



## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to our beloved family members who consistently encouraged us since our childhood; their efforts and support made this happen. Additionally, we extend our dedication to our beloved sisters, our closest friends and colleagues who provided us with a great support all along our process of producing this dissertation.

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**Abstract:**

This research paper employs an intertext drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's notions within two modern novels, Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* (2003) and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* (2018), relying on Julia Kristeva's theory intertextuality. Our study investigates how modern literature was influenced by the traditional literary works. The main objective of this dissertation is to examine and explore the two modern works, in relation to Shakespeare, while shedding light on Bakhtin's concepts overt and hidden polemic, parody and pastiche, as well as stylization. Our study analysis the two books in view of their source text and by using the above mentioned theories, we have determined that both works are intertexts of Shakespeare's original. Both writers aim to make Shakespeare more accessible to young audience by modernising the plot, characters and his language.

**Key words:** Intertextuality, modern literature, overt and hidden polemic, pastiche, parody, stylization.

## I. Introduction

I therefore will begin. Soul of the age  
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage  
My Shakespeare, rise  
[...]  
He was not of an age but for all time  
To the Memory of My Beloved, Author Mr. William Shakespeare  
(Jonson, 1623)

The quote suggests that Shakespeare's (1564-1616) works are timeless and would continue to be relevant to the next generations. It praises Shakespeare's enduring legacy; in other words, it is the body which dies, not the thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, Shakespeare's influence extends beyond literature, as his plays are regularly performed and adapted worldwide. Academics delve into the themes, characters, language, and historical context of Shakespeare's works; given the enduring popularity and cultural significance, it is likely that Shakespearean studies continue to occupy a significant space in academia. This dissertation seeks to study Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* (2003) and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* (2018) in connection to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597). The main intent of the two writers is to make Shakespeare adequate and reachable to modern audiences and lower the difficulties of his works. In spite of Shakespeare's popularity, his works remain complex and difficult to understand due to the use of complicated themes, ideas, characters and language. Our aim is to examine these new works and establish their relationship with the original version.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a similar interest in adapting Shakespeare's works for young readers. For example, Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* which adapted the famous classical love story *Romeo and Juliet*. These adaptations often include changes in language, characters and plot to make the play more accessible, easier,

funny, fresh and understandable to young readers. His use of poetic language and inventive expressions has left a lasting impact on the English language. However, the difficulty of understanding his language is a common challenge for modern readers and audiences. The main goal of these adaptations is to help young readers and those who never read Shakespeare appreciate and enjoy his works. Moreover, it allows them to comprehend, master and admire the complex themes and language of his plays in a way that is convenient and engaging. Besides, they ensure that Shakespeare's legacy and influence continues to be felt for the coming generations.

*Crushing on a Capulet* and *Cold Fire* are both related to the story of Shakespeare's play. The story has been adapted in a variety of ways. Each of these adaptations has its own style that makes the story more appealing and interesting for people who do not like the original and for young readers; in addition to offering something new and innovative which may introduce people to classical works of literature and keep them relevant and alive. The two works are directly related to the central plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. In both novels or adaptations, the authors added modern characters and created a magical and adventurous tale that brings the Shakespearean masterpiece to a modern one. In this dissertation, we will discover how these two books have succeeded in making Shakespeare attractive and reachable to young readership, both through the modifications to the text in terms of style in which the authors have adopted a modern and creative style of writing and also by producing new versions of the original story.

## **Review of literature**

Based on our analysis of previous literature upon examining works of Tony Abbott and James Hartley, we have come to the conclusion that both *Crushing on a Capulet* and *Cold Fire* gathered criticism and have been studied from the perspective of making

Shakespeare's work lively and enjoyable. As the first option, *Crushing on a Capulet* has received some literary critics and reviews.

To begin with, Sheila T. Cavanagh has written many articles on early modern literature and pedagogy, among other topics. In her work ““Crushing on a Capulet”: Culture, Cognition, and Simplification in *Romeo and Juliet* for Young People” (2006), she argues that the idea of making teaching and learning Shakespeare as “fun” is a response to the common perception that many students and even some instructors find Shakespeare's works challenging or irrelevant (Cavanagh, 2006, p.2). This perception has led educators to explore ways to make Shakespeare more accessible and engaging in modern classrooms. By presenting Shakespeare in ways that resonate with modern learners, educators aim to clear the notion that his works are hard, boring and irrelevant, and instead promote a love for his timeless contributions to literature and drama. For example, Lois Burdett has named her well-known book series for children “*Shakespeare can Be Fun!*” even the Folger Shakespeare library joins this trend under the title “Shakespeare set free” (1993).

From a cultural view, there was a debate in case to incorporate Shakespeare at school or not. Some educators and writers think that his works are essential for cultural literacy. For example, E.D Hirsch, Jr in his influential *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1988), for instance, wants students to experience Shakespeare. He also supports the idea of having students study “many similar things in school” (Hirsch,1998, p.8) to facilitate “functional literacy and effective national communication” (Ibid, p. xi) because Shakespeare's texts help “(impact) the traditional reference points of literate culture” (Ibid, p. xii). Hirsch suggests that Shakespeare can help students develop their knowledge because of his themes such as history, politics and philosophy; in addition to an effective communication and critical thinking skills. Besides, Diane Ravitch, in *The Schools We Deserve: Reflections on the Educational Crises of Our Times* (1985), offers a similar argument,

students should study the development of Western civilisation in order to understand where we got the ideals by which we judge ourselves [...] In literature, students need a common foundation of reading. Unless they have read, as a minimum, the classical myths, the bible and some Shakespeare, they will be unable to comprehend the fundamental vocabulary of most western literature (Ravitch, 1985, p.315).

Ravitch emphasises the importance of teaching Shakespeare because his works are part of western civilisation. She also believes that studying certain texts (myths, bible, and Shakespeare) will help students to engage and understand literature.

On a cognitive approach, *Crushing on a Capulet* is a novel which will assist young readers when they will confront *Romeo and Juliet*, since it has modern aspects. The writer suggests that using familiar characters and places may help the reader imagine and visualise the plot and characters in his mind. This approach not only helps children comprehend the stories but also facilitates the development of connections and associations that can support their future encounters with Shakespeare's works. As a psychologist, Margaret W. Matlin (1994, p. 14) notes, however, conscious memory of this learning is not necessary for it to aid in future studies. As she explains, "semantic memory" is "knowledge without reference to how that information was acquired" (1994, p.214). In other words, when communicating information, being transparent about the sources of knowledge enhances credibility and allows others to explore the topic further. So that, learners are likely to remember facts and figures when it is connected to what they already know. As Maltin explains, "pattern recognition involves comparing the sensory stimuli with information in other memory storage" (1994, p.33).

In the Cracked Classics series by Abbott, the author employs a similar approach to engage Juvenile audiences. Known for his popular children's books such as the *Secrets of Droon* series, he creates a world where academic underachievers, Devin and Frankie embark on time travelling adventures facilitated by their school librarian's "Zapper Gate" (Abbott, 2003, p.6) The children find themselves in various historical periods and places, including

Verona during the time of Romeo and Juliet. Similar to the Wishbone series, the Cracked Classics books introduce young readers to various classic literary texts such as *Treasure Island*, *Around the World in Eighty Days* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Overall, the Cracked Classics series by Tony Abbott presents classic literary texts in an engaging and accessible manner for young readers. While it may include the difficulty of Shakespearean language, it still provides an entertaining and informative introduction to these renowned stories for elementary school students.

On the other hand, Tonja Dracker (September 08, 2018) argues that *Cold Fire* is not a simple retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* in order to suit the modern era, instead he has created a story of mystery and emotion that elevates Shakespeare's masterpiece to a suitable level for modern minds. In other words, she claims that the novel is not a simple contemporary retelling of love story of the young lovers into a modern version, but rather a refreshing, enigmatic and emotional classical story. It will be interesting to mention that the author guides us to Shakespeare's tale, as the characters are relatable, and easy to visualize. She proclaimed that, the plot can be read alone without any difficulties. She also claims that the first pages of the book introduced us to the main character Gillian with giving certain aspects of her personality, and presenting some of her issues with her family. She also argues that the next chapters continue with a gasp of boredom into the next scenes, and keep the rhythm high. Moreover, she states that the story contains various characters, which can be added intentionally by the author to add complexity to the plot, provide new insights and create suspense.

Another reading of *Cold Fire*, Emma Hamilton (February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019) claims that the story is dramatic. Emma is an English teacher and a book reviewer; she adds also that the story is not only a revisit to Shakespeare famous protagonists Romeo and Juliet, but also an introduction to Shakespeare himself. In other words, Emma argues that *Cold Fire* introduces us to a new interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*. It provides the reader with a unique and a

fresh perspective as it forms the star crossed lovers within the story. Moreover, she did not only explore the link between Gillian and Romeo, but also, the presence of William Shakespeare in the narrative.

Jason Denness (2019, August 30) argues that the book is a modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*. He thinks that the pages truly come alive as they explore a profound and deep connection with Shakespeare play. He believes that, this retelling provides an exciting opportunity for the young readers of today to engage with the timeless story of *Romeo and Juliet*, in the purpose of making the boring school days more interesting and engaging. He adds that, his praise of the inclusion of new characters such as Angela and the master is a great addition to the story. He claims that the book gives us some information about the master and the origins of the school, in which he appreciates how the book explores the words on the pages. Jason believes that the modern reinterpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*, breathes a new life into the pages and gives them vitality. Jason Denness, explains how Shakespeare's literary obsession is reflected in the story. He also thinks that it is a unique twist and he wonders why others were not involved in the story. At the end, he comments that the book is an enjoyable and engaging one that leaves the reader excited, and gives him/ her a strong desire to continue reading and explore more works by the same author.

## **Issues and Working Hypothesis:**

In our literature review, both "Crushing on a Capulet" and "Cold Fire" have undergone critique and analysis by scholars. T. Cavanagh's assessment of Tony Abbott's novel points to a concern in teaching Shakespeare at schools due to the perception that his works are overly challenging. However, a separate study suggests that contemporary retellings, exemplified by Abbott's work, alleviate the difficulties associated with Shakespearean language for new readers. On the other hand, Tonja Drecker's examination of "Cold Fire" contends that it goes beyond a simple modern version of Romeo and Juliet, offering a refreshing and emotionally charged narrative that connects readers to Shakespeare. Drecker asserts that the novel's characters and plot are easily accessible, presenting no hindrance to readers. Conversely, Emma Hamilton's perspective on Hartley's novel emphasizes its role as a dramatic work that serves as an introduction to Shakespeare himself.

From our comprehensive literature review, it is evident that no prior studies have undertaken a combined analysis of these works. In light of this gap, we propose a research approach that employs an intertextual dialogic perspective, focusing on Mikhail Bakhtin's critical concepts of overt and hidden polemic, parody, pastiche, and stylization. This theoretical framework promises to offer valuable insights into the literary works of Abbott and Hartley, exploring their intertextual connections and broader implications within the context of Bakhtin's critical concepts.

## **Methodological Outline:**

This research consists of the following sections: general introduction, methods and materials, Results and Discussion sections. The discussion section will be divided into two chapters. Chapter one will be devoted to studying Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* with the focus on Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts such as overt and hidden polemic, parody and pastiche. The second chapter will be devoted to studying the two novels in relation to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept stylization. The last section of our research will include the general conclusion that will be a summary of the whole work and a restatement of our main findings.

## **II. Methods and Materials:**

### **Methods:**

#### **1. Theoretical Framework:**

This part plans to analyse our theoretical framework. Our intention is to guide this dissertation under the theoretical instruction of Bakhtin's concept of intertextual dialogism and Julia Kristiva intertextuality. The primary objective is to establish a connection between the selected novels and William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, focusing on specific concepts such as overt polemic and parody concerning *Crushing on a Capulet* and hidden polemic and pastiche concerning *Cold Fire*, in addition to the concept of stylization which we are going to examine on both novels. Our choice of this theory is to analyse both works in relation to intertextual dialogism. This approach will allow us to delve into how the authors drew inspiration to provide modern interpretations of Shakespeare's classic. we intend to show the complicated connections between the chosen novels and the original source material, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which these contemporary works engage with and reinterpret the timeless themes and narratives present in "Romeo and Juliet."

