

### ***Romeo and Juliet: A statue of liberty***

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#### **Abstract**

If Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* remains legendary for its love story, it is much less renowned for its embodiment of liberty. Indeed, as both Romeo and Juliet try to find a way to love each other freely versus their families' enmity, their actions and reactions turn them more and more into still characters resembling lifeless sculptures. Besides, Friar Laurence explains the effect of his potion to Juliet in quite deadly and sculptural terms: "No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest. / The rose in thy lips and cheeks shall fade / To wanny ashes, thy eyes' windows fall / Like death when he shuts up the day of life. / Each part, deprived of supple government, / Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death" (4.1.98-102). As for Romeo, in his quest for freedom and love, he gradually becomes the statue of himself, cold, colourless and still.

Thus, in this paper, I propose to explore first the complexity of family ties in 16<sup>th</sup> century England through the title characters of *Romeo and Juliet*. Then, I will study the protagonists' paralysis as a way to reach freedom, codified by opposed aesthetic vision. This will eventually lead me to analyse and to reassess the vision of freedom and sculpture in early modern England, so as to demonstrate that with the ultimate statue of the star-crossed lovers, a truly original conception of art is actually revealed.

Keywords: Art, Shakespeare, Freedom, Romeo and Juliet, Early Modern England

If Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* remains legendary for its love story, it is much less renowned for its treatment of art and liberty. Indeed, everyone knows the tragic story of the two star-crossed lovers, but what one often overlooks is the development and the transformation of their personalities throughout the play, as a form of freedom and/or a statue of liberty. The course of action(s) they adopt to be together and free from their relatives, unfortunately ushers them to death, which is nothing else, in the play, than an ultimate shape of immobility and silence. So as to attain freedom of speech, of action and of love, both title characters have no choice but to resort to extreme measures to disentangle the solid ties that their families' background have fastened along the generations. But, what kind of attachment unites boys and girls to their parents in early modern England and what does it entail to be a young adult in the Elizabethan period? Even though in *Romeo and Juliet*, the two protagonists appear to tally with the conventional portrayal of youngsters in 16<sup>th</sup> century England, desperation makes them 'react not as th' book' so as to gain freedom. Favouring a singular and perplexing paralysis as a way to escape traditions, *Romeo and Juliet* unveils a new vision of freedom and sculpture in early modern England. Codified by opposed aesthetic vision, the ultimate golden statue of the two young lovers will have to be reassessed, since it establishes a truly original conception of art which triggers a reshaping of sculpture and art for centuries to come.

In early modern England, the society being hierarchical and patriarchal, the family sphere was of salient importance<sup>1</sup> and parents raised their children in the assumption of gender roles and identity. Offspring were trained and educated according to their social status<sup>2</sup> and their sex as they were thought to have "separate and distinct destinies".<sup>3</sup> Education was centered on the inevitable and necessary fate children represented for their fathers. Since boys and girls represented the continuation of a clan, tuition started from the cradle in order to model them into miniature adults with the acquaintance of the society's rules and duties. Being part of a powerful family meant that children had pressure to achieve as much as their parents, grandparents, great grandparents and more. In well-established families who contended for successful dynastic purpose, parents and tutors would usually be quite severe – not to say harsh – on their children and pupils. Even though the continuation of the family name and leadership was the bottom line of children's education, it did not signify that adults in general did not love their children. For instance in *Romeo and Juliet*, when Capulet's wife learns about Juliet's death, she exclaims:

Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
 Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
 I lasting labour of his pilgrimage!  
 But one, poor one and loving child,  
 But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
 And cruel death that caught it from my sight!  
 (4.4.74-79)

Her words exemplify her grief as a mother with the use of negative terms such as "accursed", "unhappy", "wretched", "hateful", "miserable" and "cruel". Moreover, Juliet's mother also remembers her beloved child as a "loving child" in whom she found joy and comfort.<sup>4</sup> Education and love were in fact more often than not difficult to commingle in order to triumph in the Elizabethan highly competitive era.

