



FACULTY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

MASTER THESIS:

A Comparative Approach to the Two Albanian Translations of Shakespeare's Tragedy "Romeo and Juliet"

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CONCLUSION

I chose the MA thesis “A Comparative Approach to the Two Albanian Translations of Shakespeare’s Tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*” because, I believed, it was closely related to my long experience as a professional translator. Therefore, I wished and hoped that I could render at least a modest contribution to my research.

My thesis is conceived in eight chapters preceded by an introduction.

In the introduction I give a general survey of the translation and production of Shakespeare’s plays in Albania and Kosova.

At first, I focus briefly on the three periods of the Albanian translation of Shakespeare’s plays: 1. (1915 – 1928), which includes the translation of four tragedies (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar* by Fan Noli; 2. (1955 – 1982), which covers the communist period with three official translators (S. Luarasi, V. Kokona, and A. Kristo) who translated twelve plays; 3. (1990 to the present) which is also known as ‘the post-communist period’ and includes Shakespearean plays translated by a generation of new translators, such P. Jorgoni, K. Traja, N.Tasi, Q. Kurti, M. Hanxhari, R. Kadija, etc.

Then I give a survey of the production of Shakespeare’s plays by the Albanians, including the great actor of international recognition Aleksander Moisiu who played several Shakespearean title roles (including Hamlet). Here I focus on the production of Shakespeare’s plays by the Albanian National Theatre during the communist period, from 1951 to 1982, and then the production of Shakespeare’s plays in Albania (after the downfall of the communist regime) and in Kosova (after the 1999 crisis) up to the present.

Then I deal in painstaking detail with the issues of my thesis of comparative approach of the two translations of *Romeo and Juliet*. I have made scrupulous analysis of the text of the English original as well as of the text of both Albanian translations. After a brief theoretical argument of the central issue of each chapter, I refer to relevant cases of the original text, and then I compare how they are translated by each translator, pointing out differences between them.

The eight chapters which make up the bulk of my thesis deal with the following issues rendered by each translator:

Shakespeare’s imagery in *Romeo and Juliet*;

Aphorisms and idiomatic expressions;

Omission of verses (missing Words, sense groups and lines from the original);

Addition of Words and Verses which do not exist in the original;

Misunderstood and misinterpreted meanings and concepts. Words confused and misused;

Grammar (morphological and syntactical) mistakes made in the Albanian translation;

Explanation of erotic and sexual words and meanings which exist in the original text;

Use of versification, prosody and prose in the tragedy rendered into Albanian.

I have tried to analyze one by one all these important aspect of translation, but I have focused in particular on the first chapter, which deals with the translation of Shakespeare's imagery, and on the eighth chapter, which deals with Shakespeare's versification in *Romeo and Juliet* and how it is rendered into Albanian by each translator.

. Shakespeare uses **imagery** a lot, and his youthful tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* is rich in imagery Since Homer, no poet has come near Shakespeare in originality, freshness, opulence, and boldness of imagery. It is this that forms, in a large part, the surpassing beauty of his poetry; it is in this that much of his finest idealizing centres. And he abounds in all the figures of speech known in formal rhetoric. As N.H. Hudson put it, "The virtue of the imagery is inextricably bound up with the characters and occasions of the speakers."¹ This is one of the main reasons why our interest, above all others, stands out in Shakespeare's imagery. I have focused on the following aspects of Shakespeare's imagery in *Romeo and Juliet*: a) **the imagery of nature** with the life of the countryside and its varying aspects: the wind, the weather and seasons, flowers, birds and animals, the clouds, the sky and celestial bodies; b) **the imagery of love** for which Shakespeare used a large number of conventional images of love (it is a fire, a smoke, a furnace, a blaze and a lightning, it is "a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear", an arrow, a siege and a war; it is a food, a drink; it is a plant, a flower, a fruit, a sickness, a wound, a fever; it is a building on firm foundations, fair and strong or in ruins); c) **the imagery of death**, for the passionate love between Romeo and Juliet is linked from the moment of its inception with death; d) **colour images**, for in *Romeo and Juliet*, we find the general light and darkness symbolism is reinforced by touches of both black and white, and red and white; e) **the imagery of light and darkness**, particularly the interplay of light and darkness which is one of the most often repeated image patterns in *Romeo and Juliet*; and f) **the imagery of heat and darkness**. I have provided examples of all these kinds of imagery in *Romeo and Juliet* and have commented on the translation of these images by each translator by comparing them with the English original. I have also given my argument as to the accuracy of translation by each translator.

Of all these images, the images of light and darkness are by far the most interesting. One of the play's most consistent visual motifs is the contrast between light and darkness, often in

¹ Hudson, Henry Norman. *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters, Volume I.* . New York: Ginn and Co., 1872. [Shakespeare Online](#). 20 Aug. 2009.

terms of night/day imagery. This contrast is not given a particular metaphoric meaning—light is not always good, and darkness is not always evil. On the contrary, light and darkness are generally used to provide a sensory contrast and to hint at opposed alternatives. One of the more important instances of this motif is Romeo’s lengthy meditation on the sun and the moon during the balcony scene, in which Juliet, metaphorically described as the sun, is seen as banishing the “envious moon” and transforming the night into day (2.1.46). A similar blurring of night and day occurs in the early morning hours after the lovers’ only night together. Romeo, forced to leave for exile in the morning, and Juliet, not wanting him to leave her room, both try to pretend that it is still night, and that the light is actually darkness: “More light and light, more dark and dark our woes” (3.5.36).