#### **1.1 Intertextual Dialogism:**

In the following discussion, we will explore the complexities of intertextual dialogism, its implications for textual analysis, and its significance in understanding the complex relationships between texts. Before Julia Kristeva, several theorists made significant contributions to shaping the concept of intertextuality. One notable theorist is Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary critic and philosopher. Bakhtin's ideas about dialogism led to the understanding how texts engage in a continuous dialogue with other texts. He argued that meaning is not fixed within a single text but emerges through the interplay of various voices and perspectives. In addition to Ronald Barthes, a French literary theorist, also contributed to

the development of intertextuality. In his essay “Death of the Author” Barthes questioned the notion of a single authoritative interpretation and highlighted the role of the reader in constructing meaning. His exploration of how texts are read and interpreted in relation to other texts laid the groundwork for intertextual theory. These theorists influenced Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian French philosopher and psychoanalyst. She expanded the concept of intertextuality to include the relationships between written texts. She introduced the term in the 1960s, emphasising the interconnectedness of texts and the ways in which they refer to, transform and resonate with each other. Mikhail Bakhtin, advanced the concept of intertextual dialogism or the double voiced discourse that includes “stylization” “overt and hidden polemic” “parody and pastiche”. According to Bakhtin, stylization is a powerful tool for literary creativity in which an author employs or imitates a particular style or a period of time in order to achieve a desired artistic work; “Stylization stylizes another’s style in the direction of that style’s own particular tasks” (Bakhtin, 1963, p.193). A polemic refers to an intervention or a debate that intends to criticise or refute a particular issue, topic or belief. When talking about polemic, it is important to differentiate between overt and hidden polemic. First, in overt polemic the author expresses his perspective in a direct and explicit way, he speaks openly and declares his opposing viewpoints and launches attacks against the original work. On the other hand, hidden polemic is an indirect confrontation. The author does not show his disagreement; it requires to read between the lines in order to recognise the primary criticism of the author and his opposing viewpoint; as Bakhtin states,

overt polemic is quite simply directed at another’s discourse, which it refutes, as if its own referential object. In the hidden polemic, however, discourse is directed toward an ordinary referential object, [...] and only indirectly striking a blow at the other’s discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself (Bakhtin,1963, p.241).

Overt polemic is characterized by its open and explicit nature, while hidden polemic involves a more concealed and indirect expression of criticism or opposition. Both forms of polemic can be employed in various communication contexts, depending on the communicator's goals and the cultural or social norms of the situation.

Overall, intertextual dialogism recognises the interconnected nature of texts and the ongoing dialogue between them. It enriches our understanding of a text by considering its relationship with other works. It highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of literature and the fact that no text exists in isolation.

## **2. Materials :**

### **1. Biography of the Authors:**

#### **1.1 Tony Abbott:**

Tony Abbott was born on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1952 in Cleveland, Ohio, America. He is an author of children's books. His father was a university professor and had a library of books which became one of Abbott's first sources of literature. He attended the university of Connecticut where he studied both music and psychology and then decided to study English literature in which he graduated with a Bachelor Degree. After college, he has worked in a bookstore, a library and publishing company. He has taught and developed his writing through attending the workshops of Patricia Reilly Giff. He is popular for the book series *The Secret of Droon*, which includes over 40 books. It includes: *The Mysterious Island* (1999), *The Great Ice Battle* (1999), *The Moon Dragon* (2006), *Knights of the Ruby Wand* (2010); in addition to other series such as: *Danger Guys Series* (1994-1996), *The Haunting of Derek Stone Series* (2009), *Special Editions* (2010) and *The Weird Zone Series* (2018). In the year of 2003, he wrote a book named *Crushing on a Capulet*, a work that celebrates the well-known playwright William Shakespeare by retelling his famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) in a modern version.

## **1.2 James Hartley :**

Hartley James was born in Heswall on the Wirral England in (1973). Hartley was the first child, and has two younger brothers. His mother was a hairdresser and has her own private business and his father's profession was in a local refinery. When his father got the job in Singapore, the family moved to Asia and he lived five years in the city state before they came back to Scotland and later they moved all to Muscat, Oman, Syria. Hartley studied journalism in London and worked in a variety of jobs including being a waiter, a child-minder, a dishwasher and in the field of journalism. During his life time, he had the occasion to live in multiple countries like Singapore, Scotland, Thailand, Libya, Syria, Heland, France, and Germany. Currently he teaches English in Madrid where he lives with his wife and his two children. (Tonja, 2018)

## **2. Synopsis of the Novels :**

### **2.1 Synopsis of Romeo and Juliet:**

In Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," the titular characters, despite their families' longstanding feud, fall deeply in love at a party and decide to marry in secret with the help of Friar Laurence. However, Romeo's involvement in a fatal duel with Juliet's cousin leads to his banishment from Verona. To avoid an arranged marriage with Paris, Juliet consents to Friar Laurence's plan: taking a sleeping potion that makes her appear dead. The plan is for her to awaken, and the lovers to reunite. Tragically, Romeo, unaware of the scheme, believes Juliet is truly dead when he finds her lifeless body in the tomb. Overwhelmed by grief, he takes his own life. Upon awakening to this devastating reality, Juliet, in despair, kills herself. The play concludes with the tragic demise of the star-crossed lovers, their deaths ultimately prompting a reconciliation between their feuding families.

## **2.2 Synopsis of *Crushing on a Capulet*:**

Sixth graders named Devin and Frankie are assigned by their teacher Mr. Wexler to perform one of the most popular play's, *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare. The two friends are not excited because they find that the Shakespearean language is difficult and they can not read the lines; for them it does not sound like written in English. When Devin and Frankie are looking for their costumes in the school library, they discovered a gate. Luckily, that gate is a magic security one that transported them into Shakespeare's classic play. Unfortunately, they land right in the middle of a sword fight between two families: the Montagues and the Capulets. Two guards from the Capulet see Devin and Frankie and think they are Montague spies; they try to catch them but suddenly Benvolio appears and saves them. To escape they decide to put on costumes to look like the people in Verona but for their surprise they get involved in the play. When they start to discover the play and the characters, they find out that Romeo Montague falls in love with Juliet Capulet, but because of the problems between the two families they can never be together. Devin and Frankie agree that it is up to them to change this tragic play into a happy one and make sure this unlucky couple live happily ever after. Following many attempts from Devin and Frankie to change Romeo's and Juliet's destiny, they end up failing which make them sad and disappointed because the play ends with the death of the lovers.

## **2.3 Synopsis of *Cold Fire* :**

*Cold Fire* (2018) by James Hartley is the second book in the Shakespeare Moon series, offering a modern twist to Shakespeare's classic tale of Romeo and Juliet. Set in the magical Scottish boarding school of St. Francis, the story revolves around Gillian, a troubled teenager, and her friends Kizzie, Sol, and Angela. After a mysterious naked boy named Romeo appears on the school's football field speaking in Latin, the boarding school residents become curious witnesses to an unfolding love story. Gillian, drawn to Romeo, recalls meeting him during her

holidays in Italy, and they fall in love. Despite warnings that Romeo is a dangerous creation, Gillian pursues the relationship. The friends help them secretly marry, but a revelation by Kizzie exposes the truth: she created Romeo using her writing powers to bring joy to Gillian. Betrayed, Gillian seeks Romeo, unaware of the consequences.

Another significant character, Will Shakespeare, arrives at the school four hundred years earlier seeking employment. The old Monk, the spirit of the school, entrusts Will with a special book, revealing that only one person can write in it. As the master's final wish, Will is asked to write and hide the book. Romeo later discovers his wife's lifeless body, leading to a tragic end for the lovers. Gillian, devastated by Romeo's death, takes her own life with his dagger. In the aftermath, Will completes his play on Romeo and Juliet, realizing the lovers are gone, and decides to leave.

### III. Results

In this research, we have employed the intertextual dialogic concepts of Mikhail Bakhtin to reveal the intricate connections between Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* in relation to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Through Bakhtin's notions, we discovered that these texts are not isolated entities but are intricately woven into a broader intertextual network. Our analysis, contextualised within the framework of Shakespeare's source text, offers valuable insights into how contemporary authors continue to derive inspiration from and engage with the timeless narratives formed by Shakespeare. The study highlights the enduring appeal of Shakespeare's works and the ongoing dialogue between past and present literature.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that both Abbott and Hartley utilised Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as a foundational source for creating *Crushing on a Capulet* and *Cold Fire*. This observation aligns seamlessly with Bakhtin's concept of intertextual dialogism, emphasizing that a text is intricately connected to other texts. Despite the temporal disparity, both authors have successfully bridged the gap and established a meaningful connection with literature from a different era. This connection vividly illustrates the theory of intertextuality and dialogism, wherein authors build upon existing texts to create something new. Through the repetition and reinterpretation of characters, themes, and settings, Abbott and Hartley have effectively showcased their deep engagement with Shakespeare's timeless works. In conclusion, our research underscores how *Crushing on a Capulet* and *Cold Fire* provide a rich exploration of intertextual dialogism, delving into the profound influence of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* on contemporary literature.

#### **IV. Discussion:**

In this section of our research, we will attempt to apply Bakhtin's concepts of Intertextual dialogism on both literary works, Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's *Cold Fire*, in relation to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the first chapter, concerning *Crushing on a Capulet* we will deal with the concepts of overt polemic in relation to the plot. Then, we will study the concept of parody and how Abbott tries to make the reader laugh, in addition to the concept of stylization. As for the second chapter, dealing with *Cold Fire* we will explore the concept of hidden polemic in relation to characters and the plot. Next, we will deal with the concept of pastiche and how Hartley pays tribute to Shakespeare's play by imitating the main characters. Finishing with the concept of stylization.

**Chapter One: Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* (2003): An Intertextual Dialogic Study**

## 1. An Overt Polemic in *Crushing on a Capulet* Directed at *Romeo and*

### *Juliet:*

Overt polemic within the framework of Bakhtin's ideas, it could be understood as a direct and explicit engagement in argument or controversy within a text. In a dialogical work, characters or voices might engage in overt polemic, expressing differing opinions in debates, or directly confronting each other's viewpoint.

Prior to examining Tony Abbot's *Crushing on a Capulet*, let us first explore the original story of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a play written by Shakespeare in (1597); it tells the story of two families involved in an enmity and two young lovers who belong to these feuding families which make their love hopeless. The story is set in Verona, Italy, where the Capulets and the Montagues are fighting each other until the prince threatens to banish them. Later, Lord Capulet decides to plan a masked ball and asks Paris to gain Juliet's love. Benvolio, Mercutio and Romeo hear about the party from a servant and decide to attend in hopes that Romeo meet his love Rosaline, instead he meets Juliet and falls in love with her.

Both Romeo and Juliet declare their love for each other and decide to marry. With the assistance of Friar Laurence and Juliet's nurse they get married discreetly, hoping that their marriage will bring about reconciliation between the two families. The same day, the Montagues and Capulets get into a fight, while Romeo is trying to make peace and separate both Tybalt and Mercutio who are fighting, Tybalt stabs Mercutio and kills him.

Romeo gets involved in the fight and out of anger he kills Tybalt and runs away. Benvolio explains what has happened to the Prince and as a punishment, he decides to banish Romeo from Verona. When Juliet hears the news, she becomes overwhelmed by sorrow for her

beloved Romeo. To overcome the death of Tybalt and make Juliet happy, Lord and Lady Capulet decide to celebrate the marriage of Count Paris and Juliet. Juliet refuses and goes to Friar and asks for help; he suggests to her a potion that will make everyone believe that she is dead; in return Friar will send a messenger to inform Romeo about their plan. However, the messenger did not reach Romeo on time and he hears that Juliet is dead. He buys poison and goes to Juliet's tomb to kill himself in front of her after seeing her for the last time. When Juliet wakes up, she sees Romeo dead and learns the event that has unfolded from Friar. Friar asks Juliet to go with him but she refuses and stabs herself. The tragic ending of these two lovers plays an important role in the resolution of the two families.