Boys and girls received the same tuition until a sexual distinction was made by the family around the age of six. Before that pivotal year, boys and girls underwent a similar education which focused on the transmission of social norms and the knowledge of the basic

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etiquette of proper conduct.<sup>5</sup> Largely taught by women – but, rarely by mothers themselves – during these early years, the instruction was elemental, unisex and done by strangers until the ceremony of breeches.<sup>6</sup> Anthony Fletcher reports that boys were recognized as men, with their “first pair of breeches, usually in the seventeenth century at around six years old”.<sup>7</sup> From that age on, snared by the law of primogeniture which favoured the eldest son, boysmale heirs, were instructed by men with the avowed goal to perpetuate the family’s lineage without failing, whatever the cost may be. In other words, parents, and more particularly fathers of high social ranks, would largely act in the interest of their dynasty regardless of their children’s needs, physiological or psychological requirements and feelings. Janet Adelman speaks of a “patriarchal society [which] depends on the principle of inheritance in which the father’s identity – his property, his name, his authority – is transmitted from father to son”,<sup>8</sup> underlining the importance of a male heir. Boys quickly grasped that their father’s orders had to be obeyed since they carried their predecessors’ striving, dreams and hopes on their young shoulders. Young men were often viewed as an obedient asset for the family even if in turn, these youngsters would marry to become domineering father figures.

As for girls from wealthy and influential families, they were instructed as aristocratic young ladies<sup>9</sup> and as daughters of scholarly individuals, they “occasionally mastered, by private tuition, the classical languages and tools of formal rhetorics and poetics”.<sup>10</sup> Except for the difference in training which focused more on the exemplary behaviours of young maiden, girls followed the same obedience<sup>11</sup> as boys, as Capulet’s speech shows. He tells off his daughter who does not behave as she should, in accordance to her breeding. He thus rebukes Juliet as follows:

God’s bread, it makes me mad. Day, night; work, play;  
 Alone, in company, still my care hath been  
 To have her matched; and having now provided  
 A gentleman of noble parentage,  
 Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly lines,  
 Stuffed, as they say, with honourable parts,  
 Proportioned as one’s thought would wish a man –  
 And then to have a wretched puling fool,  
 A whining mammet, in her fortune’s tender;  
 To answer “I’ll not wed, I cannot love;  
 I am too young, I pray you pardon me”!  
 [...]  
 And you be mine, I’ll give you to my friend.  
 An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,  
 For, by my soul, I’ll ne’er acknowledge thee,  
 Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.  
 (3.5.176-94)

It is clear in his speech that he has done what he thought best for her, but even more for his family. The use of the imperative forms like “work”, “play”, “be not”, “hang”, “beg”, “starve”, “die” testifies to the deeds he has done since the birth of his daughter with the aim of maintaining his family honour and of preserving his posterity. Besides, he compares his lifelong effort to find a good match to his child to “work”, a sheer business. Furthermore, he insists on his control on her with “you be mine” that appears to extend to her entire life. He actually informs his unique child that he would be ready to have her killed rather being shamed by her disobedience. He expects her to be submissive; otherwise he may just as well forget, disinherit and banish his only child.

Yet, this kind of reaction must not be seen as an absolute rule. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia, Gobbo's daughter, is allowed to assert her preference among a list of preselected aspirants (1.2.33-60). Her freedom is relatively genuine as her father has beforehand dictated his opinions and likings to his heir by means of a roll. In broad terms, until they actually became adults, children were to comply with their parents' will and the social rules then in force. As a matter of fact, girls and boys were referred to as "it" – as for an object – until they reached puberty<sup>12</sup> which was only attained through the completion of rite of passage from one age to the next one.<sup>13</sup> Juliet, being almost fourteen years old, is considered to have attained a new status by coming into marriageable age. In point of fact, her father has already settled her future with county Paris who has also reached a new social rank – one of a man – by being elected to wed Capulet's daughter. With his new founded position, the young man takes up a crucial place in the familial sphere, especially now that he is on the verge of switching from childhood to adulthood through marriage. The historian Philippe Aries confirms that adulthood comes down to being married<sup>14</sup> and only then, young men gain access to freedom. As for girls, they turn into women without really fulfilling their dream of freedom. Leaving their father and their patriarchal influence, new brides sign up for the acceptance of a new authority in the body of their new husband.

