose mood emphasized, for instance, by the excessive number of occasions in which we find Julia bitterly crying or lamenting her ill fortune. As a matter of fact, words such as "tears" or "crying" are repeatedly used to refer to Julia's miserable state of mind, while expressions such as "what a torment!" or "miserable me!" are constantly uttered by the unhappy protagonist. The incessant succession of depressing scenes and pessimistic dialogues appear to be specifically designed to move and force spectators into constantly showing empathy for Julia. In fact,

¹³⁶ JULIA. *sola*. Ya es media noche y me tiene / con sobresalto Romeo. / ¡Qué largas son las horas / para quien espera, cielos! / Ya debiera venir. Todos / duermen en tranquilo sueño, / y yo sola derramando / lágrimas amargas velo.

¹³⁷ "La insistencia de Julia en el llanto y la inquietud por esperar a Romeo no tiene paralelo en estas versiones [las de Weisse, d'Ozicourt y Mercier]."

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her permanent feeling of utter desolation is also shared and emphasised by other characters such as her mother, Madama Capelio, who acquires more visibility in this adaptation. The first lines that she delivers occur in a conversation held with Laura at the beginning of the second act, in which Madama Capelio inquires about the cause of her daughter's dreadful state. Her intervention further contributes to perpetuate the pity that the audience ought to feel with regards to Julia:

MADAMA

So my dearest Julia
has not stopped, as you said,
sighing, nor her fatigued eyes
have slept?
Dear me! And what does she feel?
You, who constantly see her
cry, you, whom of her misfortunes
are a perpetual witness,
can you not penetrate into the source
of so much sorrow?

(II. i. p. 80)¹³⁸

As this speech evidences, unlike Shakespeare's Lady Capulet, Madama Capelio does show a sincere concern for her daughter's well-being. Julia's misery deeply afflicts her state of mind. The kind depiction turns Madama Capelio into a sympathetic figure. Both Madama Capelio and Julia elicit empathy from the audience, as a result of their constant suffering. The images of Julia as a reckless and hopeless child do not cease as

¹³⁸ MADAMA. ¿Conque mi querida Julia / no dejó, según has dicho, / de suspirar, ni sus ojos / fatigados han dormido? / ¡Válgame Dios! ¿Y qué siente? / Tú que la ves de continuo / llorar, tú que de sus penas / eres perpetuo testigo, / ¿no penetras de qué nace / tanto dolor?

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the hours go by. Even doctor Bentivoglio delves on the picture of her miserable life, when he first shows Julia the liquid that will make her appear dead in the eyes of the rest of the world, so as to avoid the marriage with Conde Paris, and facilitate her journey towards freedom:

BENTIVOGLIO [*Extracting a phial.*]

The tyrannical violence
that they want to use, and the fear
of an oppressed woman,
without resources, without protection,
desperate and resolute
that looks at life with hatred,
have given me the idea
to carefully guard against
the danger of your life;
for which purpose I have procured
this beverage and, with it,
grant you freedom.

(III. vii. p. 114)¹³⁹

Romeo first appears in act I, scene iii with the sole purpose of saying his final farewell. The third and fourth scenes of the first act occur during the break of dawn, and depict a conversation between Romeo and Julia which resembles Shakespeare's iconic act III, scene v in which the star-crossed lovers converse after the consummation of their

¹³⁹ BENTIVOGLIO. [*Sacando un pomo.*] Que la tirana violencia / que quieren usar, y el miedo / de que una mujer opresa, / sin recurso, sin amparo, / desesperada y resuelta / mira con odio la vida, / me han sugerido la idea / de precaver cuidadoso / el peligro de la vuestra; / para lo cual he dispuesto / esta bebida y, con ella, / daros libertad.

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marriage. In Solís's version of the scene, apart from begging her beloved husband to stay, Julia suggests eloping either to an African beach or to the cold Alps, a plan that Romeo says should only be used as a last resource in case his banishment is prolonged over an excessively long period of time. The two scenes do not escape the melodramatic nature of the play, as Julia is in tears while she listens to what she strongly fears might be the last words that her husband delivers in her presence. Furthermore, she even faints the last time that she utters the word "farewell", only regaining her consciousness in the following scene, once that Romeo has already left her chamber. Bearing in mind the higher importance assigned to the character of Juliet, it is not entirely coincidental that Romeo's first appearance illustrates his farewell and subsequent disappearance from the stage until the final fifth act, when he enters the gloomy setting of the Capelios's family vault.

The absence of Romeo throughout most part of the play implies that the audience is driven into seeing the action mostly through Julia's eyes. As it has been shown, we are asked to pity her more than we do in Shakespeare's text, as more emphasis is devoted to the depiction of her feelings. This is mostly possible thanks to the genre of the play. The genre of the bourgeois drama to which the play is ascribed is the reason why the action falls on a family unit, in this case, the Capelio household, so as to examine the interpersonal relations established between Julia and her parents, especially between the young lady and her authoritarian father. This is a feature directly borrowed from Weisse's *Romeo und Juliet* in which, as Williams affirms, "Capellet and his wife have a far more dominant presence. They are both figures familiar from the domestic drama" (1990, 61). The asphyxiating atmosphere in which Julia finds herself is facilitated by setting most of the action (from acts I to IV) in a single chamber located in Capelio's palace, and by reducing the number of characters to mostly three (Julia, Madama Capelio, and Capelio). Hence, Julia is portrayed as if she were a mouse trapped within the walls of her own home, of her private chamber. As Shakespeare's Juliet, Julia regards death as the only solution to her unfortunate circumstances. The audience does not get to picture her in a different scenario until the final act, when she wakes up in the desolate location of a cemetery.

Empathy for Julia is strengthened in both Weisse's and Solís's adaptations due to the depiction of a father who is considerably more authoritarian, oppressive and tyrannical in comparison with Shakespeare's Capulet. The audience first becomes acquainted with

his evil nature in act II, scene iii, when he informs his wife of his wish to marry Julia with Conde Paris on that same night. His reaction to his wife's timid plea to make him reconsider his decision on the basis of "the mourning of a nephew / decorum..." (p. 86) is met with a stern answer on his side: "I confirm it, / I want it, I order it, and that suffices" (p. 87).¹⁴⁰ Their opposing views on the manner parents ought to regard and relate to their children are exposed later in the scene, when it becomes evident that Capelio will not wait for Julia's personal opinion on her upcoming marriage before he himself delivers the news to the Count:

MADAMA

But sir,

we parents are born

to direct, not to

tyrannise our children.

Have they not got the right

not to be oppressed?

Are they slaves?

CAPELIO

They are slaves

and subject to paternal

arbiter: to obey

and suffer is their destiny.

(II. iii. p. 89)¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ MADAMA. El duelo de un sobrino, / el decoro... [...] CAPELIO. Que yo lo confirmo, / lo quiero, lo mando, y basta.

¹⁴¹ MADAMA. Pero señor, / los padres hemos nacido / para dirigir, no para / tiranizar a los hijos. / ¿No tienen ellos derecho / para no ser oprimidos? / ¿Son esclavos? CAPELIO. Son esclavos / y sujetos al arbitrio / paternal: obedecer / y sufrir es su destino.

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As the above dialogue demonstrates, Capelio's authoritarian personality provides a sharp contrast to the tenderness displayed by Madama Capelio, a considerate mother who always tries to defend her daughter's interest in front of her husband – although to no avail. Her sympathy “is an important constituent of the domestic drama” (Williams 1990, 61). A new feature introduced by Weisse – and copied by Solís – is the intimate bond that exists between Julia and her mother. They strongly love and feel for one another and, in her mother's presence, Julia finds herself comfortable expressing her own thoughts. One need only recall Lady Capulet's cold response to Juliet's petition to delay her marriage with Count Paris: “talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word, / do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee” (III. v. ll. 203 – 204). On the contrary, Madama Capelio refuses to exit the scene leaving her daughter in a situation of utter helplessness and, although aware of the little power that she has over her husband, she offers her daughter consolation with the delivery of the following speech:

MADAMA

My Julia!

Goodbye, daughter, that I look at you

in pain, and I do not want to

grieve any longer. I repeat

that I will see if to your misfortune

I can offer some relief.

(II. v. p. 97).¹⁴²

Madama Capelio's role is also reinforced in this adaptation, owing to the higher number of lines and considerably longer speeches that she has when compared with Lady Capulet. An additional feature added to her character is the portrayal of the inner anguish that she feels as a result of her daughter's suffering, a torment depicted in the two

¹⁴² MADAMA. ¡Julia mía! / Adiós, hija, que te miro / con dolor, y no me quiero / afligir ya más. Repito, / que veré si a tu desgracia / puedo dar algún alivio.

soliloquies that she delivers. Furthermore, part of the agency that Julia loses – a trait borrowed from Weisse’s Julie – is bestowed upon the suffering mother; the only character who openly confronts and directs strong accusations at Capelio in order to defend Julia’s best interests. For instance, in act III, scene i, Madama Capelio, prey of the desperation caused by her husband’s cruel demeanour, does not hesitate to call him a “tyrannical father”, and laments that “I am the mother / of the children of a beast” (p. 102).¹⁴³

Julia does not hide her disdain for her father, but never does she express her true feelings in his presence. Instead, she chooses as confidantes either her mother – to whom she begs: “for my sake I beseech you / to hide me from my father, / never merciful with me, / always for me a tyrant” (II. v. p.93)¹⁴⁴ –, or doctor Bentivoglio: “now, those who have a soul / so tyrannical, so fiery, / are made parents by the heavens!” (III. vii. p. 112).¹⁴⁵ The only instance in which Julia does show reticence to obey Capelio’s wishes takes place when he first talks to her about her arranged marriage with Paris. In response to his wishes Julia communicates her intention to lock herself inside a cell, isolated from the rest of the world and from love, so that she can die; an idea which is not found in Weisse, d’Ozicourt or Mercier (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 25). During the verbal exchange between father and daughter, the only attack that Julia throws at Capelio is her accusing him of being a “father without mercy”, but she immediately regrets those words and asks for his forgiveness:

CAPELIO

What are you saying, woman? Do you pretend
to bury in the darkness
of the cloister my highest
hopes? Hush, fool,
and think of obeying me,

¹⁴³ MADAMA. ¡Padre tirano! [...] Y de que vengo a ser madre / de los hijos de una fiera.

¹⁴⁴ JULIA. Por mi propia vida os pido / que me ocultéis de mi padre, / nunca piadoso conmigo, / siempre para mí tirano.

¹⁴⁵ JULIA. ¡Ya los que tienen un alma / tan tiránica, tan fiera, / los hace padres el cielo!

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think only of obeying me.

JULIA

So not a resource is

left for me to save me from you,

father without mercy? Sir,

pain moved my tongue:

forgive me.

(III. iii. p. 106)¹⁴⁶

The personality displayed by Julia Capelio throughout the play offers a sentimental departure from Shakespeare, given her position as the main character of a domestic drama. Her incessant tears and lamentations tone her character down, as she loses part of the strength associated with Shakespeare's heroine. Nonetheless, a fundamental aspect that the play exemplifies is the centrality that Julia occupies from the opening scene. Given the few instances in which Romeo appears, together with the emphasis placed on female suffering, one can conclude that the storyline illustrated by *Julia y Romeo* definitely evidences that this is indeed Julia's story. Furthermore, in the happy ending, the one possibly favoured in performance, she is granted the privilege of closing the play. The optimistic tone of her speech allows the audience to see her experience true happiness for the first time, as she prepares to elope to Vienna with her beloved Romeo. Unlike the tragic ending, which offers no hope of reconciliation between the rival families, Bentivoglio promises that he will secure the desired scenario:

BENTIVOGLIO

And be joyous while

Montescos and Capelios

¹⁴⁶ CAPELIO. ¿Qué dices, mujer? ¿Pretendes / sepultar en las tinieblas / de la clausura mis altas / esperanzas? Calla, necia, / y en obedecerme, y sólo / en obedecerme, piensa. JULIA. ¿Conque ni recurso para / salvarme de vos me queda, / padre sin piedad? Señor, / el dolor movió mi lengua: / perdonadme.

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tire of being adversaries,
and I reconcile their souls
in love and peace.

ROMEO

Indeed, let us go,
Julia; let us go, Pedro.

JULIA

Not to be separated,
Never.

BENTIVOGLIO

Dear friends!

JULIA

Oh, may God wish that we are
joyous, but joyous
with neither dread nor fright!

THE END

(V. v. p. 154)¹⁴⁷

Since *Julia y Romeo* constitutes the first Shakespeare-based adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that was ever created in Spain, it is doubly important to examine its reception. The text was never published during Solís's lifetime. The factor which saved the play from becoming an unfortunate case of reception without dissemination was its performance on six occasions – based on existing records – during the first three decades

¹⁴⁷ BENTIVOGLIO. Y sed dichosos en tanto / que Montescos y Capelio / se cansan de ser contrarios, / y yo concilio sus almas / en amor y paz. ROMEO. Sí, vamos, / Julia; vamos, Pedro. JULIA. Y para no separarnos / jamás. BENTIVOGLIO. ¡Queridos amigos! JULIA. ¡Oh, quiera Dios que seamos / dichosos; pero dichosos / sin temor ni sobresalto! FIN

of the nineteenth century. The premiere took place on the 9 December 1803 at the Teatro de la Cruz (Madrid). According to the information provided by the issues of the *Diario de Madrid* published between the 9 and the 13 December 1803, the play was performed on five successive nights during the aforementioned dates (1803a; 1803b; 1803c; 1803d; 1803e). It is worth remembering that the night prior to the premiere, Madrid audiences had been offered another sample of Shakespearean material with the fourth and last performance of an adaptation of Ducis's *Macbeth* written by Teodoro de la Calle, which, unfortunately, had not met with the desired expectations. Given this discouraging precedent one may wonder why Solís chose to present his *Julia y Romeo* to Madrid audiences at that precise moment in time. Pujante and Gregor offer a feasible suggestion: "it is possible that he had decided to take it to the stage taking advantage of the enormous success of *Misanropía y arrepentimiento* [Misanthropy and Repentance], another German play of the [sentimental] genre that premiered in 1800" (2017b, 26).¹⁴⁸ The play, whose original title in German is *Menschenhass und Reue*, was written by August von Kotzebue (1761 – 1819), first staged in Berlin in 1789, and later translated by Solís in 1800 (García Garrosa 2008; Andioc and Coulon 1996, 780). As Herrera Navarro asserts: *Misanropía y arrepentimiento* constitutes Solís's "major theatrical success [...] it achieved 18 performances" (2002, 334–335).¹⁴⁹ Therefore, this triumph could indeed have been the main reason that prompted the staging of *Julia y Romeo* in the last month of 1803.

Regular buyers of the *Diario de Madrid* would have read the announcement printed in the issue sold on the day of the premiere, which took place on a Friday afternoon. The news relating to the production was brief and added no information besides the title of the play, following the pattern of previous announcements advertised on the pages of that same journal. Hence, Solís's play was advertised in a particularly neutral and informative tone that neither encouraged nor discouraged possible attendees from going to the theatre that day: "in the [theatre] on de la Cruz Street they will perform the drama in five acts entitled *Julia y Romeo*, new; once concluded, a ditty will be sung, and it will end with a short dance: at half past four" (*Diario de Madrid* 1803a, 1.380).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ "Es posible que se decidiera a llevarla a las tablas aprovechando el enorme éxito de *Misanropía y arrepentimiento*, otra obra alemana de este género [sentimental] estrenada en 1800."

¹⁴⁹ "Su mayor éxito teatral, [...] cosechó 18 representaciones."

¹⁵⁰ "En el de la calle de la Cruz se representará el drama en cinco actos titulado: *Julia y Romeo*, nuevo; concluido se cantará la tonadilla, y dará fin con un pequeño baile: a las cuatro y media."

However, it could also be argued that the indication that the play was “new” may have been also purposely added to entice readers to walk to the Teatro de la Cruz that afternoon. The exact same announcement was repeated during the five days that the production was staged, which reveals that each day the theatrical show was followed, first, by a short simple song (a *tonadilla*) and, immediately afterwards, a quick dance.

In the opening decades of the nineteenth century the architectural scenery of the city of Madrid was composed of three theatres: the Teatro del Príncipe and the Teatro de la Cruz (both present since the Golden Age), and the Teatro de los Caños del Peral (built in the eighteenth century). As Rubio affirms, “the Teatro de la Cruz was wider, but not as important as the Príncipe; it did not undergo major renovations and it was finally demolished in 1859” (2003, 1811).¹⁵¹ According to the issue of the *Diario de Madrid* distributed on 9 December, the only performances available that Friday were the following: *Julia y Romeo* at the Teatro de la Cruz, and an opera and a comedy at the Teatro de los Caños del Peral (*Diario de Madrid* 1803a, 1.380). The absence of performances to watch at the most important theatre at the time, that is, the Príncipe, may have favoured a higher attendance at the second most important one: the Teatro de la Cruz.

There are no written records that provide an account of the total number of citizens that attended the Teatro de la Cruz on the 9 December so as to witness the first of the five performances of *Julia y Romeo*. Fortunately, it was common practice in the *Diario de Madrid* to record the takings on the door collected at each theatre, two days prior to the publication of each issue. This relevant information can be taken as an indicator of how a play was welcomed by the public. On the opening night, that is, the 9 December, the money collected at the Teatro de la Cruz was 9.197 *reales* (the currency used at the time), which was considerably higher than the approximately 2.300 *reales* collected at the Teatro de los Caños del Peral on that same afternoon (*Diario de Madrid* 1803c, 1.388).

¹⁵¹ “El Teatro de la Cruz era más amplio, pero no tan importante como el del Príncipe; no hubo en él grandes reformas y finalmente fue demolido en 1859”. Rubio Jiménez offers a picture of the theatrical architecture of Madrid during the first three decades of the nineteenth century: “until the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, modern theatrical architecture had scarce development but, henceforth, it started to acquire a higher vitality. Until that moment there barely existed two official theatres in Madrid, the Príncipe and de la Cruz, apart from the ancient Caños del Peral building” (“hasta la muerte de Ferdinand VII en 1833, la arquitectura teatral moderna tuvo escaso desarrollo, pero en adelante fue adquiriendo un mayor dinamismo. Hasta ese momento apenas existían dos teatros oficiales en Madrid, el del Príncipe y el de la Cruz, además del vetusto local de los Caños del Peral” (2003, 1.809).

Chapter 3

The third night that *Julia y Romeo* was on display (Sunday 11 December) stands out for being the most profitable one, as the takings on the door amount to 9.231 *reales* (*Diario de Madrid* 1803e, 1.396). Even though the figures corresponding to the remaining days do not reach 9.000, the total amount of money collected was reasonably decent, and much higher in comparison with the amount earned by the afternoon production taking place simultaneously – each of the five days – at the Teatro de los Caños del Peral. Thus, on the 10, 12 and 13 December the takings on the door at the Teatro de la Cruz were 7.552, 6.862, and 5.596 *reales*, respectively (*Diario de Madrid* 1803d, 1.392; *Diario de Madrid* 1803f, 1.400; *Diario de Madrid* 1803g, 1.404). The lesser amount of money collected on the last two days the show was in town may be explained by the days when the production was being performed, a Monday and a Tuesday, which generally tend to favour less attendance. Given the significant amount of money collected on the first and third days of the performance (approximately 9.000 *reales*), and also taking into account that the takings on the door did not decrease drastically on the last two days, it could be said that the first performance of *Romeo and Juliet* on the nineteenth-century Spanish stage was a success.

Bearing this in mind, it becomes even more intriguing to know which of the two possible endings was served to the audience. Absolute certainty regarding this matter is not possible. Par claims, based on information given by the *Diario de Barcelona* (1817) that he does not quote, that the company opted for the happy ending (1936, 43). After a thorough examination of the manuscript located at the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid, Pujante and Gregor point in the same direction:

It is quite probable that *Julia y Romeo* was performed with a happy ending. [...] Of the two extant manuscripts, the one that has the satisfying conclusion, which is a second promptbook, abounds in marked cuts, stage directions, and annotations which indicate expected scenic activity or rehearsals in progress – amongst other things, the note on the cover addressed to the one that would be the leading actor, or the list of characters and players (2017b, 26–27).¹⁵²

¹⁵² “Es bastante probable que *Julia y Romeo* se representara con final feliz. [...] De los dos manuscritos conservados, el que tiene el desenlace gozoso, que es un segundo apunte de teatro, abunda en cortes

Pujante and Gregor go one step further and explain the possible rationale behind the creation of this happy ending, which differed from the joyful finale devised by Mercier in *Les tombeaux de Vérone*. The scholars believe that the happy ending “would have been the work of the adapter, possibly due to the leading actor’s decision, or even his own” (2017b, 43).¹⁵³ If it had been a choice motivated by the main actor in the company, then it would have been a decision taken by Juan Carretero. Thanks to the manuscript held at the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid, we know the names of the actors and actresses who played each of the characters in Solís’s play. According to that manuscript the leading roles were assigned to Mr. Carretero and Miss Rita (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 57). By researching the Spanish scene at the turn of the century, it is possible to assert that the full names of the theatre players in question are Juan Carretero (1760 – 1829) and Rita Luna (1770 – 1832). The latter is described by Par as a “distinguished actress, one of the best that have trodden on the Spanish stage” (1936, 45).¹⁵⁴ It is quite remarkable that such an eminent actress would be the one to occupy a significant place in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain, as she was the first to embody the character of Juliet on the nineteenth-century stage. In turn, Juan Carretero also deserves special mention due to his position as the first Spanish Romeo of the nineteenth century. Par defines his persona as follows: “the best leading man of his time after Isidoro [Máiquez] [...] He was tall, with chivalrous manners, a pleasant voice, although lacking in a very clear diction; studious and a good interpreter of his roles” (1936, 46).¹⁵⁵ Alongside Rita Luna Juan Carretero acted with success both at the Teatro de los Caños del Peral, and the Teatro del Príncipe (Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 132). Hence, the pair of talented players seemed the ideal pair to embody two roles that would ultimately become, as it had already happened in Britain, an iconic component of Spanish theatrical history.

Carretero and Luna were forty-three and thirty-three, respectively, in 1803. As the previous chapter illustrated, this peculiarity was not entirely uncommon in the British

marcados, acotaciones y anotaciones que indican actividad escénica prevista o ensayos en curso – entre otras cosas, la nota de la portada dirigida al que sería el primer actor o la lista de personajes y actores –.”

¹⁵³ “Sería obra del adaptador, seguramente por decisión del primer actor, o incluso de éste mismo.”

¹⁵⁴ “La actriz insigne, una de las mejores que ha pisado la escena española.”

¹⁵⁵ “El mejor galán de su tiempo después de Isidoro [...] Era alto, de modales caballerescos, voz agradable, aunque de dicción no muy clara; estudioso y buen intérprete de sus papeles.”

history of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet*. The main difference is that eighteenth-century British spectators were already familiar at the time with Shakespeare's plot and, in turn, were less keen on viewing actors onstage that were not close in age to either Shakespeare's teenage lovers or Garrick's slightly more mature protagonists. On the contrary, Spanish spectators at the turn of the century were not yet familiar with the story of the star-crossed lovers – as depicted by Shakespeare. Therefore, one can assume that theatergoers would not have been too shocked by the mature Carretero and Luna, especially considering that there are no references to the age of Romeo and Julia in Solís's play. Presumably their talent would have made their performances convincing in the eyes of their contemporaries, doubly so in the case of Rita Luna. Evidence of her great talent can be found in the scarce critical references that exist, which assess her acting skills and her short theatrical career.¹⁵⁶

Rita Luna was the “artistic name of Rita Alfonso García” (Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 427). She was mostly known during her lifetime for being a comic actress. In fact, in an article written for the magazine *Cartas españolas* (Spanish Letters), and published twenty-six years after her retirement, Luna is described as the “paladin of Spanish classical comedy, come what may, resisting the invasion of the French neoclassical genre” (1832, 15).¹⁵⁷ The anonymous author of the article was, however, not a hundred percent accurate, since Rita Luna did have a taste of the neoclassical genre – although not of French origin – as a result of her participation in the cast of *Julia y Romeo*. The comment, nonetheless, is relevant as it leads one to assume that her role as Julia might have gone mostly unnoticed by her admirers once that her career was over. This must have been due to the fact that Rita Luna was known for her performance of comic roles, in which she is said to have excelled. On a related note, the anonymous author of the article made a comment in relation to Luna's acting qualities,

¹⁵⁶ As Huerta Calvo et al. affirm, “during sixteen years [Rita Luna] remained in that theatre [the de la Cruz Coliseum] as a great figure” (“durante dieciséis años permaneció como gran figura en ese teatro [el Coliseo de la Cruz]”) (2005, 427). The unknown circumstances that motivated Rita Luna to abruptly end her career were addressed in an anonymous article published in 1832: “[Rita Luna] remained in the same theatre [the Teatro de la Cruz] until the year 1806 when, in the absence of notoriously known causes, and at the age of thirty six, she put an end to her glorious career” (“permaneció en el mismo teatro [de la Cruz] hasta el año 1806 en que sin causas notoriamente conocidas, y a la edad de treinta y seis años, puso fin a su gloriosa carrera.”) (*Cartas españolas, o sea revista histórica, científica, teatral, artística, crítica y literaria* 1832, 15).

¹⁵⁷ “El paladín de la comedia clásica española, que sostuvo a todo evento, resistiendo la invasión del género neoclásico francés.”

which further reinforces Pujante's and Gregor's (2017a; 2017b) assumption that *Julia y Romeo* may have been performed with its happy ending on the opening night: "all genres were easy for her, for all she had received advantages from nature. She only did not rehearse tragedy, undoubtedly owing to the prejudice that existed in her time against that genre" (1832, 16).¹⁵⁸ Therefore, if the decision to write a happy ending had been taken by the company's leading actor, that is, Juan Carretero, who was a regular partner alongside Luna and knew her preference for comic roles, it would have been a natural inclination – particularly in the case of Luna – to favour the happy ending over the tragic denouement.

According to the opinion of twenty-first century theatre scholars Rita Luna "was not a studious actress, but rather quite careless in the characterization of her characters, but her intuitive faculties made up for that neglect" (Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 427).¹⁵⁹ The lack of attention paid to the study of her characters was certainly not an issue for her contemporaries, who often praised her for the talent that she depicted every time that she embodied a new stage persona. Hence, one can assume that her personal interpretation of Solís's *Julia* would have received the approval of the spectators. Quoting the words of an eminent nineteenth-century Spanish writer and journalist, Díaz de Escovar highlights the following qualities that shone whenever Rita Luna was performing: "Mesonero Romanos says that, considered as an actress, it was astonishing to see her stand out on the stage due to the simplicity and the naturalness of her expression, in times dominated by bad taste and extravagant exaggeration" (1900, 13).¹⁶⁰ Therefore, Luna detached herself from the exaggerated declamatory style displayed by most of her peers at that time. Luna was also skilled at crying and expressing anguish, two features that make her ideal for the role of the extremely lachrymose and melodramatic *Julia Capelio*. As the anonymous author writing for *Cartas españolas* expressed in a highly literary manner: "Rita's tears were tears of fire that would bring tears to all who listened to her. The accent of pain in her mouth was not fiction, it was the

¹⁵⁸ "Todos los géneros le eran fáciles, para todos había recibido ventajas de la naturaleza. Solamente no se ensayó en la tragedia, sin duda por la prevención que en su tiempo se tenía contra este género."

¹⁵⁹ "No fue una actriz estudiosa, sino bastante descuidada en la caracterización de sus personajes, pero sus facultades intuitivas suplían esta dejadez."

¹⁶⁰ "Mesonero Romanos dice que, considerada como actriz, era sorprendente verla descollar en la escena, por la sencillez y la naturalidad de la expresión, en tiempos que dominaba el mal gusto y la exageración extravagante."

expression of the soul agitated by sentiment” (1832, 16).¹⁶¹ There are no direct or indirect references made about Rita Luna’s interpretation of the first Spanish Juliet in none of the few sources that provide some insight into her life and career (*Cartas españolas, o sea revista histórica, científica, teatral, artística, crítica y literaria* 1832; Díaz de Escovar 1900; Sánchez Estevan 1913; Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005). This fact reinforces the assumption that Luna’s representation of Julia Capelio could not have been one of her most memorable performances. Nonetheless, considering her acting techniques, “her merit as an artist” – “immense” in the words of Díaz de Escovar (1900, 13)¹⁶² –, and also taking into account that she appears to have been naturally gifted for the stage, it seems only natural to conclude that Rita Luna must have been a deeply satisfactorily Juliet for her time.

Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* was not to be performed again until 1816, two years into the reign of the absolutist monarch Fernand VII (1814 – 1833). The location of the new staging of Solís’s drama shifted from the capital Madrid to Barcelona, where it was performed on three consecutive days from the 18 to the 20 November 1816 at the Teatro de la Santa Cruz (Pujante 2019, 147). Rita Luna had already retired from the stage at this time, and an entirely different company took over the script. The leading roles were assumed in this occasion by María Teresa Samaniego and José Infantes – the latter was both the new and sole leading actor of the company, and also its director (Par 1936, 92). The production was played for the benefit of Samaniego, the new leading lady of the company; she is described by Par as “a good-looking actress, free, and with scenic aptitudes” (Par 1936, 93).¹⁶³ Her stage companion José Infantes was, in Par’s eyes, “a good second rank actor” (1936, 92).¹⁶⁴ The inability to find further information on the actors suggests that they were not, as Par affirms in relation to Infantes, prominent figures of the nineteenth-century Spanish stage. An interesting detail that Par offers, not without hiding his discontent, is that in Barcelona *Julia y Romeo* was “represented in its worse form, that is, with the happy ending” (1936, 96).¹⁶⁵ The happy ending is responsible for the play’s “failure” – in Par’s words –, and it is the reason why it was negatively reviewed

¹⁶¹ “Las lágrimas de la Rita eran lágrimas de fuego que hacían brotar las de cuantos la escuchaban. El acento del dolor no era en su boca una ficción, era la expresión del alma agitada por el sentimiento.”

¹⁶² “Su mérito como artista fue inmenso.”

¹⁶³ “Era actriz de buen parecer, desembarazada y con aptitudes escénicas.”

¹⁶⁴ “Era un buen actor de segunda categoría.”

¹⁶⁵ “Se representó en su forma peor, es decir, con el desenlace feliz.”

the following year in the *Diario de Barcelona* (29 September 1817) in an advertisement of García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta*, which presented this new tragic adaptation as being of a higher quality than *Julia y Romeo*:

Julieta y Romeo, by Andrés Prieto [director], new tragedy in five acts, entirely different from the one that was played last year for the benefit of Mrs. María Samaniego. It offers a better finished picture, more believable characters, and lacks the ridiculous sleep-inducing drink prescribed by doctor Bentivoglio. By means of a catastrophe, both terrible and well prepared, it makes us see the fatal results of the hatred of the families (cited in Par 1936, 97 – 98).¹⁶⁶

According to the information recorded by Par there were three additional performances of *Romeo and Juliet* in Barcelona, all of which took place at the Teatro de la Santa Cruz: from the 22 to 23 July 1820, and one on 20 January 1821 (1936, 103–104). The cast of the 1820 and the 1821 productions is identical, featuring once more María Teresa Samaniego in the title role alongside a new Romeo: José Galindo. Some of the actors who had taken part in the 1816 performances of the play reappeared in these revivals (Par 1936, 102–104).

The decade of the 1830s welcomed two final productions of *Julia y Romeo* in its original location, that is, the city of Madrid. The first of these performances occurred on Saturday 21 January 1832 at the Teatro de la Sartén (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1832b, 88). News regarding the performance of plays at this theatre began to emerge in the press around 1830. As Rubio Jiménez explains, the repertoire of the Teatro de la Sartén “in those years consisted mostly of revivals of successful plays from the two main theatres [the Teatro de la Cruz and the Teatro del Príncipe]” (2003, 1.811).¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the

¹⁶⁶ “*Julieta y Romeo*, por Andrés Prieto, tragedia nueva en cinco actos, enteramente distinta de la que se dio el año pasado para beneficio de la señora María Samaniego, ofrece un cuadro más acabado, caracteres más sostenidos; y sin la ridiculez del soporífero recetado por el médico Bentivoglio; por medio de una catástrofe tan terrible como bien preparada nos hace ver los fatales resultados del odio de las familias.”

¹⁶⁷ “Su repertorio en aquellos años consistía sobre todo en reposiciones de obras de éxito de los dos teatros principales.”

revival of *Julia y Romeo* at the Teatro de la Sartén – twenty-nine years after its premiere – accounts for the play’s success amongst theatergoers of the early decades of the century.

News concerning plans to stage this new production date from December 1831. The play is now billed in the press of the period as *Julieta y Romeo*, possibly influenced by García Suelto’s neoclassical version of the same title, which in 1832 had already been performed in four occasions. The categorization of the play as a “tragicomedy” in the announcement is the clue that allows the twenty-first century scholar to differentiate it from García Suelto’s clearly tragic adaptation: “rehearsals are taking place to stage at the earliest opportunity the tragicomedy in five acts titled *Julieta y Romeo*” (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1831, 1.504).¹⁶⁸

Surprisingly, a day prior to the opening night, the general public was still not given the exact day when the play would be represented, as the same journal replicated most of the information that it had already shared with its readers in December; hence, reproducing the uncertainty inherent in its earlier announcement: “rehearsals are taking place to stage at the earliest opportunity the comedies *Viuda valenciana*, and *Julieta y Romeo*” (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1832a, 72).¹⁶⁹ It is worth noting – to avoid misunderstandings – that the term “comedy” in the previous sentence does not necessarily have the meaning that is often associated with the word in Literature, that is, a work of art intended to be funny, which provides a happy ending. In the nineteenth century, the term continued being used with considerable liberty, albeit less frequently than in the Golden Age, with the generic meaning of “play”. This peculiarity, intrinsic to Spanish theatrical history, implies that, as late as the nineteenth century, even tragedies were still being described by certain playwrights as comedies (Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 171).

Fortunately, on the day of the premiere, Solís’s newly rechristened play was advertised in the press assigned to its proper generic category. The brief announcement reveals that, once again, the company in charge had chosen to reproduce the happy ending: “with royal privilege. Theatre on the Sartén Street. The company of the Royal Sites will execute at half past six at night the tragicomedy in five acts titled *Julieta y*

¹⁶⁸ “Se está ensayando para poner en escena a la mayor brevedad la tragi-comedia en cinco actos titulada *Julieta y Romeo*.”

¹⁶⁹ “Se están ensayando para poner en escena a la mayor brevedad las comedias la *Viuda valenciana* y *Julieta y Romeo*.”

Romeo” (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1832b, 88).¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately, no information was given about the actors that intervened in the production. Solís’s neoclassical adaptation would be performed one last time in the century, on the 20 April 1836 at the Teatro de la Sartén in Madrid (Par 1936, 163). The only additional information that Par provides – besides the location and the exact date – is the title, which, two years after the death of Solís, had gone back to its original form: *Julia y Romeo*.

3.2 A Ducisian Revenge Tragedy: García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta* (1817).

The country which welcomed Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* in December 1803 was not entirely the same that fourteen years later was presented with the premiere of García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta*, which occurred in Barcelona on 29 September 1817. In-between Spain had faced a major conflict with France as a result of the War of Independence (1808 – 1814) that confronted the two neighbouring nations. The arrival of Napoleonic troops in 1808 reinforced the presence and the influence that French culture had exerted over Spain since the latter decades of the eighteenth century. One of the main consequences that the war brought was the confrontation between two opposing groups: the so-called *afrancesados* [frenchified], and the *liberals* [liberals]. The former “supported the ‘enlightened’ policies of Joseph Bonaparte”, whereas the latter “defended the claims of Fernando VII and fought heroically against the foreign invaders” (Gies 1994, 7). The labels continued to be used during the absolutist period that ensued in the aftermath of the war, after the enthronement of Bourbon monarch Ferdinand VII (1814 – 1833).¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the terms no longer designated two opposing groups, as the newly-appointed monarch would persecute members of the former liberal faction, and anyone suspicious of holding liberal sympathies. Hence, the terms acquired negative

¹⁷⁰ “Con real privilegio: Teatro de la calle de la Sartén. La compañía de los reales sitios ejecutará a las seis y media de la noche la tragicomedia en cinco actos titulada *Julieta y Romeo*.”

¹⁷¹ In 1812, during the War of Independence, the liberal faction had formed its own government in Cádiz (a city located in the southwest of Spain), and promulgated the liberal Constitution of 1812 – the first in Spanish history (Gies 1994, 51). The Constitution was suspended after the war ended.

connotations, and even infiltrated the domain of the arts. As Pujante and Gregor observe, “if there was something truly surprising during the first years of the reign of Ferdinand VII was the ease with which terms such as ‘neoclassical’ were used as synonyms for ‘afrancesado’, ‘liberal’, or ‘revolutionary’” (2010, 38).¹⁷²

Despite the convulsive period brought by the eruption of the military and political conflict, theatrical activity was not totally brought to a halt during the war. Even though theatres immediately shut down after the outbreak of war, they “reopened in [December] 1808, and the French authorities tried to encourage performances” (Calvo 2008a, 114). The continuation of theatrical activity, although at a considerably less pace in comparison with the period prior to the war, facilitated the arrival of foreign plays, including the first example of a drama depicting Shakespeare as a character: Alexandre Duval’s *Shakespeare amoureux* (1804). The staging of Duval’s play during the French occupation of Barcelona did not go unnoticed, and the event marks an important milestone in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. Gregor explains the relevance of Duval’s play as follows:

The play was first staged in Spain at the Barcelona Teatro in August 1810 to commemorate the birthday of ‘Napoléon le Grand’. The success of the play, which was performed extensively in Barcelona and moved Ventura de la Vega to produce a Spanish version in 1828, is all the more striking given that it is the first to present Shakespeare as dramatic character, when so little of his writing had been translated and hardly any of it – at least in its original form – had been performed” (2010, 28).