The storyline in Tony Abbott's work is nearly the same as the Shakespearean one. Yet, Abbott creates a polemic in the plot by adding two characters "Devin" and "Frankie" who play a central role. The two students have travelled to Verona by a magical gate in which it is considered as a magical or fantastical element added by Abbott into a realistic setting to show the link between fantasy and reality. The so called "zapper gate" is designed to separate between the present and the past, in other words, a device that facilitates a shift in temporal perspectives, allowing individuals to move from their contemporary context into a historical or literary past. When the two students have arrived; they find themselves involved in the play and the first event they have faced is the fight between the two families where the Capulet's guard tries to capture them and accuse them of being Montague spies. Both Devin and Frankie are protected by Benvolio and this is how they start to be acquainted with the characters of the play and the events through the assistance of the original book that they have with them.

When the two students get to know Romeo, they find that he is in love with Rosaline that makes them wonder if this is a "Romeo and Juliet" or "Romeo and Rosaline" story (Abbott,2003, p.12); both of them reject Romeo's love for Rosaline. When they find out about the masked party that Lord Capulet is planning to arrange, they try to convince Romeo to

attend as Frankie claims, “you guys should definitely go. And Romeo might even see someone he likes.” (Ibid, p.14) She is referring to Juliet. As she declares,

Frankie. And did I mention that Capulet’s daughter Juliet will be there? Never heard of her, said Romeo.

Something tells me you will, I said with a little chuckle. The word is that she’s a babe. Everybody wants to marry her. But you can’t let that happen. Why not? asked Romeo, still scanning the paper.

Trust us, said Frankie. You gotta see her, you were meant for her. She’s ...she’s ... well, I don’t know what she is yet, but you just gotta! (Ibid, p.15)

This is how Romeo and Juliet meet at the ball. After the balcony scene Romeo goes to Friar to give him the good news and asks him to marry them. When Juliet arrives to Friar’s house with both Devin and Frankie, their wedding ceremony starts. Devin starts to have bad feeling and that something bad is going to happen in this play. He says to Frankie,

Frankie, I hate to say this, but I think Mr. Wexler was right. I have a feeling this story isn’t going to end well.

Frankie says: But it’s different now because we’re here. Maybe we can make things turn out all right. Maybe we could give what might be a tragedy a happy ending. (Abbott, 2003, pp.32-33)

The author here tries to turn the story in his favour and create a polemic to reject the tragic ending of the story. As Bakhtin states, “overt polemic is quite directed at another’s discourse, which it refutes, as if at its own referential object” (Bakhtin,1963, p.196); the sentence suggests that overt polemic treats the other person’s discourse as if it were its own point of reference or subject of discourse. In other words, a counter discourse is a form of discourse or communication that challenges or opposes societal norms and ideologies. It involves presenting alternative viewpoints, perspective, or narratives that counter or resist the mainstream discourse.

In the story, the two students decide to go back to the town where they come across both Mercutio, Benvolio and Tybalt who is coming toward them. While they are having a dispute, Romeo arrives; Tybalt sees him; he tries to tease Romeo to start a fight. Romeo tries to keep things calm but Tybalt has already his sword and starts to fight Mercutio whom he kills

under Romeo's arm. Romeo starts to fight Tybalt to take revenge when "Tybalt's gang" (Abbott,2003, p.35) arrive; to help, Frankie and Devin start to throw "baskets" on them because they are not supposed to be in the scene. While fighting, Tybalt loses his balance and falls "sideways onto Romeo's sword" (Ibid, p.36) and loses his life. Benvolio ask Devin and Frankie to take Romeo away otherwise the prince will sentence him to death. Instead, the prince punishes Romeo by exiling him from Verona by declaring,

Tybalt was a killer, and Romeo did kill a killer. For that offense, we exile him from fair Verona under penalty of death. Let Romeo leave now! For when he's found, that hour is his last (Ibid, p.36)

Devin and Frankie rush to tell Juliet the bad news but the nurse tells her alternatively. Juliet sends the nurse to get Romeo and says her last farewell to him. At the same time, Mrs. Capulet is arranging Juliet's wedding with Count Paris to come to an end to her sorrow. Frankie and Devin hear their conversation and want to inform both Romeo and Juliet, but Juliet's mother is heading to give the news to her daughter who is with Romeo in the room. Devin hurries and locks Mrs. Capulet. Both of them go to the room to tell the couple what has happened. Juliet knows about the arranged marriage she refuses but Mr. Capulet insists and forces her to marry Paris. Then, Juliet decides to go to Friar and ask for help. Devin, Frankie, Juliet and Friar are talking about all what has happened and Juliet threatens them to kill herself if Friar does not help; Frankie is trying to calm her down. Friar suggests a plan of faking her death by taking a potion that will take her into a deep sleep and make everyone believe that she is dead.

Krestiva explains that intertextuality is a way in which text are interconnected and influence each other. It encompasses the idea that no text exists in isolation; rather, it is shaped by and contributed to network of other texts. Since overt polemics is a direct discourse, texts often directly reference or quote other works. This can be done explicitly through allusions that assume the reader's familiarity with the referenced material. Coming back to the story of

Abbott we can notice in this part that he narrates the exact events of the original work of Shakespeare, since the characters he has added are supposed to live the same events of Romeo and Juliet.

The Capulets are preparing the wedding ceremony and decide to move it to Wednesday instead of Thursday which makes both Frankie and Devin worry because Romeo may not receive the message that Friar sends to inform him about their plan, so they decide to split themselves to help. Juliet in spite of her fears, drinks the potion and falls asleep, meanwhile Frankie goes to find Romeo as soon as possible as Frankie and Devin say,

I am thinking, Devin. And I'm thinking it's the only way. The only way to help these guys is to be in two places at once. Devin, we need to split up. (Frankie)  
That's risky, very risky. Plus, it's a bit too much like what's going on with the lovebirds. Splitting up is bad. (Devin)  
I know, she said. But if I go to Mantua to some scene with Romeo in it and you stay here to see that nothing bad happens to Juliet, just maybe we can pull this off. Devin, like they say in all the junky action movies ever made ... it's up to us. (Abbott,2003, p.44)

Bakhtin's theory provides a foundation for understanding how conflicts of ideas, opinion, and values can be expressed within the dynamics of language and discourse. Coming back to the story, when the nurse comes to Juliet's room to wake her up for her wedding, she finds her dead and starts to scream until they all gathered in the room. Devin is standing there observing the painful scene; he wants to tell them that she is just sleeping but he can not say a word as he thinks, "If everyone knew, the whole plan would go up in smoke. And that would be a real tragedy" (Ibid, p.47). Both Frankie and Devin make efforts to change the story and give it a happy ending. We can notice that from what they are doing in the play to find Romeo and let him know what is going on around,

Okay, maybe we should just try yelling real loud. Romeo's gotta appear in this scene sooner or later. When he does, we tell him the deal, swing by Verona, beep twice, Juliet scampers out of the tomb, they zoom off on their honeymoon, and everybody lives happily ever after! Frankie looked at me. You know, Devin, I'd really like the story to end that way. Let's make it happen. We'll give it our best shot! Romeo! Hey, Romeo! (Abbott,2003, p.49)

They even try to call him using Shakespearean language, as shown when Frankie is calling Romeo, “Romeo, Romeo, where art thou, Romeo” (Abbott,2003, p.49). A man approaches them and tells them that he has informed Romeo that his beloved Juliet is dead. Frankie gets furious and starts to scream at the man and tells him that Juliet is not dead; in fact, they faked everything and asks with anger where Romeo is; the man says that: “He was sad. If I remember correctly, he said something like, ‘my life is over.’ Maybe not exactly those words, but something like that” (Ibid, p.50). Then he goes to find “an apothecary” (Ibid, p.50). Both go to look for Romeo because they know he will kill himself if he buys the poison. Romeo also buys “an iron bar” (Ibid, p.51) to open Juliet’s tomb. Devin and Frankie move to the next scene where they discover that Romeo is heading to the tomb; they realise that the events are happening so fast that they might not succeed to change the story. Devin tells “Frankie, we’re losing it!” “I’m not giving up!” she said (Frankie) “Let’s go!” (Ibid, p.52) this shows that they really intend and insist on changing the storyline.

## **2. Tony Abbott counter-versing Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*:**

When they arrive to Juliet’s tomb, they see both Paris and Romeo who are about to have a fight because Paris is accusing Romeo of doing something bad even to dead people. Then both of them get into a fight; Frankie intervenes to stop them but Romeo turns aside and loses his sword, by accident it hits Paris and he dies. Before Romeo does something to himself, Frankie and Devin think that is it the right moment to tell him about their plan.

Maybe it already is, she said, holding the book up. Maybe we can’t change it. It’s like a train wreck happening in slow motion. It’s going to happen. I know it is. Our happy ending is crumbling right before our eyes  
I looked at her. Then I shook my head. No, I won’t believe it, Frankie. You and me. We can change things. We can make them good. I know we can.  
Come on. Come on (Ibid, p.53)

Both the students take the opportunity and start to convince Romeo that Juliet is still alive; she only took a potion which took her into a deep sleep. Moreover, they mentioned

Shakespeare and say that he is the guy who wrote this play and take off their costumes to show him the writer; they are wearing Shakespeare's T-shirts,

Romeo! I said. She's alive. She's alive. (Devin) Believe us, said Frankie. She's just sleeping.

[...]

Romeo, I said, we know Juliet's alive (Devin)

Devin, said Frankie, are you sure—

We know it ... because ... take a look at this! (Devin)

[...]

This is the guy who wrote the story you're in, I said. That's right, a story by a guy named Shakespeare! Frankie and I are reading it. Friar Laurence gave Juliet a sleeping potion. (Abbott,2003, p.54)

Taking off their costumes is a mistake; they did not know that once they take their disguise costumes off, they will be out of the play and the characters can no longer see them. But for them it was their only hope to show Romeo the facts and modify the events,

Taking off our costumes was the biggest mistake ever.

We could tell just by looking at Romeo, that the instant we were out of costume, we were suddenly out of the play. We were no more than two people in the audience. It was as if Romeo could no longer see or hear us. (Ibid, p.54)

In this scenario, the author employs a literary technique known as “counterargument” to express disagreement with the original work. This involves presenting a conflicting viewpoint and introducing elements that directly challenge or contradict the narrative. The author utilises dramatic scenes, particularly the moment when the two students remove their costumes, to intensify the emotional impact and create a contrast with the original work. Furthermore, the author manipulates the narrative trajectory by adding key plot points to lead the story in a new direction. By introducing modifications to the storyline, the author aims to guide the audience towards a specific interpretation or opinion, encouraging them to favour the new direction proposed in the counterargument.

Devin and Frankie are disappointed and sad since they could not revise the sequence of events; they say, “Oh, man!” “This is too sad! And we couldn't do a thing! We couldn't do a stupid thing” (Ibid, p.54). Friar arrives and sees what has happened and the two students

show up again after putting on their costumes anew. When Juliet wakes up, she asks both Frankie and Devin where Romeo is; Friar tells to her to leave the place and her husband Romeo is dead. She does not believe the fact that he is dead and stays there starring at him and then sees the poison Romeo has taken. Frankie tries to pick Juliet to quit the place because some guards are coming. Juliet finds a dagger, kills herself and lies besides Romeo. It is a real tragedy everyone is lying there dead. Devin and Frankie add,

I glanced at Frankie.  
She looked at me.  
Yeah. It was a tragedy, all right.  
And we couldn't stop it or change it. (Abbott,2003, p.56)

A tragedy is a genre of literature, drama, or other art forms that depicts serious and dark events, usually involving the downfall or suffering of main characters. Tragedies often explore the concept of fate and destiny, as in *Romeo and Juliet* suggesting that certain events are preordained and inevitable. Despite the characters' efforts to change their circumstances, the narrative opens in a way that leads to a tragic outcome. Regarding this part, all the characters who remains alive show off and they learn about the tragedy that has happened. Friar explains to the prince and to all the others the love story of Romeo and Juliet; when he has finished, Devin and Frankie tell them that they have tried to stop this tragic ending but they could not and also they blame the two families because everything has happened due to their feud as they state,

I just wanted to say that everybody, the friar, me, Frankie, Benvolio, everybody tried to stop all these folks from dying. But we just ... couldn't.... (Devin) It's true, said Frankie, wiping her face and taking over when I got too choked up. We wanted a happy ending to the story. We tried lots of stuff, but we just couldn't change it. The only way the ending could have been changed is if ... if ... (Ibid, p.57)

The prince listens to what they have said and he agrees with them and asks the two families to solve their problems since their loath has only caused many dead bodies including their children. Both Mr. Capulet and Mr. Montague take each other's hand and morn together. Mr.