In Shakespeare's tragedy, Romeo and Juliet both stand by the rules. Indeed, when the young Montague is first mentioned, he is outside, in the streets of Verona, and enjoys full freedom of movement. Introduced as a wanderer, one who has been anxiously walking all night, Romeo has not come back and has no intention to do so. Actually, when he encounters his cousin, he only asks: "Where shall we dine?" (1.1.169),<sup>15</sup> thus indicating that his whereabouts are not ended and that the social mores of the Elizabethan society allow nocturnal expeditions for a young man. In addition to his freedom of movement, the young Montague is granted the permission to experience the feelings of love with Rosaline, as we learn that the priest knew about Romeo's idyll, and was not hostile to it.<sup>16</sup> Although the young man's restlessness is due to his infatuation with the young lady he has been flirting with,<sup>17</sup> spotting Juliet at the Capulet's ceremony makes him kiss her spontaneously. Without having any second thought about Rosaline, the young Montague instantly shifts his love to Juliet.

Regarding Juliet, as a young wellborn Elizabethan girl, she is very much kept from view since as a young maiden, she is expected to be virtuous, demure, fair, innocent and obedient. Lee E. Pearson points out that "the high value placed on chastity by society did confine many intelligent daughters to a repetitious round of daily duties in their homes till the time came for matching them in marriage".<sup>18</sup> Juliet's movements are indeed very much restricted, as she is kept behind walls, always confined in a room – her bedchamber, the ballroom, the priest's cell, the chapel or again the monument. Consequently, in contrast to the agitation around her – an agitation generated by the old lasting conflict between the two families and the boisterous rivalry among the young generations –, she appears quite motionless and static. She sometimes even seems to be hidden away to be protected, and her immobilization subtly alludes to the polychrome sculptures which decorated churches and religious places until the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>19</sup> For instance, the famous scene of Romeo and Juliet's talk (act 2, scene 1), with Juliet aloft and Romeo in the garden, clearly depicts her as a saint. Romeo marvels:

It is my lady, O, it is my love!

O, that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing; what of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

[...]

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art

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As glorious to this night, being o’er my head  
 As is a winged messenger of heaven  
 Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes  
 [...]
   
 By a name  
 I know not how to tell thee who I am:  
 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
 Because it is an enemy to thee;  
 Had I it written, I would tear the word.  
 (2.1.52-99)

Romeo, as a Roman Catholic devotee facing his cherished saints, compares Juliet to a silent statue, which still manages by its wicked powers to communicate with its believer thanks to its eyes. The young man continues his saintly sculptural fantasy by calling Juliet “angel”, “messenger of heaven” and “dear saint”. Beautiful, silent, immured, put away from view in her room, Juliet thus convenes a vision of ideal Elizabethan maiden with one of confined Roman Catholic statue. Actually, the schism between Roman Catholics and Protestants locked away many coloured sculpture and was the genesis of ‘plain’ sculpture in early modern England. As a result, since the Reformation, English viewers had become accustomed to monochrome sculpture so as to distinguish themselves from the old religion.

