

True Love and its Tragedy: Presenting Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

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Keywords: Love.Tragedy. Hate. Romance. Violence**Summary:**

The main aim of this paper is to demonstrate the power of true love and emphasize its importance in achieving peace in life. To accomplish this task, dramatic analysis of characters was used, which basically analyzes this work as a narrative manifestation of the author's personality, emotions, thoughts, and aspirations. Based on this analysis, this play can be explained and depicted as displaying the conflicts between the Montagues and the Capulets through the actions of certain characters throughout this play. This has also proven to be useful in emphasizing the power of romantic love. This research also aims to prove that neither *Romeo nor Juliet* can be held responsible for the tragedy as separate individuals. The somewhat unusual bond they share affects each other's characters and pushes them towards disaster. Ultimately, this play can evoke similar feelings of love and hate. Romeo and Juliet are no longer alive, but their sacrifices helped unite their families. Shakespeare's play, written and published centuries ago, continues to captivate the new generation with its messages and details.

Introduction

Romeo and Juliet, being one of Shakespeare's most acclaimed plays, has been embraced by readers around the globe since its inception. We must acknowledge that this play, *Romeo and Juliet*, is quite unique and innovative as it inspires youth to challenge the constraints of feudal society in medieval times and urges younger generations to seek out love freely (Jie, 2020, p:164).

In Shakespeare's perspective, *Romeo and Juliet* intends to reveal a societal tragedy to the audience. It then focuses on the tragic fate as the central theme and used the love tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* as the main subject. This theatrical piece vividly and effectively exposes the tragic love story of that medieval era. The challenges face by a young man in battling his destiny and resisting societal norms create a profound and lasting impact on future generations (Jie, 2020, p:165).

Since this romance begins, Romeo's existence was ensnared in various fate entanglements. Due to a confrontation with Juliet's cousin brother, Romeo fatally stabbed him, which not only complicates the acceptance of their love by the two families but also result in his banishment to Mantua. Later, upon hearing that Juliet had died, he purchases a vial of poison and resolves to return to Verona as quickly as he could be with Juliet, even if it meant death. From the entire play, we discern that Romeo and Juliet were not truly familiar with one another, yet Romeo's quest for free love and idealistic romance ultimately compelled him to consume the poison without significant hesitation. In essence, Romeo's quest for perfect love hastens the eventual tragic end (Jie, 2020, p: 167).

Juliet is truly a casualty of this kind of patriarchy. Her father, Capulet, compelles her to wed the aristocratic Paris quickly. However, undoubtedly, this type of marriage arrangement ignites strong opposition from Julie, ultimately resulting in the tragic conclusion of love. Clearly, Capulet views his daughter Juliet as his personal possession. This type of repression of human nature inflicts a significant and grave damage on women's human rights. This kind of randomness ultimately caused Juliet to pay the price of her youthful life. The narrative illustrates how frail and susceptible women can become when facing the oppression of the patriarchal system. As mentioned, numerous women paid the ultimate price to pursue free love, yet all ultimately faced failure (Jie, 2020, p: 168).

Romeo and Juliet in Brief

Romeo and Juliet is a drama by William Shakespeare, who is regarded as one of the most prolific authors in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras of British theatre, often known as the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Era. The drama primarily centers on a longstanding feud between two influential families that culminates in violence. A band of masks Montagues endangers additional discord by uninvitedly attending a Capulet celebration. A young, infatuates Romeo Montague quickly becomes enraptured by Juliet Capulet, who is set to wed her father's selected suitor, County Paris. Assisted by Juliet's nurse, the women prepare for the couple to wed the following day, but Romeo's effort to prevent a street altercation results in the death of Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, causing Romeo to be exiled. In a frantic effort to reunite with Romeo, Juliet adheres to the Friar's scheme and pretends to die. The message does not get to Romeo, and thinking Juliet is dead, he ends his life in her tomb. Juliet awakens to see Romeo's dead body next to her and takes her own life. The sorrowful family consents to resolve their conflict (Boro, A. R., 2021, p: 140).