Therefore, the first staging of Duval’s *Shakespeare amoureux* led to the introduction of the phenomenon of Shakespeare as dramatic character, a feature that has remained up to the present, as Pujante stresses, an inherent component of the reception of Shakespeare and his work in Spain: “Shakespeare first appears on the Spanish stage as a

¹⁷² “Si hubo algo verdaderamente sorprendente en los primeros años del reinado de Fernando VII, fue la facilidad con que términos como ‘neoclásico’ se usaban como sinónimos de ‘afrancesado’, ‘liberal’ o ‘revolucionario’.”

theatrical character and cultural icon, thus, inaugurating a literary current that leads up to our days, and which constitutes one of the main features of the presence of Shakespeare in Spain” (2019, 136–137).¹⁷³ Not only was Shakespeare as a character present during the War of Independence, but also adaptations of his works were performed during those years, mainly for the entertainment of the Napoleonic troops garrisoned in Spain. For instance, in 1811 there was a performance of Ducis’s *Othello* conducted by a French company (Calvo 2008a, 110). From a critical standpoint, however, it does not come as a surprise that the period surrounding the years of the War of Independence hardly led to any references about Shakespeare’s literary production: “the little that is written about [Shakespeare’s work] until 1806 reveals few changes, and the critics fall silent between 1808 and 1817” (Pujante 2019, 119).¹⁷⁴

Coincidentally, it was in 1817 during the first years of the absolutist reign of Ferdinand VII, when Manuel Bernardino García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta* was first published and performed in Barcelona. Gregor and Pujante define him as “a translator, a poet, and a Hellenist” (2011, 27).¹⁷⁵ This author has remained up to this day a considerably unknown literary figure. Indeed, he is absent – unlike Solís – from the list of nineteenth-century Spanish translators included in the digital *Diccionario Histórico de la Traducción en España* (the Historical Dictionary of Translation in Spain) (Lafarga and Pegenaute 2021). Pujante also remarks in his latest monograph the little information that exists on García Suelto: “we know little about this adaptor, and the little that we know presents him as a classicist aesthetically, and a supporter of the Ancien Regime ideologically” (2019, 155).¹⁷⁶ His translation of *Romeo and Juliet* was not his first incursion into the work of Shakespeare. A few years earlier, in 1812, García Suelto had written *Macbé, o los remordimientos* [Macbé, or Remorse], which constitutes an improved version – in the opinion of the translator – of the 1790 edition of Ducis’s *Macbeth* (Gregor and Pujante 2011, 27). García Suelto translated the play for the celebrated actor Isidoro Máiquez. It premiered at the Príncipe Theatre on 31 May 1812

¹⁷³ “Shakespeare aparece por primera vez en la escena española como personaje teatral e icono cultural, inaugurando así una corriente literaria que llega hasta nuestros días y constituye uno de los rasgos principales de la presencia de Shakespeare en España.”

¹⁷⁴ “Lo poco escrito sobre ella [la obra de Shakespeare] hasta 1806 revela pocos cambios, y la crítica enmudece entre 1808 y 1817.”

¹⁷⁵ “Traductor, poeta y helenista.”

¹⁷⁶ “No sabemos mucho de este adaptador, y lo poco que conocemos nos lo presenta como un clasicista en lo estético y un partidario del Antiguo Régimen en lo ideológico.”

and, as Calvo observes, the production was a complete fiasco: “the failure of this new version was greater than the earlier [Teodoro de la Calle’s 1803 *Macbeth*], it was performed solely once, and the text of the translation was not published until 1818” (2002, 63).¹⁷⁷

García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta* does not constitute a translation of Shakespeare’s tragedy. In fact, it is unlikely that García Suelto had had any contact – either direct or indirect – with the original play. Instead, the translator resorted, once again, to Ducis’s heavily adapted rewritings; thus, exemplifying the common practice adopted since the start of the circulation of Shakespeare’s works around the Continent. Hence, it is evident in the history of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain that the early decades of the nineteenth century still reflect little awareness of how Shakespeare’s plays really looked like, as the public’s knowledge of his works, that is, what they considered to be Shakespeare, was inevitably mediated by Ducis’s hand. Daniel López, author of the first series of articles devoted to the study of Shakespeare in Spain, wrote about this particular moment in the history of the reception of Shakespeare, describing how the dramatist was wrongly conceived at the time, even by experts in literature:

It was not strange, however, that our men of letters did not know Shakespeare in its original form, and that only when in France Ducis’s imitations, welcomed with increasing enthusiasm, started to call attention to the English author, they tried to present him to our public. Nonetheless, it was believed that the French tragedies, so well received at the other side of the Pyrenees, were mere *imitations*, that is, alterations or rewrites of the original in which the English author always emerged triumphant (López 1883).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ “El fracaso de esta nueva versión fue mayor que el de la anterior [1803], llegando a representarse solo una vez y no publicándose el texto de la traducción hasta 1818.”

¹⁷⁸ “No era extraño, sin embargo, que nuestros literatos no conociesen a Shakespeare en el original, y que sólo cuando en Francia las imitaciones de Ducis, acogidas con entusiasmo creciente, empezaron a llamar la atención sobre el autor inglés, intentasen presentarle a nuestro público; eso sí, creyendo que las tragedias francesas, tan bien recibidas al otro lado de los Pirineos, eran meras *imitaciones*, es decir, reformas o arreglos del original en que el autor inglés salía siempre ganancioso.”

Even though Ducis held a strong influence upon adapters of Shakespeare's work, García Suelto's translation does not constitute an exact reproduction of Ducis's 1772 *Roméo et Juliette*. This is partly the result of the change of focus with regards to neoclassicism that took place after the War of Independence had come to an end. Prior to the military conflict, the Spanish Neoclassicists, obsessed with the improvement of the stage, embraced French tragedy "as a model of order, exemplary heroism and deep refinement" (Gregor 2002, 325). Nevertheless, the situation changed significantly after the war, as Gregor explains:

When the conflict came to an end in 1814 and when, one by one, the theatres reopened their doors, the neoclassical project of reform seemed to have reached a dead end. [...] The idea of the purity of classical tragedy had now given way to an acknowledgement of the unique appeal and necessity of bourgeois drama" (2010, 27).

The new appeal elicited by bourgeois drama is one of the reasons why – in the hands of García Suelto – Ducis's tragedy becomes a domestic tragedy. Even though the neoclassical project of reform did not eventually succeed, this does not imply that neoclassicism was completely removed from the stage after 1814. In fact, Par referred to García Suelto's play as "the best neoclassical rewrite of this period" (1930, 13). Indeed, *Romeo y Julieta* adheres – almost perfectly – to the neoclassical unities, one of the most characteristic features attached to the label "neoclassical". Nonetheless, the unity of place is violated in the last act, which transfers the scene from Capuleto's palace to the communal crypt of both the Montegones and the Capuletos.

García Suelto's domestic tragedy closely follows Ducis's plot but, as Pujante and Gregor remark, "his *Romeo y Julieta* is less a translation than a *refundición* [rewriting]" (2017a, 110). The cover of the 1817 edition of the play contains the title, together with the following information: "*Romeo y Julieta*. Tragedia en cinco actos. Traducida del francés" (Romeo and Juliet. Tragedy in Five Acts. Translated from the French) (Pujante

and Gregor 2017b, 159).¹⁷⁹ As in Ducis's reworking of Shakespeare's text, Julieta Capuleto and Romeo Montegón have known each other since their infancy. Julieta's father has raised Romeo as a son, ever since he managed to escape under the name of Dolveo from the persecution suffered by the Montegón faction at the hands of Rogero (Julieta's uncle). In other words, Romeo and Julieta have grown up almost as brother and sister.

Following Ducis's adaptation, the tragic love story between Romeo and Julieta also acquires less significance. As a matter of fact, the plot is centred on Montegón (Romeo's father), who has a prominent part in the play. The action mostly evolves around his return to Verona to take revenge on the Capuletos. Twenty four years prior to the beginning of the action of the play, the rival faction imprisoned Montegón and his four sons in a tower in Pisa, resulting in the death through starvation of three of his innocent offspring. Only Romeo successfully managed to escape. Montegón's thirst for revenge will even lead him to ask his son Romeo to murder Julieta. The Spanish adapter only departs from Ducis in the last act. In the French adaptation, Juliette learns that Montaigu plans to murder her and her father. Thus, she takes poison to put an end to the enmity between the two families, and dies in the arms of Romeo, who soon follows her into death. The onstage death of the lovers was the element of the play which mostly troubled Ducis's audiences (Carlson 2012, xvii). The Spanish adaptation takes a different turn in its depiction of the final tragic deaths. When Capuleto vows to end the feud, Montegón attempts to stab him. Romeo immediately intervenes, positioning himself in the middle, but is accidentally killed by his biological father (Montegón). After witnessing the tragic events in complete despair, a distressed Julieta stabs herself with the same dagger with which Romeo has been murdered. Finally, the vindictive Montegón, confronted with the horrible thought of having killed the only son he had left, hears Ferdinand dictate his destiny: he will be sentenced to prison, and tortured to death.

García Suelto introduced formal changes such as the metre, by transforming Ducis's "full-rhymed alexandrines" into "assonant-rhymed hendecasyllables" (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 110). Nevertheless, the most salient innovation can be observed in the

¹⁷⁹ The text of *Romeo y Julieta* that has been consulted is the 1817 edition of the play, published in 2017 by Pujante and Gregor in their monograph *Romeo y Julieta en España: las versiones neoclásicas*.

adapter's deliberate wish to depoliticise Ducis; an inevitable consequence of the absolutist regime which governed the country at the time:

Working in a particularly sensitive period, in which the newly reinstated monarch, Ferdinand VII, was engaged in a specially virulent campaign against the liberal reformers, [García Suelto] does, however, avoid any political allusions, and even the Ducisian references to the different 'partis' [parties] and 'factions' supporting the protagonists are replaced by the more domestic 'familias' [families] (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 110).

Another innovation – albeit minor – is found in the names of the protagonists, altered to accommodate them to the Spanish language. This feature is also present in García Suelto's *Macbé*, in which only Duncan remains completely unchanged, whereas Macbeth undergoes a lesser process of "hispanization" (Gregor and Pujante 2011, 27). The *dramatis personae* of Ducis's *Roméo et Juliette* contains notable absences in comparison with Shakespeare's play, as the number of characters is considerably reduced to the following seven individuals: Ferdinand (Duke of Verona), Montaigu, Capulet, Roméo, Juliette, Albéric (Roméo's friend), and Flavie (Juliette's confidante) (Ducis 1773, 2). In García Suelto's translation the characters are rechristened as follows: Fernando, Montegón, Capuleto, Romeo, Julieta, Alberico, and Flavia.¹⁸⁰

Given the predominance of Montegón and his lust for revenge, less attention is devoted to the portrayal of the tragic love story. In Shakespeare the first steps depicting the gradual development of the love between Romeo and Juliet are presented through their first meeting at the masquerade, followed by the iconic balcony scene where they reflect on their amorous feelings, and their secret wedding. In this adaptation there is no need for the first two scenes because Romeo and Julieta have known each other from an early age, whereas their wedding never materialises. Unlike Solís's adaptation which considerably assigns far more importance to Julia than to Romeo, this version does not

¹⁸⁰ Both Ducis's and García Suelto's versions also feature the appearance of the following minor characters: an officer (a captain), guards and soldiers, courtesans belonging to the Duke's retinue, partisans of Montaigu/Montegón house, and partisans of Capulet/Capuleto house.

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place more weight on the main female character. In fact, both appear almost in the same number of scenes: Romeo in twenty-four, and Julieta in twenty-two. Nevertheless, the character of Julieta regards herself as the dominant force in the relationship. Following Ducis, García Suelto's Romeo is also a celebrated warrior, praised by both Capuleto and the Duke. From the opening scene Julieta prides herself in being responsible for her sweetheart's victories, as she clarifies in her last intervention in act I, scene i during a conversation with Flavia:

JULIETA

It is to me alone

that we owe the exploits of his arm,

to me we owe the laurel of his conquests:

without me, without this love, he would not be

such a distinguished hero...

(I. i. p. 166)¹⁸¹

Furthermore, through her agency, Julieta tries to control Romeo's actions, especially by dictating what he is not supposed to do. This feature becomes apparent since act I, scene v, when Alberico confirms to them that the old man that has returned to Verona is indeed Montegón – as rumour had it. Henceforth, one of Julieta's major concerns is to protect Romeo from Montegón, and to ensure that he does not reveal his true identity to his biological father. Julieta is very firm in ordering Romeo not to act against her judgment:

ROMEO

Oh, chance! Oh, unexpected pleasure!

¹⁸¹ JULIETA. A mí sola / se deben las hazañas de su brazo, / se me debe el laurel de sus conquistas: / sin mí, sin este amor, no fuera acaso / héroe tan singular...

The Neoclassical Adaptations

Can this be possible?

JULIETA

In such blissful moment

sole reflection must occupy us:

your father cannot know you;

care that he does not see you in such state.

If you adore me, if my love you appreciate,

I beg you, in brief, I command you.

(I. v. p. 174)¹⁸²

In their second encounter, an afflicted Romeo reflects upon his misery after seeing the pitiful state in which his old father is. Julieta then reacts by showing some leniency, and grants Romeo permission to acknowledge to his father that he is his son, so that he can “regain / the illustrious rights of his birth” (II. i. p. 176).¹⁸³ Nevertheless, he can only reveal such an important secret providing that Montegón does not remain obstinate in his plans to pursue “his atrocious vengeance” (II. i. p. 176).¹⁸⁴ Once again, Julieta takes the lead, and forces Romeo to obey her wishes. Resembling the type of love depicted in chivalric romances, Romeo gives in, showing no opposition to his lady’s desires:

JULIETA

Will you promise me?

ROMEO

Yes.

JULIETA

¹⁸² ROMEO. ¡Oh, ventura! ¡Oh, placer inesperado! / ¿Será posible? JULIETA. En tan feliz momento / la sola reflexión debe ocuparnos: / tu padre ya no puede conocerte; / guarda que no te vea en tal estado. / Si tú me adoras, si mi amor aprecias, / yo te lo ruego, en fin yo te lo mando.

¹⁸³ JULIETA. Recupera / los ilustres derechos de tu cuna.

¹⁸⁴ JULIETA. Su venganza atroz.

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May your tongue
and your ardent affection swear to obey me.

ROMEO

I swear by my love, by my Julieta,
by her life and mine, and this sword,
always to obey her supreme orders.

(II. i. p. 176)¹⁸⁵

Unfortunately for Julieta, her influence over her lover is less powerful than what she believes. In point of fact, Romeo rapidly takes pity on Montegón, and swears allegiance to him: “be my father, milord; as your son / I vow respect, eternal submission” (II. iv. p. 184).¹⁸⁶ Shortly afterwards, murder ensues when Romeo slays offstage Teobaldo (Julieta’s brother), in order to save the life of Montegón. Therefore, throughout the play, Romeo, who soon regrets his crime, is torn between showing loyalty to his biological father, and to the rival faction that raised him and welcomed him with open arms.

On the other hand, Julieta also faces her own dilemma: having to choose between her heart (loving Romeo), and her father’s desires (marrying Count Paris). The announcement of her immediate marriage with the Count – who never intervenes – is also announced in the first act. The difference in comparison with Shakespeare’s play is that Julieta’s marriage with Count Paris has political and personal implications, as it is a decision taken by Capuleto to ensure more protection for his family against Montegón’s tyranny. Capuleto is a more benevolent figure, who does not witness with indifference his daughter’s tearful plea to dissuade him from his scheme:

¹⁸⁵ JULIETA. ¿Me lo prometes? ROMEO. Sí. JULIETA. Jure tu lengua / y tu ardiente cariño obedecerme. ROMEO. Yo juro por mi amor, por mi Julieta, / por su vivir y el mío, y esta espada, / siempre cumplir sus órdenes supremas.

¹⁸⁶ ROMEO. Sed mi padre, señor; cual hijo vuestro / respeto os juro, sumisión eterna.

The Neoclassical Adaptations

CAPULETO

It is no longer possible to delay any longer
such a satisfactory and necessary union.

Obey!

JULIETA

My lord!

CAPULETO

What!

JULIETA

My father,
and you stare at my anxious crying
without piety, without pain?

CAPULETO [*Touched.*]

“Dear daughter,
do you think that I rejoice in your sorrow?

[...]

But, alas! That I see in terror and dread
that the fierce Montegones are gathering...

(I. iii. p. 170)¹⁸⁷

One of the arguments that Julieta throws at her father, in order to defend her best interests – although to no avail – is the following brutal attack: “My lord, I know / your truths: do not wish tyrannically / to immolate your blood” (I. iii. p. 168).¹⁸⁸ Ironically, in

¹⁸⁷ CAPULETO. Ya no es posible diferir más tiempo / enlace tan feliz y necesario. / ¡Obedece! JULIETA. ¡Señor! CAPULETO. ¡Qué! JULIETA. Padre mío, / ¿y veis correr mi congojoso llanto / sin piedad, sin dolor? CAPULETO. [*Enternecido.*] Hija querida, / ¿piensas tú que me gozo en tu quebranto? / [...] Mas, ¡ay!, que miro con pavor y espanto / que se juntan los fieros Montegones...

¹⁸⁸ JULIETA. Señor, conozco / vuestras verdades: no queráis tirano / inmolar vuestra sangre.

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the next scene, she gives in to her father's plan to protect the family, and decides to act against her own will; precisely by doing what she had begged her father not to force her to do, that is, to sacrifice herself:

JULIETA

Oh, pain!

ROMEO

I am going to lose you.

JULIETA

My father I obey, and to the State

I sacrifice myself.

ROMEO

To renounce is strength,

the lovely joy of staring at your beauty.

JULIETA

Soon death will approach me and, dying,

I will free myself from my tyrannical pain.

(I. iv. pp.172 – 173)¹⁸⁹

The reference to the “State” is a mere remnant of Ducis’s adaptation, and it certainly does not have the same implications. In Ducis’s version it is evident that Capulet’s decision to marry his daughter to Paris is politically motivated. On the contrary, in García Suelto’s version the feud mostly affects the two rival families, and it does not truly destabilise the entire state of Verona. Hence, the insertion of the word “State” must be taken as a mere remnant of the French text that was not omitted during the process of

¹⁸⁹ JULIETA. ¡Oh, dolor! ROMEO. Voy a perderte. JULIETA. A mi padre obedezco, y al Estado / me sacrifico. ROMEO. Renunciar es fuerza / la amable dicha de mirar tu encanto. JULIETA. Presto la muerte me llegará y, muriendo, / me libraré de mi dolor tirano.

translation, perhaps because the adapter felt confident enough that he had safely removed any possible associations between the fictitious Verona governed by Duke Ferdinand, and the real absolutist Spanish regime imposed by King Ferdinand VII.

Throughout most of the action of the play, García Suelto's Julieta mostly resembles Ducis's Juliette. Nevertheless, a significant departure takes place at the end. García Suelto's Julieta does not run away from her destiny by committing suicide; unlike Ducis's Juliette, who takes poison after reading a letter by Montaigne in which he fiercely demands the death of the Capulets. On the contrary, in the Spanish adaptation Julieta makes her best display of bravery, and implores Romeo to flee with her father. Her only wish is to keep safe the two men that she loves the most, whereas she once again opts to sacrifice herself: "And let it be myself alone the miserable object / that satiates your father's vengeance" (V. ii. p. 213).¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Romeo is powerless to carry out Julieta's wish, and cannot evade the tragedy that awaits them in the final scene. The spectacle of blood depicted at the end heightens the dramatic tension, as the lovers do not die alone, but in the presence of their fathers and Fernando, which significantly contributes to increase the horror of the scene. Shortly after Romeo is mortally wounded by Montegón, Julieta seizes the opportunity to carry out her final will. Thus, as she had recurrently announced, she eventually ends up sacrificing herself as she chooses. In the same manner that she had – somehow arrogantly – claimed earlier to be the cause of Romeo's victories in the battlefield, at the end she proudly revels in being the executioner of her own death:

[JULIETA *seizes from* MONTEGÓN, *who will be distracted, the dagger with which he wounded* ROMEO.]

JULIETA

Barbarous father,

of your own son bloody murderer,

rejoice in his corpse, rejoice now

¹⁹⁰ JULIETA. Y sea yo sola el miserable objeto / que sacie la venganza de tu padre.

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in the triumph of your rage. The object
of your vengeance I am, but my death
I will not owe to that hand that I see
stained with the blood of my lover.
You see him, pale, immobile... Sweet dream...
Farewell, beloved father. Farewell, tyrant,
see fulfilled your ferocious desire.

[*She wounds herself.*]

CAPULETO

Stop, Julieta... Oh, Lord!

FLAVIA

She wounded herself.

JULIETA

Let

me expire in Romeo's arms.

[*She falls beside him.*]

(V. v. pp. 218 – 219)¹⁹¹

In the 1817 edition of the play the death of Julieta is followed by comments of dismay and disgust expressed by Capuleto and Montegón, remarks prompted by the dreadful scene that they have just witnessed. Consumed by remorse, Montegón then blames himself for having murdered his only living son. In his last intervention, he offers to make peace with Capuleto. The last words of the play are given to Fernando, who

¹⁹¹ [JULIETA *arrebata a MONTEGÓN, que estará absorto, el puñal con que hirió a ROMEO.*] JULIETA. Bárbaro padre, / de tu mismo hijo matador sangriento, / gózate en su cadáver ahora / el triunfo de tu cólera. El objeto / de tu venganza soy, pero mi muerte / no deberé a esa mano que estoy viendo / teñida con la sangre de mi amante. / Le veis pálido, inmóvil... Dulce sueño... / Adiós, amado padre. Adiós tirano, / mira cumplido tu feroz deseo. [*Se hiere.*] CAPULETO. Tente, Julieta... ¡Oh, Dios! FLAVIA. Se hirió. JULIETA. Dejadme / expirar en los brazos de Romeo. [*Cae junto a él.*]

pronounces Montegón's imprisonment and death, as punishment for being "the cause of this bloody horror" (V. v. p. 219).¹⁹² This ending features only in one of the four manuscripts that contain the play, as Pujante and Gregor point out: "three of the four handwritten versions of the play do not include the last interventions by Fernando, Capuleto, and Montegón, whereas in the fourth one these appear between square brackets" (2017b, 32).¹⁹³ These textual annotations, included in the manuscripts that functioned as promptbooks for the companies who took the text to the stage, strongly suggest that in performance the play ended with the shocking and powerful image of Julieta stabbing herself, before expiring in the arms of her beloved Romeo. Therefore, in performance, it appears that the character of Julieta stole the show at the end.

García Suelto – in following Ducis – relegated the lovers to a second place within the story. For this reason, the text ends with Montegón and his righteous punishment. If on the stage the play indeed ended with the unfortunate death of Julieta and, thus, without revealing whether or not there is a possible reconciliation between the rival families, it can be argued that the lovers are ultimately turned into the real protagonists. To end the play with their deaths, and not with Montegón's death sentence, strengthens their position by presenting both Romeo and Julieta as the true victims of the feud.

The text was first published in 1817, and reprinted without having been revised in 1820; in both occasions the play bore the title *Romeo y Julieta* (Pujante and Gregor 2017a, 107). Unlike García Suelto's 1818 edition of *Macbeth*, in which the adapter made clear that the tragedy had been written in English by Shakespeare and later adapted in French by Ducis, the two editions of *Romeo y Julieta* offer no details on that regard (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 37). It is worth stressing that *Romeo y Julieta* is the title that was given to the play by its own author, as it was not the one that features in advertisements. It seems that – in the eyes of the journalists – the character of Julieta had more allure than her male counterpart because the play was billed in the press as *Julieta y Romeo*. Another possible explanation for the inversion of the names of the lovers might be the precedent established by Solís's *Julia y Romeo*.

¹⁹² FERNANDO. La causa de este horror sangriento.

¹⁹³ "En tres de las cuatro versiones manuscritas de la obra no se recogen las últimas intervenciones de Fernando, Capuleto y Montegón, mientras que en la cuarta éstas se ponen entre corchetes."

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García Suelto's adaptation was staged for the first time in Barcelona on the 29 and 30 September 1817 at the Teatro de la Santa Cruz (Par 1936, 97). It is worth remembering that the production was highly acclaimed in the *Diario de Barcelona* (29 September 1817), which stressed that the characters and the play as a whole had improved in comparison with *Julia y Romeo*, and that this new version discarded the "ridiculous sleep-inducing drink" prescribed to Romeo by doctor Bentivoglio – a clear reflection of the disapproval that the happy ending had met with when Solís's *Julia y Romeo* was first performed in Barcelona in 1816. The protagonist and director of the 1817 production was Andrés Prieto, who played Montegón. Par describes him as follows: "Andrés Prieto is the best actor that Barcelona had in those times; he was not such a great thing but, after all, he was Máiquez's disciple and understudy" (1936, 96).¹⁹⁴ Almost nothing is known about the Catalan actress Juana Galán, leading lady of the company that year, and responsible for embodying the character of Julieta Capuleto (Par 1936, 97).¹⁹⁵ As for the actor who possibly played Romeo, Par (1936, 97) simply provides his surname, "Galindo", which does not coincide with the surnames of any of the major actors of the period. Consequently, one can only assume that the role was interpreted by a second-rank actor.

According to Par the reception that the play had was "nothing beyond ordinary" (1936, 101)¹⁹⁶. Nevertheless, this assumption or perception, as it can only be interpreted as such, does not prove useful. As it often occurs in the works of Par, he is – at times – exceedingly subjective. The use of the term "ordinary" is extremely vague, as one cannot truly know the scholar's personal conception of what constitutes an "ordinary" reception. In the absence of figures indicating the (approximate) number of attendees or the takings on the door, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not the production was successful. Nevertheless, the revival of the play in Madrid, merely a year after, points towards the assumption that the production must have been successful.

¹⁹⁴ "Andrés Prieto es el mejor actor que tuvo Barcelona por aquellos tiempos; no es que fuese cosa mayor, pero al fin y al cabo era discípulo y segundo de Máiquez."

¹⁹⁵ No secondary sources have been found about the actress in question, besides the few bibliographical details that Par provides based on knowledge passed on to him by Emilio Cotarelo. Juana Galán was born in Reus (Tarragona). In 1806 she was a student at a drama school located in the Teatro de la Santa Cruz (Barcelona). In 1815 she worked in her home town. Ten years later the actress rose to leading lady in Zaragoza. Galán will later return to Barcelona, where she continued playing leading roles until her age allowed it (1936, 97).

¹⁹⁶ "No pasó de regular."

In 1818 García Suelto's tragedy was performed in Madrid at the Teatro del Príncipe from the 14 to the 16 December (*Diario de Madrid* 1818a; *Diario de Madrid* 1818b; *Diario de Madrid* 1818c). As a result of circumstances that are unknown the premiere was delayed for, at least, two months. On 2 October the play appears in the press, included in a list of performances to be executed at the theaters of the capital in that same month. As usual, the announcement was brief, and it only provided details regarding – in this order – the leading actor (Andrés Prieto), the title of the play (*Julieta y Romeo*), the genre (a tragedy), and its translator (García Suelto) (*Crónica científica y literaria* 1818). The same piece of information was repeated twice on the issues printed on the 3 November and the 4 December (*Crónica científica y literaria* 1818b; *Crónica científica y literaria* 1818c). On the day of the premiere (14 December) more specific details as regards to the performance were eventually disclosed:

In the Príncipe, at half past 6 at night, they will execute the new tragedy in 5 acts entitled *Julieta y Romeo*; once concluded, a bolero will be danced, and it will all end with an entertaining farce. Actors: Mrs. Manuela Molina [Julieta] and Mrs. María Maqueda [Flavia]; Mr. Andrés Prieto [Montegón], Mr. Bernardo Avecilla [Romeo], Mr. Joaquín Caprara [Capuleto], Mr. Antonio Silvostrí [Fernando], Mr. Ramón López [Alberico], and Mr. Manuel Prieto [a captain] (*Diario de Madrid* 1818a, 834).¹⁹⁷

The announcement reveals that the new production contained a different cast compared with the one that had first performed the play in Barcelona a year earlier, but there is one obvious exception, Andrés Prieto, who undertook for a second time the roles of both director and male lead. Gies informs that in 1817 Prieto “had taken over from [Isidoro] Máiquez at the Príncipe Theatre” (1994, 61), a detail that ought not to be overlooked. It is worth remembering that Máiquez was one of the most important figures

¹⁹⁷ “En el del Príncipe, a las 6 y media de la noche, se ejecutará la tragedia nueva en 5 actos titulada *Julieta y Romeo*; concluida se bailará el bolero y se dará fin con un divertido sainete. Actores: señoras Manuela Molina y María Maqueda; señores Andrés Prieto, Bernardo Avecilla, Joaquín Caprara, Antonio Silvostrí, Ramón López y Manuel Prieto.” The names of the actors and their corresponding roles are provided by Pujante and Gregor (2017b, 161).

in the theatrical scene of the period. Hence, if Andrés Prieto had substituted him, and was since 1817 in charge of the most important theatre in Madrid, he must have been particularly careful in the selection of the plays to be produced in order to continue guaranteeing the prestige of the Teatro del Príncipe. The decision to produce García Suelto's adaptation a second time, on this occasion in the nation's capital, can be interpreted as an indication that the previous 1816 performances of the play in Barcelona must have had a warm reception. Furthermore, if Prieto's personal interests are considered, it is also worth taking into account that *Romeo y Julieta* presents a story with an interesting male lead that plays a paramount role throughout most of the play, which would explain why he cast himself again in the role of Montegón. In Julieta's skin we find an unknown actress: Manuela Molina. Her name does not even appear in the thousands of files guarded by the Spanish National Library.

The only apparent surviving review dates from ten years later, when the play was revived in the same theatre, and it attests to the enormous success that the 1818 production had: "its plot merited the most satisfactory welcome from this illustrious public when it was first performed in the year 1818" (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1828b, 812).¹⁹⁸ The anonymous reviewer ignored, possibly due to the change of location, that the first production had actually taken place in 1817. If the plot of the play was deemed "satisfactory", it is evident that, when it comes to an evaluation of the content – the tragic story itself – one can confidently affirm that the "narrative" aspect of the production pleased contemporary audiences.

Unfortunately, the reviewer did not assess the quality of the acting of the 1818 production. Bearing in mind that Prieto was one of Máiquez's disciples, one can easily assume that he probably offered a satisfactory performance in the role of the odious and vindictive Montegón. But what about the character of Julieta? Would the public have been pleased with the performance of Manuela Molina? Or that of Juana Galán a year earlier? In the absence of material evidence, one can only speculate about the reception and quality of their interpretations, which would not be an adequate solution. However, one aspect *is* certain: Spanish actresses would not have had the pressure that nineteenth-century British actresses playing Juliet had. In contrast to the British theatrical scene,

¹⁹⁸ "Su argumento mereció de este ilustrado público la acogida más satisfactoria cuando se representó por vez primera en el año de 1818."

where Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was already a celebrated and well-known play, in Spain the majority of the general public remained ignorant about the existence of the original tragedy. Taking into account the point of view of an actress agreeing to play the character of Julieta, it inevitably implies that she was signing up for the performance of a relatively unknown role. Consequently, the actress in question had complete freedom to represent the tragic heroine as she best deemed fit, without having to deal with unnecessary comparisons with previous actresses that had already undertaken that persona.

Rita Luna was up to this point in time the only popular actress that had played Juliet. It is true that the possibility of Juana Galán and Manuela Molina attending a performance of *Julia y Romeo* cannot be discarded altogether, but Rita Luna would not have served as the most adequate example. Luna was mostly praised for exceeding in comedy, and it does not seem that she was remembered in her time for her portrayal of Julia. Nevertheless, if her performance is to be taken into consideration, hers would have been the only well-known referent. Thus, the absence of exemplary tragic Juliets to look up to for inspiration would have forced both Juana Galán and Manuela Molina to rely mostly on their own skills, their personal interpretation and understanding of the character, and – possibly – the instructions given by the actor-manager.

Their early-nineteenth-century British counterparts did have several models preceding them, perhaps much to their dismay. In 1811 the actor, playwright and theatre manager John Philip Kemble (1757 – 1823) published his own version of *Romeo and Juliet*. The information printed on the cover bears proof of whom the author was greatly indebted to: *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, A Tragedy; Adapted to the Stage by David Garrick* (Kemble 1811). Indeed, this “new” version heavily relied on Garrick's adaptation, which was still being performed at the turn of the century. Borrowing from the work of other authors was common practice in the writing career of Kemble since, as Dobson stresses, he “only rarely added material not derived from adaptations already in the repertory” (1992, 185). However, employing as a direct source the most influential version of *Romeo and Juliet* that existed after Shakespeare did not guarantee that the quality of the acting was up to the expected standards, as Weis observes:

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But if no actors and actresses in the early years of the nineteenth century could quite measure up to the landmark Romeos (and Juliets) of the second half of the eighteenth century, it was not for lack of trying by Kemble (who used Garrick's text largely), his sister Sarah Siddons and Edmund Kean (2012, 66).

It is highly unlikely that Kemble's *Romeo and Juliet* could have exerted any influence on productions of either *Julia y Romeo*, or *Julieta y Romeo*, since there was little exchange between the Spanish and the English stage in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, even if Spanish actresses had turned their eyes to the English theatrical scene of the decade, they would have found it lacking in proper models of instruction that could help them with their own performances of Julieta.

García Suelto's adaptation would not be performed again until 1828. The reason for its revival was not given, but there are different circumstances that seem to have strongly influenced the reappearance of the play on the stage at this precise point in time. First of all, there is the successful precedent of the 1818 production in Madrid, which delighted critics and contemporary audiences alike. Secondly, García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta* did not only enjoy a promising life on the stage, but also in print, as in 1828 there were already two editions of the text published, which confirm that the tragedy still elicited interest from the general public. Thirdly, 1828 constitutes an important year in the history of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. On the one hand, as Calvo stresses, "Madrid was swept in 1828 by *Othellomania*" (2008a, 112). There were two different productions of *Otelo* in Madrid theatres that year, Teodoro de la Calle's *Otelo* and the parody *El Caliche* – the latter is "generally attributed to José María Carnerero" (Gregor 2002, 335).¹⁹⁹ On the other hand, this year coincides with the premiere on 18 April of the first Spanish translation-adaptation of Alexandre Duval's *Shakespeare amoureux: Shakespeare enamorado*, written by Ventura de la Vega (Pujante 2019, 136).

¹⁹⁹ *El Caliche* is described by Calvo as "a parody of Ducis's *Othello* presented in the shape of the prototypical Spanish farce or sainete" (2008a, 112). Although *El Caliche* is generally assigned to Carnerero, there is no evidence that suggests he is the actual author of the play.

The story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona also captivated Italian composers of opera, the medium that in Spain “would come to be the most enthusiastically followed entertainment in the 1820s and early 1830s” (Gies 1994, 93). Indeed, as Calvo highlights, “the success of *Otelo* and *Romeo y Julieta* in Madrid is partly the result of the success of opera, as Rossini and Bellini helped to make these two Shakespeare tragedies well known in Spain” (2008a, 116). The year 1828 also coincides with the publication in Spanish of *Julieta y Romeo* (*Giulietta e Romeo* in the original), a two-act opera with a libretto by Felice Romani and music by Nicola Vaccai. The name of the translator is not given, but the cover indicates that the opera “is to be represented at the Teatro de la Cruz of this court” (Romani 1828).²⁰⁰ All of these factors clearly demonstrate that there was an evident interest in Shakespeare and his work in 1828, which must have contributed to the revival of García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta*.

On 16 July 1828, the *Diario de Avisos de Madrid* [Madrid’s Journal of Announcements] was informing its readers of the upcoming premiere of the five-act tragedy *Romeo y Julieta*, billed as: “one of the most interesting ones from the wealth of the Príncipe Theater” (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1828a, 792).²⁰¹ This new production is particularly significant as, the day it premiered (21 July 1828), the *Diario de Avisos de Madrid* acknowledged – for the first time in Spanish history – Shakespeare as the original author of *Romeo and Juliet*:

In the Príncipe [Theatre] at 8 o’clock at night. First, a symphony: shortly afterwards, *Romeo y Julieta*, tragedy in five acts by the immortal Shakespeare, adapted to the Spanish stage. Its plot merited the most satisfactory welcome from this illustrious public when it was first performed in the year 1818. Since then, this production had not been represented, despite its merit, owing to several incidents which have delayed it. Its repetition after so many years will be, without doubt, pleasing to the spectators (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1828b, 812).²⁰²

²⁰⁰ “Se ha de representar en el Teatro de la Cruz de esta Corte.”