Montague says that he will build a statue for Juliet to remind Verona of her and Capulet adds that a statue of Romeo should join her. The story ends with the prince making a speech. Time has arrived to both Frankie and Devin to leave and go back to their school when a sudden light appears in the tomb; it is the zipper gate they slip into it and come back to the library room. Mr. Wexler and Mrs. Figglehopper find them with the costumes on, both of them are now ready to perform the play and head to the cafeteria; they are pretty confident that they can play the story very well since they have lived it. They have tried their best to make the story funny but “a tragedy is a tragedy” (Ibid, p.59); at the end, they have accepted the sad ending of the play in spite of their efforts to give it a happy ending.

### **3. Parody of *Romeo and Juliet* in *Crushing on a Capulet*:**

Some writers reinterpret ancient works with the intention of adding some entertainment and humour to the new versions as Bakhtin explains, “The situation is different with parody. Here, as in stylization, the author again speaks in someone else’s discourse, but in contrast to stylization, parody introduces into the discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one” (Bakhtin, 1963, p.238). Bakhtin suggests that there is a difference between stylization and parody. In stylization, the author takes the original work without necessarily opposing it, rather he introduces it with his own style. However, in parody the author creates a new discourse by copying an existing work as a way to make fun or critique the original one. The primary objective of a parodist is to make the reader laugh. Abbott’s *Crushing on a Capulet* uses parody on Shakespeare’s language to help young readers reduce their fear while reading his works. Abbott in the first pages of his work focuses on mocking the Shakespearean language.

In the first chapters of the book the author is making fun of the Shakespearean language by his two characters Frankie and Devin who are asked by their teacher Mr. Wexler to perform Romeo’s and Juliet’s roles. The mockery starts when Mr. Wexler is reading some lines from the play and Devin says, “Mr. Wexler, the last time I checked, you were an English

teacher. But you're not talking English. You're talking some other language. A weird one" (Abbott,2003, p.4). This shows the complexity of the language to the students which leads them to criticise it by adding,

Devin, then the sign wasn't written in good English  
Neither is this, said Frankie, turning the book every which way. The words are all crazy. [...]. I guess people had more time on their hands back then. They needed it to figure out what the other people were saying! (Ibid, p.4)

In spite that the author makes some critics to mock the Shakespearean language. However, he appears to be using Mr. Wexler and the librarian Mrs. Figglehopper viewpoint to defend it against the criticisms previously made. This might imply that the author is arguing that Shakespearean language is worth studying and appreciating, even if it appears challenging at first when she says: "It's not that hard to understand! she boomed. Besides, a good story is a good story Quite right, added Mr. Wexler." (Abbott,2003, p.5). While parody is used by writers to draw attention to some elements by imitating a work and generating a humorous effect, it may have some negative effects when the author starts to exaggerate in describing a feature. For example, in chapter two of *Crushing on a Capulet*, Devin describes the Shakespearean language as a "headache" and "that stuff" (Ibid, p.6) and Frankie adds, "I can't even read this !" [...], shutting the book. "It's like somebody is punishing my brain—but my brain didn't do anything wrong" (Ibid, p.6). This can be considered as an attack against Shakespeare, but the author, again to diminish his critics, gives responses that reject such criticism. Devin gives to Frankie an answer in which he criticises his brain instead of the language by saying, "For sure. It usually doesn't do anything at all" (Ibid, p.6). Moreover, the author keeps his work comic by making fun of the names of the original characters. When Devin and Frankie are caught by the Capulet's guards they consider them as being Montague spies, so one of the guards says,

Silence, you, you—Montague! snarled one of the men, drawing shapes around my head with his sword. Draw your blade and fight us!

It's plastic! I said, showing him how the toy sword bent every which way.  
Besides,  
I'm not this Monty Glue you're looking for. I'm Devin Bundy— (Ibid, p.9)

Parody in literature adds a comic touch by putting on some humour and exaggerated imitations in addition to, commenting on or criticizing a particular idea. By imitating an existing work, the writer can spot the displeasing events of a story and offer a different perspective. Furthermore, it makes the work livelier and pleasant which gives an enjoyable and memorable experience to the readers.

#### **4. Stylization of *Romeo and Juliet* in *Crushing on a Capulet*:**

Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary critic and philosopher, had a significant impact on the study of literature and language. His broader concepts provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how styles and voices interact, clash and transform within a cultural and artistic context. When considering stylization through Bakhtin, one might explore how different styles engage in a dynamic interplay, contributing to the richness and complexity of cultural expression.

##### **4.1 Interpretation of the Setting:**

*Crushing on a Capulet* is a modern retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. While the basic plot of the two stories is the same, Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* tries to simplify and modernise the story by adding some modern touches. The story takes place in modern times. At school, the two students Frankie and Devin are supposed to perform the play in the school cafeteria; they are taken by accident to Verona, Italy, through a magical gate where the original play has taken place. Frankie announces as they arrive, "What I mean is, this looks a lot like the stage set in the cafeteria, only it's really real. I think that's weird" (Abbott,2003, p.8). Since this new adaptation is meant to be addressed to young audience in the purpose of overcoming their fear while reading Shakespeare's works, the author stylises the plot by adding

some descriptions to the play to help the reader visualise the story and attract him/her. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare does not give a description of Juliet's room, while in *Crushing on a Capulet*, Abbott describes Juliet's room as being "all pink and frilly" (Abbott,2003, p.17); he describes the garden above Juliet's balcony:

The garden we were in was small and square and filled with tall gangly plants and big fluffy flowers above us hung Juliet's balcony. Just for the record, it was about twenty feet high, with all kinds of branches and vines creeping up to it from the garden below. (Ibid, p.24)

The author also describes the way out of the city and draws out the countryside around, "The countryside around us was beautiful. On each side were big meadows and rolling hills, and here and there little stone houses with gardens and bunches of sheep and goats grazing" (Abbott,2003, p.27). The students also give some descriptions to old Verona as Devin describes:

I mean, here we are in old Verona. We have no homework hanging over our heads. The birds are tweeting. The air is clean. The sheepies go baaa. And the grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night, checking the eastern clouds with streaks of light. (Ibid, p.27)

These descriptions, the modern touches and creative reimagining that the author adds to Shakespeare's work can indeed make the play more accessible and engaging for contemporary readers. By incorporating elements like magic and the use of a flipping book to transition between scenes, the author not only introduces a sense of wonder and excitement but also simplifies complex plot structures for modern audiences. Infusing Shakespearean works with a modern touch and a touch of magic can indeed breathe new life into these classics. The author emphasises that when an artist reproduces someone else's style, they may not fully capture the original context or intention behind that style. The connection to the original creator's context is indirect or implied rather than explicitly conveyed in the new work. (Bakhtin, 1963, p.195)

## 4.2 Abbott's Use of Language:

*Crushing on a Capulet* is part of the Cracked classics series that is meant to middle grade children. The book is designed to simplify the story of *Romeo and Juliet* and make it accessible to young readers who may find Shakespeare's language difficult. Readers once confronted with a piece of literature, may appreciate the story but not resonate with the author's style. Style is highly subjective and vary from one author to another, as well as from one piece of literature to the next. The fact that each writer has its own style of writing adds richness and variety to the literary world. Some writers may write the same literary work and because of their different styles the pieces may differ as Bakhtin states in his work "what is important to the stylizer is the sum total of devices associated with the other's speech" (Bakhtin,1963, p.234); it suggests that the stylizer values not just the content of the other person's speech but also all the techniques, methods, and devices used in that speech. These could include stylistic choices, or the overall structure of the discourse. For example, *Crushing on a Capulet* is an exact retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* but because of the different periods of time and style, Abbott has produced a work which revived Shakespeare's play in his own way, and by using some of the Shakespearean language.

Shakespeare wrote in a poetic style, while Abbott uses a different structure, vocabulary and mood. In *Crushing on a Capulet*, the language is modernised since it is written in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which language has changed and developed to fit the new generations. However, to give credit to the original writer of *Romeo and Juliet*, Abbott uses some of his vocabulary when both Mr. Wexler and Mrs. Figgleshopper practice some lines from the original book and when both Devin and Frankie travel through a magical gate to find themselves performing roles in the story of Shakespeare. The new characters in some parts of the play were obliged to use the Shakespearean language to get along with the play. For example,

Frankie, because she had been doing most of the reading, had been sort of stung by the Shakespeare bug. Romeo! she called out. Romeo, Romeo, where art thou, Romeo! (Frankie)

That's when we heard it. You there! (man)

The voice came from a nearby doorway. We spotted a young man just stepping into the street. Dost thou seek Romeo of Verona? (man) I gasped.

Frankie, he's talking Shakespeare! (Devin)

Yes! Frankie said to the man. We do seek Romeo! (Abbott,2003, p.49)

Before getting involved in the play, the characters face difficulties understanding Shakespeare's language, but when they have got the chance to get into the play and perform it, they start to understand and use some of its vocabulary, because Shakespeare's plays are meant to be performed in order to appreciate them, not to be read which is the case with Devin and Frankie.

Abbott has even copied sentences from the original work; he makes some modifications in terms of structure, he manages to combine two different styles; his own style and Shakespeare, to bring to life the source play to this new generation without struggling with the ancient language. Moreover, he adapts the play to the modern linguistic requirements, he uses some abbreviations in his work which is common nowadays. For instance, calling Juliet "Jules" and Mrs.Capulet "Mrs.C" (Ibid, pp.1718). These rectifications will allow this new audience to enjoy and get more interested in reading archaic works.

## **5.Stylization of the Themes of *Romeo and Juliet* in *Crushing on a Capulet*:**

### **5.1 Love and Fate:**

The theme of love and fate in William Shakespeare's play is central to the tragic story. Love is portrayed as a force that transcends social boundaries and expectations. Romeo's and Juliet's love is intense, defying their families' feud. Their passion for each other is strong that they are willing to risk everything including their lives to be together. Even after discovering each other's name, both of them complain about the social restrictions that prevent them from

being together as Juliet says, “O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? / Deny thy father and refuse thy name” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.43). Romeo also hates the idea of being a Montague and Juliet as a Capulet because they can never be united due to their feuding families, but their love is solid that Romeo complains:

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. (Ibid, p.43)

Their love makes them blind; they could not accept the idea of not being a couple; they decide to get married without even their families' permission which may make things even worse. Moreover, Juliet takes the risk of drinking a sleeping potion that will take her into a deep sleep and look like she is dead to cancel her marriage with Paris and again be with Romeo, but this plan has led to the death of the lovers at the end. The tragic ending of Romeo and Juliet shows how much these two love each other; they choose to die rather than live without one another. And it is because of their love that the two families have reconciled at the end.

On the other hand, fate can be depicted as an external, uncontrollable force that influence the lives of the characters. From the prologue, Romeo and Juliet are suggested to be “star-crossed lovers” (Ibid, p.5) emphasising that their love is marked by fate, “A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life” (Ibid, p.5). Throughout the play, Romeo and Juliet face obstacles which prevent them from being together, starting from the enmity of their families; when Romeo kills Tybalt, Juliet's cousin this push the Capulets to hate him even more, Romeo expresses his unhappiness by saying, “O, I am fortune's fool” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.76). Later in the story, Friar, who is an important character who attempts to manipulate fate to bring positive outcome for Romeo and Juliet, makes a plan to unite the lover by faking Juliet's death and then sends Romeo a message to tell him the plan and where they can be reunited again; unfortunately, the letter does not arrive to Romeo due to a plague which can be seen as a work

of fate. The Friar exclaims by saying, “unhappy fortune” (Shakespeare,1597, p.125). The elements of chance highlight the idea that fate plays a relevant role in determining the flow of the events. The element of fate is often a central in many tragedies, it plays a significant role in shaping the tragic events that unfold.