Romeo and Juliet is a well-known romantic tale in the history of English literary . Naturally, the predominant and most significant theme of the play is love. The play centers on romantic love, particularly the deep passion that ignites instantly between Romeo and Juliet. Love is an intense in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, euphoric, dominating power that transcends all other principles, allegiances, and feelings. G. Lipson & S. Lipson (2007) noted that "among the 37 plays authored by William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* is the one that resonates most powerfully with youth. Even though the play is from a different century, its conflicts are relevant in any era. The urgent desire of Romeo and Juliet's love, along with the couple's rebellion against their parents, strongly resonates with today's young people." (p:101).

Romeo and Juliet is a tragic tale of two families, the Montagues and Capulets, who oppose the union of the two lovers. Romeo has slain a family member of Juliet against his desire and has been exiled, while Juliet is entombed alive as a deception. Believing that Juliet has truly died, Romeo takes his own life. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the tragic elements arise from outside influences rather than the traits of the characters involved. There isn't any contradiction in the psyches of Romeo and Juliet, nor do they conflict with one another. The predicament that leads them to their demise originates not from their traits, but from a profound hostility between their mothers and fathers. If the feuding families, the Montagues and Capulets, maintain a good relationship, there would be no tragedy. They lack any shortcomings that would result in misfortune, regardless of the circumstances (Urgan, 2004, p. 246-47).

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* opens with a summary of the play's occurrences, swiftly highlighting violence: "From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,/ Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean" (Prologue, 3-4), fate: "From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,/ A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life" (Prologue, 5-6), and the tragic nature of sacrifice in settling a blood feud: "Whose tragic misfortune sadly ends/ Their deaths conclude their parents' conflict" (Prologue, 7-8). The scenes of violence, fate, sacrifice, and tragic misadventure collaborate to illustrate the systems operating in Verona, a society that mirrors both Elizabethan English society and contemporary life. The community's violence evidently arises not from randomness, but from the outburst of intense human longing, frequently intensified by indoctrination and societal expectations. The mishaps in this play stem from following socially built customs and traditions (Hoffman, 2004, p: 1).

Shakespeare's General Treatment of love

The Shakesperean realm reflects, as a whole, a clear delight in vibrant living. This conveys characteristically as a dominant essence, an infectious mood, rather than a belief proposed, or a standard established. It is evident in the portrayal of Falstaff or Iago, just as in that of Horatio or Imogen. And it is nowhere more evident than in his management of interactions between men and women. In this instance, Shakespeare's likes and dislikes are remarkably clear; he frequently depicted what he found pleasing in the behaviors of lovers and married couples, while he seldom illustrated what he found distasteful, and only for particular reasons when he did. Criminal love, in any form, occupies a rather secondary role in his art; conversely, if ideal figures are present, they can be found among his devoted, passionate, yet mischievous and joyful women (Herford, 1921, p: 2).

Therefore, it is feasible to establish a Shakesperean standard or archetype of romantic relationships. It is the most evident in the developed Comedy dramas, where he crafts his vision of existence with calm liberty; yet also in the Tragedy dramas, where a Portia or a Desdemona tragically meets their end in the snare of death. Even in the Histories, it sometimes manifests itself (like in Richard II's loyal queen, who was historically just a child) in opposition to the weight of documented truth. In the earlier Comedies, it explores through different phases of inconsistent or flawed forms. In both Comedies and Tragedies, he employs, albeit not extensively, forms of love other than the 'normal' type for specific comic or tragic purposes (Herford, 1921, p: 2-3).

The Shakesperean ideal of love, when interpreted this way, can be characterized in the following manner. Affection is an enthusiasm that ignites the heart, mind, and senses in harmonious and joyful measures; fervent yet not lascivious, gentle but not overly sentimental, innocent yet not ascetic, ethical but not excessively puritanical, cheerful yet not trivial, playful and clever but not bitter. His partners see marriage as