²⁰¹ “Una de las más interesantes del caudal de ese teatro [Príncipe].”

²⁰² “En el del Príncipe a las 8 de la noche. Se dará principio con una sinfonía: enseguida *Romeo y Julieta*, tragedia en cinco actos del inmortal Shakespeare, acomodado a la escena española. Su argumento mereció de este ilustrado público la acogida más satisfactoria cuando se representó por vez primera en el año de 1818. Desde entonces no ha vuelto a representarse esta producción, no obstante su mérito, por diversos incidentes que lo han retardado. Su repetición después de tantos años, será grata sin duda a los espectadores.”

The circumstances which motivated this ten-year delay are not provided. The production was followed by a second performance the next day (*Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1828b; *Diario de Avisos de Madrid* 1828c). Whereas the exact dates of the two performances are clear (21 – 22 July 1828), the same degree of certainty cannot be applied to the location. Whereas the *Diario de Avisos de Madrid* mentions the Teatro del Príncipe in all of the aforementioned announcements, according to the *Correo literario y mercantil* [Literary and Commercial Post], it was the Teatro de la Cruz which hosted the new production (*Correo literario y mercantil* 1828, 3).

The 1828 production of *Romeo y Julieta* is also of great importance owing to the professionals who were responsible of taking the play to the stage. First of all, the cast features two of the most important theatre players of the nineteenth-century Spanish stage, Carlos Latorre (owner of the company) and Concepción Rodríguez, who portrayed the parts of Romeo and Julieta.²⁰³ Of equal importance in this production was the director of the Teatro del Príncipe at the time, Grimaldi (1796 – 1872), who had taken control of the theatre in 1824 (Gregor 2010, 31). Known in Spain as Juan de Grimaldi, the French Jean-Marie Grimaldi is one of the most eminent theatrical figures of the early decades of the nineteenth century. As an impresario, stage director and playwright Grimaldi left a permanent and influential mark on the Spanish stage. His role as director of the Teatro del Príncipe was of particular significance, as he was “determined to transform the Príncipe Theater into a European theatre” (Calvo 2006b, 83).²⁰⁴ Hence, the staging of foreign plays at the coliseum. Furthermore, as Gies highlights, Grimaldi was a man devoted to his craft, who took great care of the productions under his supervision:

[Grimaldi] must be credited with investing sizeable amounts of time and thought into improving the theatres in the 1820s and 1830s. Those improvements included the training of actors, [...] and the insistence on proper dress, props and scenery for the performances he directed. His

²⁰³ The other interpreters that intervened in the production were the following: Antonio Silvostrì (Fernando), Joaquín Caprara (Montegón), Elías Noren (Capuleto), Antonio Rubio (Alberico), Jerónima Llorente (Flavia), and Antonio González (an officer) (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 162).

²⁰⁴ “Empeñado en convertir el Teatro del Príncipe en un teatro europeo.”

overarching goal, as he explained many times, was to bring Spanish theatre up to the level of theatre in the rest of Europe (1994, 68).

Therefore, Grimaldi's role as director cannot be overlooked, as he surely contributed to guarantee that the performance complied with his high standards of excellence. In contrast with the production of *Romeo y Julieta* held ten years earlier at that same theatre, on this occasion, the company owner (Latorre) did not chose to play Montegón – as Andrés Prieto had done –, but instead acted the role of Romeo, alongside the equally talented Concepción Rodríguez. The decision to interpret Montegón was certainly motivated by Latorre's age, as he was twenty-nine at the time. Thus, he was considerably much younger than Caprara, who at fifty-eight was more suited to play the role of an old man, weakening as a result of his poor health. The acknowledged talent of Latorre and Rodríguez must have contributed to enhance in performance the roles of the lovers, overshadowed in the text by the dominant presence of the revengeful Montegón, and now embodied in the lively figures of two young gifted actors.

Joaquín Caprara deserves special mention: “[Isidoro] Máiquez was his master and Caprara became one of the most notable actors of his time – despite his Italian accent – to the extent that he turned into, after the death [in 1820] of the great actor from Cartagena, the main continuator of his school” (Herrera Navarro 2018).²⁰⁵ Caprara was born in Bologna; thus, his Italian accent. Herrera Navarro's statement about the actor's rise to fame, “despite his Italian accent”, will probably be met with disapproval. An actor's personal accent ought not to be seen as a handicap, as Sonia Massai defends in her latest monograph entitled *Shakespeare's Accents: Voicing Identity in Performance* (2020). In point of fact, in this particular production, Caprara's accent must be viewed as a valuable asset, given that he had to play a character who is Italian. Of more importance in Herrera Navarro's quote is the reference to Máiquez and the continuation of his acting style. Contemporary theatre scholars refer to Máiquez's acting method as “naturalist”, a personal approach to performance that was “followed by actors such as Carlos Latorre, Antonio Guzmán, Joaquín Caprara, Rafael Pérez, and Andrés Prieto” (Huerta Calvo,

²⁰⁵ “Máiquez fue su maestro y Caprara se convirtió en uno de los actores más destacados de su época – a pesar de su acento italiano –, hasta el punto de erigirse, después de la muerte del gran actor cartagenero [en 1820], en el principal continuador de su escuela.”

Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 423).²⁰⁶ Hence, one can assume that Latorre and Caprara would have infused their performances of Romeo and Caprara with a touch of naturalness, an important feature bearing in mind the tendency towards exaggerated gesture and expression that prevailed in acting at the time.

Concepción Rodríguez (1802 – 1859) had begun her career in Madrid in March 1818, and was soon to become “the leading lady of the Romantic stage” (Gies 1994, 63). Her interpretation of Juliet at the age of twenty-six was not her first appearance in a play of Shakespearean interest. In that same year, first in late April and then in the first weeks of July, Rodríguez had played – also alongside Latorre – the role of Carolina (Shakespeare’s sweetheart) in performances of Ventura de la Vega’s *Shakespeare enamorado* represented at the Teatro del Príncipe (Calvo 2008a, 111;121). Rodríguez specialised in roles of heroines of melodramas and – later – romantic dramas. As her fellow colleague Latorre, with whom she often worked in tandem, she “appears to have equipped those extreme roles with certain naturalness, owing to Grimaldi’s insistence on certain naturalness” (Rubio Jiménez 2003, 1.818).²⁰⁷ The genius of a talented man of the theatre (Grimaldi) accompanied by such a talented ensemble could only merit success, as evidenced by a detailed review published in the press on 23 July, a day after the last performance of *Romeo y Julieta*:

Although this tragedy was already represented in 1818, the passing of time has made it appear new in the eyes of the public; this was confirmed by the large audience, and it does not seem out of place to say something with regards to its representation. [...] The public was content with the performance. The beautiful final scene of the fourth act, in which the extraordinary genius of Shakespeare shines so bright, was very well executed. Caprara knew how to maintain the concept of himself that he has constantly deserved from the Madrid public. Latorre distinguished himself by the elegance and precision of his costume, and by the veracity of his sentiments. As for Mrs. Rodríguez...not to make of her an absolute praise would be to break the duty imposed upon us

²⁰⁶ “El método ‘naturalista’ de Máiquez sería seguido por actores como Carlos Latorre, Antonio Guzmán, Joaquín Caprara, Rafael Pérez y Andrés Prieto.”

²⁰⁷ “Al parecer, dotaba a estos papeles extremados de cierta naturalidad por la insistencia de Grimaldi en cierta naturalidad.”

by justice. The remaining actors contributed to the good success of the performance (*Correo literario y mercantil* 1828, 3).²⁰⁸

The reviewer made a slight mistake when he alluded to the final scene of the play, wrongly assigning it to the fourth act instead of to the fifth. All in all, what the review clearly reflects is that the public was more than pleasantly satisfied with the two performances of *Romeo y Julieta* staged by the company owned by Latorre.

There was one last performance of García Suelto's play during the reign of Ferdinand VII. Unless new evidence emerges, this also seems to have been the last revival of the play in the nineteenth century. Par informs that the new performance, now entitled *Julieta y Romeo, o Montegones y Capuletos*, took place on 20 September 1830 at the Teatro de la Santa Cruz in Barcelona (1936, 111). This fourth revival denotes the success that the play had enjoyed since its first performance at that same theatre back in 1817. Concerning the cast that intervened in the production, Par provides the following details: "Antonio Valero, the younger, played the role of Romeo in this adaptation by Dionisio Solís, which he also directed and rehearsed; he was accompanied in its execution by Mr. José Tormo, Mr. Antonio López, Mr. V. Aguado, Mr. Miguel Ibáñez, and Mr Manuel García, and by Mrs. Juana Galán and Mrs. D. García" (1936, 111).²⁰⁹ Par wrongly assigns the play to Solís, a recurrent mistake in his different studies on Shakespeare in Spain. Nonetheless, there are several factors that refute his assumption. Firstly, the appearance of the surname "Montegones" in the title. The actual name employed by García Suelto in his tragedy is "Montescos", but there are no members belonging to that faction in Solís's play besides Romeo; hence, the irrelevance of the plural form. Secondly, the surname "Montegones" is clearly a derivative of "Montegón", a character which only features in García Suelto's tragedy. Thirdly, there are solely seven characters in Solís's *Julia y*

²⁰⁸ "Aunque esta tragedia se representó ya en 1818, el transcurso de los años la ha hecho aparecer como nueva a los ojos del público; así lo acreditó la numerosa concurrencia, y no nos parece fuera del caso decir algo de su representación. [...] El público quedó contento del desempeño. La hermosa escena final del cuarto acto, donde tanto brilla el extraordinario genio de Shakespeare, estuvo muy bien ejecutada. Caprara supo sostener el concepto que constantemente ha merecido al público madrileño. Latorre se distinguió por la elegancia y exactitud de su traje, y por la verdad de sus sentimientos. En cuanto a la señora Rodríguez... no hacer de ella un completo elogio sería faltar a los deberes que nos impone la justicia. Los demás actores contribuyeron al buen éxito de la función."

²⁰⁹ "Antonio Valero, el menor, representó el papel de Romeo en este arreglo de Dionisio Solís que también él dirigió y ensayó; le acompañaron en su ejecución los señores José Tormo, Antonio López, V. Aguado, Miguel Ibáñez y Manuel García, y las señoras Juana Galán y D. García."

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Romeo, and Par speaks of a cast of eight members. Another obvious clue is the name of the female protagonist of this play, which is Julieta, and not Julia. Lastly, Par only mentions two actresses as part of the 1830 production, and the *dramatis personae* of Solís's tragicomedy includes three female characters – Julia, Laura, and Madama Capelio –, the three of which appear onstage together in certain scenes. Consequently, this new production clearly constitutes another revival of García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta*, in which the role of Julieta is played, once again, by the Catalan actress Juana Galán.

This chapter has illustrated a new step forward in the history of the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the original Elizabethan play had still not truly reached Spanish soil. Nevertheless, two influential countries in the dissemination of Shakespeare across Europe, Germany – and especially – France are contributing to shape the material employed by Spanish adapters, who no longer rely on the Italian sources of the play. As a result of the strong influence exerted by Neoclassicism, the character of Juliet depicted in the early decades of the nineteenth century departs from an Elizabethan model which seems distant, and becomes instead the direct heiress of eighteenth-century sentimental and domestic drama, the type of theatre popular in Spain at the time. This becomes more apparent with Solís's Julia Capelio, a helpless, lachrymose, and extremely melodramatic Juliet. Another important highlight from the period is that Juliet regains her tragic features, particularly in García Suelto's tragedy *Romeo y Julieta*. Even though Solís's *Julia y Romeo* provided a happy ending, little does Julia resemble the comic Juliets present in the Golden Age comedies composed by Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla. To make the audience laugh is no longer a role assigned to Juliet. Since García Suelto's adaptation proved to be more successful than Solís's tragicomedy, it can be said that audiences welcomed – and preferred – the play when it ended tragically.

A more important development is that the tendency to grant more importance to the character of Juliet continues. This is self-explanatory with a reading of the text of *Julia y Romeo*, in which Solís elevates Julia to the status of absolute protagonist of the play. García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta* is more in line with the plot of a revenge tragedy. Thus, the omnipresence of the figure of Montegón results in a considerable reduction of the roles of the wretched lovers. Nevertheless, as soon as the play was taken to the stage, the title was altered so as to mention Juliet's name first, while in performance the play

appears to have ended with the iconic image of a brave and resolute Juliet taking her own life.

The existence of reviews from the period – though brief in most cases – favour a better examination of how a play fared on the stage. Fortunately, the neoclassical adaptations by Solís and García Suelto met with approval, as evidenced by their several revivals throughout the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. By the end of the reign of Ferdinand VII, *Romeo and Juliet* had definitely managed to win the appeal of contemporary audiences. The character of Juliet might not have yet acquired the status that it enjoyed on the British stage since the eighteenth century, but important changes were beginning to take place in the direction of increasing the appeal that the role has to offer. This was facilitated by having prominent actresses of the nineteenth-century stage, such as Rita Luna and Concepción Rodríguez, perform the role in successful productions, starring alongside equally talented male figures of the period. This factor increased the visibility of the character of Juliet, and the fascination with the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona.

Romeo and Juliet enters the nineteenth-century stage shaped by the rigid template imposed by Neoclassicism and, thus, making it difficult to establish the connection with Shakespeare. Nevertheless, the final years of the absolutist period mark the beginning of change in that direction when in 1828, different reviews acknowledge – for the first time in Spanish history – “the immortal Shakespeare” as the legitimate author of the play. The decline and eventual failure of the neoclassical project for the reform of the Spanish stage does not imply the end of the interest in *Romeo and Juliet*. On the contrary, as the following chapter will demonstrate, the allure elicited by Shakespeare’s tragedy will continue to increase as the century advances. As the reign of Ferdinand VII gradually draws to an end, a change of aesthetic is beginning to permeate Spanish literary culture, thanks to the late arrival of the Romantic movement and its new ideals. The tragic story of *Romeo and Juliet*, with its recurrent references to death and its gloomy settings, will be viewed by new adapters of the tragedy as being perfectly suited to the Romantic taste. In turn, Juliet will become the ideal Romantic heroine.

4. Romantic Echoes

Romantic Echoes.

Romanticism, particularly in Germany, is responsible for championing Shakespeare as a cultural icon. The movement marks a crucial phase in the reception of Shakespeare across the Continent. Indeed, as Pujante affirms, “since the Romantic period Shakespeare has remained in our culture as an irreplaceable literary genius” (2007, XXII).²¹⁰ Influential works in the field of Shakespeare studies such as *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age* (Delabastita and D’Hulst 1993) have documented how the period sparked several translations of Shakespeare and his work in different countries across Europe. In Britain the period coincides with the elevation of the Bard to the prestigious status of national icon. The Romantic movement arrived in Spain in the mid-1830s. This can be regarded as a relatively late arrival, especially when one compares Spain with other European countries such as Britain, where Romanticism had already come to an end around that time.

The late arrival of Romanticism in Spain is mostly responsible for the gap that exists between García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta* (1817), and the next adaptation of the play written for the nineteenth-century Spanish stage: Víctor Balaguer’s *Julieta y Romeo* (1849). It is also worth remarking that the new adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* that saw the light between 1849 and the final decades of the century appeared immediately after the apogee of the movement. Nonetheless, each of these adaptations constitute remnants of Romantic drama which, in the words of Gies, was “the most significant contribution to Spanish theatre in the middle third of the nineteenth century” (1994, 95). This chapter explores the work of four authors: Víctor Balaguer, Ángel María Dacarrete, Lucio Viñas y Deza and Fabio Sunols (a collaborative work). They each contributed to the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain by providing a total of four new plays amongst them. Before diving into the pages of these new works to unravel the different portrayals of Juliet that emerged since the mid-nineteenth century, one must first delve back into the intricacies of Spanish history. Even though these adaptations were not strictly produced during the years when Romanticism was most active in Spain, they were definitely shaped by the

²¹⁰ “Desde la época romántica Shakespeare ha permanecido en nuestra cultura como genio literario insustituible.”

new set of aesthetic ideals that the movement brought. Thus, in the exploration of the circumstances behind the late introduction of Romanticism is where this fifth chapter begins.

The term Romantic movement will mostly be employed throughout this chapter to refer to the field of Literature. Nonetheless, as some historians defend, in reality there was not one single movement. As it is widely known, this new aesthetic and attitude to reality impacted several fields (literature, painting, architecture, music, etc.). Even though pre-Romantic features can be traced back to the mid-eighteenth century, it is generally agreed that the movement – in the widest sense of the term – began to flourish in Western civilization in the late eighteenth century. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, one of its most characteristic features was the “rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified Classicism in general and the late eighteenth-century Neoclassicism in particular”.²¹¹ This rejection of Neoclassicism is particularly relevant to Spanish culture. As chapter 3 illustrated, the latter decades of the eighteenth century were characterised by the presence of prominent thinkers, who were strongly trying to push forward reforms on the basis of neoclassical precepts, in order to reform the stage and refine public taste. Despite their eventual inability to cause a significant impact, the reformers did, however, manage to delay the arrival of Romanticism, which did not fully permeate Spanish culture until the nineteenth century. The 1830s, as Calvo affirms, “is the decade in which the definitive battle between Neoclassicists and Romantics is fought” (2006b, 82).²¹² The Romantics constitute the faction which ultimately emerged victorious from this literary feud.

The neoclassical ideals defended by influential figures such as Luzán, Jovellanos or Moratín cannot be regarded as the only factor that explains why Romanticism failed to permeate Spanish culture in the final decades of the eighteenth century. One need also examine the historical and political context of the nation to understand which other causes delayed the arrival. First and foremost, one ought to remember that while most European countries were fully immersed in the development of Romanticism, Spain was at war with France. During the six-year conflict brought by the War of Independence (1808 – 1814), Spain was not completely cut off from foreign influences, but the war certainly did not

²¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/art/Romanticism> (accessed November 2, 2020).

²¹² “1830, la década en que se libra la batalla definitiva entre neoclásicos y románticos.”

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facilitate the arrival of Romantic ideals. After the conflict had come to an end, Romanticism could still not find the necessary atmosphere for its proper development, owing to the departure of liberal exiles who, as Gregor, explains “had fled for their lives during the purges of the 1820s and early 1830s” (2010, 37).

The year 1833 marks the death of absolutist monarch Ferdinand VII. His daughter and legitimate heiress – future Queen Isabella II – was at the time merely three years old. Nevertheless, historians establish 1833 as the year of her accession to the throne. Her young age did imply, however, that during the first ten years of her reign there were two regencies: first, the regency of her mother María Cristina (1833 – 1840), followed by the regency of General Espartero (1841 – 1843) (García de Cortázar and González Vesga 2011, 713). The new Queen Regent María Cristina was “moderate and enlightened”, as Gies describes her (1994, 12). These aspects of her personality offered a sharp contrast with the absolutist regime imposed by her late husband, King Ferdinand VII. Her regency positively contributed to the development of drama, as Calvo observes: “Queen Regent María Cristina appointed moderately liberal ministers who began to dismantle the ancien régime, an amnesty encouraged the return of many exiled men of letters, and Romanticism soon impregnated literary and theatrical activity” (2008a, 112). Therefore, the return of liberal exiles who had spent time abroad, and had been exposed to the current trends in the arts played a decisive role in the introduction of Romanticism.

Literary historians have generally agreed that, in Spanish literature, it is around 1835 when Romanticism can be said to be at its peak (Benítez Claros 1973, 260). This does not imply that prior to this date there existed no works that manifested pre-Romantic features. One example is Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* (1803). The character of Julia Capelio clearly displays pre-Romantic traits in the rebelliousness shown against her progenitors, or the melancholy that she experiences as a result of the absence of her beloved. Regarding the stage, the Spanish Romantic movement is traditionally said to have lasted fifteen years: the period ranging from 1834 until 1849. Gies credits Grimaldi with having paved the way for the arrival of Romanticism on the stage back in 1829, after the premiere of his *Todo lo vence amor, o la pata de cabra* [Love Conquers All, or The Goat’s Leg], a *comedia de magia* described by the scholar as “the most popular play staged in Spain

in the first half of the nineteenth century” (Gies 2008).²¹³ As Gies affirmed in a different study on the nineteenth-century Spanish stage, “the plot itself – the happiness of two young lovers frustrated by a tyrannical relative – would become, with added ideological colorings, the basic Romantic plot” (1988, 77).

There is general agreement on the fact that the premiere in 1834 of Francisco Martínez de la Rosa’s *La conjuración de Venecia* [The Conspiracy of Venice] marks the beginning of Romantic drama in Spain (Penas Varela 2003, 1.925).²¹⁴ Nevertheless, as it happens in the case of British Romanticism, literary historians have had more difficulty in trying to provide a definitive end date: “although it is generally accepted that two works by [José] Zorrilla, *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844), and *Traidor, inconfeso y mártir* [Traitor, Unconfessed, and Martyr] (1849) imply the closing of a cycle, the truth is that the genre still survived for several years” (Penas Varela 2003, 1.895).²¹⁵ As a matter of fact, the first Romantic adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* dates from 1849. *Romeo and Juliet* may have been absent from the stage during the years in which Romanticism bloomed, but the same cannot be said about other Shakespearean plays from the canon.

Parallel to the processes of reception taking place simultaneously in different countries across the Continent, the Romantic period also constitutes a crucial chapter in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. It is worth remembering at this point the eighteenth-century debate that introduced Shakespeare into Spanish culture: “Shakespeare enters Spain through France, arriving from there as the ‘monster’ created by Voltaire and, in any case, bringing the controversy concerning his vices and virtues” (Pujante 2007, XXI).²¹⁶ Unlike the Neoclassicists who emphasised rules, the Romantics valued the genius of the artist. This shift of focus brought by the advent of Romanticism contributed to change the perception of Shakespeare, as Gregor explains:

²¹³ *La pata de cabra*, as the play was commonly known, was an “adaptation of Cesar Ribie’s and A. L. D. Martainville’s *Le pied de mouton*, a three-act comedy first played in Paris in 1806” (Gies 2008).

²¹⁴ The apogee and consolidation of Romantic drama occurs on 22 March 1835, after the triumph of the premiere of *Don Álvaro, o la fuerza del sino* [Don Álvaro, or the Force of Fate], authored by Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas.

²¹⁵ “Aunque viene aceptándose que dos obras de Zorrilla, *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844) y *Traidor, inconfeso y mártir* (1849), suponen el cierre de un ciclo, lo cierto es que el género pervivió todavía largos años.”

²¹⁶ “Shakespeare entra en España a través de Francia, viniendo de allí como el ‘monstruo’ creado por Voltaire y, en cualquier caso, trayendo la polémica en torno a sus vicios y virtudes.”

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The contribution of other liberals writing outside Spain was vital in the reappraisal of non-national figures such as Shakespeare – none of them more vocal in their support for the English bard than José Blanco White who in 1837 would argue that Shakespeare’s chief fault had ‘not so much been the absence of rules as the novelty and audacity of his metaphors’ (2010, 38).

The emergence of new critical voices in favour of the Bard paved the way for the gradual introduction of his work. It is important to recall that in the 1830s, when Romanticism began to permeate Spanish culture, Shakespeare was present on the stage owing to the performance of successful adaptations of *Othello* (the farce *El Caliche*), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Solís’s *Julia y Romeo* and García Suelto’s *Romeo y Julieta*). Furthermore, Ventura de la Vega’s farce *Shakespeare enamorado* (the adaptation of Duval’s *Shakespeare amoureux*) also contributed to enhance the popularity of the dramatist. Before the arrival of Romanticism only four Shakespearean plays had been adapted to the Spanish stage – *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. As explained in earlier chapters, some of these rewritings altered the tragic medium in which the play had been transcribed, so as to transform the original into the preferred genre of the Spanish public since the Golden Age: comedy. The new change of aesthetic facilitated the incorporation of a new play from the Shakespearean canon: *Richard III*. Indeed, as Gregor affirms, there was a “furore for the character of Richard [...] among the Romantics” (2010, 40). The play acquired enormous popularity but, as it was common practice at the time, Shakespeare’s history play was not employed as the source text: “*Richard III* was presented in free translations of French versions, under such odd titles as *Los hijos de Eduardo* [Edward’s sons] or *Ricardo III, Segunda Parte de los hijos de Eduardo* [Richard III, The second part of Edward’s sons]” (Portillo and Salvador 2003, 182). In addition, the tragedy had a connection with *Shakespeare amoureux*, as Portillo and Salvador point out, since “both Duval and Ventura de la Vega present young William Shakespeare in love with an actress who is rehearsing *Richard III* in London” (2003, 182).

Another tragedy, *Macbeth*, a play which contained potential ingredients such as witches, extreme passions, blood, doomed situations and bleak scenarios seemed *a priori* perfectly suited to please a Romantic audience avid for a vibrant spectacle. Surprisingly, that was not the case in Spain. On the contrary, in Britain “the Romantics and [later] the

Victorians especially admired Macbeth's heroic criminality and Lady Macbeth's 'unnatural' ambition as superb, even sublime constructions of character" (Carroll 2016, 215). Nevertheless, the Spanish public did not have the same reaction to the play. The year 1838 constitutes a significant date in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. This is the year in which, for the first time in Spanish literary history, a Shakespearean play was translated directly from the original English text. The author in question was José García de Villalta. There was a lot of expectation surrounding the production, as newspapers spent several weeks advertising it on the press and wetting the public's appetite. The play premiered on 13 December 1838 at the Teatro del Príncipe in Madrid, and it featured two of the most popular players of the nineteenth-century stage in the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: Julián Romea and Matilde Díez (Gregor 2010, 42). Nonetheless, "Villalta's *Macbeth* did not please" the Spanish public (Pujante 2019, 236).²¹⁷ Even though *Macbeth* initially appeared to be the ideal play to appeal to the taste of contemporary audiences, Gregor highlights that "difficulty – non-linear plots, sudden reversals of fortune, the appearance of characters, living and dead, to disrupt audiences' notions of 'the real' – was not something Spanish playgoers were comfortable with or indeed used to" (2010, 42). In fact, even distinctly Romantic writers such as Martínez de la Rosa found *Macbeth* – in his own words – "disgusting and absurd", a clear "sign of how resilient the decorum and rationalism of an earlier age really was when it came to adapting [Shakespearean plays] to Spanish tastes" (Gregor 2010, 41).

The mid-1840s brought another important change as regards to the consumption of material based on Shakespearean plays, as Calvo observes: "the Othellomania which had travelled across the Spanish theatres of Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, and Valencia during the first three decades of the nineteenth century had come to an end" (2006b, 79).²¹⁸ The reason why "*Otelo* stopped being liked" was "its status as neoclassical tragedy" (Calvo 2006b, 83).²¹⁹ This is a clear symptom that Romanticism had ultimately triumphed over Neoclassicism by the second half of the century.

²¹⁷ "El *Macbeth* de Villalta no gustó." For a detailed account of the circumstances that explain why the production did not please the public see chapter "*Macbeth*, 1838: la frustración de un Shakespeare 'auténtico'" [*Macbeth*, 1838: The Frustration of an "Authentic" Shakespeare] (Pujante 2019). Pujante refutes the general belief held up to the present, whereby the production has been often labelled as a fiasco, merely on the basis of it having lasted only four nights on the stage.

²¹⁸ "La otelomanía que había recorrido los teatros españoles de Madrid, Barcelona, Sevilla y Valencia durante las tres primeras décadas del siglo XIX había tocado a su fin."

²¹⁹ "*Otelo* deja de gustar por su condición de tragedia neoclásica."

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On 5 March 1847 there is an important announcement placed in the *Diario de Madrid* that attests to the increasing – yet timid – introduction of Shakespeare’s work in Spain. The anonymous article gives account of the publication of the first installment of *Cuentos de Shakspere [sic], o sea teatro de este autor novelado por Carlos Lamb*. Puesto en castellano por D. Andrés T. Manglález [Tales from Shakespeare, that is, Theatre by this Author Fictionalized by Charles Lamb. Translated into Spanish by Mr. Andrés T. Manglález] (*Diario de Madrid* 1847, 1.218). The book was initially published as a series of installments, in which each translated tale was accompanied by an image illustrating a scene from the summarised play. The article evidences that Shakespeare still constituted in the mid-nineteenth century a relatively unknown figure amongst the Spanish public, and denotes excitement at the prospect of facilitating the dissemination of his work through this upcoming publication:

[Shakespeare’s works] such precious treasure, righteous pride of England, is little known amongst our compatriots, and there is hardly an approximate knowledge in Spain of this luminous torch of northern literature. It is true that the desires of many enthusiasts have always shattered due to the little facility with which Shakspere’s [sic] vast repertoire circulates amongst us. But this obstacle has been happily overcome since, thanks to the efforts of a distinguished man of letters, the theatre of this author is accessible to all, and from now on we can all deservedly pay tribute – with admiration and respect – to the unique skill of that incomparable genius (*Diario de Madrid* 1847, 1.218).²²⁰

Although the author of the advertisement does not directly specify it, *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) constitutes – as it is well-known – a children’s book. Readers of the *Diario de Madrid* may have easily inferred this fact by looking at the title of the book.

²²⁰ “Un tesoro tan precioso, justo orgullo de Inglaterra, es muy poco conocido de nuestros compatriotas y apenas se tiene en España una idea próximada [sic] de esta antorcha luminosa de la literatura septentrional. Es verdad que los deseos de muchos apasionados se han estrellado siempre en la poca facilidad con que circula entre nosotros el extenso repertorio de Shakspere [sic]; pero queda felizmente vencido este obstáculo; pues gracias a los desvelos de un literato distinguido el teatro de este autor se halla al alcance común, y desde ahora podemos todos prestar el tributo merecido de admiración y respeto a la singular maestría de aquel genio incomparable.”

More astonishing is the absence in the announcement of Mary Lamb, Charles Lamb's sister and co-author of the popular book. In 1847 the complete edition of this serialised work, which translated the twenty tales of the English collection, was first published in Barcelona (Lamb 1847).²²¹ *Romeo and Juliet* is the thirteenth tale in the volume. Mangláez did not follow the Lamb siblings in the translation of the title, and instead resorted to the preferred title displayed in the majority of adaptations of the play presented on the stage. Thus, the tale was translated as *Julieta y Romeo*, the title that the public was beginning to be familiar with. Coincidentally, or perhaps not so, this is the same title given to the first translation of Shakespeare's tragedy written in the mid-nineteenth century: Víctor Balaguer's *Julieta y Romeo* (1849).

4.1 In God We Trust: Balaguer's *Julieta y Romeo* (1849).

Víctor Balaguer i Cirera (1824 – 1901) was a Catalan playwright, translator, liberal politician, journalist, and historian (Paniagua Fuentes, Rodríguez Eguía, and Sastre Muñoz 1973, 289; Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005, 60). Prior to the composition of Balaguer's *Julieta y Romeo*, the closest "Romantic recreation of a well-known story of tragic young love" had been Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch's *Los amantes de Teruel* [The Lovers of Teruel] (1837) (Gies 1994, 78).²²² Nevertheless, it does not

²²¹ The twenty tales included in the collection are the following: 1. "Cuento de invierno" (*The Winter's Tale*), 2. "Sueño de una noche de verano" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), 3. "El mercader de Venecia" (*The Merchant of Venice*), 4. "Los dos hidalgos de Verona" (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), 5. "Un ardid contra otro ardid" (*Measure for Measure*), 6. "Como usted guste" (*As You Like It*), 7. "El rey Lear" (*King Lear*), 8. "Mucha bulla por nada" (*Much Ado About Nothing*), 9. "Macbeth" (*Macbeth*), 10. "Cimbelino" (*Cymbeline*), 11. "La tempestad" (*The Tempest*), 12. "La niña indómita amansada" (*The Taming of the Shrew*), 13. "Julieta y Romeo" (*Romeo and Juliet*), 14. "Hasta el fin nadie es dichoso" (*All's Well That Ends Well*), 15. "Hamlet" (*Hamlet*), 16. "Las equivocaciones" (*The Comedy of Errors*), 17. "Otelo" (*Othello*), 18. "El día de reyes" (*Twelfth Night*), 19. "Timón de Atenas" (*Timon of Athens*), 20. "Pericles" (*Pericles*).

²²² Hartzenbusch's highly popular play is based on the legend of Isabel de Segura and Juan Martínez de Marcilla (the "lovers of Teruel"). The tragic love story supposedly occurred in 1217. Isabel is the only daughter of a rich man. Juan is a kind man, whose only "fault" is his lack of wealth. The opposition of Isabel's father to their marriage on the basis of Juan's poor social status, leads the young man to spend five years away fighting against the Moors – a feat that earns him a considerable sum of money. In the absence of news from her beloved, Isabel is forced into marrying her father's chosen candidate. Juan arrives one night, unexpectedly, at the feet of the newlyweds' bed, and begs Isabel to kiss him because he is dying. Not

seem that Hartzenbusch's highly acclaimed Romantic drama served as an inspiration for Balaguer, who was only thirteen at the time when the play took the Romantic stage by storm.

In a letter that accompanies the text of the first edition of his *Julieta y Romeo*, Balaguer himself expressed that he “chose the tragic love of Julieta and Romeo, a romance tradition [...] which sanctifies love, and from which neither Shakespeare, nor Rojas, nor Soulié, nor Romani have been able to remove its novelty” (Balaguer 1849, 22).²²³ The reference to Romani, that is, to the libretto *Giulietta e Romeo* discussed in chapter three, demonstrates the significant contribution of Italian opera to the dissemination of the story of the lovers of Verona throughout the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Balaguer's mentioning of different authors who had written about the tragic lovers of Verona prior to him suggests that the Catalan writer was aware of the story. This does not imply, however, that he had first-hand access to each of the sources that he alludes to in his letter. In fact, the knowledge that exists of Balaguer's ability as a translator suggests that it is unlikely that he would have read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. As Palomas i Moncholí affirms: “the languages that he had a command of were French and, to a lesser degree, Italian, which he translated directly into Castilian Spanish. It seems probable that he relied on collaborators for the translations from German (of Hoffmann and Goethe) [...] and English (of Bulwer-Lytton)” (2018).²²⁴ In point of fact, Balaguer's *Julieta y Romeo* constitutes a free version of the story of the tragic lovers of Verona, and not a translation of any of the works composed by the authors that he mentions in his letter – Shakespeare, Rojas [Zorrilla], Soulié, and Romani.

wanting to betray her husband, Isabel refuses, and Juan suddenly dies. Remembering the enormous efforts that Juan had made to gain her hand in marriage, Isabel resolves to kiss his corpse before the burial. The troubled lady apparently kissed him so forcefully that she instantly died. On discovering the dead bodies, it was decided that Isabel and Juan ought to be buried together (Fundación Amantes de Teruel 2017). Undoubtedly, the legend of the lovers of Teruel in its narration of a tragic love story between two young individual echoes the medieval Italian novelle that account the tragic fate that befell the Veronese Romeo and Giulietta.

²²³ “Escogí los trágicos amores de Julieta y Romeo, romancesca tradición [...] que santifica el amor, y a la cual ni Shakespeare, ni Rojas, ni Soulié, ni Romani han podido quitar su novedad.” *Les amans de Murcie* [The lovers of Murcia] is an 1844 French adaptation by Frédéric Soulié which transposes Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to fourteenth-century Murcia (Hernández Serna 1977).

²²⁴ “Los idiomas que manejó fueron el francés y en menor grado el italiano, que tradujo directamente al castellano. Parece probable que contó con colaboradores para las traducciones del alemán de Hoffmann y de Goethe [...] y del inglés de Bulwer-Lytton.”

Balaguer's *Julieta y Romeo* belongs to his corpus of plays that some scholars have defined as "juvenile dramatic work" (Farrés 1997, 6).²²⁵ Indeed, Balaguer was young when he wrote the play, which he considered to have been "inspired by a prurient twenty-five-year-old imagination" (1849, 21).²²⁶ In the letter that follows the text of the tragedy, the author defines his creation on two occasions as a "work of the heart" – *obra del corazón* in Spanish (Balaguer 1849, 21). The reason for this definition is that there is evidence to assume there exists a real correlation between the fictional characters presented in the play and the real life of the author, who can be identified with Romeo:

All I know is that my Julieta is neither Shakespeare's, nor Soulié's, nor Rojas's.

My Julieta is my own Julieta, one that I know, that I respect, that I admire; a Julieta to whom I owe the few *days of sunshine* which have brightened my agitated life.

I also know a *Romeo*.

There is also a *Capuleto* between them.

(Balaguer 1849, 21)²²⁷

Therefore, when a few lines afterwards Balaguer writes that "the love of Julieta and Romeo will never die" (1849, 22)²²⁸, he seems to be referring not only to the "immortal" quality traditionally associated with the myth of the lovers of Verona, but probably also to the love that he himself had for his own Julieta. In other words, his rewriting of the story between the young Romeo and Juliet appears to have been the result of a deliberate wish to offer evidence of his passionate love or, to go slightly further, to make a declaration of love to the object of his affections.

²²⁵ "Obra dramàtica de joventut."

²²⁶ "Obras inspiradas por una calenturienta imaginación de veinte y cinco años."