Abbott, also shows the themes of love and fate. Both stories feature a love that is forbidden due to the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets. *Crushing on a Capulet* narrates the exact story of *Romeo and Juliet* by modernising it to the young readers to make it more reachable. In *Crushing on a Capulet*, the main characters are sixth graders who are transported into Shakespeare’s famous love story and try to save and change the fate of the star crossed lovers. The book portrays Romeo’s crush on Juliet, as a Capulet. Romeo’s love for Juliet is passionate and impulsive, leading him to take severe actions to be with her which is also the case with Juliet, as she is willing to give up her identity as a Capulet as she says, “Or if thou will not, be but sworn my love, and I’ll no longer be a Capulet” (Shakespeare,1597, p.43). Also Abbott expresses Romeo’s hate to his name using the exact expression as Shakespeare by saying, “My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself, because it is an enemy to thee” (Abbott,2003, p.25). Both Romeo and Juliet know that their love is impossible because of their surroundings, but their willingness to be together demonstrates the strength of their love. They decide to meet at Friar’s house with the help of Juliet’s nurse and both Devin and Frankie to get married. Romeo speaks to Juliet, “Then death do what he will. It is enough that I may call her mine” (Abbott,2003, p.32). Their words are filled with love, devotion and the desire to be united as one. Moreover, when Romeo is banished from Verona, Juliet goes to Friar’s house to ask for help; he then suggests a plan for her to take a potion that will make her appear dead. The plan involves Juliet being placed in the Capulet family tomb, and the Friar sending a letter to Romeo informing him of the situation. The intention of this plan is to

reunite the two lovers after Romeo rescues Juliet from the tomb. This shows the risks that both Romeo and Juliet take to be together.

Richard Olmann's definition of style aligns with the understanding that style is the manner in which a writer expresses their thoughts. This concept implies that there are various ways in which language can be utilized to convey the same idea or thought (Andrew Nyongesa, p.1) which is seen in the theme of fate that is also present in Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet*. As portrayed in Shakespeare's work, fate is an outside element that reigns over the lives of the characters, leading to the tragic ending. However, the new characters, Frankie and Devin, that Abbott has added, find difficulties to accept the fact that Romeo and Juliet are going to die at the end. The students when they have arrived to Verona, start to learn and discover the play, the characters, and the events. Likewise, in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the two characters encounter many barriers that prevent them get to unite united. The feud between the two families is an external force that controls the lives of the lovers and push them to hate their names. Several other chance events occur throughout the play, leading to the lover's downfall. For example, just after the secret marriage of Romeo and Juliet, Romeo gets into a fight with Tybalt and kills him after Tybalt kills Romeo's best friend Mercutio; Romeo blames fortune and claims, "I am fortune's fool" (Abbott,2003, p.36). Frankie and Devin are important characters who attempt to influence and change the fate of the lovers to prevent their death. Both of them support the plan of Friar and decide to take actions because the plan is not working as planned and the events are moving quickly as the main goal of the author is to simplify the play and its language to the new audience by introducing the two characters. Frankie goes to look for Romeo in hope to find him and tell him about the plan, and Devin stays with Juliet to watch her and make sure nothing bad happens to her. Unfortunately, Frankie comes back without finding Romeo and that she has come back because the guard thinks that she is carrying a plague. She tells,

I haven't even found the guy! I spent the entire time just getting to this point here! First, I flipped too far ahead, then I flipped back. When I finally wound up here, the Mantuan guards chased me all around because I had come from Verona and they thought I was carrying the plague or something. (Frankie) The plague? I said. Why would you carry one of those around? (Devin) She shrugged. From the way they talked, it's some kind of bad disease. (Frankie) Eew. (Abbott,2003, p.49)

The students are sad and disappointed, but they do not want to give up and still search for Romeo mainly when they get informed by a man that Romeo knows about Juliet's death.

Frankie and Devin go to Juliet's tomb because they know that they will find Romeo there. When they have arrived, they try to explain to him what has happened and this is a play written by a playwright named Shakespeare; they take off their costumes to show him the writer's name on their T-shirts, but this action makes them out of the play; Romeo can no longer see or hear them. Renaissance and modern times, although they share some common values, also have different characteristics. A complete combining of the two may dilute the essence of each era and prevent a true understanding of its historical context. Frankie adds, "It was like shouting at a movie screen" (Ibid, p.54). Both Romeo and Juliet end up by killing themselves and the new characters could not do anything and finally give up by saying, "Yeah. It was a tragedy, all right" (Ibid, p.56). "And we couldn't stop it" (Ibid, p.57). It shows that the intention of the author is to revive and bring to life *Romeo and Juliet* to young readers in an accessible way by not changing the story or giving it a new perspective because Shakespeare's works are considered to be some of the greatest works and have had an impact on literature.

## **5.2 Conflict:**

Conflict is another central element in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and also in Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet*. Bakhtin in his work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* he clarifies, "the stylizer uses another's discourse precisely as other" (Bakhtin,1963, p.234)

which suggests that when someone stylises or reinterprets another person's discourse, they do so in a manner that is almost identical to the original work, treating it as something separate or distinct by adding their own creative touches. Abbott presents the theme of conflict as in the original work but by adding his personal touch. The conflict is presented through the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets which Shakespeare has mentioned in the prologue by describing, "Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona, where we lay our scene, from ancient grudge break to new mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hand unclean" (Shakespeare, 1597, p.5). Shakespeare shows that the conflict between the two households is ongoing and is not likely to stop. Abbott also shows the theme of conflict in his new version; when the new characters arrive to Verona, the first thing that they have witnessed is the fight between the two families and this scene makes them think that these families are in a quarrel. Frankie claims, "But I'm thinking maybe these Montague and Capulet guys are sort of like enemies" (Abbott, 2003, p.9). And she adds, "And I think they're having a whopper of a family feud. With us in the middle" (Ibid, p.9).

In addition, there is Romeo and Juliet's inner conflict. Romeo experiences a profound conflict between his deep love for Juliet and his loyalty to his family. He is initially in love with Rosaline, but when he meets Juliet at the Capulet's party, he falls in love with her. Throughout the play, Romeo is exposed to a range of intense emotions, from love and passion to despair and grief. His inner conflict is often a result of these emotional swings. Besides, Juliet's conflict is when she discovers the real identity of her lover and cannot change the fact that she loves someone who is supposed to be her enemy; as she complains, "I must love a loathed enemy" (Abbott, 2003, p.22). Romeo also has expressed his feeling when he has discovered Juliet being a Capulet by exclaiming, "Is she a Capulet? Then ... my love ... is my enemy?" (Ibid, p.22). Additionally, the conflict between Romeo and Tybalt represents the ongoing feud between the two families. Tybalt presumes that Romeo has dishonoured his

family by attending the Capulet's party "Tybalt is angry with Romeo for breaking into the Capulet party last night and dancing with his cousin Juliet" (Abbott,2003, p.30) says Mercutio to Devin and Frankie. So Tybalt thinks that Romeo must pay and offers to duel him. This fight has led to the death of both Tybalt and Mercutio and has deepened the enmity between the two families. The theme of conflict in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Crushing on a Capulet* results in a series of tragic consequences including loss of lives, violence, unfulfilled love and missed opportunities.

**Chapter Two: James Hartley's *Cold Fire* (2018): An Intertextual Dialogic Study**

# **1. Hidden Polemic Over Characters and Plot of *Cold Fire* in Relation to *Romeo and Juliet*:**

## **1.1 Hidden Polemic Through the Main Character Gillian in Relation to Juliet:**

Bakhtin views the concept of hidden polemic as crucial aspect of his literary theory and analysis. According to, Bakhtin believed that hidden polemic is a concept that refers to the presence of another's discourse within a text which is not overtly expressed but is implicitly present. In other words, hidden polemic is a form of ideological confrontation in which an author uses of indirect or subtle language to attack or to criticize a certain belief. This can be seen in works of literature where an author uses a character or plot device to criticize a particular opinion without explicitly stating it.

For any reader, when they see the title of the book *Cold Fire*, they cannot guess the true meaning of the story which means for the author that moment when two souls fuse. The story James Hartley recounts is considered as a good introduction to Shakespeare's work for children and young audience. For instance, from the start of the novel, we are directly plunged into the thoughts of the central character Gillian as she laments "I can be calm and perfect like the sea tonight or I can be dark and frightening like the sea at home it all depends on my mood and sometimes I can't control my moods" (Hartley, 2018, p.7). Gillian is introduced as a character who is feeling that life and her emotions are very difficult to control. She is described as a complex protagonist who suffers from life and family issues. Her moods are the weather of the soul and she is struggling with her mind, with the weather, with her own moods and with school. She is described as a miserable, unhappy teenager in her own world

of books, and music where she feels lonely, and sad around her family as she says “feeling lonely when you were surrounded by the people you were supposed to love the most” (Ibid, p.7). The main character Gillian catches a glance of a naked boy on the school football pitch, who is later appeared to be Romeo, her love interest. The author introduced her as his female character, a student in a boarding Scottish school in S.t Francis like Abbott’s setting, around an entire group of teenagers Kizzie, Zak, Sol and Angela.

In William Shakespeare’s work, Juliet plays a central role. He presents his female protagonist as the young daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet. Juliet is initially portrayed as an obedient, and naïve girl who is respectful of her mother’s authority. She is profoundly in love with Romeo the son of her enemy’s family, and marries him in secret, with the help of the Nurse and Friar Lawrence. Juliet is a headstrong character when she refuses to marry Paris, and this shocks her father which means for him that she does not obey him. She is also described as an intelligent, and courageous woman who takes a drastic action to ensure her relationships, and her future life with Romeo by making decisive choices, as she fakes her own death so to be with Romeo.

From this description of main characters, we notice that, Hartley introduced his protagonist with modifying her name into Gillian in the aim of creating a hidden polemic especially among the readers who would read this work in the light of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. “hidden polemical is a double-voiced, although the interrelationship of the two voices here is a special one. The other’s thought does not personally make its way inside the discourse; but is only reflected in it, determining its tone and its meaning” (Bakhtin,1963, p.196).The author takes his time to hide certain aspects of his character Gillian, who is a protagonist not directly known to the readers or the audience as being derived from Shakespeare’s play by representing her with different background. This means that the author hides certain things from the readers, as he produces a sense of mystery and discovery by

hiding the true identity of the character for the readers. They will try to piece together the hidden meaning and to reveal the character's true identity, by understanding the character's actions, and paying attention to certain behaviours of the main protagonist that give away the true identity of the character to the reader, and that can help him/her to figure out who the character really is. This can make the story more attractive, interesting, and engaging for the readers; he adds also a sense of uncertainty in his character Gillian as the readers can not notice directly that Gillian is the main character Juliet while recounting his story.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare presents his female character Juliet in a clear way that makes the reader understand the main character directly. While, in *Cold Fire*, there is a hidden polemic that can be defined according to Bakhtin "in the hidden polemic, however, discourse is directed toward an ordinary referential object, naming it, portraying, expressing, and only indirectly striking a blow at the other's discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself." (Bakhtin, 1963, p.196). In other words, hidden polemic is also an internally polemical discourse that is not instantly visible to the reader as the reader is required to read between the lines to identify the hidden meaning. An author can communicate his perspective without openly expressing his/her viewpoints, which is necessary for comprehending the multiple perspective, and voices introduced in the literary text.

## **1.2 Hidden Polemic in *Cold Fire* Through the Male Character the Naked**

### **Boy in Relation to Shakespeare's Romeo:**

James Hartley represents his male character Romeo, or naked boy in a hidden polemical way in contrast to the original of the play. In *Cold Fire*, the author describes the naked boy as an imaginative boy, who finds himself naked at boarding school, in the playing fields speaking in a foreign language, Latin; a weird individual unable to remember his name, and pretending his name like Romeo. The only thing that seems essential for him is Gillian as

he declares “I did it because I love you that’s all” (Hartley,2018, p.36). In Shakespeare’s text, Romeo is the son of Lord and Lady Montague; a smart guy, and loyal friend who is obsessed by Rosaline, but when he meets Juliet, they fall in love with each other. Romeo is described as immature, and a complex character who quickly changes his moods as hasty and impetuous.