a normal expectation, and they do not foresee its obligations nor shift their affections to others. They typically fall in love at first glance and do so permanently. Romantic relationships that do not consider marriage are infrequent and serve other dramatic intents. He is not drawn to tragedies like that of Gretchen. Romeo's love for Rosalind serves only as a contrast to his deeper feelings, while Cassio's affection for Bianca is simply a thread in Iago's web of deceit; Claudio's relationship with Juliet is the essential element of the story. The path of love seldom goes without bumps; however, suitors suggested by parents are subtly opposed or playfully mocked, never, even by the kindest, welcomed. Unrefined young girls such as Hermia, sensitive women like Desdemona and Imogen, the ecstatic Juliet and the plain Anne Page, the prudent Silvia and the innocent Miranda, all agree on this matter. And they all win the day. The intensely dramatic situations that emerge from forced marriage, such as Ford's Penthea (The Broken Heart) or Corneille's Chimene (Le Cid), who struggle between love and honour, exist, like this conflict in general, beyond Shakespeare's selected realm. And alongside this assurance of ownership, his affectionate women share a knack for humor and playfulness that is uncommon in the theatrical portrayal of love. Rosalind embodies a deeper Shakespearean essence than Juliet (Herford, 1921, p: 18-19).

When True love ends with Death

Romeo and Juliet is not just a narrative but also a theatrical work filled with intense violence and mortality. The drama starts and concludes with turmoil, disorder, and brutality. These themes arise from the play's main ideas, which are love or desire, bias and arrogance, and control. These themes instigate and lead to the violence present in our "fair Verona." The entire play is marked by struggles, battles, and fatalities. The underlying reasons for all this are the prideful conflict between the Capulets and the Montagues. The play's opening scene highlights the feud and discord within a community and society, based in Verona, establishing a dire

situation where the Prince threatens death to anyone who disrupts the city's peace once more because of it. The affection between Romeo and Juliet exists in a realm of animosity arising from their parents' conflict, and ultimately, the rivalries of their families are directly to blame for the ensuing tragedies in the drama. The animosity and brutality that is established directly contrasts with the affection of Romeo and Juliet, and ultimately they become its casualties, as the Prince highlights at the play's ending " See what a scourge is laid upon your hate! / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love..." (Act 5, Scene 3) According to the Prince's comments, he perceives the situation as a result of fate, recommending that the 'scourge' or retribution results from the families' 'hate'. He subsequently links the event to 'heaven' to illustrate that a higher, natural force governs our existence, and as a result of the families' animosity, heaven has destroyed 'your joys'. However, the Prince asserts that it was 'love' that led to their demise, explaining that the enmity between the families brought about their downfall because they established a society in which Capulets and Montagues did not interrelate, and they failed to foster a tranquil environment for future generations, fixating instead on longstanding family issues (Boro, 2021, p: 142-143).

Romeo and Juliet illustrates a tragic story. Peter Holbrook (2015: 8) states that this literary genre predates drama. Traditionally, a tragedy focuses on the decline of a noble man or woman. However, in the majority of the tragedies, it is a male character. This person is of a high social status. However, this is not always true, as in *Romeo and Juliet* we encounter youths from affluent families, yet as previously noted, they do not belong to aristocratic lineages (Ortega, 2016, p: 6).

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the primary characters are continually battling against challenges throughout the play, and for this reason, they can be seen as "tragic heroes," due to their destiny, as they are fated to fail. According to Weis (2012: 3), Juliet is depicted as a tragic heroine because of her youth. The term "thirteen" and

Juliet's actual age never appear in the play. However, Juliet is 13 years old, and she delivers thirteen lines in Act 5, with each line symbolizing a year of her life, concluding with the thirteenth ending in "die" (V, iii, 170). J.K. Franson (1996: 244-249) analyzed these details regarding the ill-fated number thirteen in Juliet's age, noting that this number intensifies the dramatic shift in Juliet's journey from innocence (childhood) to suicide (maturity). In Elizabethan England, individuals under the age of fifteen were regarded as children, with fourteen being the minimum age for marriage. Franson also mentioned that Shakespeare pens this play to caution about the risks of love and marriage between young people. Moreover, he shows several connections with Juliet's age; her complete name consists of 13 letters, she is the 13th character to be named in the play, Romeo mentions her by name 14 times throughout, and there are 13 proper names listed for Capulet's Ball (244-249) (Ortega, 2016, p: 5-6).