²²⁷ Italics in the original. "Yo no sé más sino que mi Julieta no es ni la Julieta de Shakespeare, ni la de Soulié, ni la de Rojas. Mi Julieta es una Julieta mía, que yo conozco, que yo respeto, que yo admiro; una Julieta a la cual debo los pocos *días de sol* que han alumbrado mi agitada vida. También conozco a *Romeo*. También existe entre ambos un *Capuleto*."

²²⁸ "Los amores de Julieta y Romeo no morirán nunca."

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Balaguer divided the action of his *Julieta y Romeo* into three acts. The metre that predominates throughout the text is the combination of heptasyllables and hendecasyllables, a type of metrical composition known in Spanish literature as *lira*. The playwright limited the number of main characters to five, thus providing the smallest *dramatis personae* created up to that point in time. The characters which appear in this version, accompanied by the brief description incorporated to the *dramatis personae*, are the following: Capuleto (“a Veronese noble, father of Julieta”), Julieta, Romeo Montecho (“rich gentleman from Verona”), don Alvar (“Spanish gentleman”), and Talerm (“wise doctor and magistrate from Verona”) (Balaguer 1849, 1).²²⁹ Even though the following figures never make an appearance, there are also references throughout the play to Montecho (Romeo’s father), the Prince of Verona, and Tebaldo (Julieta’s brother). Don Alvar, Capuleto’s ideal husband for his daughter, appears to be a relatively original creation. The name certainly is, as there is no don Alvar present either in Romani’s two-act opera or Soulié’s five-act tragedy (Romani 1828; Soulié 1844). The idea to turn Talerm into a doctor, was possibly borrowed from Romani’s opera, which includes a character (Lorenzo), who works as Capelo’s doctor (Romani 1828). As a matter of fact, there are echoes of the Italian opera in the plot of *Julieta y Romeo*, such as the fact that Tebaldo and Julieta are brother and sister, or the depiction of Julieta’s frustrated wedding with a nobleman, which is abruptly interrupted by Romeo. These facts suggest that Balaguer had either attended a performance of *Giulietta e Romeo* or read the libretto, which had been published and translated into Spanish in 1828.

In Balaguer’s adaptation, the reduced number of characters helps to place the entire focus on the conflicts afflicting Capuleto and his family. The first two acts take place in a room inside Capuleto’s palace, whereas the final act occurs at the family vault. The feud between the Capuletos and the Montechos is alluded to by Capuleto in the opening scene, and it can be traced back two centuries prior to the beginning of the action of the play. In a tragedy in which Romeo is the only member of the Montechos present, it is not surprising that the play ends without the rival factions being reconciled. The play opens in Capuleto’s palace, and the audience soon learns that Julieta and Romeo are

²²⁹ CAPULETO, noble veronés padre de JULIETA. JULIETA. ROMEO MONTECHO, rico señor de Verona. D. ALVAR, caballero español. TALERM, sabio médico y magistrado de Verona. The minor characters included are: “relatives, servants, Capuleto’s armed men. Nobles, ladies belonging to Capuleto’s faction” (“deudos, servidores y hombres de armas de Capuleto. Nobles, damas pertenecientes al partido de Capuleto.”) (Balaguer 1849, 1).

already married. Julieta begins the play distressed, she has not seen her husband for two months and, to make matters worse, she ignores his whereabouts. Over a time span of two days, events unfold one after the other at a rapid pace, resembling, in this respect, the fast speed action of a Spanish Golden Age *capa y espada* [cloak and sword] drama. The obvious difference is that Romantic imagery permeates the pages of this mid-nineteenth century adaptation.

What can be regarded as the most salient feature of this play is the heightened dramatic tension added to the ending of each of the three acts. The first one ends with the reference to Tebaldo's death, who is killed by Romeo as he was trying to escape from Capuleto's palace. The death of his son leads Capuleto to promise that he will marry his daughter to the gentleman who brings her Romeo's head as a wedding gift (a gloomy Romantic image). The second act ends with Romeo's unexpected appearance at Julieta's wedding with Alvar. Nonetheless, the ceremony does not take place because Julieta falls to the floor unconscious, as a result of the beverage administered by Talerm to make her appear dead. The third act ends with the deaths of Julieta and Romeo, who see each other one last time at the Capuletos's mausoleum before they expire.

As in Solís's *Julia y Romeo* (1803) this version also adds more emphasis to the character of Juliet. The young lady appears in fifteen scenes, as opposed to Romeo, who intervenes in seven. Furthermore, even when she is not physically present, other characters are talking about her. Alvar is the first to inquire about her whereabouts in the opening scene that exemplifies a conversation between the young man and Capuleto. The first reference to Julieta presents her as a miserable lady:

ALVAR

And Julieta, where is she...? Always crying?

CAPULETO

Crying? No, if ever in

her purest eyes weeping shows,

it is because she recalls those lovely days

spent with my sister in Geneva.

The only reason why Capuleto wastes no time in denying the gentleman's assumption is because he wishes to see his daughter married to Alvar, who in this scene asks for Julieta's hand. Hence, Capuleto has the need to present Julieta in his eyes as a desirable and merry woman, whose tears are only the result of nostalgic feelings for a blissful past. Nevertheless, in the following scene, once that Alvar has left the palace, Capuleto confesses to Talerm his concern for his daughter's current dreadful state:

CAPULETO

Shying away from my caresses and glances
Julieta avoids my paternal affection,
and a seed of hidden pain she guards
in the depths of her virginal bosom.
Immersed in sobs, several times
I have caught her by surprise. Talerm, what is this?

(I. ii. p.3)²³¹

Julieta makes her first appearance in the following scene, and confirms that she constitutes an emblem of female suffering. Talerm acts as her confidante and ally in this adaptation, as he is already acquainted with the news of her secret marriage with Romeo. The old man's only wish is to reconcile and put an end to the long-term feud between the rival factions. Since Julieta views him as a trustworthy friend, in his presence she finds the freedom and courage needed to openly complain about the pain that afflicts her heart:

JULIETA

I would have already died if joy
were mortal... Lord, infinite God,
you know of the eternity of my sorrows,
of the atrocious martyrdom of my pain,

²³⁰ ALVAR. ¿Y Julieta dónde está...? ¿Siempre llorando? CAPULETO. ¿Llorando? No, si alguna vez asoma / a sus purísimos ojos el llanto, / es que recuerda esos hermosos días / que con mi hermana en Génova ha pasado.

²³¹ CAPULETO. Huyendo a mis caricias y miradas / Julieta esquivo mi paterno afecto / y un germen de dolor oculto guarda / en lo profundo de su virgen seno. / En llanto sumergida, varias veces / la he sorprendido ya. Talerm, ¿qué es esto?

Romantic Echoes

of the nights I have spent immersed
in bitter, anxious, impious weeping,
of the days with no sunshine that I have contemplated,
deprived of sun my withered heart...
Well, then, if I succeed in seeing my Romeo
little still is, Lord, what I have suffered!

(I. iii. p. 4)²³²

The excessive emphasis on crying and suffering might have been influenced by the Romantic rewritings of *Richard III* that dominated the stage, which have been described by Gregor as “lachrymose histories” (2010, 53). An important aspect of the previous extract are the recurrent references to God, the real addressee of her speech. This reveals a new feature that characterises this Julieta: her piousness. Indeed, Julieta is presented throughout the play as a devout Christian – and so is Romeo – who, unlike Shakespeare’s star-crossed lovers, puts their faith in God, and not in the stars. For this reason, religious imagery is a recurrent element present in Julieta’s speeches. For instance, when a troubled Julieta hides Romeo inside her “sanctuary”, immediately after the murder of her brother Tebaldo, she invokes God:

JULIETA

My chamber, Romeo, is a sanctuary,
hurry up, then; in it he hides you...
I believe in God, and omnipotent God,
oh! Doubt not, do not, he will come to my aid!

[Enter ROMEO inside JULIETA’s chamber.]

(I. vii. p.8)²³³

Owing to the fact that Julieta is portrayed as a devout Christian, it would not go in consonance with her actions to defy paternal authority. Not only does Julieta ever

²³² JULIETA. Yo hubiera muerto ya si la alegría / fuera mortal... Señor, Dios infinito, / la eternidad tú sabes de mis penas, / de mis dolores el atroz martirio, / las noches que he pasado sumergida / en llanto acerbo, congojoso, impío, / los días que sin sol he contemplado / falto de sol el corazón marchito... / Pues bien, si logro ver a mi Romeo / poco es aún, Señor, ¡lo que he sufrido!

²³³ JULIETA. Mi aposento, Romeo, es un santuario, / apresúrate, pues; en él te oculta... / Yo creo en Dios, y el Dios omnipotente, / ¡oh! No lo dudes, no, ¡vendrá en mi ayuda! [Penetra ROMEO en los aposentos de JULIETA.]

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confront her father, but also never dares to express her thoughts and feelings in his presence. The audience first becomes acquainted with this side of her character towards the end of the first act. In his plan to reconcile the rival families, Talerm, who counts with the blessing of the Prince of Verona, has managed to appease Montecho's hatred. The latter has already given in by demanding, in return, that Julieta becomes Romeo's wife. When Talerm acquaints Capuleto and Julieta with the news, the old man is shocked at discovering Julieta's refusal and inability to speak the truth:

CAPULETO [*To JULIETA.*]

Have you heard, daughter of mine?

Montecho demands you for his son!

Answer, do!

JULIETA [*Aside.*]

Oh! Tebaldo! Oh, my Romeo!

TALERM [*Surprised.*]

She remains silent!

CAPULETO

Her silence is expressive.

She refuses, as you can see.

TALERM

Julieta!

JULIETA

Oh, heavens!

Talerm, I have not... I have not... I have said nothing!

(I. ix. pp. 9 – 10)²³⁴

This is not the only occasion in which Julieta refuses to hold onto the chance of embracing happiness by acknowledging that she is already Romeo's lawful wife. In act II, scene ix, when Romeo suddenly erupts into the house as they are about to leave for the church, the only thing that saves Julieta from consummating a second marriage – on this occasion, with Alvar – is a sudden faint, caused by a beverage administered by Talerm.

²³⁴ CAPULETO. (*A JULIETA.*) ¿Le escuchaste, hija mía? / ¡Montecho te demanda para su hijo! / Contesta, ¿di? / JULIETA. (*Aparte.*) ¡Oh! ¡Tebaldo! ¡Oh, mi Romeo! TALERM. (*Asombrado.*) ¡Se calla! CAPULETO. Su silencio es expresivo. / Rehúsa, ya lo veis. TALERM. ¡Julieta! JULIETA. ¡Cielos! / Talerm yo no... yo no... ¡yo nada he dicho!

In other words, Julieta prefers to avoid confrontation with the only paternal figure that she has. She either remains mute about her true feelings, or her body silences her. Julieta's resignation and consequential lack of agency is not accidental. In the letter attached to the published edition of the play, Balaguer deliberately indicated that he hoped that the "woman" – as no name is given – to whom the play is secretly addressed would "find truthful some of the words and discover an echo in Julieta's resignation" (1849, 22).²³⁵

Romeo, a warrior – as in Ducis's and García Suelto's versions – barely intervenes in the action of this adaptation. Not only is he overshadowed by Julieta, but also by don [Mister] Alvar, who is recurrently presented by Capuleto as an exemplary figure. The addition of this character is particularly relevant, as Alvar is the first Spanish character to be introduced in an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* written for the Spanish stage. Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla were the first to include an Italian character named Conde Paris. This character does not feature in the *dramatis personae* of Solís's adaptation, but the Count is mentioned in the play, as he is the gentleman that Capelio wishes to see his daughter joined with in matrimony. Therefore, prior to this date, the different versions of Count Paris that had appeared in adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* had always been Italian.

Patriotism is one of the features that characterised Spanish Romanticism. This is a quality that Alvar definitely embodies. It explains, for instance, why the character constantly stresses in his speeches that he is both Spanish and a member of the nobility, although of the lowest rank (an *hidalgo*). Alvar firmly believes that being a Spanish nobleman has inherent in it qualities such as honour, loyalty, and religious devotion, as he communicates to Julieta: "a Spanish *hidalgo* never in his deeds / does he deny the faith of his beliefs / nor the name that his grandparents exhibited" (II. iv. p. 13).²³⁶ Therefore, for the first time in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain, there is a character that constitutes an example of what Calvo has described as "de-foreignisation", that is, "deforeignising the plays, divesting them of their 'Englishness'"; a quality that the scholar associates with the history of Shakespearean reception in Spain (2008b, 143). In the case of this particular adaptation, in which almost certainly the Elizabethan tragedy was not

²³⁵ "Si una mujer [...] encuentra fieles algunas palabras y halla un eco en la resignación de Julieta."

²³⁶ ALVAR. Un hidalgo español nunca en sus hechos / desmiente ni la fe de sus creencias / ni el nombre que ilustraron sus abuelos.

employed by Balaguer as a source text, it cannot be said that there was a wish on the part of the author to “de-anglicise” the original. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a deliberate intent to de-foreignise a character and, by making this alternative version of Count Paris Spanish, attach to him a series of qualities that make him worthy of praise. Don Alvar could be said to function as an exemplary model of manly behaviour. Moreover, his noble actions and the fact that he has no family ties with any of the two rival absolves the character from any possible blame.

The four scenes that form the final act take place in the lugubrious setting of the Capuletos’s family vault. The third act constitutes from the beginning an endless succession of a selection of instances of gloomy instances of Romantic imagery. From the moment Romeo enters the churchyard, he is seized by ghastly visions in which he imagines tombs opening, and corpses throwing themselves at him, yelling the sinister word “murderer”. Balaguer finds in the cemetery the perfect medium to add more terror to what already constitutes a horrifying sight. Furthermore, he adds a final conversation between the lovers, possibly influenced by Romani’s opera, which also includes a final exchange between Romeo and Giulietta at the churchyard. In Balaguer’s adaptation the scene begins with the terrifying image of Julieta apparently awakening from the dead. The following detailed stage directions provide an illustrative example of the fear that the author intended to convey through Julieta’s actions and Romeo’s consequential reactions: “JULIETA [*sitting up in the sepulchre*]”, “ROMEO [*falling on his knees, overcome by the most profound terror*]”, or “JULIETA [*hastily descending the steps and approaching ROMEO, who retreats, without touching her and terrified of what he believes to be a vision*]” (III. iii. p. 19).²³⁷ Balaguer was arguably less successful in taking advantage of the scene with which Garrick had managed in the eighteenth century to arouse the audiences’ pity for the lovers. Balaguer’s Romeo is dying from the poison that he had drunk minutes earlier, but, somehow, he surprisingly, manages to find the strength to show a display of abnormal physical energy. The man’s gestures and movements are exaggerated and not entirely coherent with his present dying state, which only contributes to distort the pathos inherent to this scene:

²³⁷ JULIETA. [*Incorporándose en el sepulcro.*] [...] ROMEO. [*Cayendo de rodillas, preso del terror más profundo.*] [...] JULIETA. [*Bajando precipitada las gradas y dirigiéndose a ROMEO que retrocede, sin tocarla y aterrado por la que cree visión.*]

Romantic Echoes

ROMEO [*Rolling over the floor.*]

I am going to die. My heart adores you.

[...]

ROMEO

Come, my Julieta, come, let us pray to God!

[*He makes an effort to stand on his knees and collapses, dragging*

JULIETA *with him.*]

Ay! I cannot...! My God! And to leave her,

I find myself condemned...? So beautiful!

[*Lifting convulsively JULIETA's head.*]

So beautiful, Lord...! Divine piety!

I feel death already... She is nigh.

My heart... Oh, God...! Stays...with you...

Farewell, Ju...lie...ta... Fare...well!

[*Standing up because of a convulsive movement, endeavours to embrace JULIETA between his arms, and falls dead.*]

JULIETA

Oh! I follow you!

[*She falls over ROMEO's body.*]

(III. iii. p.19)²³⁸

While Romeo is shown to suffer an agonising death, Julieta is slightly more fortunate, as she dies within seconds, from the mere pain of having witnessed the death of the love of her life. The last words that she utters – “Oh! I follow you!” – can also be interpreted as her final resignation to fate. After her fall, the next and final scene opens with a stage direction that announces: “[ROMEO and JULIETA dead]” (III. iv. p. 19). At the end of the play Julieta ultimately becomes the ideal Romantic heroine, a woman capable of dying from the most powerful and intense emotion that individuals were believed to experience: love. In the hands of Balaguer, the tragic story of *Romeo and*

²³⁸ ROMEO. [*Revolcándose por el suelo.*] Voy a morir. El corazón te adora. [...] ROMEO. Ven, mi Julieta, ven, ¡a Dios oremos! [*Hace esfuerzos para ponerse de rodillas y cae desfallecido arrastrando consigo a JULIETA.*] ¡Ay! ¡No puedo...! ¡Dios mío! ¿Y a dejarla / condenado me veo...? ¡Tan hermosa! [*Levantando convulsivo la cabeza de JULIETA.*] ¡Tan hermosa, Señor...! ¡Piedad divina! / Siento la muerte ya... Ya está vecina. / Mi corazón... ¡Oh, Dios...! Queda...contigo... / Adiós, Ju...lie...ta... ¡A...dios! [*Levantándose por un movimiento convulsivo, procura estrechar a JULIETA entre sus brazos y cae muerto.*] JULIETA. ¡Oh! ¡Ya te sigo! [*Cae sobre el cuerpo de ROMEO.*]

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Juliet clearly becomes a vivid and illustrative example of “intense passion that [leads] into doomed situations”, one of the characteristics of Romantic drama (Gies 1994, 85). Balaguer adds to this Romantic picture a final Christian message delivered by Talerm, who ends the play inviting spectators to accept the tragic denouement as: “thus was God’s supreme will: / the Lord’s designs may we respect” (III. iv. p. 21).²³⁹

In this adaptation Romeo can be said to briefly steal the show in act III, scene iii, through the way in which the author exaggeratedly revels in prolonging the young man’s agony during his final minutes alive. Nevertheless, the spectator is asked from the beginning to pity Julieta more than Romeo by presenting a version of Juliet who is completely hopeless, unable to defend herself, and often in tears lamenting the misfortunes that befall her: her two-month separation from Romeo, the death of her brother at the hands of her cherished husband, the hunt for Romeo’s life, the arrangement of her wedding with the honourable Alvar, and the eventual death of her beloved. The reason to turn Julieta into a more important and visible character appears to be the result of the author’s desire to win the affection of a woman who ought to identify with this particular portrayal of Julieta, and whose identity remains a mystery up to this day:

To demand from this woman a tear from her beautiful eyes would be too much to ask. The poet will content himself with a glance, and with her lending him her hand, perhaps, the day after he gives her this drama (Balaguer 1849, 22).²⁴⁰

Between 1846 and 1850 Balaguer was intensely devoted to translation, which he produced mainly for a book shop located in Barcelona named Mayol, and its collections of drama *Joyas del Teatro* [Jewels of the Theatre], and prose fiction *Biblioteca Popular Continua* [Ongoing Popular Library] (Palomas i Moncholí 2018). For this reason, *Julieta y Romeo* was first published in 1849 in the first volume of the *Joyas del Teatro* collection (Balaguer 1849). The fact that the text was included in a collection of theatrical jewels is significant, as it is indicative of the status that *Romeo and Juliet* was slowly beginning to acquire in the mid-nineteenth century within the publishing industry. The Spanish

²³⁹ TALERM. Tal fue de Dios la voluntad suprema: / del Señor respetemos los designios.

²⁴⁰ “Pedirle a esa mujer una lágrima de sus bellos ojos, sería pedirle demasiado. El poeta se contentará con una mirada y con que le tienda tal vez la mano el día después de haberle entregado el drama.”

National Library has a copy of this first volume, in which *Julieta y Romeo* is the only play labelled as a “tragedy” amongst the twenty-three theatrical pieces that are included, six of which signed by Balaguer.²⁴¹ The Romanticism Museum in Madrid also holds two copies of this 1849 edition, included in a different series entitled *Biblioteca dramática. Varios actos* (Dramatic Library. Several Acts). The text located at the National Library, and the two texts from the Museum of Romanticism were collated to examine whether there were any differences amongst them, but one can assert that the three are exactly the same.

The play was reprinted in 1853 in the third and last volume of Balaguer’s *Junto al hogar, misceláneas literarias* [Near Home, A Literary Miscellany], which includes different plays from the dramatic corpus of the author (Balaguer 1853). The only alteration made to the play was the title, which four years later is changed to *Los amantes de Verona* [The Lovers of Verona]. The text remained intact, as Balaguer did not even correct the editing mistake in enumeration found in the second act of the 1849 text, where the third scene is wrongly followed by the sixth, instead of the fourth. Furthermore, the personal letter that he had written back in 1849 is omitted. This may be interpreted as a sign of embarrassment, as the playwright was perhaps far too passionate and sincere in the exploration of the feelings that led him to write an adaptation of the story of the lovers of Verona.

Balaguer did not only write his *Julieta y Romeo* as a token of love for the recipient of his affection, but also had the stage in mind and wished that the play would be performed. Evidence of this assumption can be found in the level of detail reflected in the stage directions, which contain several remarks about the setting, and also indications or expectations on how the author desired to see a given scene performed. The following constitutes an example: “[*Throughout this entire scene JULIETA manifests to be overcome by a vague delirium which disappears, however, from time to time, in favour*”

²⁴¹ The five plays, besides *Julieta y Romeo*, which Balaguer contributed to the volume are the following: *Carlos VII entre sus vasallos* (an adaptation in verse of Dumas’s *Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux*), *El conde de Monte-Cristo* (an adaptation for the stage by Balaguer and Francisco Luis Retes of Dumas’s *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*), *Vifredo el velloso* [Wilfred the Hairy] (a collaborative work with D. J. de Alba), *Las cuatro barras de sangre* [The Four Bars of Blood] (another collaborative work with D. J. de Alba), and *Un corazón de mujer* [A Woman’s Heart].

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of some rays of reason. The author hopes that the actress' intelligence will compensate for the author's observations]" (II. vi. p. 14).²⁴²

Julieta y Romeo premiered on 21 May 1849 at the Teatro Principal in Barcelona, directed by Ceferino Guerra (Par 1936, 222). Par provides the names of all the members that composed the company, but does not specify which actors and actresses played each role. Nevertheless, one can assume that the leading lady, Matilde Duclós, must have played Julieta. In relation to her Par comments that she was "very young, possessed relevant qualities, but fortune never smiled at her. She could not obtain the post of leading lady in Madrid; consequently, she emigrated to [South] America," (1936, 223).²⁴³ Indeed, around 1856 Duclós will become one of the first Spanish singers and impresarios to emigrate to South America (Fornaro et al. 2007, 42). Unfortunately, Par informs that the actress died poor overseas (1936, 223).

Julieta y Romeo was performed only once, a fact that leads Par to conclude that "it is evident that it did not please" (1936, 223).²⁴⁴ I have not been able to find reviews of the production. There is, however, an important omission in Balaguer's *Junto al hogar, misceláneas literarias* (1853), which supports Par's assumption. In this volume, Balaguer offers information on the production dates of the plays included in the collection. Nonetheless, he suspiciously omits such information in relation to this play, which, it ought to be remembered, was re-titled *Los amantes de Verona*. Could Balaguer have felt embarrassed and/or disappointed by the lack of popularity that the production had? Could these feelings have motivated the change of title? It is quite probable. Hence, by altering the name of the play, the author perhaps hoped that no associations would be made in 1853 with the 1849 premiere. Balaguer must have felt some kind of attachment to a text that he wrote during his early adulthood, as he did not abandon or give up on the play entirely. As it will be analysed later in this chapter, Balaguer will revisit his rewriting of the story of the lovers of Verona in 1878, providing the first adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* written in Catalan.

²⁴² [En toda esta escena JULIETA se manifiesta presa de un vago delirio que desaparece sin embargo de vez en cuando a favor de algunos rayos de razón. El autor espera que suplirá sus observaciones la inteligencia de la actriz.].

²⁴³ "Muy joven, poseía condiciones relevantes, pero nunca le sonrió la fortuna. No pudo lograr el puesto de primera dama en Madrid, de resultas de lo cual emigró a América, en donde murió pobre."

²⁴⁴ "Es evidente que no agradó."

4.2 Dangerous Liaisons: Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo* (1858).

The next version of *Romeo and Juliet* written for the mid-nineteenth-century stage was Ángel María Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo* (1858). Between the performance of Balaguer's tragedy and the composition of Dacarrete's adaptation, a new play emerged that attests to the increasing interest in Shakespeare the man: Enrique Zumel's *Guillermo Shakespeare* (1853). As Gregor observes, "written and produced by – as well as starring – Enrique Zumel, [it] is based on a Spanish translation of the French novel by Clémence Robert" (2003, 46). The play ran for four nights, and it continued the tradition popularised by Ventura de la Vega's *Shakespeare enamorado* (1828), whereby Shakespeare had been turned into a dramatic character.

Ángel María Dacarrete Hernández (1827 – 1904) was a poet, translator, and – later in his life – a politician (Real Academia Española 2019). In 1852 the author moved from Seville to Madrid to continue studying law, and it is in the capital where Dacarrete begins to devote time to poetry and theatre (Hernández Cano 2018). Similar to the letter that Balaguer had written for the first edition of his *Julieta y Romeo*, Dacarrete included what he describes as a prologue entitled "Dos palabras al que leyere" [Two Words to the One Who Reads], in which he explains the circumstances surrounding the composition of his play. A thirty-one-year-old Dacarrete confesses that he had devised the plot more than six years earlier, at a time in which he was not familiar with the story of *Romeo and Juliet* through Shakespeare's Elizabethan drama:

The author of this drama, when conceiving it, ignored how much had been written about the same matter and, making use only of the data derived from oral tradition, that is, the bloody enmity that separated the families of Julieta and of Romeo, and the tragic end of both lovers, he

imagined a plot very different from the work of the immortal author of *Macbeth* (Dacarrete 1858).²⁴⁵

The reference to *Macbeth* suggests that Dacarrete might have been familiar with the 1838 “experiment” of taking Shakespeare to the stage in its original form; an attempt which neither critics and writers, nor the general public had welcomed with open arms. This might have been one of the reasons why Dacarrete chose in the end to adapt rather than – in his own words – “imitate” Shakespeare, as imitation had indeed been his original intention. In fact, in the prologue, the author admits that when “it occurred to him to unearth the manuscript of this work and transform it into a drama capable of being represented publicly [...] he had already read and studied, something not done earlier, the magnificent tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* by the immortal Shakspeare [sic]” (Dacarrete 1858).²⁴⁶ Since in 1858 there were no Spanish translations of *Romeo and Juliet*, Dacarrete had probably read Shakespeare’s play in its English original, before composing his own version of the tragedy. What is more, Dacarrete described himself as a “passionate admirer of the genius of Shakspeare [sic], bordering on idolatry” (1858).²⁴⁷ Evidence of his knowledge of the English text is given by the author himself, as he provided in a section entitled “Notas” [Notes] a translation into Spanish of a short extract from the original. Dacarrete selected for this literary enterprise the famous conversation held between the lovers in act III, scene v, in which the break of dawn forces the inevitable separation of the newlyweds. Dacarrete translated the first twenty-six lines of the scene, from Juliet’s “wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day” to her “it is, it is! Hie hence, be gone, away!” (1858, 81–83). The fact that Dacarrete knew and had read Shakespeare’s tragedy, but claimed to have written under the same title a new play with a different plot, would lead critics to open a debate in the press as to whether or not Dacarrete’s tragedy could be regarded as an original creation.

²⁴⁵ “El autor de este drama, al concebirlo, desconocía cuánto se ha escrito sobre el mismo asunto, y valiéndose únicamente de los datos debidos a la tradición verbal, cuales son la sangrienta enemistad que separaba a las familias de Julieta y de Romeo, y el trágico fin de ambos amantes, imaginó un argumento, muy diferente del de la obra del inmortal autor de *Macbeth*.”

²⁴⁶ “Ocurriósele [sic] desenterrar el manuscrito de este trabajo y convertirlo en un drama capaz de ser representado públicamente. [...] había leído ya y estudiado, lo que no hiciera antes, la magnífica tragedia *Romeo and Juliet* del inmortal Shakspeare [sic].”

²⁴⁷ “Admirador apasionado del genio de Shakspeare [sic], hasta rayar en la idolatría.”

Romantic Echoes

Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo*, a tragedy in four acts written in verse, is heavily influenced by Romanticism; as this aesthetic had not yet entirely abandoned the stage in the mid-1850s. Even though the title coincides with that of Shakespeare's play, it is true, as Dacarrete had asserted, that there are several differences between this Romantic rewriting and the Elizabethan tragedy. Dacarrete expanded the number of characters in comparison with previous versions, but six are the main characters that intervene throughout the play: Julieta, Laura (a married lady in love with Romeo), Leonora (Julieta's maid), Romeo, Capuleto, and Rodrigo Loredano (a Veronese gentleman). There are no motherly figures, since both Romeo's and Julieta's mothers are dead. Furthermore, Romeo accounts as the only member of the Montescos. Most importantly, Dacarrete introduced several changes to Shakespeare's plot motivated by the depiction of a love triangle between Julieta, Romeo and Laura that strongly distorts the image of pure love that Romeo and Juliet have traditionally embodied.

It is close to midnight and, retaining the custom present in earlier versions, the play opens in the Capuleto's palace in Verona. During a conversation held between Julieta and her servant Leonora, the audience learns of the existence of Laura (Romeo's former sweetheart), now a married woman and Countess of Vitello. Romeo soon enters the house – undetected – through a balcony in order to converse with Julieta, with whom he is already in love. After his leave, Julieta confesses to her father that she loves Romeo, and that her feelings are reciprocated. An enraged Capuleto then forces his daughter to either kill or forget Romeo's name forever. As a consequence, the act ends with the pitiful image of Julieta desperately crying. The second act begins at a masquerade held in the gardens of the palace of the Prince of Verona. Approximately ten months have gone by, and spectators discover that during that time Romeo has been in Mantua banished. The decision was taken by the Prince, encouraged by Capuleto, who wished to get rid of Romeo. Nonetheless, the Prince simply ordered Romeo's banishment, so as to avoid the shed of innocent blood between the rival factions. During his time in Mantua, Romeo has gone back to the arms of the married Laura, whom he abandons as soon as he hears news of Julieta's upcoming marriage with Rodrigo Loredano. Romeo arrives at the masquerade summoned by Julieta and, completely ignoring his affair, both agree to elope together. A resentful and jealous Laura has eavesdropped on them in order to later inform Capuleto

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of their secret intentions. Capuleto intercepts Julieta as she attempts to leave their mansion and, taking pity on her old father, she eventually resolves not to abandon him.

The third act opens with Romeo invading, once again, Julieta's house; on this occasion because he cannot believe that she has just married Rodrigo Loredano. When Julieta makes her entrance, she is wearing her bridal dress; a sign that reveals that the wedding has just taken place. Romeo and Julieta have a long conversation in which the married lady gives him her mother's ring, as a token of the love that she still feels for him. Rodrigo Loredano discovers them alone, he wrongly assumes that they have had sexual intercourse, and the two gentlemen draw their swords. During the fight, Julieta vainly attempts to hold Rodrigo, who throws her with such brutal force to the floor that she does not regain her consciousness. The men leave the stage, and shortly after Rodrigo's cry of death is heard by Capuleto and Leonora. Capuleto commands Romeo to flee the house immediately. Capuleto's only concern at such critical moment is the preservation of his daughter's honour. The fourth and final act begins at the Capuleto's family vault, where Julieta has been buried next to her husband inside an open tomb, in case she wakes up. Romeo enters the cemetery carrying poison, which he drinks minutes prior to Julieta's awakening. In the presence of her late husband's open tomb, Julieta awakens and agrees to be Romeo's wife, hoping that God and her father will listen to her plea for forgiveness. Nevertheless, poison soon takes hold of Romeo's life. The final scene is the most dramatic and horrifying death given to Juliet on the Spanish stage, as Dacarrete's Julieta stabs herself with a dagger in the presence of several witnesses, including her father.

Even though there existed at least one example of a *Romeo and Juliet* farce written during the Victorian period, Andrew Halliday's one-act burlesque *Romeo and Juliet Travestie; or, The Cup of Cold Poison* (1859), most Victorians would have been highly alarmed or terribly shocked to have witnessed a performance of Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo*, as it heavily distorted Shakespeare's creation. As it is known, during the Victorian period "the works [of Shakespeare] were increasingly becoming a means of moral guidance and instruction" (Sillars 2013, 51). Nevertheless, the situation in Spain at the time when Dacarrete composed his adaptation was completely different. Not only were Shakespearean plays not elevated to the status of exemplary works of morality, but also

the general public still remained mostly unaware of the real content of his plays. Therefore, Spanish adapters had more freedom to alter his plays as they best deemed appropriate. Pleasing the taste of contemporary audiences, rather than showing faithfulness to the English text, is the only factor that truly concerned writers who attempted to rewrite Shakespearean material. This explains the emergence of plays such as *Julieta y Romeo*, where Dacarrete introduced changes to the Elizabeth plot, which would probably have met with considerable disapproval in Shakespeare's native country.

Dacarrete quotes after the title page of his text the words with which Shakespeare's Prince closes the play: "for never was a story of more woe, / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (V. iii. ll. 309 – 310). These two lines can be interpreted as an illustration of the fact that Shakespeare's play is mostly centred on the tragic story of Juliet and *her* Romeo. This appears to have been the impression that Dacarrete had after a reading of Shakespeare's tragedy because in his prologue he manifested that he intended to "paint a love so foreign to vanity, so unconnected to selfishness, so opposed to fiction as the love that I have pretended Julieta to embody" (1858).²⁴⁸ In other words, the author chose to depict love through the figure of Julieta. The focus on her demonstrates whom the writer regarded to be the most important character in the play. What Dacarrete implies with the assertion of love "opposed to fiction" is hard to decipher. The affirmation is opened to a wide array of possibilities, as different individuals may have different conceptions of what real love is.

Thus, in the difficulty of establishing a valid and universal definition of what "real" love is, it is consequently not truly possible to determine what Dacarrete implied by the notion of "fictional" love. More easily understandable, however, is the concept of love detached from vanity and selfishness. Based on the aforementioned quote, Dacarrete seems to transmit the idea that the kind of love that he wanted to portray through his Julieta is a type of love that is desirable, beneficial, a type of love that individuals would want to aspire to feel and/or receive. Perhaps his Julieta cannot be regarded as vain, but she does display some signs of selfishness in the rapid manner in which she constantly changes her opinion on decisions related to her heart, which inevitably affect the feelings

²⁴⁸ "Pintar un amor tan extraño a la vanidad, tan ajeno al egoísmo, tan opuesto a la ficción como el que ha pretendido encarnar en Julieta."

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of those who are closer to her (Romeo, her father, and later her husband Rodrigo Loredano).

Indeed, if there is one feature that characterises this new version of Juliet is her extreme inconstancy. She is initially presented as being consumed by an ardent desire for Romeo. In fact, this is the first time in a Spanish adaptation of the tragedy in which Juliet – despite the expected reaction – openly confesses to her father that she is love with a member of the rival faction of the Montescos:

CAPULETO

That man... Who is he?

JULIETA

His goodness comes down to
his calling you father.

CAPULETO

But... His name...?

JULIETA [*With fear.*]

Romeo...

CAPULETO [*Astonished.*]

Montesco!!! You are delusional?!

[JULIETA bows her head.]

Tell me that you are deceiving me!

JULIETA [*In despair.*]

Ah!

CAPULETO

No! It is impossible!

[...]

And you came
to your deceived father with your chest
sighing for him!

JULIETA

Yes...! Your rage
unleash upon me; but may your lips
not insult him, sir! See that his heart
does not cherish hatred. He loves me so much!

However, for reasons which are not given, during the approximately ten months that Romeo spends in Mantua, news of her wedding with Rodrigo Loredano reach the banished man. Julieta then breaks her promise to elope with Romeo, once that she realizes that her intentions truly affect her old father. It is worth mentioning that Dacarrete's Capuleto strongly differs from the tyrannical figure that Shakespeare had created, even if the former ends the first act commanding his daughter to either kill or forget Romeo. Capuleto elicits pity. He is an old man, a sign he offers draws attention to. The character is also a widower, and often refers to the painful absence of his dearest wife. During the scene in which Capuleto tries to stop his daughter from fleeing with Romeo, he first encounters fierce opposition on her side, as she bluntly asserts: "your rage / I respect; but there is nothing that can now impede my firm decision" (II. x. p. 39).²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, this initial resistance to paternal authority soon disappears. Capuleto cunningly manages to melt his daughter's heart by presenting her with the terrible fate that will await him, if she runs away with Romeo:

CAPULETO

Does my daughter wish to part? Right on time does she part!

Depart and leave my name debased,

my honour stained. Ridicule

my word to her promised husband.

Step on my white hair, insult my honour,

leave my home void of your voice.

And, as for me, already elderly, dishonoured, and alone,

please, leave the tomb open!

JULIETA

You destroy me without compassion!