We can say, that James Hartley sheds new light on his character with adding a new element, and producing a sense of mystery in the main character of the story. The author portrays his protagonist as imaginative boy that was created by Kizzie by hiding his identity and making it more genuine, as the main character Romeo is intentionally hidden to the readers; he has not made the character clear enough for them. The writer creates a sense of suspense and anticipation in his story by keeping the true identity of a character hidden in which this can slow down the pacing of the story as the reader becomes more invested in the mystery and wants to know the character’s true identity in which this adds a depth and complexity to the story that make the readers try to uncover the hidden meaning, and attempt to reveal the true existence of the character.

### **1.3 Hidden Polemic in *Cold Fire* Through the Plot:**

James Hartley uses hidden polemic through the plot in order to make his story more enjoyable, engaging and amusing for readers in the aim of creating a provoking and meaningful story by setting it in the magical boarding school of ST Francis, where a group of teenagers become involved in the love story of Romeo and Juliet. For example, in the book *Cold Fire*, when Gillian and the other girls set off somewhere in the running walking of the school they notice a small group of students near the centre circle of football where they see the boy and she comes around the boy, she remembered him from Italy holidays then Romeo’s eyes smiled at her and the love poured into Gillian’s heart, meanwhile, a group of prefects were circling the boy and ordered the students to go away from the boy.

From this paragraph, it is apparent that the author uses hidden details that are hard to catch at first view but can be found if the readers look or seek for them. For instance, Hartley describes the meeting of Gillian and Romeo in subtle aspects as they did not discover each other's identity and did not have a conversation between them. However, this is done in the purpose of building up a hidden polemic that can produce a feeling of suspense and tension that can slow down the pacing of the story, in the aim of keeping the readers guessing and creating a sense of anticipation, and letting them more invested in the plot. So the readers in the story will wait for the plot to be revealed, and try to understand how it fits into the story.

While, in *Romeo and Juliet*, in Act 1 Scene 1 Romeo and his friends Mercutio, and Benvolio appear in the house of Capulet wearing masks that disguise their true identities. Meanwhile, Romeo remarks Juliet over the room, and he is attracted by her beauty and his curiosity about the true identity of Juliet that lead him to ask the servants who she is. However, the servant does not know who she is. Despite the fact that he does not know her name Romeo engages with Juliet in a flirtatious conversation in which they share a warm connection, and they kiss each other and Juliet declaring "you kiss by the book" (Shakespeare, 1597, p.36).

To sum up, we notice that in Shakespeare's text, he made a clear description to his plot with giving the important details, which are visible and obvious to understand for the readers, while in the plot of *Cold Fire*, the author uses the plot in a way that is not immediately apparent to the readers. He used the main characters and different events to present his own opinion, in order to create a complex, and interesting story that explores controversial themes.

Hartley, utilises hidden polemic in his book through the event of the wedding between Romeo and Gillian. The meeting of the balcony which is considered as romantic, and pivotal moment that demonstrates the intensity of Romeo and Juliet's love, that shows the obstacles that they must face to be together. In addition, Romeo and Gillian arrange to meet the next

day in the dips, without telling anyone except her friends Kizzie, Zak and Angela. In the morning, Gillian tells her friend Kizzie to make her a favour to perform the ceremony of her wedding, and Kizzie was surprised by the news, that her friend is getting married this morning. She is wondering who can be the guy that she will marry, and Gillian says to her “the guy from the holiday” (Hartley, 2018, p.43).

Form this passage, it is clear that, the story introduces us to Shakespeare himself; according to the Act 2, Romeo suggests to Juliet to marry her and she accepts; also in the same Act 2 Scene 5, Juliet tells her nurse that “I’m going to get married” (Shakespeare,1597, p.67) nurse tells Juliet. “Then hide you hence to friar Lawrence’s cell.” “There stays a husband to make you a wife” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.67), which means that the Friar Lawrence, who marries Romeo and Juliet in secret without an audience.

Yet, in *Cold Fire*, the author uses hidden polemic through the wedding ceremony, by interpreting the main idea from the original work but in a subtle way. While, Gillian is speaking with her friend Kizzie about marriage “I ‘m going to get married” “the guy I was telling you about” (Hartley, 2018, p.43). We notice that she is talking about a boy that she meets in Italy during holidays, without mentioning his name as the author develops his events, and his characters slowly at the beginning of the story, and he does not reveal certain aspects, until the story become more detailed. From this, we could say that the author introduces his plot by employing hidden aspect, in order to explore a deeper meaning or a message in the story, and shed a fresh light on its importance, and relevance to contemporary issues and in making his story more charming, and notable by representing a unique perspective.

The real intention of the author, while using hidden polemic in his story is to express his strong opinion, and beliefs indirectly which may lead the readers to take into consideration the author perspective and worldview. In other words, Hartley tries to bring what he believes in, by using the notion of hidden polemic, in order to avoid referring to the subject explicitly

which can influence the reader's opinion, and encourage them to have a critical thinking, have a sense of discovery and prevent the story from becoming too obvious. Overall, the true intentions of the author in utilizing hidden polemic is to convince the reader about his story.

## **2. Homage in *Cold Fire* to the Main Characters Romeo and Juliet (Romeo and Gillian):**

James Hartley wrote *Cold Fire* which is set in a magical boarding school in Scotland, where a group of teenagers becomes implicated in the tale of Romeo and Juliet. But the whole idea of the author is to provide a modern context to the young reader, who find difficulties in reading the plays of Shakespeare and in order to see the plays from inside as he says through his words; from the start, his whole idea of Shakespeare's Moon books was not to retell Shakespeare's plays but to provide the useful keys to enable the young readers to penetrate inside Shakespeare's world.

In other words, the writer pays homage to the play of Shakespeare by introducing a series of book on purpose to present Shakespeare to modern audience in more reachable, and applicable way, but with keeping the original version of the story. As we can see, the book contains the concept of pastiche which refers to a creative work that imitates the style, form, or content of another author as way of paying respect or homage to great works of the past. For example, in *Cold Fire* the author imitates the characters of his book Gillian and Romeo in a memorable way that makes the story more interesting for the readers and easy to connect with emotionally. Moreover, the purpose of the author is capturing the essence of the original work by demonstrating his protagonists in an image of a star crossed lovers. For example, in the novel, the author borrows his characters from the original play with making some modifications.

In *Cold Fire*, Gillian is introduced as a modern character a student at a boarding school, and a young teenager who feels sad while living with her parents. She feels only in love with clam, dark ocean, and nature which she considered as her real family, but when she meets her Romeo in a costume party, she feels completely different not the same girl at all, and they share a passion, an intense feeling of love; then, later Gillian decides to leave the party with her father.

While in *Romeo and Juliet*, in Act 1 Scene 5, the house of Capulet organise a party or a masked ball in which all people keep a black mask in front of their eyes. Where Romeo is a Montague and his friend Mercutio, and Benvolio conceal their identities under masks. After a moment, Romeo meets Juliet, and they share a strong feeling, and they kiss each other. This shows pastiche, is meant to produce his own work by imitating the characters, and events, Gillian as Juliet, and the boy under the mask, as Romeo from the original work.

## **2.1 Pastiche in *Cold Fire* Over the Plot of *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo and Gillian):**

Moving to the next aspect, Hartley, imitates the famous balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* and he finds that it is a significant moment in the story where Gillian and Romeo declare their love for each other as the inclusion of the balcony scene serves to enhance the story's connection to the original play while also adding his own unique twist to the story. Within the scene of the balcony, in *Cold Fire*, Gillian is asking the boy about his name; she was trying to have answers to her questions. The boy was about to speak and he prefers to say that "call me Romeo no? I think it is prefect and you Juliet?" (Hartley, 2018, p.35). From this passage we notice that, the author adds the balcony scene and imitates certain aspect of the main character from *Romeo and Juliet*, in order to integrate them into his work. He uses pastiche

via characters and events that permit him to pay honour and show respect to William Shakespeare, while producing something original fresh and innovative as a work of art.

However, the author adds a feminist perspective on the female character Gillian as Shakespeare has never done. It challenged the traditional gender roles of the time which the bard did not dare to do. During the Renaissance, women were often perceived as subordinate to men, confined to domestic roles, and expected to adhere strictly to societal norms and expectations. Their primary purpose was seen as being wives and mothers, with limited rights and agency. Women were often subject to their fathers' authority until they were married off, after which they became subject to their husbands' authority. However, Juliet, as portrayed by Shakespeare, challenges these norms. She is intelligent, passionate, and independent-minded, which was quite unconventional for women during that era. Juliet defies her family's expectations by falling in love with Romeo, a member of their rival house, and she actively participates in their secret romance. Juliet's willingness to defy her family, make her own choices, and pursue her desires especially in matters of the heart highlights a departure from the typical portrayal of women in Renaissance society. Her boldness in pursuing love outside the boundaries set by her family and society's expectations showcases a sense of agency and autonomy that was not commonly associated with women during that period.

A writer who uses pastiche frequently imitates the style of the original work. This can be done by mimicking the style that helps the pastiche to feel like it is a continuation to the original text. But with infusing a feminist perspective to the female character Shakespeare has introduced, Hartley challenges the traditional gender roles of that time which demonstrates agency, autonomy and strength of women. For instance, when Gillian says to Romeo “they’re going to kill you if they find you here” (Hartley,2018, p.36). This sentence demonstrates the connection between the original work and the work of Hartley. Writing similar sentences in modern form to pay homage to him such as in *Romeo and Juliet* act 2 scene 2, Juliet says to

Romeo they're going to kill you if they find you here" (Shakespeare,1597, p.44). When Romeo is in the Capulet orchard, Juliet warns him that if her parents find him there they will kill him. In *Cold Fire*, it is the same thing; Gillian says to Romeo "they're going to kill you if they find you here" (Hartley, 2018, p.36). When Romeo is in the boarding school, Gillian tells him that if the member of the school finds him, they will kill him.

Furthermore, we can say that Gillian's willingness to sacrifice her safety and reputation for love, can be seen as a reflection of power and an act of agency, as she takes an active role in protecting Romeo and their relationship. This demonstrates her strength, courage and determination to pursue her own decisions. The author portrayed his female protagonist, as a strong and independent women capable of following her own path that challenges the traditional gender role, the notion that women should prioritise obedience and conformity. In other words, the author has described his character, Gillian, as a girl who can take care of her life with making her own choices based on her own desires. To sum up, Hartley imitates directly the original play as a tribute to the original writer and to commemorate his past achievements.

The arrival of will Shakespeare in cold fire as a writer and young teacher from Stratford upon Avon at the magical boarding school of St Francis 400years earlier to look for work is a pastiche that imagines Shakespeare's arrival in London and his early years as a playwright. As Hartley creates a link between the past and the present to connect his story to Shakespeare's work in the aim of paying a tribute to Shakespeare 's enduring legacy and his influence on literature and culture. The inclusion of will Shakespeare in the novel serves to pay homage to the original play while also enriching the storyline and adding a layer of historical and literary significance to the plot. Adding to that the phrase four hundred years earlier serves as reminder of Shakespeare 's timeless relevance and enduring popularity in the world of theatre and literature.

The presence of Gillian's friend Kizzie performing the ceremony, along with the involvement of other characters like Zak and Athy, suggests that this wedding ceremony scene is significant to the story. The fact that Alain warns them about the dangerous nature of a character Romeo. It is obvious, in *Romeo and Juliet* that the wedding is considered as a private affair and the couple are obliged to hold their marriage in secret without any guests; this is why the two families are in feud, and they would never approve their relationship. This indicates that their link should be kept in secret with the Friar Lawrence who performs the ceremony and the company of her nurse only. From this passage, we might say that the author uses references by borrowing from Shakespeare, in the purpose of creating a new literary work with being loyal to the original text.