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare portrays the tragic fate of two lovers who fell in love instantly and gave their lives to uphold their passion. Romeo, the Montague's son, and Juliet, the Capulet's daughter, became deeply enamored with one another when Romeo went to a gathering hosted by Lord Capulet to catch a glimpse of Rosaline. Once they express their deep and profound love for one another, their relationship develops rapidly. They secretly wed, defying their families' feud, but shortly after, Romeo kills Juliet's cousin Tybalt and was banished. The news of Juliet's demise leads him to end his life, unable to endure the pain of losing his spouse. When Juliet stirred from her deep slumber, the sight of Romero's lifeless body next to her to take her own life too, as she had nothing left to live for besides her one true love. Love serves as the primary source of violence in this play. (Bhudial, 2014, p: 1).

The key tragic aspect in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is not the deaths of the lovers, but rather the reasons behind them and the idea that fate is not solely

responsible; the societal structure may also play a role. The excessive focuses on fate compels us to examine its importance. Juliet's perception of Romeo's demise reflects an awareness of its unavoidable nature rather than a supernatural bond with destiny: "O God, I possess a misjudging spirit./ I believe I now see you so low,/ Like one lifeless at the base of a grave" (3.5.54-6). Whenever *Romeo and Juliet* share the stage, there are discussions about the impending danger of death, whether it comes from Juliet or her relatives and guards, whether for Romeo's invasion as a foe, for violating his exile, or for retribution for killing Tybalt. The play emphasizes fate, notably referring to *Romeo and Juliet* as "star-crossed lovers" (Prologue, 6), which appears less as an explanation for the unfolding events and more like a clue to recognize how fate is not responsible. Characters possess agency; they are distinct individuals who interact with or oppose the frameworks that regulate their society. Indeed, attributing faults to fate can reveal how the characters shun accountability to cushion the impact for viewers witnessing the fundamental shortcomings of civilization—law and order, tradition and safety—being ineffectual at best, and disastrously harmful at worst (Hoffman, 2004, p: 6).

In *Romeo and Juliet*, numerous allusions to the risks of impulsiveness—particularly when it stems from insufficient or inaccurate information—show that reflexive thinking, particularly without complete details and without thoughtful reflection, is especially perilous. Heart-wrenching tragedy evokes compassion for the sacrificial victim(s) of a harsh society; by highlighting the various layers of power operating within this society, the dramatic piece not only elicits an emotional reaction but also encourages the audience to avert such tragedy—prompting them to learn the consequence of impulsiveness—in reasoning and in allowing passion to lead to violent actions (Hoffman, 2004, p: 6).

The intense love that shared by *Romeo and Juliet* is connected with death from its very beginning: Tybalt sees that Romeo intrudes on the celebration and vows to slay

him just as Romeo glimpses Juliet and immediately falls for her. From that moment forward, love appears to draw the lovers nearer to both love and violence, rather than distancing them from it. Romeo and Juliet are overwhelmed by suicidal thoughts and a wish to act upon them: in Act 3, scene 3, Romeo reveals a knife in Friar Lawrence's cell and threatens to take his own life after being exiled from Verona and his beloved. Juliet also brandishes a knife to end her own life in the presence of Friar Lawrence just three scenes after. Once Capulet chooses that Juliet should marry Paris, Juliet declares, "If nothing else succeeds, I possess the ability to die" (3.5.242). In the end, each envisions that the other appears lifeless the morning following their initial and sole sexual encounter ("Methinks I see thee" Juliet states "as one dead in the bottom of a tomb" (3.5.55–56) (Boro, 2021, p: 143).

Regrettably, Romeo transitions from a lovesick youth to a vengeful and anger-driven killer, slaying Tybalt in vengeance and subsequently Paris, his "rival," (or one might claim, the embodiment of the societal expectations that "destroyed" his wife). The connection of these men to violence (involvement in family feuds, or in Baz Luhrmann's film, manipulative corporate dominance or gang ties) stands in stark contrast to what ought to be a honeymoon phase. Love is corrupted and shattered by the violence present in the community. However, the community does not assault the lovers. Instead, Romeo assumes a violent role, permitting himself to engage in the violence culture. I contend that it is the culture of violence that shapes Romeo's impulsiveness, particularly in killing Paris (Hoffman, 2004, p: 10).