Juliet with her reserved and obedient education, her knowledge and application of proper manners, and her numbness, illustrates the perfect statuesque Elizabethan young lady. Still under her father’s patriarchal authority, she soon learns about her father’s arrangements about her wedding with Paris. As for Capulet, he is convinced of her obedience and only declares to Paris: “I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not” (3.4.13-14). The words “rule” and “respect” both suggest that she has been evaluated by Capulet who has concluded that she would conform to his will like a true Elizabethan young lady. Also related to sculpture, those terms imply that Juliet has been measured like a piece of art. When she declines his offer, Capulet is so taken aback that he can only remind her of her silent duty. He belches:

Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!  
 I tell thee what: get thee to church o’Thursday,  
 Or never after look me in the face:  
 Speak not, reply not, do not answer me;  
 My fingers itch.  
 (3.5.160-64)

A child’s duty amounted to an entire deference and marriage was part and parcel of this obedience since love had a small part in it.<sup>20</sup> Sasha Roberts thus acknowledges that *Romeo and Juliet* mirrors not only the representation of marriage in early modern England but that the play also reflects the social and political values of the Elizabethan society. She declares that:

[t]he fact that *Romeo and Juliet* has been co-opted as a ‘universal’ love story that transcends time and cultural difference should not blind us to the topical relevance of the play in the late-sixteenth century. Rather, by addressing the historical context of family relations in early modern England we become more attuned to the complexities and contradictions at work in Shakespeare’s portrayal of a family in crisis.<sup>21</sup>

Roberts even argues that “Capulet resorts to insult, humiliation, even blackmail in order to procure his daughter’s obedience”.<sup>22</sup> As to Lynda Boose, she notes that

[...] the aristocratic family of Shakespeare’s England was, according to social historian Lawrence Stone, ‘patrilinear, primogenitural, and patriarchal.’ Parent-child relations were in general remote and formal, singularly lacking in affective bonds and governed solely by a paternal authoritarianism through which the ‘husband and father lorded it over his wife and children with the quasi-authority of a despot’.<sup>23</sup>

Because of patriarchal authority, noble Elizabethan women did not have much freedom and would hardly ever defy their father. Also, at times, the reified Juliet appears as an object with her silent allegiance to her father’s social expectations. Since both the Montagues and the Capulets are upper-class and well-respected families, they confer influence and prominence upon their actions and behaviours. Thus, it is due to the children’s allegiance to their fathers that the “ancient grudge” (Chorus, 3) is once more triggered, so as to conform to the ancestral quarrel. Besides, the term “ancient” establishes here that the enmity has been going on for decades and is part of the families’ stories. The Elizabethan definition of the word, according to John Baret’s dictionary, goes as follows: “Antique. Vetuste. That is left by ancestors: ancient of long time of continuence”.<sup>24</sup> In fact, their conflict is very much part of their tradition. No wonders if in the first act, the weight of Romeo and Juliet’s family ancestry is very much underlined by Capulet. While talking to Paris about his future union with Juliet, he insists on his coming to his “old-accustomed feast” (1.2.18), the “same ancient feast of Capulet’s” (1.2.84). It is indeed because of these old customs preventing them from marrying that both lovers are eager to break these old irons rooted in the past of their families and acquire freedom. But how could it be done?

Being prisoners of their family’s traditions and their restrained feelings and actions, Romeo and Juliet are thus chained to hereditary habits and rules. Romeo is first introduced as a melancholic young man, “bound”, “shut up in prison”, “kept”, “whipped and tormented” (1.2.54-56). Even though he talks about his love for Rosaline, such expressions can also refer to his own familial condition. Then, we encounter Romeo in front of the Capulet’s where he is about to enter with “a soul of lead / So stakes me to the ground I cannot move” (1.4.15-16), as if he were a heavy grey statue fixed to the ground. His unrequited love makes him carry a “heavy burden” (1.4.22), “too rough, too rude” (1.4.25-26) as if turned into a raw, unfinished, unpolished statue. He further says: “I’ll be a candle-holder and look on [...] I am done” (1.4.38-39), thereby implying with a pun on “dun” and “done” that he is now changing into a dead and greyish-brown statue.