Chapter II deals with Shakespeare’s use of aphorisms and idiomatic expressions, which express folk wisdom. In *Romeo and Juliet* we observe that Friar Lawrence speaks like a philosopher and his speech is full of aphorisms. The youthful lovers Romeo and Juliet also use beautiful aphorisms, but most of them come from Friar Lawrence’s wise advices and sermons. In this chapter I have provided examples of aphorisms and I have compared how these aphorisms are rendered into Albanian by the two Albanian translators of this tragedy.

In comparing the Albanian translations with the original text, I have found out that in the first translation there are **missing words, sense groups** and even **whole lines** of the original English text. Therefore I have dealt with them in Chapter III. But I have also observed and recorded all those instances of additions in the first Albanian translation of *Romeo and Juliet*. So, I found out that the first translator had inserted **46 additional verses of his own**, which do not exist in the original and I have recorded them in Chapter IV.

In Chapter V I have juxtaposed both Albanian translations and, in comparing them with the English original, I have found out that in the old translation there are also **misunderstood and misinterpreted meanings** of the original text, and even **wrong, inaccurate words and expressions**. For instance, the first translator has misunderstood the word “**fennel**” for “**female**” and has translated it as “buds of girls” (‘girls like buds’) when Capulet says to the guests: “*such delight/ Among fresh fennel buds shall you this night, /Inherit at my house*” (Act I, Scene II, 29). Or the word “**demesne**” [de’mein], which is an archaic word meaning ‘a large house and the land that belonged to it’. It was translated by Kristo as “**mis**”, which he most probably meant ‘a young girl’, mistaken for the archaic word ‘damsel’. The English original “*And the demesnes that there adjacent lie*” (II, I, 22) is translated by the first translator as “*Dhe për çdo mis të bukur aty afër*”, which, in fact, is quite meaningless.

Chapter VI deals with some morphological and syntactical mistakes and a few ungrammatical dialect forms (such as “**trunw**” for “**trurin**”, etc.), which I have found in the first Albanian translation.

Based on authorized editions of the 21st century, the second translator R. Kadija has provided a lot of **explanatory notes of erotic or sexual connotations and meanings**, which exist in the English text but were missing in the first Albanian translation of this tragedy. They are mostly evident in the speeches of Mercutio and the Nurse, particularly in the dialogue

between them (II, iv) as well as in the conversation between Mercutio and Benvolio (II, i), but also Nurse's words in Juliet's chamber ((IV, v), in the dialogue between the servants Gregory and Sampson (I, i), in the conversation among Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo with frequent word-play, puns suggesting male and female privates and sexual acts (II, iii), etc. The Nurse also links love and sex throughout the play. This is more marked when she finds out Juliet is to marry Romeo. We can see how excited she is about the physical opportunity for Juliet because she comments immediately on Romeo's physical traits. "...*His face be better than any man's*". This has links with Mercutio when he talks about Rosaline. Although both Mercutio and the Nurse refer to the sexual act, the Nurse's language is crude and lacks the refinement of Mercutio's wit. Here Shakespeare presents to us a member of the lower classes, deprived from a formal education.

Chapter VIII, which the last chapter of my MA thesis, deals with Shakespeare's use of versification in *Romeo and Juliet*. The linguistic medium of the tragedy "*Romeo and Juliet*" is 90 % verse and 10 % prose.² Most of the verse is in iambic pentameter, except for the two sonnets of the Chorus. The greater part of the pentameter verse is unrhymed. There is casual couplet rhyme, as in the speeches of Friar Lawrence (II, ii, 1-30; 32-43, 59-65; 90-98) and Romeo (II, ii, 66-81), etc.

In the 2111 lines of blank verse in the Second Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* are found stress modifications of all kinds. There are 118 feminine (or double, redundant, hypermetrical) endings, 6 light endings, 1 weak ending, and many short lines. Such variations give to the verse flexibility and power, in addition to music and harmony.

In comparing the Albanian translation of the two sonnets of the tragedy, we see that The Albanian version of the second sonnet has been translated better and more accurately by the second translator. In the first translation there are misunderstood meanings and connotations, particularly in the expression "*time means to meet*" meaning that "time gives them means to meet", "time enables them to meet".

The First translator has used the pentameter metric system. But: the first four lines have couplet rime, whereas the following eight lines have alternate rime. E.g. ...

The second translator has done his best to retain the sonnet pattern and rhyme of the two sonnets of the Chorus (particularly the sonnet of the Prologue of the tragedy) and the casual rhyme and couplet rhyme of the final verses of the tragedy

There are some shortcomings of rhyming of the verses in the second Albanian version. But the second translator seems to have been aware of the difficulty and has decided to sacrifice part of the rhyme for the sake of accuracy of imagery and connotation and denotation of the

² Bates, J. and Rasmussen, E. (eds.), William Shakespeare Complete Works, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., The RSC 2007, p. 1678.

original text. As for the length of lines, instead of the pentameter (five feet) of lines, the second translator has applied the twelve-syllable lines, which is more natural for Albanian as a tonic language and for the Albanian prosody based on syllabic counting and not on 'foot' measurement of line length.

While French prosodists apply the term 'Alexandrine' only to a twelve-syllable line with the pause after the sixth syllable, it is generally used in English to designate iambic six-stress verse, or iambic hexameter. This was a favorite Elizabethan measure, and it was common in moral plays and the earlier heroic drama. English literature has no finer examples of this verse than the last line of each stanza of *The Faerie Queene*. In *Romeo and Juliet* there are only 6 Alexandrines. Therefore the second translator has used the twelve-syllable ('Alexandrine') line which is also more natural to the Albanian metric system of line-length.

When we come to the analysis of the prose part of the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* we can say that only about one seventh of the whole play is in prose, the play in this respect resembling all the earlier work of Shakespeare.

These are all the aspects of my research in the comparative study of two Albanian versions of the translation of Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*.