For an Elizabethan audience, the most sorrowful aspect of *Romeo and Juliet* was less about "their doomed love affair and more about how the lovers brought ruin upon themselves by breaching the societal norms of their time." The actions of the lovers invert all accepted standards. Romeo and Juliet are the offspring of families engage in a feud, and typically there is a clash whenever individuals from the opposing households encounter each other. However, this situation is different for Romeo and

Juliet. "Captivated by the allure of appearances" (2nd Prologue) they become enamored with one another and fate unfolds its tragedy. They increasingly distance themselves from societal norms, marry in secret, and Juliet ignores her parents' wishes. Furthermore, she chooses to be loyal to Romeo instead of her family, even after he has killed her cousin. Additionally, the lovers' perception of their roles sharply contrasts with that of the other characters around them. Romeo, as a man, should typically resemble Mercutio and Tybalt, constantly prepared to battle and sacrifice his life for the sake of family honor. Instead, he is tormented by his unreturned affection for Rosaline; he feels at ease following his marriage to Juliet and is reluctant to engage in conflict, which Mercutio perceives as effeminate. Romeo also weeps in Friar Laurence's cell, prompting the Friar to label him effeminate (III, iii, 110 and 112), as well. In contrast, Juliet seems quite pragmatic, favoring practical ways to pursue a romance with Romeo rather than indulging in elaborate Petrarchan vows as Romeo tends to do. Ultimately, she takes her life with a dagger (symbolizing masculinity) while her lover ingests poison (which symbolizes femininity) (Schuchardt, 1999, p: 18-19).

For an Elizabethan theatergoer, this is excessive. While "an Elizabethan courtier would understand the enchanting fervor of love to empathize with the pair, [...] he would distinctly recognize his obligations" and choose to act accordingly rather than emulating Romeo and Juliet's behavior (Schuchardt, 1999, p: 19).

Conclusions

Love incites violence because Romeo and Juliet were so profoundly in love that they prefer to give up their own lives rather than be apart from one another. Their thoughts consume by suicidal ideations and a desire to undergo it. Romeo displays a knife in Friar Lawrence's cell and threatens to take his own life after being exiled from Verona and from his beloved Juliet for having killed Tybalt.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare showcases the dual nature of love and death. Both concepts are integral to human existence. Everyone requires love and partners to bring significance to our lives. Disputes between partners can influence their lives both positively and negatively, and they have the potential to ruin an entire family dynamic. The feud between the Montagues and the Capulets is the primary cause of all the struggles and the unfortunate fate of the central characters. Numerous individuals lose their lives due to the arrogance and pointless conflicts of their families. By exploring the characters of Romeo and Juliet, I realize that genuine love is real and can result in tragedy. Romeo and Juliet die, yet their sacrifice helps bring their families together. Shakespeare's play was written and published centuries ago, but its messages to readers are still inspiring every generation.

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الحب الحقيقي ومأساته: تقديم مسرحية روميو وجوليت لشكسبير

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الحب، المأساة، الكراهية، الرومانسية، العنف
الملخص:

الهدف الأساسي من هذا البحث هو إظهار قوة الحب الحقيقي والتأكيد على أهميته لتحقيق السلام في الحياة. ولإتمام هذه المهمة، تم استخدام التحليل الدرامي للشخصيات والذي يحلل هذا العمل بشكل أساسي باعتباره مظهرًا في شكل سردي لشخصية المؤلف وعواطفه وأفكاره وتطلعاته. وبناءً على هذا التحليل، يمكن توضيح وتصوير هذه المسرحية على أنها تعرض الصراعات بين آل مونتيجو وآل كابوليت من خلال تصرفات شخصيات معينة طوال هذه المسرحية. وقد أثبت ذلك أيضًا أنه مفيد في التأكيد على قوة الحب الرومانسي. يهدف هذا البحث أيضًا إلى إثبات أنه لا يمكن تحميل روميو ولا جوليت المسؤولية عن المأساة كأفراد منفصلين. إن الارتباط غير المعتاد إلى حد ما الذي يتقاسمانه يؤثر على شخصيات بعضهما البعض ويدفعهما نحو الكارثة. في النهاية، يمكن لهذه المسرحية أن تستحضر مشاعر مماثلة من الحب والكراهية. لم يعد روميو وجوليت على قيد الحياة، لكن تضحياتهما ساعدت في توحيد عائلتهما. لا تزال مسرحية شكسبير، التي ألفها وأصدرها منذ قرون تأسر الجيل الجديد برسائلها وتفصيلها.