As for Juliet, her very name ascribes her to a small object, a “jewel”, *i.e.* a valuable stone that has been cut and polished, a sculpted gem from a petrified concretion of mineral matter, which throughout the play, slowly develops into a real statue. First, it is through Romeo’s eyes that she is statified as an idolized sculpture with her white hand and her “immortal blessing” as a Goddess. The young man declares indeed:

They may seize  
On the white wonder of dear Juliet’s hand,  
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,  
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,  
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin.  
(3.3.35-39)

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Romeo’s description intensifies Juliet’s sculptural image with the twofold concepts of eternity and sanctification as well as with a rather clear allusion to the cult of the saints.<sup>25</sup> Besides, when Romeo sees Juliet at the ball for the first time, she is reduced to a motionless sculpture, a statuesque goddess, beautiful and still. Here is what he states at this precise moment:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night  
 As a rich jewel in an Ethiopie’s ear –  
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.  
 So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows  
 As yonder lady o’er her fellows shows.  
 (1.5.43-44)

Romeo’s description emphasizes her statuesque look. Implicitly compared to the statue of a goddess, Juliet is clearly over pictured by Romeo with the repetition of the adverb “too” and the comparison to a snowy dove instilling a vision of whiteness, perfect beauty and purity. Moreover, the use of “hang” insists here on a feeling of stillness, as if time had stopped. Juliet, or “jewel”, is a raw material, a stone turned into a gem, *i.e.* transformed into a beautiful piece of art by sculpting.

While she is viewed as a sculpture or a jewel on a sculpture, Romeo is compared to a “pilgrim”<sup>26</sup> in front of a carved Juliet:

**Romeo:** If I profane with my unworhiest hand  
 This holy shrine, the gentler sin is this:  
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss  
**Juliet:** Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
 Which mannerly devotion shows in this.  
 For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch,  
 And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss.  
**Romeo:** Have not saints lips, and holy palmers, too?  
**Juliet:** Ay, pilgrims, lips that they must use in prayer.  
**Romeo:** O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:  
 They pray; grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.  
**Juliet:** Saints do not move, though grant for prayers’ sake.  
**Romeo:** Then move not while my prayer’s effect I take.  
 (1.5.92-105)

The girl recognizes in her beloved a religious devotee who travels to a shrine or a sacred place, and she considers him as one who embarks on a quest for something conceived of as sacred. Romeo journeys to Juliet as if she were a sacred place where he could gather his thoughts – a sacred place where, most probably, a statue would stand, and in front of which he could kneel. François Laroque portrays him “as a pilgrim (the ‘pilgrim from Rome’, ‘romitaggio’, according to the Italian etymology of His Name) coming to worship the holy shrine of her sacrosanct, statue-like body. In these images, Juliet is indeed indirectly addressed as the statue of some saintly virgin”.<sup>27</sup>

Not only does Romeo emerge as a religious pilgrim, he can also be compared to a traveller in quest of a new entity. Indeed, Juliet's request to doff his name is really specific to a renouncement of any familial bonds. Here is what the young man answers: "Call me but love and I'll be new baptized" (2.1.92). Symbolically, Romeo gets rid of the cultural obligation and of the societal rules implied by his name. By removing it, Romeo destroys his former identity in the hope to reconstruct it.<sup>28</sup> However, in his feverish discourse to Friar Lawrence, Romeo demonstrates that his name cannot be expelled as it is lodged in his body and soul. He declares:

As if that name  
 Shot from the deadly level of a gun  
 Did murder her as that name's cursed hand  
 Murdered her kinsman. O tell me, friar, tell me,  
 In what vile part of this anatomy  
 Doth my name lodge?  
 (3.3.101-106)

Diana O'Hara recalls that "[t]he reputation and name of an individual were considered important because, as part of a collective he or she was subject to collective sanctions and public opinion"<sup>29</sup>, which is indeed the very reason why he wishes he could be renamed.