CAPULETO

²⁴⁹ CAPULETO. Ese hombre... ¿Quién es? JULIETA. Su bien se cifra / en llamaros su padre. CAPULETO. Mas... ¿Su nombre...? JULIETA [*Con temor.*] Romeo... CAPULETO. [*Con asombro.*] ¡¡¡Montesco!!! ¿¡Tú deliras?! [JULIETA *baja la cabeza.*] ¡Di que me engañas! JULIETA. [*Con desconsuelo.*] ¡Ah! CAPULETO. ¡No! ¡Es imposible! [...] ¡Y venías / de tu engañado padre sobre el pecho / por él a suspirar! JULIETA. ¡Sí...! ¡Vuestra ira / descargad sobre mí; mas vuestro labio / no le injurie, señor! Ved que no abriga / su corazón el odio. ¡Me ama tanto!

²⁵⁰ JULIETA. Vuestro enojo / respeto; pero nada hay que ya impida / mi firme decisión.

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Oh my God!

It is not better if they poison my existence,
abandon me in the cold sepulchre!

LAURA

But with you...

CAPULETO

Never!

JULIETA

My soul

resist all this battle it cannot!

For such sacrifice, strength

my heart would not have!

(II. x. pp. 40 – 41)²⁵¹

Capuleto continues to artfully manipulate his daughter's feelings, until he gives her no other option but to exclaim: "[*with desperate resolution.*] Enough! Take me away!" (II. x. p. 41).²⁵² Therefore, the brief confrontation that Capuleto encounters at the start of their conversation, gradually results in Julieta's resignation to his wishes to remain at home. By attending to her father's wishes, Julieta neglects, in turn, Romeo's feelings. The previous conversation shows two important factors. On the one hand, the entire scene serves to spare Laura from further condemnation. At the beginning of the second act, she is the object of scorn and mockery by attendees present at the masquerade, who were gossiping about her notorious "voluntary banishment" in Mantua. However, in this scene, moved by Julieta's compromising position, she begs for Capuleto's and Julieta's forgiveness, which she does obtain. She does not succeed, however, in gaining Romeo's pardon, after admitting to him that she is responsible for having thwarted his hope for a blissful future with Julieta. On the other hand, the conversation illustrates how important honour is for the elderly Capuleto. The old man utters the word twice. The third time he pronounces it, the term acquires more profound implications as it is transformed into the

²⁵¹ CAPULETO. ¿Quiere mi hija partir? ¡Parta en buena hora! / ¡¡Parta y deje mi nombre envilecido, / manchado mi blasón, deje burlada / mi palabra a su esposo prometido. / Pise mis canas, y mi honor ultraje, / deje mi casa de su voz desierta. / Y a mí, ya anciano y deshonorado y solo, / déjeme por favor la tumba abierta!! JULIETA. ¡Me destrozáis sin compasión! CAPULETO. ¡Dios mío! / ¡No es mejor si envenenan mi existencia / abandonarme en el sepulcro frío! LAURA. Pero con vos... CAPULETO ¡Jamás! JULIETA. ¡El alma mía / tanto combate resistir no puede! / ¡Para tal sacrificio no tendría / fuerzas mi corazón!

²⁵² JULIETA. [*Con desesperada resolución.*] ¡Basta! ¡Llevadme!

adjective “dishonoured”. This is precisely how Julieta ends up in the third act, immediately after her wedding with Rodrigo Loredano.

Incapable of forgetting Romeo, Julieta does not remain entirely loyal to her husband and admits her true beloved into her chamber in secret. During the conversation that they hold, a newly married Julieta is incapable of hiding the remorse, guilt, and shame that she feels as a result of her betrayal to the passionate love that she had for Romeo:

JULIETA

I love you!!

ROMEO

Julieta!

JULIETA

Here, within my soul

I hear a voice that shouts accusingly
against me, feeble woman, miserable,
who immersed in cowardly weakness,
another man married, and they were, Romeo,
yours, my heart, my life, yours!

ROMEO

And they are!

JULIETA

[...]

I cannot ask you to forgive me!
I do not deserve it, no. How degraded
I must seem in your eyes, Oh God,
with my soul I adore you, and married I am!

(III. iv. p. 52)²⁵³

It is worth remarking that Romeo is not free from blame either, as he indulges in an affair with a married lady during his banishment. But Romeo’s unfaithfulness to Julieta

²⁵³ JULIETA. ¡¡Yo te amo!! ROMEO. ¡Julieta! JULIETA. ¡Aquí, en mi alma / oigo una voz que grita acusadora / contra mí, mujer débil, miserable, / que en cobarde flaqueza sumergida, / a otro hombre me uní, y eran, Romeo / tuyo mi corazón, tuya mi vida! ROMEO. ¡Y los son! JULIETA. [...] ¡No te puedo pedir que me perdones! / No lo merezco, no. ¡Cuán degradada / debo a tus ojos parecer, Dios mío, / con el alma te adoro, y soy casada!

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is not even discussed between them. When he returns from Mantua, they both act as if nothing had happened. In the end all the blame falls upon a tainted Julieta, who first betrays Romeo by marrying Rodrigo, and later betrays her husband by confessing her love for the true object of her affections. Hence, the third acts depicts the fight to preserve Julieta's "purity". Julieta is the first to proclaim her desire to remain pure, when she gives Romeo her mother's ring and implores him: "your life, / which is my life too, for God's sake respect, / and leave me so that alone always pure / I may cry for you!" (III. iv. p. 53).²⁵⁴ Shortly after Rodrigo intrudes upon them and assumes they have had sexual intercourse, it is Romeo instead who defends Julieta's purity:

ROMEO

I swear that Julieta is pure,
on my salvation!

RODRIGO

Her impure
blood and yours I crave to
drink!

(III. vi. p. 56)²⁵⁵

After the death of Rodrigo, it is a desperate Capuleto who shows concern for his daughter's damaged reputation, which he can only save by ordering Romeo to leave his house immediately:

CAPULETO

That she is dishonoured,

[Signalling towards the room in which JULIETA is.]

if they see you! What detains you?!

[Impatiently.]

Flee, and far away!

(III. viii. p. 59)²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ JULIETA. ¡Tu vida, / que es mi vida también, por Dios, respeta, / y déjame que a solas siempre pura / pueda llorar por ti!

²⁵⁵ ROMEO. Juro que Julieta es pura / ¡por mi salvación! RODRIGO. ¡Su impura / sangre y la tuya beber / ansío!

²⁵⁶ CAPULETO. ¡Que está deshonrada, / *[Señalando a la habitación en que está JULIETA.]* / si te ven! ¡¿Qué te detiene?! / *[Con impaciencia.]* ¡Huye, y lejos!

In the final moments that precede the tragic ending of the play, dramatic tension heightens. A Julieta who seems out of her mind is only preoccupied with preventing anyone from touching the dead body of her dear Romeo, and threatens with a dagger anyone who attempts to come near his body: “to whoever dares / touch him, to whoever moves / I will pierce their heart!” (IV. viii. p. 78).²⁵⁷ Balaguer had ended his version of *Julieta y Romeo* with the character of Talerm asking spectators to accept the tragic fate of the lovers, as that had been God’s will. Similarly, Dacarrete also closes his play with a religious message. Nonetheless, the tone is considerably more serious. Capuleto’s desperate plea for God’s forgiveness reveals that, in the eyes of society, Romeo – and especially – Julieta have utterly ruined themselves:

LEONORA [*Holding CAPULETO.*]

JULIETA

He will steal him from me!

CAPULETO

Let go!

[Furiously getting himself rid of LEONORA and advancing towards JULIETA who, on seeing her father approach, retreats horrified towards the sepulchre and stabs herself with the dagger, falling over ROMEO’s body, causing a general cry of terror.]

CAPULETO, LEONORA

Ah!!!

[CAPULETO falls on his knees at the feet of the sepulchre and raising his eyes to the sky, utters crossing his hands.]

CAPULETO

Forgive them, dear God!

(IV. viii. p. 79)²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ JULIETA. ¡Al que se atreva / a tocarlo, al que se mueva / le traspaso el corazón!

²⁵⁸ LEONORA. [*Sujetando a CAPULETO.*] JULIETA. ¡Me lo robará! CAPULETO. ¡Soltad! [*Desasiéndose furiosamente de LEONORA y avanzando hacia JULIETA, que al ver acercarse a su padre retrocede horrorizada hacia el sepulcro y se clava el puñal en el pecho, cayendo sobre el cuerpo de ROMEO, causando un grito general de terror.*] CAPULETO., LEONORA. ¡¡¡Ah!!! [*CAPULETO cae de rodillas al pie del sepulcro, y alzando los ojos al cielo, dice cruzando las manos.*] ¡Perdonadlos, Dios mío!

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It is quite evident throughout the play that Julieta, Romeo, and Laura – the three characters involved in a dangerous love triangle – display a dubious morality. Nevertheless, in the end, condemnation mostly shifts towards the figure of Julieta when she compromises her position as an honourable married lady, the minute that she allows her former love to invade her home uninvited. Anna Jameson, author of a work which acquired enormous popularity in Victorian times, *Characteristics of Women: Moral, Political and Historical* (1832), grouped Shakespeare’s female characters into four categories and, as Poole affirms, provided an “enthusiastic celebration of Juliet who is ‘love itself’” (2004, 92). Had Jameson had the opportunity to read Dacarrete’s play, she would have possibly been deeply displeased with this peculiar version of Julieta, and her questionable behaviour as a woman who claims to be in love. Nonetheless, one need not travel abroad to speculate about possible negative reactions to the play. Dacarrete’s adaptation had its detractors in Spain, especially amongst men and women of letters who were familiar with Shakespeare’s play. One example can be found in the poet Carolina Coronado, author of a long article written for the newspaper *La Discusión* (The Discussion). It was published on the 1 June 1858, only a few days after the play’s premiere. In the article, she openly expressed her discontent with this new adaption of *Romeo and Juliet*, which she believed did little justice to Shakespeare’s original. Coronado was particularly disgusted with the type of love that the play represents. Nevertheless, the author blamed the public for the immorality inherent to the text:

Dacarrete, in avoiding a translation, has destroyed the moral beauty of the Juliet and Romeo that the world knows. [...] The sacred emotions of legitimate love no longer satisfy the public. It is not Dacarrete’s fault that immorality has become fashionable at home and at the theatre (Coronado 1858).²⁵⁹

The Spanish National Library holds a copy of the manuscript of Dacarrete’s *Julieta y Romeo*, numbered 14544/2 (Dacarrete 1856). The only edition of the play that exists up to this day was published in Madrid in 1858 (Dacarrete 1858). On 12 December 1856 the censor José Amador de los Ríos granted permission to perform the tragedy

²⁵⁹ “Dacarrete huyendo de hacer una traducción, ha destruido la belleza moral de la Julieta y Romeo que el mundo conoce [...] Las emociones santas del amor legítimo no satisfacen ya al público. Dacarrete no tiene la culpa de que la inmoralidad se haya hecho moda en el hogar y en el teatro.”

(Dacarrete 1858, 80). The cover of the manuscript reads “Teatro del Circo. Noviembre de 1856” [Circo Theatre. November 1856] (Dacarrete 1856). Nevertheless, that was not the theatre where the play was eventually staged. The reason behind the change of location was quite possibly due to the fact that “the Teatro del Circo went bankrupt again in 1858, and shut its doors temporarily” (Gies 1994, 22). The first performance of Dacarrete’s *Julieta y Romeo* took place on 29 May 1858 at the Teatro Novedades in Madrid (Dacarrete 1858). According to Par the play was performed at the aforementioned theatre from 29 May to 1 June and, some days later, on the 16 and the 17 June (1940, 15). The Teatro Novedades was at the time a relatively new theatre, as it had opened less than a year earlier, on 13 September 1857. José Valero was its leading actor and stage director. He received praise from theatre critics of the period such as Juan de la Rosa González, who highlighted Valero’s “unusual ostentation in presenting the plays”, and the “great care” employed in the direction and rehearsal of the plays produced at the Novedades (1858b).²⁶⁰ Valero played Romeo, opposite María Rodríguez’s Julieta, in all the Madrid productions of the play. On the opening night, the play was performed for the benefit of José Calvo, who played Capuleto (Dacarrete 1858).

A week prior to the premiere, the newspaper *La España* was advertising what constituted a promising spectacle to look forward to, highlighting that the performance would involve the use of new “magnificent decorations, real shades of great size, and costumes perfectly in line with the period” (n.a. 1858).²⁶¹ The first three performances of *Julieta y Romeo* proved to be enormously successful. The scenography was a factor which strongly contributed to the warm acceptance that the production received. A detailed review published in the newspaper *La Época* (Epoch) on 31 May offers an adequate description of the two main factors that contributed to the success, Valero’s performance of Romeo, and the set design created by a Mr. Bravo:

Its author, Mr. Dacarrete, called to the stage at the end of the third and the fourth act, has known how to take great advantage of the situation, even if the subject matter of his play had already been dealt with by illustrious playwrights. The metre is excellent. Mr. Valero did really

²⁶⁰ “Un inusitado aparato en presentar las obras y con un gran esmero en dirigirlas y ensayarlas.”

²⁶¹ “Magníficas decoraciones, transparentes verdaderos de gran tamaño y trajes con perfecta consonancia con la época.”

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well, eliciting with his inspiring creation enthusiasm from the public. Less accurate in their respective performances the remaining players were; but they all worked with zeal for the good success of the play. Everywhere could the expert hand of Mr. Valero be seen, who in those moments had his wife in bed, giving him a child. The new decorations were applauded, and the author, Mr. Bravo, was called to the stage (Juanco 1858).²⁶²

As the review evidences, the play met with a warm reception. Furthermore, during intervals, there was a musical spectacle for the public to enjoy, provided by the dancers Mrs. Espart and Mr. Garcerán (Juanco 1858). Whereas there was unanimous agreement in the press on Valero's outstanding interpretation of Romeo, the same could not be said about the acting of his stage partner, María Rodríguez. A critic writing for *La Época* on 2 June was particularly severe in his detailed negative assessment of the poor acting skills that he thought Rodríguez to exhibit, not only during her performances as Julieta, but also on every occasion that she set foot on the stage:

A word to Mrs. Rodríguez [...] The character of Julieta, all tenderness, love, abnegation, also excludes arrogant movements, an irascible tone, the terrible attitude that Mrs. Rodríguez adopts. [...] Experience makes us comprehend that this is a personal defect, as we see the actress persevere, always committing it. Mistaking energy for violence, she believes to be vigorous when she is monotonous. With no gradations, no contrasts, no chiaroscuro, her diction ends up fatiguing the public, causing them an unpleasant sensation. Correct yourself, thus, Mrs. Rodríguez, from such a defect, which deeply matters to you and, hence, you will avoid another pitfall: to apply a uniform and affected physiognomy to all your creations (Fernández 1858).²⁶³

²⁶² “Su autor, el Sr. Dacarrete, llamado al palco escénico al final del acto tercero y cuarto, ha sabido sacar gran partido de las situaciones, a pesar de que el asunto de su obra ha sido tratado ya por ilustres dramáticos. La versificación es excelente. El Sr. Valero estuvo muy bien, causando con su inspirada creación el entusiasmo del público. Menos acertados estuvieron en sus respectivos desempeños los demás actores; pero todos trabajaron con ardor por el buen éxito de la obra. En todas partes se veía la mano maestra del Sr. Valero, que en aquellos momentos tenía a su esposa en el lecho, donde la daba un hijo-. Las decoraciones nuevas fueron aplaudidas y llamado su autor, el Sr. Bravo, a la escena.”

²⁶³ “Una palabra a la Sra. Rodríguez [...] el carácter de Julieta, toda ternura, toda amor, toda abnegación excluye además los ademanes olímpicos, el tono iracundo, la actitud terrible la Sra. Rodríguez adopta. [...] La experiencia nos hace comprender que este es un defecto de escuela porque vemos a la artista perseverar,

Undoubtedly, Pedro Fernández (the pseudonym used by a Mr. Navarrete) was profoundly disappointed and disgusted with the actress, whose interpretation of Julieta did not meet the desired expectations. The critic does not seem to have been alone in sharing a disregard for this particular performance of María Rodríguez. As a matter of fact, I have not been able to encounter a single word of praise for the actress in any of the reviews that were written around the time the production was being played in Madrid. All the compliments and deep admiration were reserved for the figure of Valero, of whom Par writes that he was considered:

The prototype of the good Romantic actor, he recited quite comfortably the sonorous lines of the new bards, and no one ever begged him to renounce this so as to accommodate to a more humane and less magnificent shape (1936, 149).²⁶⁴

Prior to the emergence of Romanticism on the stage, there had been, as Gregor asserts, “interpreters such as Máiquez, and later Latorre and Romea, [who] edged gradually towards a greater naturalness of performance and tone than in the past” (2010, 47). Nonetheless, Par’s description of the qualities that earned Valero the approval of his contemporaries demonstrates that a declamatory style still dominated the nineteenth-century stage. The issue with María Rodríguez’s acting was not that she could not imitate the declamatory style properly. In fact, the reviewer considered some of her movements to be exaggerated. The main fault that Fernández found in the actress was mainly her inability to act in a manner that looked and sounded convincing. Above all, he seemed to have been particularly irritated by her ineptitude in not being able to act differently depending on the character; she always seemed “monotonous”, always applying “a uniform and affected physiognomy to all [her] creations”. This reflects that there existed at the time interpreters who were – literally – completely unable to act. In other words,

incurrir siempre en él. Confundiendo la energía con la violencia, cree ser vigorosa cuando es monótona. Sin gradaciones, sin contrastes, sin claro oscuro, su dicción acaba por fatigar al público, y por causarle una sensación desagradable. Corrijase, pues, la Sra. Rodríguez de semejante defecto, que mucho la importa y así evitará otro escollo: el de prestar una fisonomía uniforme y amanerada a todas sus creaciones.”

²⁶⁴ “Prototipo del buen acto romántico, declamaba muy a gusto los sonoros versos de los nuevos vates, y nadie le rogó que renunciara a ellos para acomodarse a forma más humana y menos lúcida.”

the mediocrity that characterised the Spanish stage at the turn of the century had not entirely disappeared in the mid-1850s.

Grimaldi had been a forerunner of the struggle to improve the skills of Spanish theatre players, even proposing the opening of a drama school. His efforts eventually materialized with the opening in 1831 of the Real Conservatorio de Música y Declamación [The Royal Conservatoire of Music and Declamation], inaugurated by Queen Regent María Cristina (Gies 1994, 35). Unfortunately, as Gies observes, it failed to completely impact and improve the Spanish stage:

The Conservatorio functioned efficiently but with little real success. Although many great actors ended up teaching there (among them, Carlos Latorre, Julián Romea, Antonio Vico, Fernando Díaz de Mendoza, Matilde Díez and Teodora Lamadrid), it never produced the desired core of skilled actors which had been the hope of its founders (1994, 35).

Consequently, María Rodríguez's lack of talent ought not to come as a surprise, as it was, unfortunately, a sign of the times. Even though José Valero was the only actor in the ensemble who stood out, this factor did not stop the public from enjoying Dacarrete's adaptation. Par records two more performance of the play, on this occasion, in Barcelona at the Teatro Odeón on 14 and 21 November 1858 (1940, 71). The new production was directed by a different director, Andrés Cazorro, and that might have also involved a change of company; Par provides no information on that regard and no reviews have been found. In this revival the title of the play was expanded to *Julieta y Romeo, o las víctimas del amor* [Julieta and Romeo, or Love's Victims]. Furthermore, each act was given a name following, as Par points out, "the Romantic trend of doubling the titles and assigning gruesome names to acts"; hence, each act was titled as follows: "I. Love, II. The Curse, III. A Death Duel, IV. Julieta's Tomb" (1940, 71).²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ "La moda romántica de doblar los títulos y de dar nombres truculentos a los actos"; "I. Los amores; II. La maldición; III. Un duelo a muerte; IV. La tumba de Julieta."

One of the most interesting features that characterises the reception of Dacarrete's play is the general divide that existed between the public, who truly enjoyed it, and the critics, who had their reservations. One of the features that the play incorporated and that not all critics agreed with, as the previously discussed quote by Carolina Coronado exemplified, was the questionable moral behaviour of Dacarrete's Romeo and Julieta. The general public, still not familiar with the text of Shakespeare's tragedy, could be more favourable arbiters. The majority of spectators had not read Shakespeare's play and, thus, eagerly welcomed different recreations of the love story of Romeo and Julieta. The characters were slowly becoming more popular on the Spanish stage, but spectators, in their lack of knowledge, could not have made a proper comparative analysis between Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers and their Spanish counterparts. Theatregoers probably did not even wish – or could be bothered – to incur in such an analysis. Enjoying a good spectacle was the main goal when attending a new performance of a play. Theatre critics, together with men and women of letters, however, had a different purpose in mind.

Critics and experts in literature were increasingly acquiring more knowledge of Shakespeare and his work, and those few *connoisseurs* had started to judge the new adaptations by comparing them with the work of “the immortal Shakespeare” – as the playwright was often called in the press of the period. In naming his play *Julieta y Romeo*, Dacarrete was inevitably forcing critics to establish parallels between his and Shakespeare's tragedy. The several changes introduced to Shakespeare's original implied that Dacarrete's rewriting failed to reach the literary quality that experts found in the original English play. For instance, Coronado was, in general, opposed to the established tradition of rewriting previous dramatic works; an opinion she defended in the article discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus, in Dacarrete's adaptation the poet found the perfect example to illustrate her dissatisfaction with such practice:

The first thing that comes to my mind is to ask the author: why have you written this drama? Why did you call it *Julieta y Romeo*? If you wanted to write an original drama, you who have the talent for it, why have you borrowed Shakspeare's [sic] thoughts? If you wanted to translate Shakspeare [sic], you who know him so well, why have you made the play yours? As an original work, too much has been translated; as a translation, the best has been omitted. To perfect it was

impossible; you wanted to copy it, and you have counterfeited it
(Coronado 1858).²⁶⁶

Coronado was particularly firm in her attack on Dacarrete for having appropriated Shakespeare's drama, posing, in turn, doubts on the nature of the originality of Dacarrete's work; a concept which had become important in literature since the advent of Romanticism. Coronado was not the only one to voice those concerns. The critic Rosa González wrote precisely about the debate that the play generated. In an article published on 6 June 1858 in the newspaper *La Iberia* [Iberia], he observed the following: "the critics agree on conceding the Spanish poet dramatic talent, they do not agree as regards the greater or lesser originality of his drama" (Rosa González 1858a).²⁶⁷ As for his personal opinion on the tragedy, the critic confesses that "regarding the literary form in which the drama is written, one must confirm that I am not entirely in agreement with the praise, in one's view slightly exaggerated, which it has been the subject of" (Rosa González 1858a).²⁶⁸ Other voices criticized the play on the basis of its Romantic nature. This was the case of Francisco Lozano y Grau. Writing for the journal *La España artística* [Artistic Spain] on 31 May 1858, he refused to enter into a detailed analysis of Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo*, and automatically rejected it for being an example of a Romantic drama:

Together with the limited novelty that its plot offers, such play belongs to the pure Romantic genre and, under this point of view, and as the News in Brief of the daily political newspaper *La España* [Spain] says, little good could it expect from healthy criticism which, long ago, rejected it from the stage; if not forever, at least for a very long time (Lozano y Frau 1858, 245).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ "Lo primero que se me ocurre es preguntar al autor: ¿por qué has escrito este drama? ¿Por qué le llamas *Julieta y Romeo*? Si querías hacer un drama original, tú que tienes tanto talento para ello, ¿por qué has tomado los pensamientos de Shakspeare [sic]? Si querías traducir á Shakspeare [sic] tú que tan bien le conoces, ¿por qué has hecho la obra tuya? Para original has traducido mucho; para traducción te has dejado lo mejor en el tintero. Perfeccionarla era imposible; has querido copiarla y la has contrahecho."

²⁶⁷ "Acorde la crítica en conceder al poeta español talento dramático, no lo está en cuanto a la mayor o menor originalidad de su drama."

²⁶⁸ "En cuanto a la forma literaria con que el drama está escrito, debemos consignar que no nos hallamos enteramente conformes con los elogios, en nuestro concepto algo exagerados de que ha sido objeto."

²⁶⁹ "Al par de la escasa novedad que ofrece en su argumento, pertenece dicha obra al género romántico puro, y bajo este punto de vista, como dice la gacetilla del diario político *La España*, poco bueno tendría que esperar de la sana crítica, que mucho tiempo hace le rechazó de la escena, sino para siempre, al menos para mucho tiempo."

“Healthy criticism” – a snobbish term – may have “long ago rejected [Romanticism] from the stage” according to Lozano y Grau. But the reality is that Romantic plays continued being written after this date. Most importantly, the genre still proved to be successful amongst contemporary audiences. Although the “official” end date for Romantic drama is 1849, it is generally agreed that this is merely a convenient device to signal the end of the absolute furore over the movement. The year does not imply whatsoever the definitive death of Romanticism on the Spanish stage; on the contrary, there were still authors reluctant to abandon the Romantic aesthetic because of its potential to create haunting works of art. In fact, the next new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Romeo y Julieta* by Lucio Viñas y Deza and Fabio Sunols, was performed as late as 1875, and written specifically for a popular neo-Romantic actor of the age.

4.3 Performance Prevails: Viñas y Deza and Sunols’s *Romeo y Julieta* (1875).

The decade prior to the composition of the 1875 *Romeo y Julieta* brought some important new additions to the timeline of the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. It is true that the 1864 tercentenary of Shakespeare’s birth “went largely unnoticed in Spain”, as Gregor observes (2010, 56). Nonetheless, the absence of celebrations to commemorate the birth of the Bard did not imply his fall into oblivion, or a complete lack of interest in the playwright’s figure or his dramatic production. In fact, the year 1867 brought another successful play featuring Shakespeare as a dramatic character: “the immensely popular and wholly original *Un drama nuevo* [A new play] by Manuel Tamayo y Baus” (Gregor 2003, 47). The significance that the play acquired, even lead some scholars to define it as “possibly the best dramatic work of the century” (Benítez Claros 1973, 261).²⁷⁰

In the month of September of the following year a revolution broke out. The revolution is often referred to in history books as “La Gloriosa” (the Glorious), or “Septembrina”, a word that means “related to the month of September”. “La Gloriosa”

²⁷⁰ “Posiblemente la mejor obra dramática del siglo.”

was a brief revolution, as it ended twenty days after it had started, causing the overthrow of Queen Isabella II, and the implementation of a provisional government (1868 – 1871). A new constitution was approved in June 1869, which implied the election of General Francisco Serrano as Regent, and the appointment of General Prim as Head of State (Linés Viñuales 2018). General Prim would be the main person in charge of appointing Amadeo I of the House of Savoy as the new King of Spain; thus, restoring the monarchy for a considerably brief period of time (1871 – 1873). Coincidentally, “La Gloriosa” also marked the beginning of an important new phase in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, as Calvo stresses:

The year of the Spanish revolution saw an unusual interest in Shakespearean drama – new translations of *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet* and, for the first time, *The Merchant of Venice* indicate that 1868 brought more than a political change. 1868 is a turning point in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain because between 1868 and 1890 a series of translations of Shakespeare’s plays by the most important nineteenth-century scholars emerge: Marqués de Dos Hermanas, Jaime Clark, Guillermo Macpherson, Menéndez Pelayo. Around this time, Francisco Nacente undertakes for the first time the job of publishing a ‘collected works’ edition, not just individual plays (2008b, 142).

Indeed, 1868 is an important year in the calendar of Shakespearean reception in Spain. One of the new translations worth highlighting is the translation of *Othello* by Francisco Luis Retés: *Otelo, el moro de Venecia*. This text is particularly significant because it constitutes, as Gregor asserts, “the first more or less faithful rendering of *Othello*” (2010, 61).²⁷¹ Another translation that needs to be addressed is the one alluded to in the aforementioned quote by Calvo: Gregorio Amado Larrosa’s *El mercader de Venecia* [*The Merchant of Venice*] (2008b, 142). Furthermore, as Calvo highlights, *The Merchant of Venice* “was not only the first of the comedies to be translated into Spanish but also the first of the comedies to be performed [in Italian] in a Spanish theatre” (2008b,

²⁷¹ Furthermore, Gregor observes that “it was performed on nine different occasions between 18 January and 14 February 1868 at the Teatro Principal in Barcelona” (2010, 61).

143). Indeed, *The Merchant of Venice* was first staged in Spain in 1868 during the second Spanish tour carried out by the troupe led by the renowned Italian actor Ernesto Rossi (Gregor 2010, 57). The new Shakespearean translations that emerged since 1868 are not merely significant *per se*, but also because they marked a new change of direction in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, as Calvo remarks:

Performance and translation which had been closely dependent on each other since Shakespeare first reached Spain, became estranged. [...] From now on, plays are translated to be published – and presumably read – not simply staged (2008b, 142–143).

Indeed, the six translations of *Romeo and Juliet* published in Spain during the nineteenth century constitute examples of texts written primarily to be read: *Romeo y Julieta* (Hiráldez de Acosta 1868), *Julieta y Romeo* (Velasco y Rojas 1872), *Romeo y Julieta* (Clark 1874)²⁷², *Romeo y Julieta* (González y Marcial 1875), *Romeo y Julieta* (Macpherson 1880), and *Romeo y Julieta* (Menéndez Pelayo 1881). There is no evidence that any of these translations were ever staged (Campillo Arnaiz 2005, 61). It is worth highlighting that amongst the aforementioned group of plays, the 1868 translation by Manuel Hiráldez de Acosta is the only one that was not translated from Shakespeare's text, but possibly derived from a former French translation (Pujante and Gregor 2017b, 15). The play regarded as the first *Romeo and Juliet* directly translated from its English original is the prose translation published in 1872 by Marquis Matías de Velasco y Rojas (Pujante and Campillo Arnaiz 2007).²⁷³ His *Julieta y Romeo* constitutes the only nineteenth-century translation of the play that inverts the names of the star-crossed lovers in the title. As Campillo Arnaiz observes, Macpherson's translation was the one which would acquire the highest degree of prestige: "it was his translation which won fame and popularity over the ones published in the nineteenth century, eclipsing the translations by

²⁷²The five-volume edition of the translations written by Jaime Clark bears no date of publication. Campillo Arnaiz (2005) locates his ten translations within the period ranging from 1873 to 1874. Regarding the publication of Clark's verse rendition of *Romeo and Juliet*, Pujante and Gregor point towards the year 1874, clarifying that "the date given for Clark's translation is conjectural" (2017a, 102).

²⁷³In Portugal, the first Shakespearean play translated from the English into Portuguese would appear in 1877, breaking, as Agarez Medeiros states, "the overall pattern of the playwright's reception in Portugal. To this date, only two of his dramas had appeared in French translations, most of them based on the French versions by Ducis" (2004, 67).

Velasco y Rojas, Clark, and, subsequently, Menéndez y Pelayo” (Campillo Arnaiz 2008).²⁷⁴

In 1875, coinciding with the outburst of Shakespearean translations, Lucio Viñas y Deza and Fabio Sunols published *Romeo y Julieta*, a play specifically composed for the stage. This stage adaptation was written during the period known as Restoration. This new phase in Spanish history had begun a year earlier, when the I Republic (1873 – 1874) came to an end as a result of the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy under the figure of King Alfonso XII (1874 – 1885). A second edition of the play was recently published, edited by the Valencian publishing house Tirant Humanidades (Viñas y Deza and Sunols 2016). The names of the authors that appear on the cover of both editions are Lucio Viñas y Deza (1837 – 1915) and Fabio Sunols (? – 1903). Nonetheless, as Campillo Arnaiz clarifies, these names were, in reality, acronyms which functioned as the pseudonyms used by Luis Díaz Cobeña and Luis Bonafós (2005, 61–62).

Little is known about the two figures in question. Their appearance in scholarly criticism, in which they are often referred to by their pseudonyms, is restricted to their roles as the authors of the 1875 rewriting of *Romeo and Juliet* (Par 1940; Campillo Arnaiz 2005; Pujante and Campillo Arnaiz 2007; Montalbán Martínez 2011; Pujante and Gregor 2017a). In fact, only one bibliographical reference has been found that provides some information on the identities of the adapters, as both authors are included in a catalogue of nineteenth-century Spanish journalists (Ossorio y Bernard 1903). Apart from referring to the surnames used by both authors in writing, Luis Díaz y Cobeña is described as an “illustrious lawyer and man of politics who [...] cultivated with applause in his youth dramatic literature, and also collaborated in several Madrid newspapers”, whereas Luis Bonafós y Vázquez is defined as “a military sub intendant and writer who [...] has given theatre much applauded plays (Ossorio y Bernard 1903, 106; 51).²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ “Fue su traducción la que ganó en fama y popularidad a las que se publicaron en el siglo XIX, eclipsando a las de Velasco y Rojas, Clark y, posteriormente, Menéndez Pelayo.”

²⁷⁵ “Ilustre abogado y hombre político de este nombre que [...] cultivó con aplauso en su juventud la literatura dramática, colaboró también en varios periódicos madrileños”; “subintendente militar y escritor, que [...] ha dado al teatro obras muy aplaudidas”. As a journalist, Díaz y Cobeña often wrote for the Madrid newspapers: *La Idea*, *La Paz* (1870), *La Gaceta Popular* (1873), and *El Bazar* (1874 – 1875). Likewise, Bonafós y Vázquez collaborated with *El Correo Militar*, *La Idea* (1860), and *El Teatro* (1864) (Ossorio y Bernard 1903).

Romeo y Julieta was first published in 1875. Nevertheless, a letter written by Fabio Sunols that was consulted during my research stay at the Spanish National Library reveals that the play had been written, at least, two years prior to this date. This handwritten letter dated 1 October 1873 was addressed to the author, actor, and stage impresario Manuel Catalina (1820 – 1886). In the first part of his missive, Sunols acquaints Catalina with the news of the *Romeo and Juliet* that he has written in collaboration with Viñas y Deza, a text which he refers to in a peculiar manner:

Mr. Manuel Catalina.

My most distinguished friend; I allow myself to attach an issue of *La Gaceta popular* and another one of *El Correo militar* in which, respectively, my *accomplice* in the disfigurement of *Romeo y Julieta* and I occupy ourselves with the new theatre which you are about to direct in due course. We will celebrate that both news correspond with your desires (Bonafós 1873).²⁷⁶

The theatre alluded to in the letter must be the Teatro Apolo, of whose inaugural 1873 season Manuel Catalina was in charge (Tamayo 1927, 86). The use of the term “disfigurement” can be interpreted as highly indicative of a lack of satisfaction with the end product which would, in turn, imply that the letter could have been a call for help. One cannot truly ascertain whether or not Sunols could have been ashamed or, at least, unsatisfied with the literary enterprise that he had undertaken alongside Viñas y Deza. Nevertheless, the addressee of his letter was no insignificant figure, as Roman Fernández remarks: “Manuel Catalina was considered in his time a character with a high knowledge of culture, and a notable thirst for acting perfection” (Román Fernández 2018b).²⁷⁷ Therefore, if Sunols had the necessity to subject the text to the judgment of such a prestigious actor, what can be deduced is that, Sunols must have wished *Romeo y Julieta* to be regarded as suitable for performance. If Par could have read Sunols’s letter, the

²⁷⁶ The word “accomplice” is underlined in the original handwritten note. “Señor D. Manuel Catalina. Mi más distinguido amigo; me permito remitirle adjunto un número de “La Gaceta popular” y otro de “El Correo militar” en que respectivamente mi *cómplice* en la degollación de *Romeo y Julieta* y yo nos ocupamos del nuevo teatro que V. ha de dirigir en breve. Celebraremos que ambas noticias correspondan a sus deseos”.

²⁷⁷ “Manuel Catalina fue considerado en su época como un personaje de elevada cultura y notables ansias de perfeccionismo como actor.”

scholar would have certainly agreed with Sunols's description of the play. In point of fact, the highly critical Par, who often regarded the Shakespearean original as pure perfection, defined with absolute confidence and no reservations that the 1875 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* was *un engendro*, that is to say, "a monstrosity" (1940, 35). In terms of the literary quality of the play, this new adaptation may not have been the best rendition of *Romeo and Juliet* that one could expect or hope for. Nonetheless, the authors contributed to the ongoing process of the dissemination of Shakespeare's tragedy in Spain.

Sunols's personal views on Shakespeare are unknown, as there are no surviving written testimonies related to that matter. Fortunately, this is not the case with his partner in crime. Viñas y Deza was seemed hugely preoccupied with the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, as he detailed in a lengthy article published in 1875 in the journal *Revista europea* [European Journal] titled "Ensayo crítico sobre Shakspeare [sic] y la manera de juzgarle en España" (Critical Essay on Shakespeare and the Manner of Judging him in Spain) (Viñas y Deza 1875). In the article Viñas y Deza demonstrates a thorough knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, Shakespeare's work, and the history of the reception of Shakespearean drama since the eighteenth century, not only in Spain, but also across the Continent. Viñas y Deza does not hide in the article his profound admiration for Shakespeare, whom he considers "a genius of a superior order", and deeply laments that "in Spain Shakespeare is little and badly known" (1875, 361; 364).²⁷⁸ His outrage at this deplorable situation reaches its highest peak of indignation in the following extract, in which the author illustrates the current state of affairs regarding the reception of Shakespeare in Spain:

How many [people] have extended their studies on the English poet further beyond the reading of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* and, perchance, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Richard III*, and this through prosaic translations of translations, or rewritings lacking fidelity and accuracy? And, nonetheless, he is judged and condemned based on the beliefs of suspicious authorities! Can there be a greater injustice? (Viñas y Deza 1875, 368)²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ "Un genio de orden superior"; "en España se conoce poco y mal a Shakspeare [sic]."