James Hartley, adds also a scene that pays homage to the literary work of Shakespeare by writing the same ending to his story. In *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo discovers the death of his lover, he expresses his pain by declaring "my love, my love." "my wife, my darling wife" (Shakespeare, 1597, p.130). In the Capulet grave yard, he declares that he cannot live without his lover Juliet; he drinks the poison and stayed next to her tomb. Later, Juliet wakes up after her fake death; she discovers that Romeo is dead, then she decides to kill herself by a sword and follows him. While, in *Cold Fire* when Romeo finds a dead body on the snow, under a small shelter, he knows that she is Gillian his wife; he declares "my love, my love." "My wife, my darling wife" (Hartley, 2018, p.113) where he finds her "pale" "very grey" "her eyes wide open" (Ibid, p.113). He tries to keep her warm by covering her with his clothes, but it is too late; she is dead and he lays next to her till he freezes. After that, Gillian opens her eyes, and she realizes that her Romeo is dead, and convinces herself that she cannot live without him, and kills herself by a small dagger of her husband to join him.

In this description of the events, we notice that Hartley uses some similar words that appear in *Romeo and Juliet* like “my love, my darling wife, and my wife” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.130). In this case, it is evident that he mixes his style with Shakespeare’s making a combination between them and producing something new. Furthermore, the author uses pastiche in his story that helps him to create something rich, and original with incorporating new elements in which he pushes the boundaries to be creative, and inventive in the present that leads him to produce a new voice, but with keeping the intertwining of the original story in way to honour, to give a sincere homage, also a justice, respect and appreciation to the famous work it is imitating.

### **3. Stylization of Shakespeare’s Play in James Hartley’s *Cold Fire*:**

#### **3.1 Stylization of the Female Character: Gillian in Relation to**

##### **Juliet:**

By studying *Cold Fire*, we are directly introduced to the main character who is one of the star-crossed lovers in the story. Gillian a young teenager and student in the boarding school of St Francis where is Juliet interpreted by the author in a modern version. The novel begins with different thought of Gillian as she claims “moods are the weather of the soul” (Hartley, 2018, p.7) “I am a complete person always the same, but I can be so different I can be clam and perfect like the sea tonight or I can be dark and frightening like the sea at home.it all depends on my moods” (Ibid, p.7).

Gillian is facing the feeling of pain with life, and having issues with her parents; she is struggling with her mind and with the weather. We start with the relationships of Gillian with her parents which is seen as formal, her father does not defend her because he is scared of his wife, and her mother is a selfish and everything that Gillian did for her mother, seems not right for her; she feels that they hate her. Her wish is to be free from everything, as in the school, where she feels like herself again. However, Gillian is introduced to her Romeo when she sees him naked on the football pitch and love poured into Gillian’s soul.

After that, in the balcony scene Gillian and Romeo meet and reveal their love to each other; they decide to meet again and to get married in secret with the help of her friends Kizzie, Zak and Athy. Therefore, it is clear that both characters are involved in a star crossed love story as Juliet the main character of Shakespeare and Gillian in *Cold Fire*. For instance, at the beginning of the play, *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet is portrayed as the daughter of Capulet, young and innocent teenager who tries to satisfy her parents, like to marry Paris. But, soon changed her decision; when she meets Romeo, she falls quickly in love with him, where she refuses to marry Paris because she is against marriage if there is no love, even though Juliet discovers the truth that Romeo is her enemy; at the moment she seems confused and hesitant. At the end, she knows her strong feeling to Romeo, and she can not live without him, and she defies all her family only to be with Romeo.

Furthermore, we can clearly notice the similarity between the two characters; both of them are ready to sacrifice everything for love. On the first hand, Gillian is willing to give up her school, her friends and her family. On the second hand, Juliet is ready to put herself in danger, so that she can be with Romeo. Both made a significant sacrifice in taking a risk to marry in secret, despite the obstacles that they have around them and knowing that their families would never approve their union. In this case, it is clear that the author, Hartley, inspired his character from the famous classic story of *Romeo and Juliet*. We might say that the author utilized stylization from the main character Juliet, but with creating different and modern character entirely new with a unique perspective in his story.

### **3.2 Stylization of the Male Character Romeo in Relation to Romeo:**

Hartley portrays Romeo as a charming and romantic character who is the star crossed lover of Gillian . The inspiration of this representation comes from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The naked boy is portrayed imaginatively, as a mysterious boy who finds

himself without any clothes in the boarding school; he appears like another person speaking in a foreign language; adding to that, the boy did not remember anything; he remembered only Gillian because he fell in love with her from the first eye contact. As a result, the only thing that he really wanted, is to find her as he states, “I am here because of you, I did it because I love you that’s all I can say” (Hartley, 2018, p.36).

However, the main character Romeo is described as a lover and brave boy, who is willing to risk everything for love, even his own life, only to be with Gillian. Romeo is viewed as a dangerous boy for the residents of the boarding school and for Alain Verne. He considered him as an enemy for his attraction to Gillian. Romeo in Shakespeare is described as the only child of the Montagues, a young teenager, and sensitive boy who thinks and acts with his emotions. He is ready to let his family for Juliet. Both of them have two differences, and similarities in which everyone represents a true, and a sincere love. Adding to that, the characters show similarities in terms of sacrificing their lives by committing suicide. This suicide demonstrates the depth of their love, and the belief that death is the only way to be with their lovers. Actually, James Hartley, got the inspiration of his male character Romeo from *Romeo and Juliet*. We can say that the writer has chosen to narrate his story with adding different element to his protagonist as introducing him as an odd and imaginative character in his novel, but with keeping the main idea of the original story.

### **3.3 Stylization of the Play’s Plot in *Cold Fire*:**

From our reading of *Cold Fire*, we have noticed that the book is a contemporary retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the author incorporates the events of the original work in order to recount his story to young audience in a different way, but with maintaining the original events. In *Cold Fire*, the author has portrayed the meeting of the lovers in Italy when Gillian is having holidays with the company of her parents, where they set at a white plastic

table eating pizza, and Gillian feels lonely around the table; she wants to eat quickly and go home “as soon possible she’d retreat back into the world of books” (Hartley,2018, p.7). Later Gillian walks into a bar and enters into a noisy party and some were in fancy dress. Suddenly, she comes face to face with her Romeo in a gorilla mask and are at once attracted to each other, and a strong feeling passed between them “she stared into the eye slits for what might have seen eternity, surprise, pleasure, knowledge, elation” (Ibid, p.7). It seems that, she knows him and the same thing for him like she knows her.

It is clear, there is the same thing in Shakespeare’s play in (Act 1 scene 5); the servants in the Capulet are getting ready for the ball where Romeo and his friends attend the party with masks that conceal their identities, and after a while, Tybalt sees Romeo, and he is angered with his presence, as he sees his presence as an insult. But the lord Capulet lets Romeo stay at the party. Meanwhile, Romeo meets Juliet and they share a warm connection between them. They fall in love and kiss each other and find out their true identities as Juliet declares “My only love spring from my only hate” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.38) Romeo and Juliet, entangled in a bitter family feud, face not only the external challenges of their forbidden love but also an internal struggle. Their characters are not merely idealistic lovers; they become individuals navigating the complexities of affection in a hostile environment. From the passage above, it is noticeable that there are similar events in which, we might say that the first one is a stylization. James Hartley had stimulated his plot from Shakespeare’s play concerning the first meeting of the lovers in a party, by introducing two modern different characters to meet in the same way as Romeo’s and Juliet’s meeting.

In Act 2 Scene 2, *Romeo and Juliet* is usually renowned for the balcony scene; when Romeo climbs in the Capulet’s garden, and Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony alone; he wondered why he is a Montague, and she is a Capulet. She reveals her thoughts about her love to Romeo, thinking that a name is a simple word and it would not be complicated to

Romeo to have a new one. Then, he appears in the balcony and overhears what Juliet says about him, and agreed to change his name only to be with her. Later, they set together talking about how much they love each other, and thinking about strategies to see each other again, and talk about their plan and about their wedding. We can say that it is apparent that this famous balcony scene can also be seen in *Cold Fire* as stylization of Shakespeare's play.

In the middle of the night, Gillian wakes up, and she cannot sleep because of her thoughts thinking about the boy and asks herself "why does everything have to be so complicated?" "Why now? Why here?" (Hartley, 2018, p.34). Suddenly, she hears a noise in the balcony; she knows that it is her boy as he says "hello again" (Hartley, 2018, p.35). Gillian asks him a lot of questions such as "what are you doing here?" "How did you get here?" "Well where do you came from, then?" "Can't you tell me anything?" (Ibid, p.35). The boy remembered only driving like the other days which was a normal night in a motorcycle, and then he forgets everything. The only thing that he remembers is the centre of the football pitch of the boarding school S.t Francis, where they have found him. Romeo climbs to the balcony, and Gillian asks him about his name and if he is real, then pretends his name is Romeo and Gillian for him is his Juliet. We notice that the author used stylization to his plot by interpreting his different events from original story of Shakespeare's play with his own writing style.

James Hartley also adds , a prominent stylization within his novel; the events are the same as in *Romeo and Juliet*. For example, the death of the young lovers, Gillian and Romeo, comparing to *Romeo and Juliet*. The two stories end with a tragic ending, which is illustrated in the death of the young lovers in both texts.

In *Cold Fire*, when will Shakespeare turns back to his room, he notices a human figure nude in the snow and he sees a young naked girl with something in her hands, an acorn; he asks her "who are you? She answers "Juliet "then will says to her "I will bring your love"

(Hartley,2018, pp.102-103). Later, will Shakespeare tell Romeo that “your Juliet is here. Beg pardon sir? Your girl your Juliet.” “She is here” “With an acorn in her hand so you know it is her-she is here” (Ibid, p.103). Romeo runs in the frozen night only to find her and he sees a dead body in the snow, with an acorn, their wedding gift, and he cried out as he says “my wife, my darling wife, my soul, my reason, my everything”. Then he says “like our love, we will be always together now” (Ibid, p.113) and Romeo lies next to her. After that, Gillian opens her eyes; she notices the clothes of Romeo on her; she knows that Romeo is dead. She decides to join him, and kills herself with Romeo’s dagger.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo discovered the death of Juliet by his servant Balthazar, and he is destroyed saying “I defy you, stars” (Shakespeare,1597, p.122). He buys a poison planning to kill himself, next to his Juliet. When Romeo arrives and sees Juliet’s body, he feels sad then he drinks the poison and kills himself rather live without her; he says “eyes look your past” “Arms take your past embrace” (Ibid, p.130). Juliet wakes up from her fake death and looking for Romeo and she realizes that the dead body is Romeo’s and she kills herself.

We may say that James Hartley recounted his story adapting the same events, as to the original play, but with some modifications and with the same tragic conclusion. The true intention of the author through this stylization is to convey his message by adding his own style. This is done in the purpose of creating an aesthetic and creative work in clear and effective way that may influence the reader’s experiences and perspectives.

#### **4. Stylization of Themes in James Hartley’s *Cold Fire*:**

##### **4.1 Forbidden Love in the Source Text and Hartley’s Novel:**

People in daily life may say that love is a wonderful feeling that indicate joyfulness or gratefulness, but never state that love could be blinding which can also immortalize a circle of illogical choices that lead to tragic consequences. In both literary works, *Romeo and Juliet*

and *Cold Fire*, the theme of love is presented as powerful, full of twists and the characters are ready to risk everything, including their lives to be together.

Shakespeare illustrated the theme of love through his main characters who are young teenagers experiencing a mutual, and true love for the first time. Romeo meets Juliet not knowing who she is; he falls in love with her in the first moment he sees her, and the same happened for Juliet. Both of them ignorant that he is a Montague, and she is a Capulet, they instantly fall in love and kiss each other Romeo says “to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.35). He claims that he is rough and does not deserve the touch of Juliet; the fact that Romeo portrays the kiss as tender illustrates Romeo’s kind, and true feeling for Juliet. This reveals that their initial meeting is loaded with love which Shakespeare presented as emotional, seductive, and true.