Nevertheless, being renamed "love" is not enough to gain total freedom and the two protagonists have to undergo many more frustrating moments of stasis to actually liberate themselves. In other words, they appear more and more like statues as the play develops. The very first illustration of this forced quietness occurs when Juliet does not react to her mother's announcement (act 1, scene3), but grows instead into an even more petrified young lady as she decides to ignore her father's approval. Then, she orders the elements to come to her as if she were riveted to a pedestal. In a now famous prothalamion, she says:

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
 Towards Phoebus' lodging. Such a waggoner  
 As Phaëton would whip you to the west  
 And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
 Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
 That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo  
 Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen.  
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
 By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,  
 It best agrees with night. **Come**,<sup>30</sup> civil night,  
 Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,  
 And learn me how to lose a winning match  
 Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.  
 Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks,  
 With thy black mantle, till strange love, grow bold,  
 Think true love acted simple modesty.  
**Come**, night. **Come**, Romeo. **Come**, thou day in night,  
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
 Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.  
**Come**, gentle night, **come**, loving, black-browed night,  
 Give me my Romeo. (3.2.1-21)

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Even though here Juliet speaks in a very quick manner relying on broken sentences conveying an impression of fast pace and motion, she remains still. The term “come” is repeated six times which shows, on the one, that she is overwhelmed by emotions and, on the other hand, that she is waiting without moving. As a young maiden involved in her first secret love story, she should be eager and bustling around with excitement instead of being static. As a matter of fact, her immobility is slowly extending since her brain inside her skull is hard now, and Capulet seems to have noticed it as he calls, “my headstrong” (4.2.16). As if she were made of stone, carved out by her father patriarchal society, Juliet only replies that she will be ruled by him (4.2.21-22).

Then, Juliet’s stillness becomes tragic at last for the grieving Capulet when he describes his daughter’s pseudo death, emphasizing the features of a statue:

Ha, let me see her! Out, alas, she’s cold.  
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff.  
Life and these lips have long been separated.  
Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.  
(4.4.52-6)

The father uses adjectives like “cold”, “settled”, “stiff”, “frost”, hinting at a statuesque representation of his own daughter.

However, the best example of Juliet turning into a statue is Friar Laurence’s explanation about the elixir that the young woman must take in order to mimic death. Indeed, he carefully describes the effects that will make Juliet fall asleep momentarily, and turns her into a motionless Juliet. He explains:

And this distilling liquor drink thou off,  
When presently through all thy veins shall run  
A cold and drowsy humour; for no pulse  
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease.  
No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest.  
The rose in thy lips and cheeks shall fade  
To wanny ashes, thy eyes’ windows fall  
Like death when he shuts up the day of life.  
Each part, deprived of supple government,  
Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death  
(4.1.94-104)

The terms used to describe the effects of the potion on Juliet, “cold”, “no pulse”, “[n]o warmth, no breath,” no “roses in thy lips”, “stiff and stark and cold” are words and phrases related to death, much closer to a statue than to a living being deeply numbed by the effects of the potion. At this point in the play, it is easy to imagine a lying Juliet comparable to a recumbent statue.

Her stillness takes another form when, after she has drunk the elixir, Romeo thinks she is dead, and poignantly describes Juliet as a freshly painted statue paving the way for that of Hermione in *The Winter’s Tale*. The girl becomes as desirable as the statue of Galatea:

O my love, my wife,  
 Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
 Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign yet  
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
 (5.3.91-6)