²⁷⁹ "¿Cuántas [personas] han extendido sus estudios sobre el poeta inglés más allá de la lectura de *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Otelo*, *Romeo y Julieta*, y si acaso *El mercader de Venecia* y *Ricardo III*, y esto por medio de

Considering Viñas y Deza's disappointment with the current position that Shakespeare had in Spanish literary culture, one can suggest that he must have written *Romeo y Julieta* with the hope of contributing, in the best possible manner, to the dissemination and appreciation for Shakespeare and his work, which he valued on the basis of its beauty and its universal appeal. Possibly motivated by the absence on the Spanish stage of "faithful" renditions of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the 1875 text does not include any major deviations from the Elizabethan plot. The only important exception is the continuation of the tradition initiated by Garrick, whereby a final encounter between Romeo and Juliet in the graveyard is added. The authors' wish to resemble Shakespeare's original as much as possible is evident from the title. In fact, this is the first Spanish stage adaptation of the play titled *Romeo y Julieta*, a literal translation of the English original.

The 1868 revolution, "La Gloriosa", did not only result in the dethronement of Bourbon monarch Isabella II, it also signaled the end of an era, as Linés Viñuales points out: "it is a key moment that marks the end of the Romantic period in Spain, traditionally limited by the dates of the reign of 'The One with the Sad Destinies' [1833 – 1868]" (2018).²⁸⁰ Indeed, the year 1868 is often associated with the twilight of Romanticism. Nevertheless, the movement recurrently managed to avoid reaching its complete downfall. Even though realism had imposed itself on the stage since the second half of the nineteenth century, the advent of the I Republic coincided with a revival of Romanticism (Par 1940, 36). Hence, during the Restoration period a new trend saw the light in Spanish literature: Neo-Romanticism. This literary current has been described as the "violent expression of a traditionalist mentality, asphyxiated in economic terms and on the verge of being extinguished" (Menéndez Onrubia and Ávila Arellano 1987, 32).²⁸¹ The adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* by Viñas y Deza and Sunols constitutes an example of one of the neo-Romantic plays produced during the latter decades of the century.

prosaicas traducciones de traducciones, o de arreglos faltos de fidelidad y exactitud? ¡Y sin embargo, se le juzga y se le condena sobre la fe de autoridades sospechosas! ¿Puede darse mayor injusticia?"

²⁸⁰ "Se trata de un momento clave que marca el final del periodo romántico en España, acotado tradicionalmente con las fechas del reinado de 'La de los tristes destinos'."

²⁸¹ "Violenta expresión de la mentalidad tradicionalista ahogada económicamente y a punto de extinguirse."

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The full title printed on the cover of the 1875 edition of the play is: *Romeo y Julieta. Drama en cinco actos de William Shakespeare. Arreglado en verso a la escena española* [*Romeo and Juliet. Drama in Five Acts by William Shakespeare. Adapted in Verse for the Spanish Stage*]. This five-act drama is entirely written in rhymed verse. The cover also includes the following note added in nineteenth-century handwriting: “this arrangement has been done in line with Jaime Clark’s translation” (Viñas y Deza and Sunols 1875).²⁸² Indeed, the influence of Clark’s verse translation is evident. Clark spoke English and, thus, provided a literal and literary translation of Shakespeare’s original (Campillo Arnaiz 2008). The debt owed to Clark is not acknowledged by the authors. The brief note found in the 1875 edition that I have consulted is handwritten, not printed. Furthermore, it does not necessarily imply that it had been written by Viñas y Deza or Sunols. It could easily have been added by an anonymous individual, who was familiar with Clark’s text, and was able to identify the real source text upon which this new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is modelled.

Romeo y Julieta includes all of the main characters from Shakespeare’s play, with the exception of Romeo’s parents and Count Paris. This inevitably implies that the scenes in which those characters appear have been deleted. However, Julieta’s parents do mention Paris throughout the action of the play, and talk about their wish to see them joined in matrimony. Despite the omission of the aforementioned characters, the adaptation closely follows Shakespeare’s plot, as Viñas y Deza had made clear in the aforementioned article that he was strongly against “rewritings lacking fidelity and accuracy” (1875, 368). This can be said to be the main reason why the changes made to the overall structure of the play are minor. Variations made to the Shakespearean plot include changing the setting of some of the scenes, and cutting speeches which the authors probably considered unnecessary or excessively long such as Fray Lorenzo’s soliloquy at the beginning of act II, scene iii, or Mercutio’s famous Queen Mab speech. Viñas y Deza desired to witness a wider acceptance of Shakespeare in Spain. This wish implied disseminating unadulterated versions of his creations, so as to acquaint the general public with the true contents of the plays. Offering an adaptation which heavily altered the original storyline, as earlier rewritings such as Dacarrete’s highly criticized *Julieta y Romeo* (1858), would not have contributed to such purpose. Hence, their use – even if

²⁸² “Este arreglo se ha hecho ajustándose a la traducción de Jaime Clark.”

perhaps unscrupulous – of Clark’s 1874 verse translation, which offered a faithful rendition of the English original.

Even though the adapters barely meddled with the original plot, they did take more liberties with the language. The majority of ideas and themes present in Shakespeare’s original are retained in this adaptation, what changes is the form. As a matter of fact, one of the most salient features of *Romeo y Julieta* is the attention that the authors have devoted to the language, giving the impression, at times, that language prevails over the actions take place. Interventions made by characters are often enlarged in comparison with their exact equivalent in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*; this is a feature directly derived from Clark’s translation. All speeches are written in octosyllables and hendecasyllables. As a consequence of the choice of rhymed verse for the metre, there is an unpleasant musicality incorporated to the language. This feature would have made lines particularly resonate in the spectators’ ears in performance. The rationale behind extending some of the speeches, especially Romeo’s, was to draw attention to the actor whom the authors wished to see performing Romeo: Rafael Calvo. This explains why the language of the text is characterised by what Par regards as “the tiresome music of the perfect rhyme”; as the scholar further clarifies:

The purpose was to underscore the declamatory force of the leading actor (in this case Calvo), and the most delicate scenes, such as the ones at the window, the tomb, etc., are constructed paying special attention to the ears of the public, enlarged with new stanzas that will provide the *star* with a final filler (1940, 35–36).²⁸³

The other relevant aspect that becomes notable in this adaptation is a certain preoccupation with maintaining the play within the boundaries of decorum. One example can be found during the famous balcony scene. The terms “unsatisfied” and “satisfaction” uttered by Shakespeare’s Romeo towards the middle of the conversation, when he asks

²⁸³ Italics in the original. “La música machacona de la rima perfecta. La cuestión era poner de relieve la fuerza declamatoria del primer actor (en este caso Calvo), y las más delicadas escenas, como la de la ventana, la de la tumba, etc., están construidas con atención preferente a los oídos del público y alargadas con nuevas estrofas que proporcionen al *divo* la cascada final o latiguillo.”

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“o, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?” (II. ii. l. 125), to which Juliet replies “what satisfaction canst thou have tonight?” (II. ii. l. 126) have been deliberately omitted. Even though Romeo soon clarifies that he simply wishes “th’exchange of thy love’s faithful vow for mine” (II. ii. l. 127), the audience could easily interpret his lines as an indirect allusion to a desire to have sexual intercourse with Juliet. Consequently, in the 1875 rewriting of the iconic scene, that part of their conversation is reproduced as follows:

ROMEO

What! Are you going to leave me
thus?

JULIETA

What do you want?

ROMEO

To exchange
my faith for your faith.

(II. ii. p. 33)²⁸⁴

The rewritten passage illustrates that there is no way that contemporary audiences could have contemplated the idea that the couple might be discussing sexual matters, as even the issue of matrimony is sanctified more explicitly by referring to the ceremony as the exchange of faith between two individuals. The playwrights’ preoccupation with the issue of propriety is also seen in the rendition of the farewell between Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in act III, scene v. Unlike their Elizabethan counterparts, this pair of lovers are not presented immediately after the consummation of their marriage – an act which never occurs in this adaptation. As a matter of fact, in order to remove the possibility of conceiving that thought, in the nineteenth-century adaptation, the scene begins with Romeo’s abrupt entrance into Julieta’s room.

The concern with decorum bears some relation with the moral quality that Viñas y Deza assigned to Shakespearean drama. In his 1875 article, the adapter highlighted that “the most notable quality of Shakspeare’s [sic] theatre, and what it is convenient to insist on, [...] is the profound moral character that all his plays reveal” (Viñas y Deza 1875,

²⁸⁴ ROMEO. ¡Cómo! ¿Me vas a dejar / así? JULIETA. ¿Qué quieres? ROMEO. Cambiar / mi fe por tu fe.

370).²⁸⁵ For instance, in relation to *Romeo and Juliet*, the author believed that the moral lesson to be extracted from the play is that the young lovers suffer “for imprudently throwing themselves in pursuit of a blind and excessive passion” (Viñas y Deza 1875, 371).²⁸⁶ In this sense, Viñas y Deza coincided with Arthur Brooke in holding the belief that the characters deserved to be punished for a love that is considered to be an exhibition of wrong conduct. Viñas y Deza further justified his argument by stating that Shakespeare illustrated with his plays that individuals are responsible for their fate and, hence, must account for the consequences of the good or bad actions committed throughout their lives. This view of mankind that Viñas y Deza associates with Shakespearean drama is also regarded by the adapter as one of the principal constitutive elements of Romanticism.

Viñas y Deza, in his fervent admiration for Shakespeare, also considered that the playwright had no rival “in the painting of character and in the expression of passion” (1875, 368–369).²⁸⁷ Undoubtedly, love is the main passion that *Romeo and Juliet* portrays. Viñas y Deza coincided with previous adapters of the tragedy in the view that *Julieta* is simply “love” itself (1875, 370). The author was more explicit in his description of how Romeo’s character can only be explained in relation to this universal feeling: “the passionate outburst of his character and an amorous preoccupation, in the middle of the rivalries that surround him, completely dominate his spirit” (Viñas y Deza 1875, 369).²⁸⁸ In following Clark’s translation, that is, a faithful rendition of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Viñas y Deza and Sunols did not significantly alter the Elizabethan text. Thus, it cannot be said that the character of Juliet is transformed, and she certainly does not become more prominent, as in former adaptations of the play. On the contrary, if there is a character which has been carefully crafted in this text is that of Romeo, as this adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* had been written for the neo-Romantic actor Rafael Calvo.

Romeo y Julieta premiered on 30 January 1875 at the Teatro del Circo in Madrid (Viñas y Deza and Sunols 1875). The play was performed at the aforementioned location from 30 January until 3 February. Viñas y Deza and Sunols were granted the privilege of having Rafael Calvo y Revilla (1842 – 1888), one of the most renowned actors of the

²⁸⁵ “Pero la condición más notable del teatro de Shakspeare [sic], y sobre lo que conviene insistir [...] es el profundo carácter moral que revelan todas sus obras.”

²⁸⁶ “Por lanzarse imprudentemente en aras de una pasión ciega y sin medida.”

²⁸⁷ “En la pintura de los caracteres y en la expresión de las pasiones.”

²⁸⁸ “El apasionado arrebato de su carácter y la preocupación amorosa en medio de las rivalidades que le cercan domina completamente su espíritu.”

nineteenth-century Spanish stage, in the title role of Romeo. The Sevillian actor was at the time, as Par highlights, “the prince of neo-Romantic actors” (1940, 36).²⁸⁹ His brother Ricardo Calvo, whom according to Par “lacked his brilliance, but was more natural”, was cast in the role of Tebaldo (1940, 37).²⁹⁰ Elisa Boldún y Corellano (1847 – 1915) played Julieta. The actress is considered “one of the greatest renovators of the stage” (Román Fernández 2018a). Her importance on the Spanish scene of the second half of the nineteenth century is evidenced by the fact that there even exists a two-act comic play, *Crisálida y Mariposa* [Chrysalis and Butterfly], which was, as the cover of its edition informs, “written expressly for Miss Elisa Boldún” (García Gutiérrez 1872).²⁹¹

Boldún revealed an unusual talent for acting since her early childhood. As a consequence, in 1858, aged eleven, her parents enrolled her at the Conservatoire of Declamation in Madrid, where she received training from the illustrious Julián Romea, who would hire her two years later to work at his own company (Román Fernández 2018a). When Boldún played the role of Juliet in 1875, she had already been working for a year at the Teatro del Circo, as a member of the company led by Rafael Calvo and Victorino Tamayo; the 1874 season had been a resounding success (Román Fernández 2018a). Unfortunately for her admirers, Boldún’s marriage in 1875 implied her retirement from what a successful stage career (Román Fernández 2018a).

The cover of the 1875 edition of *Romeo y Julieta* claims that the play was “represented with extraordinary success at the Teatro del Circo on the 30 January 1875” (Viñas y Deza and Sunols 1875).²⁹² Nonetheless, evidence, or rather the lack of it, poses doubts on the supposed veracity of this affirmation. There is evidence to suspect that this might constitute a distortion of reality, a lie devised by the publishing house so as to aspire to sell more copies. No theatrical reviews have been found. Nevertheless, Par asserts that the performance offered by the entire ensemble “was very deficient” (1940, 37).²⁹³ Indeed, there is every reason to believe that this must have been the case, owing to the absence of written records assessing the performances of Rafael Calvo and Elisa Boldún in their respective roles as Romeo and Juliet.

²⁸⁹ “El príncipe de los actores neorrománticos.”

²⁹⁰ “No tenía la brillantez de aquel, pero era más natural.”

²⁹¹ “Escrito expresamente para la señorita doña Elisa Boldún.”

²⁹² “Representado con extraordinario éxito en el Teatro del Circo el 30 de enero de 1875.”

²⁹³ “La ejecución en conjunto fue muy deficiente.”

Calvo was one of the most prominent figures of the nineteenth-century stage. Thus, unlike other obscure interpreters of the period which have fallen into oblivion, fortunately, there is bibliography on Rafael Calvo. During my research stay at the Spanish National Library, I personally consulted all the surviving volumes – including two works published overseas – that offer an account of the actor’s successful – albeit brief – trajectory on the stage (Estrada 1883; La Sociedad Española de Beneficencia de Buenos Aires 1883; Amigos y admiradores de Valparaíso 1884; Teatro Español 1888; Fernández Almagro 1956). There is not a single reference to Calvo’s interpretation of Romeo in any of the aforementioned memoirs that honour the actor for his popular theatrical career. Calvo’s performance of Romeo is also absent from contemporary scholarly works that analyse the Spanish stage (Huerta Calvo 2003; Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005). This bibliographical vacuum inevitably suggests that Calvo’s Romeo could not have been one of his most memorable performances. The same conclusion can be equally applied to his stage companion in that enterprise: Elisa Boldún. Her brief career did not produce ample bibliography. Nonetheless, the few scholarly works that approach her life and acting also avoid any mention of her role as Juliet (Par 1940; Pascual Lavilla 2004; Román Fernández 2018a; Huerta Calvo, Peral Vega, and Urzáiz Tortajada 2005). Instead, Boldún is said to have been remembered and praised for her participation – in the order that follows – in the following plays: *El tanto por ciento* [A Certain Percentage] by Adelardo López de Ayala, *O locura o santidad* [Madness or Sanctity] by José Echegaray, *Los amantes de Teruel* [The Lovers of Teruel] by Eugenio Hartzenbusch, and *El vergonzoso en palacio* [The Shame in the Palace] by Tirso de Molina (Par 1940, 32; Román Fernández 2018a).

There was only one more performance of Viñas y Deza’s and Sunols’s *Romeo y Julieta*. The same company of the Teatro del Circo which had first performed the play in Madrid took the production a few months later to Barcelona, where it was staged only once on 24 May 1875 at the Teatre Principal (Par 1940, 110). Par explains the different factors that contributed to make this second performance an utter fiasco:

The play was a failure and no other representation could be given. The public had before them the text and performance of Rossi, and found that the Spanish rewriting falsified the character of the tragedy – which

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was also literarily bad –, that the performance suffered from a lack of rehearsals, and that the roles were not in line with the qualities of the actors (1940, 110).²⁹⁴

The reference to Rossi, one of the most illustrious Italian actors of the nineteenth century, is particularly relevant. As it known, this century saw the rise of a series of hugely talented Italian interpreters such as Ernesto Rossi, Tomasso Salvini, Adelaide Ristori or Eleonora Duse, who made a significant contribution to the reception of Shakespeare, not only across the Continent, but also in the United States. Italian touring companies travelled around the world with their productions in Italian of Shakespeare, facilitating the dissemination of his work. The vivid realism that characterised some of the Italian productions was sometimes met with disapproval, especially in late Victorian England. Moody has analysed the inherent xenophobia present in reviews written by Victorian critics that evaluated Shakespearean productions interpreted by foreign – not only Italian – players:

The performances of Charles Fechter, Ernesto Rossi, Eleonora Dusse, Tomasso Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt shattered the moral decorum and emotional gentility of late nineteenth-century Shakespeare. Their ‘unprecedented’ interpretations – rebellious, passionate, sensational, anarchic – seemed to symbolise the disintegration of an English Shakespearean tradition (2003, 101).

Even though Victorian reviewers frequently “tried to dismiss these immigrant performances by invoking the myth of an English Shakespeare”, by 1879 fashionable audiences flocked to the theatre to become first-hand witnesses of the new arrivals coming from the Continent (Moody 2003, 100; 103). In contrast to Victorian England, Spain lacked a well-established Shakespearean tradition. In fact, as Viñas y Deza bitterly

²⁹⁴ “La obra fue un fracaso y no pudo darse de ella otra representación. El público tenía ante sí el texto y el desempeño de Rossi, y encontró que el arreglo español falseaba el carácter de la tragedia, que era además literariamente malo, que el desempeño padecía por falta de ensayos y que los papeles no se avenían con las cualidades de los actores.”

lamented in 1875, there was neither extensive awareness nor a widespread appreciation for Shakespeare and his work. Nevertheless, the situation was about to change. Firstly, owing to the translations published by Clark between 1873 and 1874, and, in the following decade, by Macpherson. Secondly, as a result of the arrival of Italian touring companies, who played a fundamental role in the dissemination of Shakespeare's work. Indeed, as Gregor comments, "it was the Italians, and the 'holy trinity' of Ristori, Rossi and Salvini, who had undoubtedly laid the foundations of such belated bardolatry" (2010, 60). The first incursion of Italian companies into the Spanish stage took place in 1857, with a successful performance of *Macbeth* produced by the company led by Adelaide Ristori (Gregor 2010, 59).²⁹⁵

The Italian touring companies are also credited with being the first to bring Shakespeare in its "original" form. However, this does not imply that the Elizabethan and Jacobean texts were not altered prior to their performance. For instance, Rossi's script for *Romeo e Giulietta* was based on the 1838 translation by Carlo Rusconi but, as Calvi observes, Rossi's adaptation provided "a shorter and slighter plot", and excised "female characters, except for Juliet and the Nurse" (2017, 149).²⁹⁶ Despite the reduced plot and the elimination of some of the characters present in the English original, Rossi's production of *Romeo e Giulietta* constitutes an important landmark in the history of the reception of the tragedy in Spain because, as Pujante and Gregor remark, "curiously enough, the first production of the play seen in Spain and based on Shakespeare's play and text was that of Ernesto Rossi's company, in Italian, which was staged in Madrid and Barcelona in 1868" (2017a, 102).²⁹⁷ 1868 is the year of Rossi's second Spanish tour, summarised by Gregor as follows:

Having marveled audiences in both Madrid and Barcelona two years previously with his virtuoso productions of *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Both

²⁹⁵ As Gregor further explains: "Ristori had been invited to perform before the Queen at the Zarzuela [theater] and, later that year, at the Teatro del Circo in Barcelona, where her production of *Macbeth*, and in particular her conception of the sleep-walking scene, had prompted an unusually enthusiastic response from critics" (2010, 59).

²⁹⁶ Other characters which are also eliminated from the play are "Benvolio, Sampson, Gregory and the other servants of both households, except for Peter. Lady Capulet's cues are assigned to Juliet's father" (Calvi 2017, 149).

²⁹⁷ A year later, as Calvi points out, Rossi would become "the first to mount Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Italy, making his debut as Romeo at the Teatro Re in Milan in July 1869" (2017, 140).

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shows were to be repeated on this second, larger tour, which also included productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and, for the first time in any form, *The Merchant of Venice*, whose Italian title *Shylock* expresses the centrality of the character in Rossi's production, in which of course he would cast himself as the Jew" (2010, 57).

With regard to what Par considers to have been Rossi's "masterly performance" in *Romeo e Giulietta*, the scholar quotes from an anonymous critic who attended a staging of the play in Madrid on 2 June 1868, highlighting the following aspects of the production: "we doubt that anyone could recite with a sweeter and more amorous accent... the charming balcony scene... and the lines addressed to Julieta in the sepulcher, whose gravestone has just been lifted by Romeo" (cited in Par 1940, 23).²⁹⁸ Therefore, prior to Viñas y Deza and Sunols, in 1868 Rossi had become the first to offer Spanish theatregoers a taste of a relatively original Shakespearean *Romeo and Juliet*.

In 1875 the Italian company led by Rossi was back in Barcelona at the Teatro del Circo, offering productions during the months of April and May of *Otello*, *Amleto*, *Romeo e Giulietta*, *Macbeth*, *Re Lear*, and *Shylock* (Par 1940, 109). On this occasion, as Par highlights, "the press points out that the company was very weak and, as a result of this, the public did not go, as in other seasons, to admire the art of the supreme actor [Rossi]" (1940, 109).²⁹⁹ Although the ensemble does not seem to have offered salient performances, Rossi did receive the greatest applause from the public for his performances in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* (Par 1940, 110). Rossi starred as Romeo opposite Mrs. Cattaneo's Giulietta on the 7 and the 16 May 1875. Thus, when Rafael Calvo played the role merely a few days later (24 May), in comparison with Rossi's Romeo, his rendition failed to please audiences. This dislike may have been caused by their different approach to acting. On assessing Calvo's personal acting style, Rubio Jiménez stresses the skills that he possessed for the actor's trade:

²⁹⁸ "Magistral interpretación"; "dudamos que nadie pueda decir con acento más dulce y amoroso... la encantadora escena del balcón... y las frases dirigidas a Julieta en el sepulcro, cuya losa acaba de levantar Romeo."

²⁹⁹ "La prensa hace notar que la compañía era muy floja y que por esto no acudió el público, como en otras temporadas, a admirar el arte del actor supremo."

Calvo appears to have been specially gifted with a passionate diction, and merited praise from demanding critics such as Clarín, somewhat anchored with regards to representation in a Romantic taste. With his gestural and verbal expressivity, he compensated for his poorly graceful figure. His early and sudden disappearance cut his brilliant career and, perhaps, the possibility of his acting evolving from the prevailing neo-Romanticism into more natural formulae (2003, 1.820).³⁰⁰

Thus, as a clear representative of the school of neo-Romanticism, Calvo stood out for the passion with which he infused his performances, which, could translate into a – somewhat – exaggerated diction, as he was indeed a true master in the art of declamation. However, since the mid-nineteenth century, other Spanish interpreters such as Julián Romea or Carlos Latorre had begun to move in the direction of a greater naturalness of performance. This is precisely the acting style that Italian actors favoured and pursued. In *The Italian Shakespearians. Performances by Ristori, Salvini, and Rossi in England and America* (1985), one of the few scholarly works that offers a detailed account on the intricacies of the Italian touring companies, Carlson argues that the two qualities that made the Italian acting style remarkable was the realistic acting together with the development of distinctly new creations for each role, what the scholar refers to by “diversity”:

The Italian acting style had many striking and praiseworthy features, but perhaps, from the perspective of the actors’ achievement and of the long-term development of ‘realistic’ acting, no part of it was more significant than this specific and highly controlled diversity (1985, 183).

Hence, the realistic approach to acting exhibited by Ristori, Salvini or Rossi offered a sharp contrast with the dominant neo-Romantic style that was fashionable in Spanish theatres at the time. The fact that Calvo, one of the most celebrated actors of his

³⁰⁰ “Calvo parece haber estado especialmente dotado para la dicción apasionada de los textos y mereció elogios de críticos exigentes como Clarín un tanto anclado en lo que a la representación se refiere en los gustos románticos. Con su expresividad gestural y verbal compensaba su poco agraciada figura. Su temprana y repentina desaparición cortó su brillante carrera y quizá la posibilidad de que su arte evolucionara desde el neorromanticismo dominante a fórmulas más naturales.”

time, failed to please audiences with his declamatory diction and excessively passionate representation of Romeo, reflects an important change in public taste as regards performance which, undoubtedly, also applies to Shakespearean performance. The failure of the 1875 *Romeo y Julieta* suggests that theatregoers were gradually beginning to shy away from the bombastic and grandiose performances given by interpreters versed in the art of declamation, in favour of a more natural approach to characterization and representation.

4.4 Balaguer Strikes Again: *Las esposallas de la morta* (1878).

Spanish spectators did not have to wait long to get another taste of *Romeo and Juliet*, as in 1878 Balaguer decided to revisit the story of the lovers of Verona.³⁰¹ The appearance of this new adaptation of the tragedy constitutes an important landmark in the reception of Shakespeare in Spain, as it has the privilege status of being the first Shakespearean play written in Catalan (Montalbán Martínez 2011, 12). In 1878 Balaguer was no longer the juvenile twenty-five-year-old man who had resorted to *Romeo and Juliet* in order to, apparently, gain the affection of a mysterious lady. The author was now fifty-four, and had acquired an important position in the cultural and political life of the country, particularly in Catalonia. As a liberal politician, he had been closely linked to the political project of Prim during the provisional government (1868 – 1871) that emerged after the 1868 Revolution, playing an active role, and even taking part in the election of the candidacies for the Spanish throne (Casacuberta 2005, 70; Palomas i Moncholí 2018). More important for this research is the fundamental role played by

³⁰¹ In 1878, there were two other adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* written: *Julieta y Romeo* (part I), and *La venganza de Romeo* (part II) [Romeo's vengeance]. The author was the Catalan writer Jaume Piquet i Piera (1839 – 1896), who based his two-part adaptation in *Julieta y Romeo (Los amantes de Verona)* [*Juliet and Romeo (The Lovers of Verona)*], a novel published in 1868 by Enrique Villalpando de Cárdenas (Par 1940, 115). The two volumes were never published. The original manuscripts are kept at the Biblioteca de Catalunya. I contacted the library requesting a copy, but received instead a reproduction of the original manuscripts copied with a typewriter. All pages are heavily altered by the hand which transcribed the texts: words that are crossed out, annotations written in pen, speeches circled, etc. Furthermore, there are marks that make some of the sentences unintelligible. The impossibility to access the original manuscripts, together with the inability to conduct a proper close reading of the texts, are the two reasons why these two adaptations have not been analysed in this doctoral thesis.

Balaguer since the 1850s and 1860s, as one of the main driving forces promoting the cultural movement that emerged in Catalonia under the name of *Renaixença* [the Renaissance] (Palomas i Moncholí 2018). This influential movement governed the Catalan cultural sphere during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is worth remarking, as Domingo explains, that what was understood by literature of the *Renaixença* significantly varied after the 1868 Revolution:

The literature of the *renaixença* [...] in 1859 is all that literature which, without discrimination on the basis of language, manifests the contemporary vigour of the Catalans – a provincial vigour. In this context, literature in Catalan will be reserved for a nostalgic and edifying function (historicist, domestic, sentimental), in any case, minor, inscribed in what has been called the ‘ideologies of the home’. [...] However, ten years later, after the 1868 Revolution, crystallises [...] that ‘deliberate movement’ by a few young people who have complete confidence in Catalan as a literary language and – I add – endeavour to organize a literary-linguistic system to all intents and purposes; it is then when the new profile of the ‘Catalanist writer of the *renaixença*’ is modelled” (2009, 231).³⁰²

Therefore, after 1868, one of the main aims of the *Renaixença* had been to defend the imperative of using Catalan in literature which, for centuries, had been overshadowed in preference for Castilian Spanish. Balaguer’s ardent defence of Catalan as a “literary language” ought not to be mistaken for nationalist sentiments, a feeling shared by other promoters of the *Renaixença*, and a turn which he regretted the movement taking, as he himself wrote in 1897, in the final years of his life, when comparing the different approach taken by Provençal and Catalan writers:

³⁰² “La literatura de la renaixença [...] en el punt de 1859 és tota aquella literatura que, sense discriminació de llengua, testimonia el vigor contemporani dels catalans — el vigor provincialista. En aquest marc, a la literatura en català li serà reservada la funció d’una manera nostàlgica i edificant (historicista, domèstica, sentimental), en qualsevol cas menor, que s’inscriuria en allò que ha estat anomenat les ‘ideologies de la llar’ . [...] En canvi, deu anys més tard, després de la revolució de 1868, quan cristallitza [...] aquell ‘moviment deliberat’ d’uns joves que fan confiança plena en el català com a llengua literària i (afegeixo) malden per organitzar un sistema lingüístic-literari a tots els efectes, és aleshores que és modelat aquell nou perfil d’ ‘escriptor catalanista de la renaixença’ .”

[The people of Provence] purely and simply limited their action and movement to the literary terrain, without deviating an inch from it, and within the literary terrain, to poetry. Their works are published with the French translation visible, thus, they have made both languages, French and Provençal, siblings; [...] Ah, if Catalans, in our Spain, had done what they did! This is the path that ought to be followed by all Catalan writers; and which I tried to draw for them when I had some authority amongst them, when I commanded my group or little group” (cited in Casacuberta 2005, 78).³⁰³

It is not surprising that Balaguer would have praised Provençal writers for publishing their work in Provençal alongside a French translation, as that is precisely what the playwright himself did in the different editions that followed his *Tragedias* (1876) [Tragedies] and *Novas tragedias* (1879) [New Tragedies], regarded by contemporary scholars as the author’s “contribution to highbrow theatre in Catalan” (Palomas i Moncholí 2018).³⁰⁴ Balaguer’s *Las esposallas de la morta* [The Betrothal of the Dead Lady] constitutes the earliest Catalan adaptation inspired by Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.³⁰⁵ *Las esposallas de la morta* was first published on 11 November 1878 in the journal *Revista catalana de literatura, ciencias y arts* [Catalan Journal of Literature, Science, and Arts] (Par 1940, 175; Pujol 2007, 180). The Catalan play has enjoyed a fruitful and lasting afterlife in print, owing to its several reprints; the last of which published in the twenty-first century: 1879, 1882, 1891, 1893, 1894, 1911, 1919, 1968, and 2001 (Par 1940, 175; Pujol 2007, 180–181).³⁰⁶ The two Spanish translations of *Las*

³⁰³ “[Los provenzales] limitaron pura y sencillamente su acción y movimiento al terreno literario, sin apartarse de él ni una pulgada, y dentro del terreno literario, principalmente a la poesía. Sus obras las publican con la traducción francesa a la vista, con sólo lo cual han hecho hermanas las dos lenguas, francesa y provenzal; [...] ¡Ah, si los catalanes, en nuestra España, hubiesen hecho lo que ellos! Este es el camino que debieran seguir los escritores catalanes todos; y que yo procuré trazarles mientras tuve alguna autoridad entre ellos, cuando acaudillaba mi grupo o mi grupito.”

³⁰⁴ “Contribució al teatro culto en catalá.”

³⁰⁵ Nineteenth-century Catalan editions of the play feature the determiner *las* [the] at the beginning of the title. Grammatically, *las* is in the plural, and it has feminine gender. Since the twentieth century onwards, the determiner was changed to its current form, that is, *les* [the], which has the same meaning in Catalan as the old form *las*. *Les esposalles de la morta* is the title often employed in scholarly criticism. Nevertheless, since this chapter analyses the reception of Balaguer’s tragedy on the nineteenth-century stage, *Las esposallas de la morta* is the title that will be used. The alternative title will only be employed in quotes in which *les* is the form favoured.

³⁰⁶ In 1881, the play inspired a parody written in verse by Josep Maria Codolosa titled *Las ventallas de la porta* [The Door Frames] (Pujol 2007, 183). As Par points out, the parodic title was chosen motivated by

esposallas de la morta that exist first appeared in 1879 in *Nuevas tragedias* [New Tragedies] (Balaguer 1879b). In *Nuevas tragedias* Balaguer translated into Spanish four Catalan plays (*Las esposallas de la morta*, *Lo guant del degollat*, *Lo compte de Foix*, and *Raig de lluna*),³⁰⁷ which he had formerly published in that language in his volume *Novas tragedias* (Balaguer 1879a).

The two Spanish translations of *Las esposallas de la morta* included in *Nuevas tragedias* are titled *Los esponsales de la muerta* [The Betrothal of the Dead Lady]. One is a prose translation written by Balaguer himself – the text analysed in this chapter – and the second one is a verse translation by Juan de Dios de la Rada y Delgado, praised by the Catalan author on the basis of “the elegance and brilliance of Rada’s Spanish verse” (Balaguer 1879b, 189).³⁰⁸ In the third edition of Balaguer’s *Tragedias*, the play was reprinted in Catalan alongside Balaguer’s 1879 Spanish translation (Balaguer 1882). Twelve years later, in the second volume of the sixth edition of *Tragedias*, the original Catalan text was published accompanied, on this occasion, by the 1879 verse translation written by Rada y Delgado (Balaguer 1891).

In the 1879 prologue to *Nuevas tragedias*, Balaguer explains what he understands by the term “tragedies”: “tragic things, sad things, things to be lamented and felt” (1879b, 6).³⁰⁹ The clarification is particularly relevant if one looks back to his 1849 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which during his early adulthood the author confessed that he was not capable of assigning – with complete certainty – a genre to his play; in fact, he stated in a note that “all of a sudden I call the preceding play drama or tragedy. This perhaps will prove to the critics that the author does not believe it to be one or the other” (1849, 22).³¹⁰ Despite that comment, which the author must have deemed pertinent to include, the full title of his 1849 adaptation is *Julieta y Romeo. Tragedia en tres actos* [Julieta and Romeo. Tragedy in Three Acts], which suggests that between the two genre categories

phonetics, owing to the sonorous similarity that exists in Catalan between the terms *esposallas* [betrothal] and *ventallas* [door frames] (1940, 124).

³⁰⁷ The titles in English can be translated as follows: *The Betrothal of the Dead Lady*, *The Glove of the Beheaded Man*, *Count Foix*, and *Ray of Moonlight*.

³⁰⁸ “La elegancia y brillantez del verso castellano de Rada.”

³⁰⁹ “Cosas trágicas, cosas tristes, cosas de lamentar y de sentir.”

³¹⁰ “Tan pronto llamo a la obra que antecede drama como tragedia. Esto probará tal vez a los críticos que el autor no la cree ni lo uno ni lo otro.”

(drama and tragedy), Balaguer obviously considered the latter better suited for a play that he had described as being “a work of the heart”. Such a personal and sentimental definition of his earlier creation resonates with the 1879 description of the term tragedy, which Balaguer strongly connects with “things to be lamented and felt”, that is, with the realm of feelings and emotions.

Apart from reinforcing that this second adaptation is indeed a tragedy, an important structural difference between *Julieta y Romeo* and *Las esposallas de la morta* is that the latter eliminates the subdivision of each of the three acts into scenes. This is a decision that the playwright applied to the four tragedies included in the volume, and which he justified as follows:

I do not even divide into scenes the works that I write of this class [tragedies]. For me, for my object, they are a single picture, they only have one scene, played only by the characters that I need in order to give colour and life to the period or character which I propose to represent (Balaguer 1879b, 6–7).³¹¹

Balaguer’s conception of his tragedies as one single picture explains why the plot of *Las esposallas de la morta* has been considerably condensed and reduced to a selection of a few crucial moments in the development of the tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet. As a matter of fact, approximately half of the length of the 1849 play (the main source text) has been cut. Balaguer omits in the prologue any references to his first unsuccessful rewriting of the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, and explains that the absence of a Catalan text on the story of the lovers of Verona is the *raison d’être* of this adaptation:

The Betrothal of the Dead Lady is the tradition of the love of Romeo and Juliet, inspired by a reading of Shakespeare, Federico Soulié and other authors. This legend, which is in all theatres and all languages, was absent from the Catalan stage and the Catalan language, which was thought to be impotent to reproduce it. Other Catalan poets would have

³¹¹ “Ni siquiera divido en escenas las obras que de esta clase escribo. Para mí, para mi objeto, son un cuadro solo, tienen sólo una escena, en la que juegan los personajes únicos que necesito para dar color y vida a la época o carácter que me propongo representar.”

done it a hundred times better than myself, and perhaps it may have been daring on my part to attempt it (1879b, 11–12).³¹²

Once more, the celebrated tragic love story is dedicated to a female addressee whose identity, on this occasion, does not remain hidden from the public. The Catalan adaptation was dedicated to one of the most powerful and influential women of nineteenth-century Spanish society: Antonia Domínguez Borrell, Duchess of La Torre (1831 – 1917). The historian Rubio defines the Duchess of La Torre – literally, Duchess of the Tower – as follows: “beautiful, rich, an aristocrat, ambitious, arrogant, with a much-discussed intelligence. She dominated in a notable manner the decisions of her distinguished husband and first cousin, General Francisco Serrano, with whom she shared a life of intense political and social activity” (2017).³¹³ In his dedication Balaguer writes to the Duchess the following words as regards the inspiration behind his tragedy: “inspired by you, by you, my lady, I was born in the light of day, which is the light of love!” (1879b, 139).³¹⁴ These passionate words are probably not an actual declaration of love, as the text was openly available to the public at a time in which both Balaguer and the Duchess were known to be married. Nevertheless, given her prominent and influential position amongst the upper classes of Spanish society, perhaps it would not be too venturesome to assume that Balaguer must have been particularly interested in gaining the favour and approval of the Duchess, so as to maintain, in turn, his good reputation amongst certain social circles.