When Romeo and Juliet discover the true identities of their families, Juliet declares “my only love spring from only hate” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.38). She became devastated, yet she knows her own feelings to Romeo; she chooses to talk to Romeo more and more. This shows even though their families are at war, and against their love, Romeo and Juliet transcend all the boundaries set by their feuding families, and continue to see each other. Romeo’s and Juliet’s love is described as intensive and passionate, characterized by the famous scene in which Romeo creeps in the garden, and sees Juliet on her balcony where Juliet asks why Romeo must be a Montague; she says in Act 2 scene 2 “what’s in a name? that which we call a rose” “by another name would smell as sweet” (Ibid, p.43). These lines means that Juliet does not care about the family name of Romeo; she believed that if he had a different name, he would still be the same person for her, she sees him as a loving person.

Shakespeare portrayed the love of his main protagonists as a powerful force that can overcome all the barriers, and obstacles that stand in their way. The love of Juliet to Romeo made her ready to risk everything for the sake of love; this included defying all her family’s

wishes, and willing to risk her own life. For instance, in Act 3 Scene5 the Lord Capulet arranges a marriage of Juliet and Paris and she refuses to marry him, and says she would marry Romeo. This suggests that her love for Romeo is not just a temporary love, but rather a deep and enduring passion that lasts forever. Romeo is described as a young man who is pointedly in love with the idea of being in love; he is fascinated with Rosaline, but soon forgets her when he meets Juliet from the very first moment he sees her; he refers to her hand as a “holy shrine” and his own lips “two blushing pilgrims” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.35). This shows the purity of Romeo’s love for Juliet.

The love experience of Romeo and Juliet is also seen when Romeo goes to find his Juliet in the tomb accepting that she is dead; he takes poison and kills himself. Similarly, when Juliet wakes up, she discovers that her lover is poisoned, and kills herself only to be with him. Then, Juliet takes the dagger of her husband, and she declares “o happy dagger” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.133). This shows that Juliet is happy to die; she describes the dagger as happy so they can be together forever. This demonstrates that Romeo and Juliet are ready to experience suicide, rather be separated from each other.

On a similar vein, in *Cold Fire*, the readers are introduced to a tragic love story. The theme of love is significant in the novel, because it is shown throughout the whole story; it is seen in all aspects as warm, vital and true love till the end. In addition, Hartley uses the main characters to present the strong force of love that takes place of all the other emotions and values. We can say that Gillian and Romeo show completely what actual love is in a better and worse situation as in Shakespeare’s play.

Hartley stylises the theme of love from the beginning of his story; that is to say any stylized performance can be heard in various ways, emphasizing the subjective nature of interpretation. The best example is during Gillian’s holidays with her family in Italy. She meets

a boy, Romeo, in a noisy party, where she comes face to face with a gorilla mask and they instantly share a deep connection, and “she stared into the eye –slits for what night have been eternity” (Hartley,2018, p.7). Gillian looks in his eyes as eternity; she sees something profoundly spiritual in his eyes; she felt like she knows him also he seems to know her; she felt close to that stranger. It is evident from their first meeting that they are intimately attracted to each other, not knowing who she is, and she equally ignorant who he is. In their second meeting, Gillian comes close to him and they meet eye to eye and the feeling of love poured between the two souls; Romeo smiles at her again, and she smiles right back to him. Looking into Romeo’s eyes, she saw the world that she belonged to. The love of Gillian and Romeo is intense passion and compassion for one another like the love of Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare’s play.

Romeo asks Gillian if she loves him and tells her to say the truth without swearing with anything, “I swear I love you. I swear by” He looked around. “Just look at me and tell me you do. You don’t have to swear by anything. Just tell me the truth.” “I do! I do! I do!” (Ibid, p.37). Romeo simply tells her to say what she really feels; he wanted only to make sure that Gillian’s love is sincere and genuine. After that, Romeo suggests to Gillian to marry him, and she thinks that it is too fast and stupid and leaves him. Then, she returns back to him proposing to Romeo to meet next day in the dips, and to finalize the ceremony of their wedding. From this balcony scene, we notice that the love of Gillian and Romeo is a manifestation of true love, as they decide to risk everything together even though Alain Verne warned Gillian about Romeo. But, she defies all the obstacles only to be with him. We can say also that their love is viewed as boundless, and infinite from the first moment they meet in the party; it is real love similarly to Romeo’s and Juliet’s love story.

The veritable love of Romeo and Gillian is illustrated through their death; for instance, when Romeo finds Gillian’s frozen body, he realizes that she is dead, on the snow.

He presumed that Gillian is truly dead, and he decides to lay there, next to her and stay, until he freezes to death. Similarly, when Gillian wakes up, she discovers that her Romeo is gone forever; she then, takes the dagger of her husband, and proceeded to stab herself with it, so she could die with him rather than having the rest of her life without her own true love. This scene is significant because it marks the tragic end of a love story where the heroes committed suicide in order to be together, and it shows that their death highlights the power of their love.

#### **4.2 Death of the Young Lovers in Both Texts:**

The theme of death clearly dominated the undergoing of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cold Fire*. In both literary works, death is considered a significant contributor to the overall tragedy of the young lovers. However, death is regarded as a tragic and an unavoidable consequence of the intense love and passion between the star crossed lovers.

In Shakespeare's play, the theme of death is explored through the main characters Romeo and Juliet both of them commit suicide because they can not be together. For instance, in Act 5 scene 1 Romeo has heard of Juliet's death and is so heartbroken that he goes to buy a poison, so he can join Juliet in heaven as he declares "to Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee" (Shakespeare, 1597, p.124). Romeo believed that Juliet is dead and drinks poison he says "here's to my love! O true apothecary! thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die" (Shakespeare, 1597, p.130). These quotes demonstrate how Romeo loves Juliet so much that he will die only to be with her. After that Juliet wakes up to find her dead lover and takes his dagger to kill herself and she notices that Romeo had never got the message from his friend the friar Laurence. To sum up, the death of the young lovers in Shakespeare's play is a tragic reminder of how love can bring forth destruction and loss.

Comparably to the young lovers in *Cold Fire*, Romeo and Gillian, we notice that we have the same tragic end. The theme of death follows their romance which bloomed but

ultimately there is death. Throughout the play, the naked boy and Gillian meet in the boarding school where they fell in love with each other, and they decide to keep their relationship secret and then get married in the dips with the help of her friends. When the naked boy is chased by Alain Verne in the school, Romeo escapes from the school, and Gillian finds out that Romeo is gone, and she wants only to find him as she says to her friend Kizzie “I’ll follow my heart” (Hartley, 2018, p.68) and Kizzie reveals the truth to her friend; she made him come to the school only to make her friend happy. Kizzie feels sorry for her friend Gillian, and she finds a way to send her to Romeo where she gets a small scrap of paper from the book, and write down and make the wish of her friend. When Romeo receives the news, by his friend will Shakespeare, that his Juliet looks for him, he is backed into the frozen night seeking for her; he sees a figure human, Alain Verne, and they fight and Romeo kills him with the knife. Then, Romeo walks around and he discovers the dead body of his beloved Gillian; as he says to her “like our love, we will always be together now” (Ibid, p.113). He realizes that he cannot live without Gillian, and he lies next to her until he freezes to death. Later, Gillian wakes up and sees that Romeo is gone, she then kills herself.

We can say that in both literary works “in the end even death could not part them” (Hartley, 2018, p.117). Also we notice that Hartley adds some modifications to his story but with retaining the original tragic ending regarding the death of the young lovers Romeo and Gillian.

### **4.3 Conflict:**

The theme of conflict is clearly represented in the works of *Romeo and Juliet* and in *Cold Fire*. In *Romeo and Juliet*, it is seen through the two fighting families, The Montagues and The Capulets. From the very beginning of Shakespeare’s play there is a prologue, where he portrayed the conflict as he declares “two households both a like in dignity in fair Verona

where we lay our scene from ancient grudge break to new mutiny where civil blood makes civil hands unclean” (Shakespeare, 1597, p.5).

Shakespeare started his first line with demonstrating that the conflict is ongoing and is not likely to stop; he describes it as ancient, because the feud has become as a part of their daily life. Therefore, Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet, can not be together, because of the banned love between the two families, which is considered in society as unacceptable over the sixteenth century, that created a tension in *Romeo and Juliet*, and problems for them to pursue their love as they have to keep their relation as a secret so as not to increase the feud, and make it harder from them to be together. Also, the argument leads to Romeo’s banishment from Verona, after he kills Tybalt in revenge to his friend Mercutio which makes it difficult for Romeo, and Juliet to be together that leads to their tragic end.

In *Cold Fire*, the conflict is viewed through Alain Verne and the other members of school who were against Romeo, the imaginative character. The whole conflict of the story is when the members of the boarding school, Alain Verne, the master, and other members of the magistrate discovers that there is a dangerous and an invented character that shows up from time to time, that comes from notes, and messages written by lonely characters. The master known as the spirit of the school, told them that the writer is a living person, and the story is written, and everything will come to pass; Alain finds out that they are all part from the story, and they start thinking about how to resolve the problem. He knows that the naked boy is in the school only for Gillian; so he wanted to hunt and remove him away from the boarding school.

We can say that the conflict is the forbidden love between Romeo and Gillian as the two come from different world and their love is not accepted by those around them. For instance, Gillian is warned by Alain Verne to stay away from Romeo, as he is considered unnatural creature which makes it impossible for them to live their love, and be together

openly, as they have to hide their relationship that puts pressure on them. Similarly, to *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and Gillian have to keep their relationship secret due to the external conflict. So it is evident that, Shakespeare and Hartley, presented the theme of conflict in a different manner but the fundamental core idea of the story remains unchanged.

## V. General Conclusion:

This dissertation has attempted to conduct the intertextual dialogic study of Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's *Cold Fire* in relation to William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Our research is divided into two chapters, with the first chapter exploring Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts such as: overt polemic, parody and stylization on Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet*. The second chapter examining Bakhtin's concepts of hidden polemic, pastiche and stylization on James Hartley's *Cold Fire*. By utilising the theoretical framework of Bakhtin and conducting a thorough analysis of these works, we contribute to the understanding of how contemporary authors engage with and reinterpretation of classic literary works.

In *Crushing on a Capulet* and *Cold Fire* despite being written in a different period than Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, there are notable similarities in terms of storyline, themes and characters. Abbott and Hartley have taken Shakespeare's tragedy and breathed a new life into it and contributed to the ongoing legacy of Shakespeare's storytelling. *Crushing on a Capulet*, an interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* where two new modern students become central characters in the play. On the other hand, James Hartley sheds a new light on the tale, where the main protagonists stay the same as in Shakespeare's play. By employing intertextual dialogism, we have been able to establish and demonstrate the connection between these two works, through analysing many elements. Abbott has written a story which is the exact retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* adding two modern characters who have attempted to change the tragic death of the main characters. The author has used this technique of overt polemic to ignite a controversy or debate, and encourage readers to engage critically with the text. Hartley has a hidden polemic that is not directly noticeable to the readers to express his own perspective in an out of sight way by creating the characters in some different way.

In both novels, the authors did a stylization to the play of Shakespeare by producing it in a modern version. Abbott has revived the source work by interpreting the events, the language and the themes through his unique voice. In addition, Hartley has brought back the voice of the classic love story *Romeo and Juliet* throughout his central characters Romeo and Gillian. They both form the star-crossed lovers in the story by sharing the same fate. Moreover, stylization is seen at the stage of themes: forbidden love, death and conflict.

To finish with both the concepts of parody and pastiche have been used in the two works in order to bring something new to the stories and make the reader laugh. On the one hand, Abbott has used parody which is a creative and humorous way of engaging with existing works, offering a critical perspective on the original source while entertaining and engaging the audience. On the other hand, Hartley has used pastiche in order to honour William Shakespeare by borrowing the characters and the different events in his own work. The intention of the two authors is to create something original and fresh to be accessible and understandable to this new generation.

Researchers can still explore the relevance of Tony Abbott's *Crushing on a Capulet* and James Hartley's **Cold Fire**, conducting intertextual research to uncover connections and insights within these works. In addition to dealing with themes such as friendship, magic and society.

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