While Friar Laurence depicted Juliet as an alabaster monument, Romeo's view of the statuesque Juliet is quite different. Here, Juliet lying in the tomb has "crimson" (5.3.95) lips and cheeks, as she is slowly coming back to life. At this precise moment, Juliet looks like one of those painted, colourful statues, like Hermione and her red lips (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.3.81). Through Friar Laurence's plan which mimics death in the shape of a recumbent statue "stiff and dark and cold" (4.1.103) and which aims at liberating the two lovers, Juliet is actually ensnared in complete immobility. By lying down in a statuesque standstill (she is seen as a mere "corpse", 4.4.106; 120), she cannot gain a total freedom from her pseudo death. Upon hearing the account of Juliet's death, Romeo not knowing the friar's hoax enters her monument and poisons himself. As Juliet wakes up, she discovers Romeo still warm but already dead next to her and, she stabs herself. So, if at the time of putting together the trick, the fake death was to be a necessary and temporary step towards freedom, it eventually turns out to be permanent, petrifying and up to a certain point liberating. At the very end of the play, while explaining the trick he has elaborated, Friar Laurence describes the potion as a "form of death" (5.3.245), a potion which could also have been described, instead, as a 'form of freedom'. It has become apparent at this point that the final statues of Romeo and Juliet embody not only the traditional functions of sculpture, namely memory through funeral monuments and decorative art, but also the representation of freedom. Peter Sherlock writes that "[m]onuments [they] reveal how the people of the past wanted us to think about their world"<sup>31</sup>. So, we have seen the statufication and progressive monumentalisation of the title-characters. Upon meeting with Romeo, Juliet is compared to a holy statue (1.5.98-105) before appearing as a recumbent one, lying on her bed in her "fake death" (4.4), which is a parodic repetition of his real death at Romeo's side (5.3). In addition, the sculptures promised by the Montagues and Capulets at the end of the tragedy are those of a pair of lying bodies (5.3.298-302). Along the play, the vertical statue of the saint has thus been turned into a horizontal and mortuary one. In this horizontality are kept all the differences between life and death because for those who are dead, the grave abolished verticality whereas horizontality only accounts corpses<sup>32</sup>. In fact, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the final erected statues encapsulate memory<sup>33</sup> of the past in the present, and protect it from forgetfulness<sup>34</sup> for future generations like the standing Statue of Liberty.

In some ways close to the first pilgrims in America with their hope, their fear and dream of freedom, Romeo and Juliet's conclusive petrification epitomizes a sculpture of freedom. Not only has their carving come to a fully sculpted statue, letting no one forget about their struggle for freedom, but it also provides a more conventional use of sculpture as a tribute. De facto, the concept of art cannot be undermined, since the presence of a statue in *Romeo and Juliet* is one of many examples<sup>35</sup> uncovering a singular interest in pictorial representations and particularly in sculpting. Shakespeare uses pseudo sculptures as a means to examine aesthetic and theatrical ideas, revealing a tremendous changes in the attitudes of the early modern English society toward sculpting since at that time, the aesthetic dimensions of statues,

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in England, only began to be detached from their sacred function. Sculptures, as a result, were much more easily recognized as works of art than before.

Bearing this in mind, I would like to insist on the fact that Shakespeare's innovative conception of sculpture in *Romeo and Juliet*, appropriating visual tropes and stage pictures, enhances the visual impact of the theatrical performance, and it also conveys England's political aspirations.<sup>36</sup> More generally speaking, rising to prominence as part and parcel of a new English sculptural style, theatrical effigies represented England's artistic syncretism at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Shakespeare's theatrical art, blending human beings and statues, actually paved the way for a truly original conception of 'dramatic' sculptures that was going to refashion England's identity in the Jacobean era.

<sup>1</sup> See Martin Ingram, 'Love, Sex and Marriage' in *Shakespeare An Oxford Guide*, ed. Stanley Wells and Lena Cowen Orlin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 114. He underlines that family was considered as an institution of exceptional social importance in Elizabethan England. He indicates that "not only was it [the family] the matrix of procreation and the education of the young, it was also at all social levels an important focus of economic activity [...] and above all was the site for the exercise of patriarchal authority".

<sup>2</sup> Being a child of a peasant or one of a king does not have the same impact on education, which was obviously more extensive and imperative for the wealthy who vied to keep their influence, if not to increase it.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Fletcher. *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600-1914*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Other examples are found in Shakespeare's work. Indeed, Gloucester in *King Lear* talks about his illegitimate son in terms of love and carrying (3.4.141-45). In *Titus Andronicus*, it is Young Lucius's grandfather who demonstrates his fondness for his heir (5.3.160-65).

<sup>5</sup> Lee E. Pearson. *Elizabethans at home*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957, p. 140-44.

<sup>6</sup> For the differences in education between girls and boys, see Lawrence Stone's book, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1977, p. 409-10.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Fletcher. *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800*. New Heaven/London: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 297.