Following the formal structure of *Julieta y Romeo*, *Las esposallas de la morta* is also divided into three acts. Nonetheless, rather than employing the term “act”, Balaguer chooses instead “*cuadros*” (pictures). The condensation of the action of what already constituted in 1849 a short text is taken to such an extent that it almost seems as if the entire play is merely a very long conversation held between Romeo and Julieta, whose

³¹² “*Los Esponsales de la muerta* es la tradición de los amores de Romeo y Julieta, inspirada por la lectura de Shakespeare, Federico Soulié y otros autores. Esta leyenda, que está en todos los teatros y en todas las lenguas, faltaba al teatro catalán y a la lengua catalana, a la que se suponía impotente para reproducirla. Otros poetas catalanes lo hubieran hecho mejor que yo cien veces, y acaso haya habido atrevimiento por mi parte en intentarlo.”

³¹³ “Bella, rica, aristócrata, ambiciosa, altiva y de inteligencia discutida, dominó de manera notable en las decisiones de su insigne marido y primo hermano, el general Francisco Serrano, con el cual compartió una vida de intensa actividad política y social.”

³¹⁴ “¡Inspirada por ti, por ti, señora mía, nací a la luz del día, que es la luz del amor!”

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love story occupies the main focus of attention. Once again, it is Julieta who makes the highest number of interventions throughout the play, eight, to be precise. On the contrary, Romeo merely appears on three occasions: in the opening scene speaking to his sweetheart, at the end of the second act to prevent Julieta's wedding with another man, and in the final act when he dies alongside the love of his life. Therefore, all his appearances are strictly restricted to his connection with Julieta. In fact, it could be said that she indirectly directs his movements, as the only moment in which he briefly appears alone is when he enters the churchyard in order to embrace death. Even in this scene, his presence is motivated, as in Shakespeare's play, by the fact that he wishes to say his final farewell to his beloved Julieta.

There are some changes introduced to the 1849 *dramatis personae*, which still consists of five main characters. The first important innovation is the slight variation found in the pronunciation and spelling of the names of the rival families, which are rechristened as the Capuletti and the Monteschi; a change almost certainly motivated to make the names sound more Italian, as in the medieval sources. In da Porto's and Bandello's novelle the enmity occurs amongst the Capelletti (Cappelletti in da Porto), and the Montecchi. Balaguer's Romeo Monteschi still constitutes the only member of his faction present, whereas Julieta's father is no longer called Capuleto but instead Capuletti. Talem (the old magistrate and doctor) is now a figure closer to Shakespeare's Friar Laurence; his new name is Fray Lorenzo, and he is Julieta's confessor. Another important alteration affects the fifth character of the play: the former don Alvar (Julieta's suitor). The character is no longer a Spanish nobleman. Don Alvar is rechristened as Conrado de Arlés, a Provençal gentleman from the city of Arles. Given Balaguer's personal preference for the people of Provence, it is not in the least surprising to find this change in the nationality of the character. His presence has been significantly reduced, as Conrado de Arlés only intervenes throughout the course of the action in three occasions.

In *Las esposallas de la morta* Balaguer eliminated most of the scenes that do not appear in Shakespeare's play, and decided to keep only the most important moments related to the tragic love story. This contributes to accelerate the action dramatically which, in turn, enhances the anguish and stress that readers and spectators would have experienced, as they witness the rapid succession of events that are known to end

tragically. The play begins *in media res*, omitting references to the origin of the feud – unlike the 1849 text – or to the moment in time when Romeo and Julieta had first met. In the prologue, Balaguer justified his decision to plunge the audience right into the action of the play as follows: “in my *Tragedies* there is no exposition whatsoever. I imagine that readers or spectators are already aware of the subject matter – that they know it in-depth –, and I fully get down to business” (1879b, 8–9).³¹⁵

Thus, assuming that the reader/spectator is already familiar with the story of the lovers of Verona, *Las esposallas de la morta* opens in a gallery at Capuletti’s palace, during the break of dawn, depicting a conversation between Romeo and Julieta. The scene recreates Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, act III, scene v, where the lovers converse after the consummation of their marriage, and exchange what will be their final farewells. In Balaguer’s adaptation, the conversation has been extended. The prose rendition of their speeches does not prevent the couple from expressing their ardent feelings with passionate lyricism. They have also had sexual intercourse, and it is probably not the first time because the characters are already married when the action begins. In this second rewriting, Romeo must leave Capuletti’s home not because he has been banished, as the murder occurs immediately afterwards, but instead because no one is aware of their secret marriage. Thus, he cannot risk being seen. As in the 1849 text, Romeo accidentally murders Tebaldo (Julieta’s brother), and the first act also ends with Capuletti declaring that he will offer his daughter to any gentleman who deposits at her feet – as a wedding gift – the bloody head of Romeo; a clear remnant of gory Romantic imagery.

The action of the first five scenes corresponding to act II in the 1849 adaptation have been omitted, so as to accelerate the action. Hence, the second act begins with a conversation between Fray Lorenzo and Julieta in which the former convinces the young lady of taking the narcotic that will make her appear dead. The act also concludes with the wedding between Julieta and Conrado, a ceremony which is never consummated because Romeo appears uninvited to reclaim his wife. Julieta then faints, and is assumed to be dead. The third and final act is considerably shorter, and it only depicts Romeo and Julieta at the graveyard. Julieta also reawakens minutes before Romeo is about to die from

³¹⁵ “En mis *Tragedias* no hay exposición alguna. Me imagino que los lectores o espectadores están enterados del asunto, que lo conocen a fondo, y entro de lleno en materia.”

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the poison that he has drunk. Once again, the author revels in the depiction of Romeo's agonising death. The main difference as regard to the first ending is that the play ends with the iconic image of Julieta stabbing herself with his dagger.

As the summary evidences, *Las esposallas de la morta* is entirely centred on the tragic love of the unfortunate Veronese couple. This is the first adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in which the play opens with the lovers engaged in conversation. Not only does the play begin with the lovers, but also ends with merely the two of them present on stage to heighten their tragic representation as the innocent victims of love. The feud, and underlying political conflict, that exists between the rival factions is almost non-existent. The curtains are drawn after Julieta's death. Hence, as in the 1849 adaptation, there is probably no reconciliation between the Capuletti and the Monteschi. It appears that Balaguer wished readers to fully devote their attention to the figures of Romeo and Juliet, and on the suffering caused by their impossible love. Any other matter becomes secondary, when not altogether irrelevant.

With the irrational feud almost eliminated from the plot, it is evident that the main theme of the play is love. As Farrés highlights, "*Las esposallas de la morta* emphasises the Romantic treatment of love" (1997, 16).³¹⁶ Indeed, love is presented in Balaguer's adaptation from a Romantic perspective, depicted as an overpowering and absolute force, capable of consuming an individual until its ultimate destruction. Balaguer's second rewriting also presents Julieta as the most important character in the play. The morbid Romantic title, *The Betrothal of the Dead Lady*, already shifts the attention towards the only female member of the Capuletti present, while it excludes Romeo. Indeed, the betrothal is a direct reference to the engagement between Julieta and Conrado de Arlés, the event that precipitates the tragic ending. Furthermore, Julieta is the only female character who is given a voice in this adaptation, an element that reinforces her centrality every time that she makes an entrance. It is true that the *dramatis personae* includes ladies, maidens, and even female servants of the House of Capelletti. However, these females only appear on the day of the wedding between Julieta and Conrado, and none of them speak, but are merely included in a stage direction to indicate their presence at such an important rite. In addition, all the characters that speak in the play are directly

³¹⁶ "*Las esposallas de la morta* emfasitza el tractament romàntic de l'amor."

connected to Julieta: Romeo is her secret husband, Capuletti her father, Conrado de Arlés her almost husband, and Fray Lorenzo her confessor. A reading of the *dramatis personae* reveals that Julieta is placed at the center of the action. First of all, Julieta is the first character that appears on the list. Secondly, there are two characters who are presented by specifically detailing their relation to Julieta. Hence, Capuletti is defined as “Julieta’s father”, while Fray Lorenzo is said to be “Julieta’s confessor” (Balaguer 1879b, 141).³¹⁷ It is worth remarking that, whereas in some adaptations, the Friar is presented as a friend of Romeo, in this version, the character clearly belongs to Julieta’s acquaintance. Moreover, the fact that Romeo acts as the only representative of the Monteschi results in the loss of importance of his faction.

Almost no changes are made to the characterization of Julieta in Balaguer’s second adaptation of the story of the lovers of Verona. One of the features which the Catalan writer had formerly added to her character was her religious devotion, a trait which has not disappeared. The only difference resides in the main object of her adoration. In the 1849 version, it was God whom Julieta invoked in her speeches, as she exemplified in act I, scene vii when she firmly uttered: “I believe in God”.³¹⁸ The 1878 Julieta, however, prefers to devote her religious attention to the Virgin Mary. The following extract, new to this adaptation, evidences the overpowering presence of the Virgin in Julieta’s life. Even during moments such as the following, in which Julieta is declaring her love for Romeo, she speaks of and to the Virgin. Apart from reflecting her strong faith, this habit can be interpreted as a way of reinforcing and adding more veracity to her amorous feelings; as it would be wrong to lie while addressing such a sacred figure:

JULIETA

Here, saintly Virgin, my soul embraced to your soul, which lives off you, for you, and which gives itself to you, and here also the proud race which, increasingly blinder in its rancor, longs for your death with the same zeal with which I yearn for your life!

ROMEO

God’s angel!

³¹⁷ CAPULETTI. Padre de Julieta; FRAY LORENZO. Confesor de Julieta.

³¹⁸ JULIETA. Yo creo en Dios.

As a fervent devotee, Julieta not only addresses and alludes to the Virgin Mary in her speeches, her sacred figure is also permanently present in her private chamber. In fact, an image of the mother of Christ is required in performance, as this is a new object added to the set design of the Capuletti palace. It acts as a symbol and a visual reminder to the reader/spectator of Julieta's Christian faith, an aspect of her personality which no other adapter had stressed in such an emphatic manner prior to Balaguer. It is worth remembering that in the 1849 text, after the murder of Tebaldo, Julieta hides Romeo from the persecution of her family by urging him to hide inside "my chamber", which "is a sanctuary" (I. vii. p.8).³²⁰ In this second adaptation, Balaguer seizes upon the first crucial moment of crisis in the play, and takes it as an opportunity to reinforce the image of Julieta as a religious devotee of the Virgin Mary. The lines that follow are inspired by act I, scene vii from the 1849 text, but constitute added material:

ROMEO

It is them. They come and I am lost.

JULIETA

Not while I live.

[She opens the door of her room, and says, signaling the image of the Virgin.]

Enter my chamber. It is a refuge. At its door the Virgin and I remain sleepless.

[ROMEO enters the chamber.]

(I. p. 153)³²¹

Apart from her religious fervour, another aspect of Julieta's personality that is strengthened is her absolute love and devotion for Romeo. Since the first act, Julieta proclaims herself as his slave, as she herself tells him during their first conversation when

³¹⁹ JULIETA. ¡Aquí, Virgen santa, mi alma abrazada a tu alma, que vive de ti, por ti, y que a ti se entrega, y aquí también la raza orgullosa que, cada vez más ciega en sus rencores, anhela tu muerte con el mismo afán con que yo tu vida! ROMEO. ¡Ángel de Dios!

³²⁰ JULIETA. Mi aposento, Romeo, es un santuario.

³²¹ ROMEO. Ellos son. Ya llegan y estoy perdido. JULIETA. No será mientras yo viva. *[Abre la puerta de su estancia, y dice, señalando la imagen de la Virgen.]* Entra en mi cámara. Es un sagrado. A su puerta la Virgen y yo quedamos en vela. *[ROMEO entra en la cámara.]*

she utters “I am only your slave” (I. p. 148).³²² Her love for Romeo is presented as a force that utterly consumes her and dominates every single aspect of her life. Her strong passion and ardent feelings are stressed with more fervour than in any other passage at the beginning of the second act. The act begins with a distressed Julieta conversing with Fray Lorenzo after Capuletti has given the order to have Romeo murdered and his bloody head offered to his daughter as a wedding gift. As the epitome of the Romantic heroine, Julieta presents her love for Romeo as a powerful force that consumes her entire self. Furthermore, this dangerous love is portrayed as her destiny. In other words, she regards it as her fate, a fate that she willingly embraces, regardless of its consequences. Her passionate defence of Romeo, which verges on idolatry, makes her appear delirious in Fray Lorenzo’s eyes:

JULIETA

I will never stop loving him alive... nor dead, no...but, kill me!

FRAY LORENZO

God’s creature! Insane delirium disrupts your reason. [...] Tell me: that love which devours and destroys you, the love which you have for Romeo, can you tear it from your heart?

JULIETA

First, the world would be torn from its roots. If I was born again hundred times, a hundred times I would love him. He is my life. He is my destiny. He is myself. If he is late, his delay kills me. He arrives and, then, it is joy that kills me. His slave I am, and I do not want to redeem myself while I live; as he is my thinking, and my will he also is.

(II. p. 165)³²³

In the aforementioned passage Julieta unmistakably presents Romeo as the light of her life, as her driving force, as the only reason that justifies her existence. Nonetheless,

³²² JULIETA. Solo soy tu esclava.

³²³ JULIETA. Jamás dejaré de amarle en vida...ni en muerte tampoco, tampoco...pero ¡matadme! FRAY LORENZO. ¡Criatura de Dios! Loco delirio perturba tu razón. [...] Dime: ese amor que te devora y te destruye, el amor que a Romeo tienes, ¿puedes arrancarlo de tu corazón? JULIETA. Primero se arrancaría al mundo de sus raíces. Cien veces que volviera yo a nacer, cien veces le amaría. Es mi vida. Es mi destino. Es yo. Si tarda, su tardanza me mata. Llega, y también entonces me mata la alegría. Su esclava soy, y no quiero redimirme mientras viva; que él es mi pensamiento, y él también mi voluntad.

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at the end of the first act, Julieta has the opportunity to cling onto the possibility of enjoying a life with Romeo, but decides not to let her emotions betray her, and chooses reason instead camouflaged as silence. It is necessary to remember that the 1849 adaptation included a scene in which Talerm acquainted Capuleto and his daughter with the news that Montecho had given in, and that he came in Romeo's name to ask for Julieta's hand. Romeo and Julieta were also already married in the first adaptation, but Talerm had devised this plan to try and convince the head of the house of the Capuletos to accept a forbidden union. In the 1849 text Julieta had reduced her action to merely reflecting her desperation. However, her words could not be heard by the other members present, as they had been spoken aside. When she eventually does speak, it was simply in order to deny having uttered a word. Therefore, it can be said that Julieta actually chose to remain silent.

In Balaguer's second rewriting of the only scene in which Julieta is allowed to confront her father, the heroine also chooses not to act against his will. Once more, she resorts to speaking without letting herself be heard. Her resignation is highlighted by including new stage directions that offer indications on the body language of the characters. Balaguer reinforces the tense atmosphere of the scene, by increasing the powerful influence (both physical and emotional) that Capuletti exerts over Julieta, whose powerlessness becomes apparent from the moment that he dares his daughter to speak:

CAPULETTI

[With affected calm, and his gaze always fixed on his daughter.]

Answer, thus, Julieta.

FRAY LORENZO

A life of eternal peace that wedding must be, which joins in amorous
ties bloody enemies.

CAPULETTI

[Always with a purpose, and squeezing his daughter's hand in his.]

Answer, daughter.

JULIETA *[Aside.]*

Dear God!

FRAY LORENZO *[Lovingly interrogating her.]*

Julieta?

Romantic Echoes

[*Moments of silence. JULIETA, as if she wished to respond, raises her eyes, but turns them down again and furrows her brow, as she stumbles into her father's gaze.*]

FRAY LORENZO [*Astonished.*]

She is silent?

CAPULETTI.

She is silent.

FRAY LORENZO

Julieta!

CAPULETTI

[*Restraining his daughter with his gaze and squeezing her hand.*]

She does not deign to answer. It is my blood that runs through her veins.

JULIETA [*Aside.*]

Ah! I am dying, oh my!

CAPULETTI [*Releasing JULIETA's hand.*]

She truly is my daughter.

(I. pp. 159 – 161)³²⁴

Even though Julieta is deeply in love with Romeo, the lady evidently fears her father. His mere presence is threatening, in his not so subtle attempts at trying to prevent his daughter from speaking. Thus, the passionate love that Julieta feels for the man who is her lawful husband is not powerful enough so as to interfere with what she regards as her filial obligations. Accordingly, in her father's presence, she never dares to express her true feelings. It must be remembered that one of the personality traits that the twenty-five-year-old Balaguer highlighted when he analysed the character of Julieta in his letter was her "resignation". Undoubtedly, this is a feature that certainly stands out in this second adaptation. The characterization of Julieta can be summarised as a portrayal of a

³²⁴ CAPULETTI. [*Con afectada calma y fija siempre la mirada en su hija.*] Contesta, pues, Julieta. FRAY LORENZO. Vida de paz eterna ha de ser esa boda, que une con lazos de amor a encarnizados enemigos. CAPULETTI. [*Con intención siempre y apretando dentro de la suya la mano de su hija.*] Contesta, hija. JULIETA. [*Aparte.*] ¡Dios, mío! FRAY LORENZO. [*Interrogándola cariñosamente.*] ¿Julieta? [*Momentos de silencio. JULIETA, como si quisiera responder, alza los ojos, pero vuelve a bajarlos y dobla la frente al tropezar con la mirada de su padre.*] FRAY LORENZO. [*En el colmo de la sorpresa.*] ¿Calla? CAPULETTI. Calla. FRAY LORENZO. ¡Julieta! CAPULETTI. [*Conteniendo a su hija con la mirada y estrechándola la mano.*] Ni contestar se digna. Es mi sangre la que corre por sus venas. JULIETA. [*Aparte.*] ¡Ah! ¡Me muero, madre mía! CAPULETTI. [*Soltando la mano de JULIETA.*] Es realmente mi hija.

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woman who is devoutly religious, profoundly in love, and hopelessly obedient. Although her faith and her obedience to her father are important aspects of her personality, the feature that inevitably stands out from the beginning until the end is her all-consuming love for Romeo.

Whereas in the 1849 play, Balaguer unnecessarily reveled in the depiction of Romeo's agonising death, on this occasion the playwright decided to also enhance Julieta's desperation. The setting of the third act remains unaltered: the Capuletti family vault. Nonetheless, on this occasion, no other characters will encounter the dead bodies of the lovers, as they are the only living souls present in such deathly surroundings. The final conversation between the lovers, already a favourite variation amongst Spanish adapters of the tragedy, is retained with a few changes. For instance, while in the 1849 adaptation it was Romeo who stood out as a result of his recurrent convulsive movement, more action is also assigned to Julieta. The final minutes of the play present a distraught woman running all over the place, desperately yelling for help. Balaguer was indeed particularly fond of emphasizing – verging on exaggeration – distressed states of mind. Julieta's unanswered cries make the loneliness of the couple more visible, contributing, in turn, to increase the pathos of the scene. More attention is also devoted to portrayal of Julieta's death. It is worth remembering that, in the 1849 version, the heroine merely expired from witnessing the death of the love of her life, uttering the words "Oh! I follow you!" (III. iii. p. 20).³²⁵ However, in this new rewriting her classic act of committing suicide is incorporated to increase the dramatic tension of the scene and, perhaps, to add more veracity to the actual cause of her death:

JULIETA [*Anxiously running around the stage.*]

Help! Help!

ROMEO

For God's sake, Julieta...! For God's sake, your hand...give me your
hand!

JULIETA

[*Approaching ROMEO, kneeling at his side, lifting his head, and
yelling cries for help.*]

³²⁵ JULIETA. ¡Oh! ¡Ya te sigo!

Romantic Echoes

Help! Oh! I do not want, I do not want you to die...! Help! Help!

ROMEO

There is no time left... Everything is futile... Farewell...farewell, my

Julieta!

[*He falls dead.*]

JULIETA

Ingrate...! And you leave me thus...? It will not be. I will follow the path signaled to me by your star. Where is there a weapon...?

[*She searches for a weapon with which to wound herself; she sees the dagger which ROMEO has in his girdle, and takes it from him.*]

Ah! Sacred dagger. Here, weapon of mine, here is your place. There rust!

[*She stabs her chest with the dagger, and falls over ROMEO's body.*]

The end of The Betrothal of the Dead Lady.

(III. pp. 187 – 188)³²⁶

Julieta's last words distinctly echo Shakespeare's Juliet and her final "this is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die" (V. iii. l. 170), which evidences that Balaguer had almost certainly read Shakespeare's play. In fact, the depiction of Julieta's death constitutes the scene in which *Las esposallas de la morta* mostly resembles Shakespeare's tragedy, as it includes two of the most important elements present in the Elizabethan tragedy: Julieta's act of stabbing herself, and the reference to the stars. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the latter element makes no sense whatsoever in an adaptation in which the young couple cannot be named star-crossed lovers, as they are shown to be guided and governed by their Christian faith. Thus, the reference to the stars, might either be the result of a slip of the mind, or a conscious desire to retain part of the "essence" of Shakespeare's play, given that this adaptation clearly departs from the English text. It is

³²⁶ JULIETA. [*Corriendo desalada por la escena.*] ¡Socorro! ¡Socorro! ROMEO. ¡Por Dios, Julieta...! ¡Por Dios, tu mano... dame tu mano! JULIETA. [*Acudiendo a ROMEO, arrodillándose a su lado, levantándole la cabeza y dando gritos de socorro.*] ¡Socorro! ¡Oh! ¡Yo no quiero, no quiero que mueras...! ¡Socorro, socorro! ROMEO. Ya no es tiempo... Todo es inútil... ¡Adiós...adiós, Julieta mía! [*Cae muerto.*] JULIETA. ¡Ingrato...! ¿Y así me dejas...? No será. Yo seguiré el camino que me señaló tu estrella. ¿Dónde hay un arma...? [*Busca un arma con que herirse; ve el puñal que lleva ROMEO en su cinto, y se lo quita.*] ¡Ah! Santo puñal. Aquí, arma mía, aquí está tu sitio. ¡Enmohece en él! [*Se clava el puñal en el pecho, y cae sobre el cuerpo de ROMEO.*] Fin de los Esponsales de la Muerta.

known that Balaguer was not fluent in English. Therefore, the dramatist must have read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in Spanish, as in 1878 there were already four different translations available (Hiráldez de Acosta 1868; Velasco y Rojas 1872; Clark 1874; González y Marcial 1875).

In the prologue to his *Nuevas tragedias*, Balaguer affirmed that his “*Tragedias* are not written for the stage, but they can all be represented” (1879b, 8).³²⁷ One does not know whether to truly trust the author when he mentioned that his compositions were not aimed for the stage. The level of detail contained in several stage directions suggests the opposite. One need only have a look at the first stage direction with which the play opens. It occupies more than one page, and it describes with a high level of detail each of the different objects present inside the grandiose Veronese palace of the Capuletti. Furthermore, elements are defined in relation to their location either to the right or to the left of the stage, as it is common in texts written for performance. Furthermore, throughout the play, one encounters stage directions such as “[*Anxiously running around the stage*]” (III. p. 187), which leads to the assumption that – even if indirectly – Balaguer must have hoped to see his *Tragedies* performed. This would explain why the playwright provided meticulous descriptions of the different props and decorative elements that ought to be incorporated to the set design.

Indeed, Balaguer's tragedy was staged on several occasions in the province of Barcelona during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. *Las esposallas de la morta* premiered in Catalan on 4 March 1879 at the Teatre Català Romea (Barcelona) – known nowadays simply as Teatre Romea (Vila Fernández 2019). The five Catalan players which intervened in the production were the following: Mercè Abella (Julieta Capuletti), Armengol Goula (Romeu Monteschi), Joaquím García Parreño (Capuletti), Joaquím Pinós (Conrad d'Arles), and Andreu Cazorro (Fra Llorens) (Balaguer 1919, 1). The production was moved two days later to the Teatre Principal (Barcelona), where it ran for several days in the months of March (6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27), April (13 and 28), and May (16 and 19) (Par 1940, 118).

³²⁷ “Mis *Tragedias* no se escriben para el teatro, pero todas pueden representarse.”

Joaquín García Parreño was the person in charge of directing the ensemble. Par describes him as a “good director and a very acceptable comic actor, but he lacked the faculties needed for tragedy” (1940, 120).³²⁸ In the absence of theatrical reviews on the production, one only has Par’s personal assessment on the acting skills of two of the male actors who intervened in the first performances: García Parreño and Goula. On the basis of Par’s description of the acting skills displayed by García Parreño on the stage, the actor could not have offered a convincing picture of the character of Capuletti. Par personally accuses him of “lacking corporal energy”, which he regards as a necessary component in the interpretation of tragic roles (1940, 120).³²⁹ The actor who played Romeo did not receive a better commentary from the Catalan scholar. According to Par, “Goula was not a good actor; in what we could call a normal tuning fork, he did not reach the level of mediocre” (1940, 119).³³⁰ Ermengol Goula (1843 – 1921) does at least receive some praise for “having a good voice”, which allowed audiences to “understand him well” (1940, 120).³³¹ Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that – at times – Par becomes excessively subjective and far too critical in his opinions on the performances that he reviewed. Therefore, his negative comments and views on the apparent poor acting skills that some interpreters exhibited do not always necessarily imply that a play was not well received by contemporary theatregoers. No information is provided by Par on Abella, the first woman who played the role of Juliet in Catalan; this absence is highly surprising given that the actress in question was an important figure in the Catalan stage at the time.

Unlike some of her fellow peers who had not received any training, Mercè Abella i Alonso (1846 – 1924) took acting lessons, when in the late 1850s she attended the Conservatoire of Declamation located at the Teatre Odéon in Barcelona (Vila Fernández 2019). From the knowledge that exists on her acting skills, one can easily imagine that Abella must have offered onstage quite an adequate and desirable representation of Shakespeare’s tragic heroine. As a matter of fact, this is a role for which the actress would be remembered:

³²⁸ “Buen director y muy aceptable actor cómico, pero carecía de facultades para la tragedia.”

³²⁹ “Falta de energía corporal.”

³³⁰ “Goula no era un buen actor; en lo que podríamos llamar diapasón normal no llegaba a mediocre.”

³³¹ “Tenía buena voz, le entendíamos bien.”

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Some of her contemporaries, such as Joaquim Riera i Bertran, Joan Costa i Déu or Francesc Curet praised the expressive force of her performances, her good diction and elegance, especially in tragic roles, where she departed from stridency. Likewise, the actress stood out for the rigour with which she exercised her profession, both in its study, as she had a very good memory, and in performance. She secured her place as leading lady with the tragedies and Romantic dramas of Guimerà, Balaguer, Ubach i Vinyeta, or Frederic Soler. Thus, she was remembered for her role of Julieta in *Les esposallas de la morta* (Vila Fernández 2019).³³²

Despite Par's negative evaluation of Goula as an actor, together with Abella, with whom he studied at the Catalan Conservatoire, they are said to have constituted "one of the greatest stage couples of the moment" (Vila Fernández 2019).³³³ If Abella's performance of Julieta was included amongst her collection of most memorable roles, this implies that her maturity could not have been regarded as an obstacle or handicap for contemporary audiences, who witnessed a thirty-three-year-old Abella play opposite an equally mature Goula, aged thirty-six at the time. The lack of references in Balaguer's text to the age of Romeo and Julieta may also have contributed to ignore in performance that visual reminder of the reality hidden behind the fictional spectacle. Nevertheless, only a few years later, two legendary Victorian actors placed in a similar situation would not be judged in a favourable light by London theatregoers.

The most remarkable *Romeo and Juliet* in late Victorian England was Henry Irving's well-known 1882 production at the Lyceum, starring a thirty-six-year-old Ellen Terry as Juliet, and a forty-four-year-old Irving as Romeo. In this case, spectators were not in the least pleased with the considerable age gap that existed between Shakespeare's teenage lovers and the interpreters chosen to bring them to life. It did not make a difference, as Weis asserts, that "references to Juliet's age were cut from the text" (2012,

³³² "Alguns contemporanis seus, com ara Joaquim Riera i Bertran, Joan Costa i Déu o Francesc Curet, van elogiar la força expressiva de les seves actuacions, una bona dicció i l'elegància, especialment en papers tràgics, que l'allunyaven de l'estridència. Igualment, l'actriu va destacar pel rigor amb què exercia l'ofici, tant en l'estudi, per al qual disposava d'una gran memòria, com en l'escenificació. Es va consagrar com a primera dama amb les tragèdies i els drames romàntics de Guimerà, Balaguer, Ubach i Vinyeta o Frederic Soler. Així, fou recordada pel paper de Julieta a *Les esposalles de la morta*."

³³³ "Una de las grandes parejas escénicas del momento."

70). There is general agreement that the acting of the leading performers was not a success, precisely because of their mature age; a factor that evidently did not contribute to turn Irving and Terry into convincing interpreters of the young star-crossed lovers of Verona. What ought to have been an exceptional display of acting from two renowned Victorian actors turned out to be a fiasco. Nevertheless, as Dobson and Wells comment, “Terry later excelled as the Nurse” (2001, 401). Thus, the only reason why Irving’s production was and is still remembered up to this day was thanks to its exquisite and lavish stage design.³³⁴

There was one more performance of *Las esposallas de la morta* in 1879, to be precise, on 20 May. On this occasion the play was staged in Sant Boi de Llobregat (located in the province of Barcelona). The only aspect known about this production is that a new actor, José Miquel (Julián Romea’s understudy), took part (Par 1940, 121). This will not be the last performance of Balaguer’s tragedy. The play would be revived on four different occasions during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, always in the same setting: the Teatre Català Romea. First, on 12, 18, 25 and 30 December 1881. On this year the play was performed in Catalan with Armengol Goula – once again – in the role of Romeu (Par 1940, 124). Seven years later, on 1 October 1888, the theatre company led by León Fontova took the Catalan play to the stage in a performance attended by Balaguer (Par 1940, 136). In 1893 the play was performed in Spanish under the title of *Julieta y Romeo*; first on 11 February and, secondly, on different days of the month of April (12, 15, 19, 26) (Par 1940, 142). The final performance of the play on the nineteenth-century stage took place on 27 April 1896. The play was staged in its original Catalan, and it starred the actor Lorenzo Capdevila in the role of Romeu (Par 1940, 146). The popularity that *Las esposallas de la morta* enjoyed amongst Balaguer’s contemporaries, as evidenced by its several revivals, was not restricted to the nineteenth century. In fact, Par wrote in 1940 that the play “was still represented quite regularly” (1940, 10). Thus, the first Catalan adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* proved to achieve a considerable degree of success. After the apparent failure of the 1849 *Julieta y Romeo*,

³³⁴ As Kennedy explains, Irving’s elaborate tableaux consisted of “eighteen solid sets, three designers, rich costumes, and lightning so plastic that Juliet’s bedroom had separate qualities for three different times of day” (2001, 30).

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with his second Catalan rendition, Balaguer finally succeeded in the task of rewriting the story of the tragic lovers of Verona.

Conclusions

Conclusions.

The first important point to remark after this historical journey throughout the first three hundred years of the Spanish reception of the story of the lovers of Verona, is that the medieval legend which had circulated around Europe in narrative form entered Spain through Italy, and not via England. As a matter of fact, there is no historical or surviving written evidence that suggests that Lope de Vega, Rojas Zorrilla or Rozas/Rosas, the three Spanish Golden Age dramatists who borrowed material from Bandello's 1554 novella "La sfortunata morte de dui infelicissimi amanti" ("The Unfortunate Death of Two Most Wretched Lovers"), could have read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* prior to the composition of their own dramatic renderings of the story. Shakespeare would be the first English writer to adapt the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona for the stage. Similarly, the Spanish dramatists of the Golden Age would also become the first authors to transform the original Italian novelle into dramas.

Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla, the first Spanish playwrights to resort to the story of the lovers of the Verona, possibly unaware of the fact that Shakespeare had composed in the mid-1590s what would ultimately become one of the most important works in the history of Literature, opted for a completely different – not to mention altogether radical – approach in relation to the treatment of the Italian sources. In the hands of Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla, the tragic story of Romeo and Giulietta becomes a tragicomedy. The transformation of a narrative that ends tragically into a play with a happy ending is a distinctive and unique feature of the early Spanish reception of the story of the lovers of Verona, and a characteristic that would re-surface in the early nineteenth century.

In the initial different treatment of the Italian sources of the tale on the English stage (with Shakespeare), and on the Spanish stage (with Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla), the British and the Spanish theatrical traditions co-exist in time, but follow completely different and opposite directions in the reception of the story of the Veronese lovers. Thus, from the earliest instance in which the story is introduced into the Spanish stage, it evolves throughout the seventeenth century, independent from its evolution on the Elizabethan, the Jacobean and, lastly, the Restoration stage. Even in the case of the

only Spanish tragic rendition of the story, Rozas's (or Rosas's) *Los amantes de Verona* [The Lovers of Verona] (1666), there is no evidence that suggests that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* could have determined such an outcome. Instead, textual analysis revealed in chapter 1 that Rozas appeared to have copied the tragic ending from Boiastuau's adaptation (1559). Therefore, since the seventeenth century, England did not function as a referent in the dissemination and progressive assimilation of the story of the lovers of Verona in Spanish theatrical culture.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, two writers, Weisse and Ducis in their *Romeo und Julie* (1767) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1772), respectively, would contribute to the later re-emergence of the tragic story of the lovers of Verona. Hence, the main influences regarding the Spanish reception of the originally Italian tale continued to arrive from the Continent. The story will reappear in Spain on the early nineteenth-century stage, transformed, firstly into a play – with comic and tragic alternative endings – that strongly resembled an eighteenth-century sentimental drama and, secondly, changed into a purely neoclassical tragedy strongly influenced by Ducis's 1772 *Roméo et Juliette*. In Solís's comic variant, the ending apparently favoured in performances of *Julia y Romeo* (1803), co-existed with García Suelto's tragic *Romeo y Julieta* (1817). Contemporary reviews revealed that García Suelto's tragic rendition enjoyed a more favourable acceptance. Hence, this is symptomatic of the fact that, at the turn of the century, Spanish theatregoers preferred a tragic over a comic ending for the story of the lovers of Verona. The second half of the nineteenth century consolidated Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as a tragedy, with the peculiarity that, in Spain, the play would be heavily influenced by the Romantic movement, both in its thematic treatment of the events portrayed, and on the stage, where the Romantic school of acting and its peculiar declamatory style influenced the process of composition of the new adaptations created.

One of the main contributions of this study is that it has demonstrated that Italy is the country that played the most fundamental role in the early dissemination of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona. First and foremost, thanks to Bandello's 1554 novella, the source text employed by the three Golden Age Spanish dramatists who first transcribed and adapted the narrative for the stage. Two centuries later, in the 1820s and the 1830s, the Italian operas composed by Rossini, Bellini and Romani would strongly contribute to popularize the tragic story of the lovers of Verona. In 1868, the talented

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Ernesto Rossi, accompanied by his touring company, would be credited with introducing on the Spanish stage the earliest relatively original Shakespearean *Romeo and Juliet*. The arrival in the mid-nineteenth century of the Italian touring companies introduced a new approach in the interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy that was positively welcomed in Spain. The Italian touring companies in their attempt to remain relatively faithful to the idea that Shakespeare had envisioned gave Spanish audiences, for the first time, a taste of a pseudo-original Shakespearean *Romeo and Juliet*. Therefore, when the tragedy is eventually introduced onto the stage in its most Shakespearean format, it is not as a consequence of England, but instead via Italy and its touring companies. Even though, nowadays, it is through Shakespeare's immortal and universal tragedy – as it is often referred to – that readers and theatregoers are familiar with the tragic story of the lovers of Verona, the story gradually permeated Spanish theatrical culture detached from the English tradition. The fictional Romeo and Juliet are, after all, Italian. Thus, it is not surprising that the early dissemination of the story of the star-crossed lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage was heavily influenced by the Italian tradition, and its cultural impact on the reception of the story in Spain.

Indeed, the influence of England is almost non-existent at this early stage of the Spanish reception of the story of Romeo and Juliet of Verona. The only element in common shared between the Spanish and the English stage adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* written after Shakespeare is that most texts include the pathetic ending devised by Garrick in 1748, whereby the lovers are granted one final farewell at the cemetery before entering the realms of death. Even though from the eighteenth century onwards, most spectators would have credited Garrick with inventing the scene, da Porto (in 1524), later imitated by Bandello (in 1554), was the first to introduce this final verbal exchange between the lovers. Therefore, an innovation that Spanish adaptors could have apparently borrowed from England, had instead been inherited through the medieval Italian sources of the play.

Despite the developments that Spanish adaptations of the story of the lovers of Verona underwent during the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, one crucial aspect remained certain and almost intact: the centrality of Juliet as the most prominent figure in the play. Apart from the obvious change of genre, the other considerably significant innovation that both Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606 – 1612) and Rojas

Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* (1640) incorporated, and which constitutes a departure from Bandello's novella is that, in both texts, the character of Julia is transformed into the main protagonist. This initiated a pattern that would prevail throughout the early reception of the story of the lovers of Verona in Spain, as this doctoral thesis has evidenced.

Thus, the initial hypothesis is confirmed. From the moment that the story of the lovers of Verona was introduced into the Spanish stage, and until its final manifestations in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, most Spanish adapters rewrote the story making Juliet the absolute protagonist; hence, placing the character at the center of the action. This, in turn, allowed and made audiences witness the story depicted onstage mostly through Julia's/Julietta's perspective: through her words, her feelings, her actions, her immediate physical surroundings, and her acquaintances. In fact, if one was asked to draw a diagram for each *Romeo and Juliet* adaptation analysed, so as to visually explain the relations established amongst the different characters that intervene, in the majority of cases, Juliet would have to occupy a focal position at the centre of such drawings. Most characters are indeed defined by their relationship with Juliet: they are her parent(s), her sweetheart, her brother, her cousin, her suitor(s), her rival, her closest confidante, her servant(s), etc. Juliet is, without doubt, the unquestionable protagonist in the majority of stage adaptations that have been examined. Demonstrating Juliet's prominence in the history of the early reception of the story of the lovers of Verona on the Spanish stage constitutes the most important contribution of this academic research.

To understand this, it should be noted that Spain presented the ideal circumstances that allowed authors to freely adapt and modify the character of Juliet at their will. In Spain, unlike England or Germany, Shakespeare was never elevated to the prestigious status of national icon after the advent of Romanticism. The existence of a well-established tradition of renowned Golden Age dramatists implied that Spanish literature already had abundant referents from the seventeenth-century stage; hence, there was no actual need to search for foreign models in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Moreover, the absence of bardolatry at this stage removed any possible pressure or self-imposed constraints that Shakespearean adapters may have had, as there was no awareness on the part of Spanish theatregoers regarding the Bard's canonical position. Nonetheless, when knowledge of and admiration for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* started to grow and

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disseminate in Spain, free adaptations of the tragedy continued to be written for the stage, as it has been shown in the case study of Dacarrete's *Julieta y Romeo* (1858). Dacarrete had probably read *Romeo and Juliet* in English, but preferred to heavily depart from Shakespeare's plot in his adaptation.

The first translation of *Romeo and Juliet* rendered from the English text appeared as late as 1872. As a result of the translations written by Clark (1874) and, especially, Macpherson (1880), both accurate renditions of the English original, the Spanish public would finally be able to read the Elizabethan drama unaltered. Prior to the 1870s, the absence of translations inevitably implied that the general public had little knowledge of the actual contents of Shakespeare's plays. Consequently, theatregoers could not judge adaptations based on whether or not the texts remained loyal to the original. In fact, only experts in literature and true devotees of Shakespeare expected and demanded adaptations to faithfully reproduce his creations. The aforementioned circumstances certainly contributed to the freedom with which Spanish adapters modified their sources, when composing new stage adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, the majority of which featured Juliet as the protagonist. There are only three exceptions to this general tendency: Rozas's *Los amantes de Verona* (1666), García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta* (1817), and Viñas y Deza and Sunols's *Romeo y Julieta* (1875).

As stated previously, Italy was the country that provided the first model for the characterization of Juliet with Bandello's *Giulietta*, although one ought to distinguish between two different types of Juliet. On the one hand, the prototype that emerges during the seventeenth century dates from a period prior to the arrival of Shakespeare on the Spanish stage. On the other hand, in the nineteenth century, the new versions of Juliet that are created are influenced, either directly or indirectly, by Shakespeare's Elizabethan Juliet. Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla were the first Spanish playwrights to turn Juliet into the main driving force of their plays. Little do their female protagonists resemble Bandello's modest and timid *Giulietta*. If there is one feature that stands out in the characterization of the first two representations of Juliet is her agency. The resolute nature exhibited by both Lope de Vega's *Julia Castelví* and Rojas Zorrilla's *Julia Capelete*, which exceeds that of their male counterparts, is a feature that is not displayed by Bandello's *Giulietta*. Their decisiveness and determination are a direct result of their

transformation into the type of female comic characters that were created to please Spanish Golden Age audiences.

In the hands of Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla, Giulietta becomes a fully active female that defies all odds, and dares to confront the opposition and expectations of her own family in order to marry the man that she loves. In her search for a much desired happiness, these new versions of Giulietta turn the female lead into a woman capable of controlling her immediate surroundings to her own advantage. A crucial aspect shared by both versions of Giulietta is their outward confrontational nature, which leads them to openly defy paternal authority. One can only imagine contemporary female spectators reveling in the freedom displayed by such examples of strong female characters, who pluck up the courage to be the leading ladies of their own lives. As a consequence of their strong will and their ability to remain strong in the face of adversity, at the end of the day, both Julia Castelví and Julia Capelete manage to marry the man of their choice, and put an end to the feud. The reconciliation between the families is an important detail that is not present in Bandello's novella. Aurisena Güelfo strongly departs from her comic predecessors. Nonetheless, there is an important feature that the tragic heroine does share with her comic counterparts, and that is her fierce nature, which even leads her to offer her own life in order to protect that of her beloved. Furthermore, the Golden Spanish Age Juliet is also sexually more liberated than her Italian counterpart. Unlike Bandello's Giulietta, both Julia Capelete and Aurisena Güelfo have sexual intercourse with their partners before marriage.

With the arrival of Neoclassicism and the championing of French tragedy as a model of exemplary order, Juliet loses all the comic aspects that had been added to her personality during her incursion into the Golden Age stage. Most importantly, the character would never again display the force, sharp tongue, and resolute nature that the comic versions of Juliet had exemplified. Influenced by Weisse's *Romeo und Julie* (1767), Solís turned his Julia Capelio into the main protagonist of a play in which Romeo only intervenes in the first and final acts, making his presence almost irrelevant for the development of the action. This early nineteenth century Juliet is a considerably weaker character in comparison with her preceding Golden Age counterparts. Due to Weisse's *Romeo und Julie*, Julia resembles an eighteenth-century sentimental heroine. However, her melodramatic and melancholic nature often comes across as excessive and tiring.

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Romeo and Juliet with its strong emphasis on love as a powerful feeling that consumes the individual, its perfect delineation of rebellious characters who defy the established norms imposed by society, and its treatment of death as a force which frees the individual contributed to turn *Romeo and Juliet* into the ideal Romantic drama. In Balaguer's hands, in particular, Juliet becomes the epitome of the Romantic heroine. This is applicable both to his *Julieta y Romeo* (1849), and to his second shorter but similar rendition of the tragedy, *Las esposallas de la morta* (1878), the first Shakespearean adaptation written in Catalan. Balaguer's 1849 play is particularly significant because, in affirming that "My Julieta is my own Julieta" (1849, 21),³³⁵ the author gave rise to the birth of character. That is to say, Balaguer reaffirmed the right to make Juliet detachable from text, and especially from the image and the idea that individuals may have had about who Juliet was. Furthermore, the Catalan playwright was the first adapter to acknowledge Shakespeare, not as the author of *Romeo and Juliet*, but rather as one of the European dramatists that had recreated the story of the tragic lovers of Verona.

The two personality traits that define Balaguer's Julieta are her quiet resignation, and her devout Catholic faith. The constant references to Julieta's strong belief in God (in the 1849 text), and in the Virgin Mary (in the 1878 play), draw the character even closer to its country of origin. Italy is at the core of the Catholic faith. Since most Italians and Spanish citizens at the time professed Catholicism, the constant references to sacred figures of Christianity, reinforced the connection with the Italian sources of the play. Religious practices, such as praying or attending mass regularly, were part of the activities respectable Spanish women were expected to perform, especially in public. As a consequence, the emphasis placed on Julieta's religious beliefs presented the character as akin to an exemplary and contemporary Spanish lady.

Dacarrete's Julieta (1858) stands out as the most radical and innovative departure from Shakespeare's Juliet, and offers a sharp contrast to Balaguer's previous idealization of the character. This mid-nineteenth century Juliet does not remain loyal to the promises that she makes, and betrays and disappoints all the men in her life: her father, Romeo, and even her eventual husband (Rodrigo Loredano). Her actions are interpreted as reflecting a dubious morality. Hence, the play ultimately portrays the fight to preserve Julieta's lost

³³⁵ "Mi Julieta es una Julieta mía."

honour and reputation. The final deaths of Romeo and Julieta are depicted as the inevitable, and, to a certain extent, righteous outcome, since neither are entirely free from blame.

As evidenced in this study, there is a marked contrast between the comic and the tragic versions of Juliet. The former are examples of women who are confrontational, resolute, witty, cunning, openly flirtatious, fierce, and fearless. Most importantly, in being solely dictated by her own free will and her desires, the comic Juliet eventually manages to defy adversity, and achieve her anticipated happy ending. The tragic version of Juliet is akin to the Elizabethan original. Nevertheless, there are new traits added by the different Spanish adapters of the tragedy, mainly an excessively melodramatic nature, a disheartening resignation, and a devout Catholic faith. Regardless of the genre of the play, and save for the three exceptions cited above, Juliet emerges as the figure which mostly fascinated adapters. Thus, on the page, Juliet is arguably the most important and relevant character in the early reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the Spanish stage. The main question is why this was the case. The enquiry is opened to multiple explanations.

The first obvious step is to look at the adaptations that first introduced the play onto the Spanish stage: *Castelvines y Monteses* and *Los bandos de Verona* in the seventeenth century, and *Julia y Romeo* in the nineteenth century. All three adaptations feature Juliet as the main protagonist. The centrality that Juliet occupies is highly significant, and it established a precedent for adaptations that were to follow. Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorrilla certainly had a motivation to enhance the presence of female characters in their plays. As it is widely known, women were allowed to perform on the Golden Age *corrales de comedias*. Playwrights were undeniably aware of the voyeuristic pleasure derived from witnessing the spectacle of female bodies freely moving around the stage. Accordingly, dramatists tended to put higher emphasis on the characterization of female characters, which often led to their higher visibility within the plot of a given play. Similarly, women were perceived as valuable assets for theatre companies, and were partly hired owing to their potential to attract large crowds. These circumstances explain the prominent roles of Julia Castelví and Julia Capelete in their respective tragicomedies.

The same reasoning could be applied to the increasing presence of Juliet in nineteenth-century adaptations, since actresses did not cease to have a special allure, which obviously contributed to draw spectators into the theatre. Nonetheless, other

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feasible explanations apply. In the case of Solís, the answer seems clear. The adapter closely followed his source text, Weisse's *Romeo und Julie*, albeit via Junker's French translation. Julie is unambiguously the main protagonist in Weisse's play and, consequently, so is her Spanish derivative. Balaguer provides a more interesting case for analysis.

In the letter that accompanied the publication of *Julieta y Romeo* (1849), the Catalan writer did not hide the fact that personal emotions and events from his own life had strongly influenced the depiction of his Julieta. Balaguer's Julieta had a correlate in real life, a mysterious woman whom he loved, but who did not love him back. The writer was particularly interested in highlighting her resignation, not a very desirable quality. Nevertheless, if Balaguer was suffering from unrequited love, he might have dreamt of the possibility of seeing this woman eventually giving in to his feelings; thus, the need to highlight Juliet's resignation to her fate. Balaguer's Julieta is also the most stereotypically Romantic Juliet of the second half of the nineteenth century. The playwright turned Juliet into an idealization of womanhood. Balaguer longed to be loved; thus, his Julieta is passionately and utterly in love with her Romeo. At the same time, she is also shown as a powerless figure, who easily admits defeat in the face of events that she cannot control. His characterization of Juliet is vaguely altered in his second rendition. If anything, her resignation is further enhanced. Balaguer, fashioning himself as a Romantic hero, poured his own frustrations and thwarted expectations onto the character of Juliet, so, ultimately, his Juliet is depicted as an unattainable ideal, as evidenced by her tragic finale.

On his part, Dacarrete added a prologue to his play in which he purposely affirmed that one of his aims was to illustrate love through the character of Juliet: "paint a love so foreign to vanity, so unconnected to selfishness, so opposed to fiction as the love that I have pretended Julieta to embody" (1858).³³⁶ In other words, Dacarrete also had his own personal romanticised ideal of love that he intended to convey through his own rendition of Juliet. Whether the playwright actually succeeded in offering a convincing representation of that ideal is another question. Furthermore, the dramatist added a quote after the title page that can be taken as a clue that supports the interpretation of

³³⁶ "Pintar un amor tan extraño a la vanidad, tan ajeno al egoísmo, tan opuesto a la ficción como el que ha pretendido encarnar en Julieta."

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as a play that is about Juliet: "for never was a story of more woe/ Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (V. iii. ll. 309 – 310).³³⁷

Indeed, a close examination of the character of Juliet throughout three centuries of theatrical history has demonstrated her centrality and prominence in adaptations of the story of the lovers of Verona. Nevertheless, the main conclusion that arises from the aforementioned discussion is that Juliet's higher presence in literary adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* cannot be extended beyond the realms of fiction. In other words, one cannot interpret this unique feature of the early reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain as the result of a conscious intention on the part of the male adapters of the tragedy to increase in real life the visibility of women, or to demand a more important role for women in society. The preference for Juliet over her male counterpart in most Spanish stage adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* had nothing to do with a defence of gender equality. In the Golden Age, the higher visibility of Juliet is a direct consequence of the presence of female actresses, for whom playwrights wrote specific roles, and who were hired due to their potential to attract audiences. In the nineteenth century, Juliet becomes the protagonist as a result of the influence of previous adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, or to satisfy a male desire, on the part of an author, to project an ideal of femininity based on passionate love and utter devotion for a man.

Even though Juliet was considerably more important on the page, the same cannot be affirmed about her presence on the stage. Indeed, the main finding derived from the evidence gathered to conduct an analysis on the performative aspect of Spanish adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* is that the character of Juliet was, paradoxically, not a decisive role on the Spanish stage. It is unfortunate that not enough reviews have survived, and that the Spanish actresses studied did not write memoirs – as some English actresses did – on their experiences as performers. These first-hand testimonies would have undoubtedly provided better insight into how different female interpreters envisioned the character of Juliet. There is no evidence that suggests, as it occurred in England since the early nineteenth century, that Spanish actresses sought the role in order to gain recognition or fame. In the nineteenth century, there were famous and talented actresses who played Juliet: Rita Luna (1803), Concepción Rodríguez (1828), Elisa Boldún (1875), and Mercè Abella (1879). Concepción Rodríguez would be praised in the

³³⁷ Emphasis mine.

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press of the period for her portrayal of Juliet. Nevertheless, only the Catalan actress Mercè Abella would be remembered, after her death, for having offered audiences a mesmeric performance of Julieta in *Las esposallas de la morta*. The absence of a model to look up to for the interpretation of Juliet inevitably implied that each actress had complete freedom to be creative, and make the best possible use of their acting skills to recreate the Shakespearean heroine for Spanish audiences.

This doctoral thesis has laid the foundations to conduct future research on the Spanish reception of *Romeo and Juliet* on the twentieth and the twenty-first century stage. The advent of the twentieth century initiates a new phase in the reception of *Romeo and Juliet* in Spain that requires further analysis. There are new important factors that will intervene and determine the Spanish reception of the tragedy such as: the impact of avant-garde literature, the consequences of the First and the Second World Wars, the decades of Franco's dictatorship in Spain, the development of Feminism, the models established by new actresses, the arrival of cinema and television, and the consolidation of English Philology as a degree at Spanish universities. All these factors will have to be examined in detail in relation to the position of Shakespeare in Europe, and to the new trends in literary criticism within the field of Shakespeare Studies, as they will have a profound impact on Juliet's representations in Spain. These future challenges will be addressed by the author of this doctoral thesis to continue her contribution to the construction of a shared European Shakespeare critical heritage.

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Resumen en español

Resumen en español.

Como es bien sabido, Shakespeare no inventó la trágica historia de los amantes de Verona. Sin embargo, si hoy en día Romeo y Julieta son personajes universalmente conocidos se debe, sin lugar a dudas, a la enorme popularidad que ha gozado el *Romeo y Julieta* de Shakespeare durante sus más de cuatrocientos años de existencia. Hemos de remontarnos a la Italia medieval para localizar las fuentes más inmediatas de esta trágica historia, la cual fue narrada en las tres novelle enumeradas a continuación: “Mariotto e Ganozza (1476), de Masuccio Salernitano; “Historia novellamente ritrovata di due nobili amanti” (1524), de Luigi da Porto y “La sfortunata morte de dui infelicissimi amanti” (1554), de Matteo Bandello. La trágica leyenda de los amantes de Verona se difundió a través del continente europeo, y se adentraría en la cultura teatral española por vez primera a principios del siglo XVII durante la época dorada de la dramaturgia española.

Romeo y Julieta constituye, junto con *Macbeth*, la segunda obra shakespeariana más traducida en España; el primer puesto recae sobre la obra centrada en el trágico príncipe de Dinamarca, *Hamlet*. El *Romeo y Julieta* de Shakespeare no sólo ha gozado de enorme popularidad en el campo de la traducción, sino que también ha servido como fuente de inspiración a diversos dramaturgos españoles que han creado sus propias adaptaciones de la inmortal historia de los trágicos amantes. La enorme aceptación y notoriedad adquirida por la obra en España es el principal motivo por el cual ha sido seleccionada como objetivo de estudio de la presente tesis doctoral, cuyo título podemos traducir al español como *La Julieta de Shakespeare y sus representaciones en la cultura teatral española (desde el año 1600 hasta finales de la década de 1890)*. Por consiguiente, nuestro trabajo de investigación examina la compleja fase de recepción temprana del *Romeo y Julieta* de Shakespeare en la escena teatral española, desde su primera manifestación en el Siglo de Oro entre 1606 y 1612, la fecha aproximada de composición del *Castelvines y Monteses* de Lope de Vega, hasta las últimas representaciones de la obra shakespeariana durante la última década del siglo XIX.

Este largo recorrido que cubre trescientos años de historia ofrece un análisis pormenorizado de las distintas circunstancias históricas, políticas, socioculturales y literarias que jugaron un papel decisivo durante la primera fase de la recepción de la historia de los amantes de Verona en la escena teatral española. Hasta la fecha, no se ha

llevado a cabo ningún estudio centrado en el análisis individual de una obra del corpus shakespeariano, con el fin de analizar su proceso de recepción a lo largo de diferentes periodos históricos y literarios. Por lo tanto, la justificación de nuestra investigación reside en la necesidad de llenar un vacío existente dentro del campo de la recepción de la obra de Shakespeare en España y contribuir, de este modo, al campo – aún mayor y en continua expansión – de los estudios de recepción de Shakespeare. El enfoque en España enmarca nuestro estudio dentro de la recepción europea de Shakespeare en países de habla no inglesa. Asimismo, con nuestra tesis doctoral sobre la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en España pretendemos favorecer a la necesaria construcción de una herencia cultural, crítica y europea centrada en el estudio de la obra de Shakespeare.

Brian Vickers en su influyente *The Critical Heritage* [La herencia crítica], seis extensos volúmenes publicados entre 1974 y 1981, analizó la recepción de Shakespeare en su país de origen en el periodo comprendido entre 1623 y 1801. De este modo, Vickers asentó las bases de la recepción de Shakespeare en Reino Unido. Posteriormente, estudiosos de la obra de Shakespeare como Michael Dobson también se centrarían en la recepción de Shakespeare desde una perspectiva anglosajona. En *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation, and Authorship, 1660 – 1769* [La creación del poeta nacional: Shakespeare, adaptación y autoría, 1660 – 1769] (1992), Dobson examina la gradual evolución de la recepción de Shakespeare – su figura y su producción literaria – desde las primeras adaptaciones de sus obras durante la Restauración hasta el siglo XVIII, época en que la figura del dramaturgo adquiere el prestigioso estatus de icono nacional.

Por consiguiente, existía la necesidad de ampliar los estudios de recepción de Shakespeare fuera de sus fronteras. El interés en la recepción europea de Shakespeare se consolida en el año 1990 con la celebración de “European Shakespeare” en Antwerp (Bélgica). El evento constituye el primer congreso internacional dedicado exclusivamente a la recepción europea de Shakespeare. El éxito del encuentro se materializó en el volumen titulado *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age* [Shakespeares europeos: traduciendo a Shakespeare en la era romántica] (1993), coeditado por Dirk Delabastita y Lieven D’hulst. Ese mismo año, Dennis Kennedy publicó su trascendental obra *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* [Shakespeare extranjero: representaciones contemporáneas] (1993), centrada en la

recepción de Shakespeare en países de habla no inglesa. Alemania es uno de los principales países que ha ejercido un papel decisivo en la difusión de la obra de Shakespeare a través del continente europeo. Dos obras de referencia dentro del campo de los estudios de recepción son: *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume 1: 1586 – 1914* [Shakespeare en la escena alemana. Vol. 1: 1586 – 1914] (1990), de Simon Williams y *Shakespeare on the German Stage: the Twentieth Century* [Shakespeare en la escena alemana: el siglo veinte] (1998), de Wilhelm Hortmann. Ambas obras se complementan y sirven de base para un conocimiento profundo sobre la recepción de la obra de Shakespeare en el teatro alemán. En Francia, uno de los países que, junto a Alemania, más ha contribuido a la recepción de Shakespeare en Europa, uno de los estudios recientes de mayor transcendencia en la recepción de Shakespeare en France es *Shakespeare Goes to Paris: How the Bard Conquered France* [Shakespeare va a París: cómo el bardo conquistó Francia] (2005). En su estudio, Pemble se centra en la primera fase de recepción del dramaturgo inglés, la cual tuvo lugar durante el Siglo de las Luces.

Evidentemente, el estudio de la recepción de Shakespeare en Europa, no se limita a Reino Unido, Francia y Alemania. Estudios similares se han publicado en otros territorios del continente europeo. A continuación, enumeramos algunas de las aportaciones más relevantes: *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* [Shakespeare y Europa del Este] (2000), de Zdenek Stribny; *Painting Shakespeare Red: An East-European Appropriation* [Pintando a Shakespeare de rojo: una apropiación de Europa del Este] (2001), de Alexander Shurbanoc y Boika Sokolova; *Shakespeare in Romania, 1900 – 1950* [Shakespeare en Rumanía, 1900 – 1950] (2007), de Monica Matei-Chesnoiu; *Socialist Shakespeare Productions in Kádár-Regime Hungary: Shakespeare behind the Iron Curtain* [Producciones socialistas de Shakespeare durante el régimen húngaro de Kádár: Shakespeare detrás del telón de acero] (2009), de Veronika Schandl y *Shakespeare's Hamlet in Romania 1778 – 2008: A Study in Translation, Performance and Cultural Appropriation* [El Hamlet de Shakespeare en Rumanía 1778 – 2008: un estudio de traducción, performance y apropiación cultural] (2010), de Nicoleta Cinpoș.

Dentro del amplio campo de la recepción de Shakespeare en países de habla no inglesa, nuestra tesis doctoral pretende contribuir y aportar a la generación de nuevo conocimiento dentro del campo de la recepción de Shakespeare en España. La recepción del dramaturgo inglés en España, a través de los diferentes canales para su estudio (crítica,

traducciones, adaptaciones, performance, etc.) se ha consolidado como campo de investigación en el siglo XXI, como resultado de las contribuciones de investigadores como Clara Calvo (Calvo 2002; Calvo 2006a; Calvo 2006b; Calvo 2008a; Calvo 2008b), que ha analizado la recepción del dramaturgo inglés en la escena española del siglo XIX. Una de las aportaciones de mayor relevancia dentro del presente campo es *Shakespeare en España: textos (1764-1916)*, obra de Laura Campillo Arnaiz y Ángel-Luis Pujante. Esta antología anotada de crítica shakespeariana examina la recepción de Shakespeare en España desde la primera referencia al autor en 1764, un ensayo escrito por Nifo, hasta el tricentenario de 1916. *Shakespeare in the Spanish Theatre: 1772 to the Present* [Shakespeare en el teatro español: de 1772 hasta el present] (2010) de Keith Gregor constituye el primer monográfico sobre la recepción de Shakespeare en España desde la publicación de *Representaciones shakespearianas en España* (1936; 1940) de Alfonso Par. En *Shakespeare en España: Bibliografía Anotada Bilingüe. Shakespeare in Spain: An Annotated Bilingual Bibliography* (2015), Ángel-Luis Pujante and Juan F. Cerdá examinan la recepción crítica de Shakespeare publicada en España desde 1764 hasta el año 2000. En 2019, Ángel-Luis Pujante publicó *Shakespeare llega a España: Ilustración y Romanticismo*, un estudio pormenorizado sobre la recepción de Shakespeare en España durante los siglos XVIII y XIX. Desde el año 2010, Ángel-Luis Pujante y Keith Gregor han coeditado ediciones críticas sobre las adaptaciones neoclásicas de *Hamlet* (2010), *Macbeth* (2011), *Romeo y Julieta* (2017b) y, recientemente, *Otelo* (2021).

Por consiguiente, la investigación doctoral que presentamos, centrada en la primera fase de la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en España, evidencia nuestra intención de contribuir al campo de la recepción europea de Shakespeare en países de habla no inglesa. Nuestra tesis doctoral continua y expande los esfuerzos llevados a cabo desde la década de 1990 por académicos europeos shakespearistas para la construcción de una herencia cultural que aborde un estudio crítico sobre la recepción de la obra de Shakespeare en Europa de la recepción crítica y europea centrada en el estudio de la obra de Shakespeare.

Nos proponemos abordar tres objetivos con nuestra tesis doctoral. El primero es examinar en detalle las fuentes italianas de la leyenda medieval de Romeo y Julieta, prestando especial atención a la representación de las primeras versiones que inspiraron la creación de la Julieta de Shakespeare en cada una de las novelle italianas. Este enfoque

en la construcción y la evolución en la caracterización de las versiones italianas de Julieta todavía no ha sido objeto de estudio en nuestro campo de investigación. Este análisis servirá, asimismo, como base para comparar y contrastar el diferente tratamiento de las fuentes medievales por parte de Brooke, Painter y Shakespeare (en Inglaterra), en contraposición con Lope de Vega, Rojas Zorrilla y Rozas (o Rosas), los primeros dramaturgos españoles que adaptaron las fuentes italianas para el teatro del Siglo de Oro.

Nuestro segundo objetivo consiste en proporcionar un análisis histórico, político y cultural de los distintos factores que jugaron un papel determinante en la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en España, desde su primera manifestación en el S.XVII hasta las últimas décadas del S.XIX. Además de ofrecer un marco histórico y sociocultural, el enfoque sobre la recepción incluye tanto recepción textual (ediciones impresas) como recepción teatral (performance). Esto ha supuesto la búsqueda y posterior análisis de adaptaciones españolas de *Romeo y Julieta* prácticamente desconocidas, y que han apenas han recibido atención por parte de la crítica. Cabe destacar que la mayoría de adaptaciones de *Romeo y Julieta* examinadas en nuestra tesis doctoral no habían sido analizadas desde la publicación del estudio pionero de Par *Representaciones shakespearianas en España* (1936; 1940). Par solía escribir en base a información que le contaban terceros, de modo que, inevitablemente, tendía a errar. Por lo tanto, nos hemos planteado detectar y corregir conjeturas erróneas planteadas por Par sobre el supuesto fracaso de una determinada producción, o la aparentemente pésima actuación de un intérprete.

El tercer objetivo, y el más importante, tal y como indica el título de nuestra tesis doctoral, consiste en examinar las distintas representaciones del personaje de Julieta escritas para la escena teatral española desde el año 1600 hasta la década de 1890. Un estudio de tales características no se ha planteado ni realizado hasta la fecha dentro del campo de la recepción de Shakespeare en España. Nuestra tesis doctoral ofrece un análisis pormenorizado del personaje de Julieta, en el texto y en la escena, para determinar si en España Julieta ha sido considerada, tal y como plantea nuestra hipótesis de trabajo, la verdadera protagonista de la obra.

Durante las distintas fases de nuestra investigación doctoral hemos compilado el corpus de textos necesario para nuestro trabajo, y consultado fuentes bibliográficas de vital importancia para nuestro objeto de estudio gracias a la visita a distintos archivos y centros de investigación nacionales e internacionales. La búsqueda de información

documental ha sido posible gracias a la realización de cuatro estancias de investigación, financiadas por el proyecto de investigación “La recepción de las obras de Shakespeare en la cultura española y europea II”, actualmente codirigido por Keith Gregor y Juan F. Cerdá. A continuación, enumeramos las instituciones que vistamos durante nuestra etapa como contratada predoctoral FPI: el Shakespeare Institute de Stratford-upon-Avon (Febrero – Junio 2017), la Folger Shakespeare Library de Washington D.C. (enero – abril 2018), la Fundación Juan March y el Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (Septiembre – Diciembre, Madrid 2018) y la Biblioteca Nacional de España (Julio – Septiembre, Madrid 2019).

Con el fin de analizar la primera fase de la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en el teatro español, al tiempo que ofrecemos una amplia contextualización de la recepción de la obra en otros entornos teatrales europeos, hemos adoptado un enfoque comparativo como parte de la metodología de nuestra investigación. De este modo, es posible comparar y contrastar cómo se ha adaptado *Romeo y Julieta* al teatro en distintos países europeos. Hemos prestado especial atención a las influencias extranjeras que ejercieron mayor influencia en el proceso de recepción de la obra shakespeariana en España, las cuales proceden, fundamentalmente, de Italia, Francia y Alemania. Asimismo, un estudio de la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en España a lo largo de tres siglos implica que también hemos adoptado una perspectiva diacrónica a través de la adaptación, la crítica y la representación. La metodología de nuestra tesis doctoral también incluye, como no podía ser de otro modo en nuestro campo de investigación, un análisis textual de cada una de las obras que componen nuestro corpus de textos.

El capítulo 1 “The Spanish Golden Age” (El Siglo de Oro español) comienza con el análisis de la creación y la evolución de la leyenda europea sobre los amantes de Verona, la cual pertenecía al imaginario colectivo europeo previo a su aparición en la escena española. El capítulo examina en detalle cómo las novelle italianas que narraron la trágica historia de los amantes de Verona pasaron posteriormente por la intervención del escritor francés Boiastuau durante el S.XVI, antes de que la historia llegara a España en el S.XVI. A continuación, el capítulo ofrece un análisis de las tres versiones teatrales de la leyenda de los amates de Verona escritas durante el Siglo de Oro: *Castelvines y Monteses* (1606 – 1612), de Lope de Vega; *Los bandos de Verona* (1640), de Rojas Zorrilla y *Los amantes de Verona* (1666), de Rozas (o Rosas). Dada la popularidad que

tuvo el género de la comedias en el teatro áureo, las dos primeras recreaciones de la historia de los amantes de Verona ofrecieron al público de la época un final feliz.

El capítulo 2 “The Eighteenth Century” (El S.XVIII) llevará al lector a través de un tour literario por diferentes países europeos: Inglaterra, Irlanda, Francia, Alemania y, finalmente, España. El capítulo comienza en la Inglaterra isabelina, en mitad de la década de 1590, para ser exactos, y analiza el *Romeo y Julieta* de Shakespeare, así como el tratamiento que hizo el dramaturgo inglés de sus fuentes. Asimismo, ofrecemos una discusión detallada de todas las adaptaciones teatrales escritas desde la Restauración hasta el final del S.XVIII, dedicando especial atención a la caracterización de cada nueva Julieta, así como al modo en que diferentes actrices inglesas interpretaron el papel de la trágica heroína. La llegada de la Ilustración supone el inicio de la recepción de Shakespeare fuera de sus fronteras. A pesar de que la primera adaptación española de una obra de Shakespeare tiene lugar en 1772 con el *Hamleto* de Ramón de la Cruz, no se escribe, sin embargo, ninguna nueva adaptación de *Romeo y Julieta*. Por consiguiente, el tour literario permitirá al lector observar los distintos procesos que tuvieron lugar de manera simultánea en Inglaterra, France y Alemania en lo que concierne a la recepción del *Romeo y Julieta* de Shakespeare. Los distintos modos en los que la tragedia fue reescrita en los países citados anteriormente tendrían un impacto significativo en la escena teatral española de principios del S.XIX. Por lo tanto, el recorrido finaliza en España, donde el lector descubrirá cuáles fueron las circunstancias que impidieron la composición de nuevas versiones de *Romeo y Julieta*.

El capítulo 3 “The Neoclassical Adaptations” (Las adaptaciones neoclásicas) se centra en las dos adaptaciones neoclásicas de *Romeo y Julieta* escritas durante las primeras décadas del S. XIX: *Julia y Romeo* (1803), de Dionisio Solís y *Romeo y Julieta* (1817), de García Suelto. Durante esta fase de la recepción de Shakespeare en España, sus obras no entraron en España en su forma original, sino considerablemente modificadas tras su paso por la aduana francesa. Las dos obras examinadas en dicho capítulo procedieron de adaptaciones dieciochescas francesas y alemanas de *Romeo y Julieta* que poco, o más bien, nada, tenían que ver con el modelo original isabelino. Una vez más, se analiza en detalle las dos nuevas representaciones neoclásicas de Julieta creadas durante este periodo, así como el papel de las actrices que interpretaron el personaje.

El capítulo 4 “Romantic Echoes” (Ecos románticos) evidencia la enorme influencia ejercida por el Romanticismo y el Posromanticismo sobre la composición de cada una de las adaptaciones de *Romeo y Julieta* escritas durante la segunda mitad del S. XIX: *Julieta y Romeo* (1849), de Balaguer; *Julieta y Romeo* (1858), de Dacarrete; *Romeo y Julieta* (1875), de Viñas y Deza y Sunols y *Las esposallas de la morta*, (1878) de Balaguer. La trágica historia de los amantes de Verona con su tratamiento de la muerte, el odio irracional entra familias rivales y el amor pasional como fuerza que lleva al individuo a su destrucción, perfectamente se ajusta a los ideales románticos. Los nuevos adaptadores españoles de la tragedia shakespeariana, fascinados por el atractivo que desprendía el Romanticismo, continuaron recurriendo a la estética romántica, décadas después de que el movimiento hubiera dicho su último adiós en otros entornos literarios europeos.

Nuestra investigación confirma la hipótesis de partida. Efectivamente, desde el momento en que la historia de los trágicos amantes de Verona se introduce por vez primera en la escena teatral española del Siglo de Oro, y hasta sus últimas manifestaciones en las últimas décadas del S.XIX, la mayoría de adaptadores españoles reescribieron la historia convirtiendo a Julieta en la protagonista absoluta de la obra. Por consiguiente, Julieta aparece como eje central sobre el cual gira la acción. Únicamente existen tres excepciones que escapan esta tendencia general: *Los amantes de Verona* (1666), de Rozas; *Romeo y Julieta* (1817), de García Suelto y *Romeo y Julieta* (1875), de Viñas y Deza y Sunols.

A pesar de la centralidad y prominencia que adquiere el personaje de Julieta en la mayoría de adaptaciones españolas de la historia de los amantes de Verona, la principal conclusión derivada de nuestro estudio es que la mayor presencia de Julieta en adaptaciones literarias de *Romeo y Julieta* no es extrapolable fuera de la ficción. No podemos considerar este aspecto único en la primera etapa de la recepción de *Romeo y Julieta* en España como el resultado de una intención por parte de los adaptadores masculinos de la obra por querer aumentar en la vida real la visibilidad de la mujer. Del mismo modo, tampoco podemos afirmar que la mayor importancia del personaje de Julieta se traduce en un deseo de solicitar un papel más relevante para la mujer en la sociedad. La preferencia del personaje de Julieta sobre el de Romeo en la amplia mayoría de adaptaciones teatrales de *Romeo y Julieta* no está ligado a una defensa de la igualdad

de género. En el Siglo de Oro, la mayor visibilidad de Julieta es una consecuencia directa de la presencia de actrices en el teatro. La existencia de buenas actrices, implicaba que los dramaturgos de la época crearan papeles femeninos específicamente diseñados para las actrices preferidas del momento. Por otra parte, las compañías teatrales también se beneficiaban de la mayor visibilidad otorgada a personajes femeninos, ya que las actrices eran un reclamo para atraer a un mayor número de espectadores a las representaciones. En el S.XIX, Julieta se convierte en la protagonista de la obra como consecuencia de adaptaciones previas y extranjeras de *Romeo y Julieta* en que Julieta ocupaba el papel principal. En otros casos, el hecho de que Julieta se convierta en la estrella de la obra obedece a la necesidad de satisfacer un deseo masculino, por parte del adaptador, de proyectar un ideal de feminidad basado en el amor pasional y la devoción absoluta hacia un hombre, un ideal que encarna en dichas obras la propia Julieta shakespeariana.