<sup>8</sup> Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1992, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup> In *Timon of Athens*, an old Athenian highlights the importance he has put into his only daughter's education "at [his] dearest cost / In qualities of the best." (1.1.123-27) In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mistress Page is anxious to check his son's knowledge on mathematics and grammar (4.1.13-76).

<sup>10</sup> Edith Rickert, L.J. Naylor. *Chaucer's World*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1948, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> In *Hamlet*, Polonius reminds his daughter Ophelia of her duty of obedience (2.2.107-9). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is Theseus, Duke of Athens, who insists on his daughter's moral obligations (1.1.47-51).

<sup>12</sup> Rackin Phyllis. *Shakespeare and Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> In *As you like it*, Jaques goes through the different stages of humanhood which he states in seven ages. See (2.7.139-66).

<sup>14</sup> Philippe Ariès. *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*. Editions du seuil, 1973, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> All quotations are from *The Complete Works*. Jowett John, William Montgomery, Stanley Wells & Gary Taylor, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, [1986], 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Romeo had confided in Father Lawrence about his love for Rosaline before disclosing, out of the blue, that his true love was in fact Juliet. It might be love at first sight, however his behavior testifies, on the one hand that Romeo is unsteady, even volatile, and on the other hand that his breeding does not absolutely forbid experiencing love.

<sup>17</sup> For young men, having experienced some love affairs before marrying was admitted since it was considered as part and parcel of their education.

<sup>18</sup> Lee E. Pearson. *Elizabethans at Home*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957, p. 277.

<sup>19</sup> See George Puttenham. *The Arte of English Poesie*. Menston: Scolar Press, [1589], 1968, p. 14-15.

<sup>20</sup> Percival Hunt. *Fifteenth Century England*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962, p.130.

<sup>21</sup> Sasha Roberts. *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 1998, p.1.

<sup>22</sup> Sasha Roberts. *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462226>. *The Father and the Bride in Shakespeare*. PMLA, Vol.97, No. 3, May, 1982, p. 325.

<sup>24</sup> John Baret. *An Alveary or triple Dictionary, in English, Latin, and French*. London, 1574, STC (2nd ed.) / 1411.

<sup>25</sup> Before the Reformation, this Christian practice had been based upon a particular belief, namely that the saints and their representations proved capable of performing miracles with divine assistance. Indeed, as Catholics believers prayed to heaven for assistance, they used to admire saintly effigies, and to beg them for help. See Alison Chapman. *Patrons and Patron Saints in Early Modern English Literature*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 159.

<sup>26</sup> Kiki Gounaridou. *Text & Presentation 2011*. Jefferson: Mc Farland, 2012, p.38.

<sup>27</sup> Text from François Laroque's conference in Vicenza 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, October 2012, article without page numbers.

<sup>28</sup> See Jacques Derrida. 'Aphorism Countertime', trad. Nicholas Royle, in Derek Attridge. *Acts of Literature*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992, p. 426-27.

<sup>29</sup> Diana O'Hara. *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Sherlock. *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England*. England: Ashgate, 2008, p. 231.

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Marie Maguin. *La Nuit dans le théâtre de Shakespeare et de ses prédécesseurs*. Lille: Université de Lille, 1980, (2 vol), vol II, p. 610.

<sup>33</sup> See Pierre Nora. *Les Lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Gallimard, 1986.

<sup>34</sup> See Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> Shakespeare refers directly to a statue in other plays such as *Julius Caesar* (1599) and the *Winter's Tale* (1611), as well as alluding to some statuesque standstill in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) or again *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600).

<sup>36</sup> In addition to the desire of religious independence from the Catholic foe, early modern England was also vying to defend its culture and acquire its own art versus Italian or/and Flemish artists who had flocked to England with their knowledge and craft from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. For more information on craftsmen coming to England, see Michael Wyatt. *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 or Nigel Goose and Lien Luu. *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005.

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