

How does  
shakespeare present  
the relationship



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Although “ Romeo and Juliet” is a Tragic Romance it also explores the ever changing relationship between Juliet and her father. There are many factors as to how and why Romeo and Juliet died. The major contributor to the downfall of these lovers was Capulet, Juliet’s own father. He brought upon the death of Juliet by forcing her to marry Paris, separating her from Romeo, and rejecting her. Shakespeare’s initial portrayal of Capulet is of a kind and loving father. By saying that Juliet “ is the hopeful lady of my earth” shows how special their bond is through the metaphor “ earth”. By doing this he is comparing her to everything there is.

Hopeful” gives the impression that he has many expectations of her and that she is of use to him. Capulet continues to say that “ my will to her consent” which emphasises his deep, caring nature as he feels that Juliet is yet a “ stranger” to society. To a typical modern audience, Capulet’s response is unsurprising as Juliet is far too young to marry. In Shakespeare’s time however, the father would be expected to control many aspects of his daughter’s life. The majority of the Elizabethans would have been mildly surprised at Capulet for offering the “ choice” to the 13-year-old Juliet.

He asks Paris to “ woo” her, obviously wanting her to fall in love with the person she marries. By Shakespeare introducing the relationship between Juliet and her Father early on in the play indicates how important they are to the whole plot. On the other hand, due to the prologue, the audience is suspicious of their relationship and what the true nature of it is under that superficial father-loving-daughter relationship. Another thing that leads us to consider this option is that the topic of marriage is being discussed in Juliet’s absence, showing us that Capulet isn’t as open-minded as we thought.

Also, during the prologue the audience is told what the fate of the story will be. It is known that Juliet and Romeo will die, which brings up the question, how and what will cause the death of these “star crossed lovers”? Suspicion then falls onto the shoulders of Capulet as he flaunts the relationship between him and his daughter. This theory is supported in Act 3 Scene 4 where Tybalt has just been slain by Romeo. The image of a kind and loving father has now been replaced by one of an uncaring, selfish man.

Showing that the death of Tybalt has drastically affected Capulet’s behaviour. He becomes demanding; barking out orders such as “ go” and “ bid”. By doing this Shakespeare adds a tone of urgency to Capulet’s words, speeding up the pace in which his sentences are delivered. This was done by Shakespeare to make it a dramatic experience for the audience. Again, Capulet is making decisions for Juliet in her absence with the excuse that there was “ no time” to convince her and therefore making the choices to suit him. Capulet is smug in thinking that Juliet would in no “ doubt” be “ ruled” by him.

Shakespeare makes Capulet enormously big-headed as he goes on about how his daughter would obey him expecting her to be completely submissive. After arranging the marriage, he orders Lady Capulet to go and “ prepare” Juliet. This brings on a dramatic turn to the whole plot and in turn puts Capulet and Juliet’s relationship in danger. Dramatic Irony plays a big part in Scene 5. The Capulet’s, Paris and the nurse all believe that Juliet is upstairs “ mewed up to her heaviness” when, in fact, Juliet is in her bedroom with Romeo. Her family are led to think that Juliet is “ grieving” Tybalt death.

Lady Capulet personifies Juliet by saying that she is a cat. Cats are very mysterious creatures that appear cute and fluffy on the outside but you never know what they're thinking on the inside. By comparing Juliet to a cat it suggests that Juliet is sly and knows how to manipulate people with her innocent looks. Most cats are known to go astray from their owners. As in many of Shakespeare's plays, the father always wishes to dominate the daughters' lives. A good example of this is King Lear where the honest and outspoken daughter displeases her father and therefore disinherited.

The two daughters that suck-up to their father are loved and each inherits half his property. In truth they think their father is an old and foolish man. Both these two significant personalities are combined in "Romeo and Juliet" where Juliet becomes the defiant daughter only to fail, leading her to do what she does best: Put on the good daughter facade to get what she wants. The message that Shakespeare himself wants to convey is that daughters should be treated with a certain level of respect and be able to have the freedom in which they deserve.

They must not be suppressed to the point where they would betray you in the worst possible ways only to hurt themselves in the end. On the other hand, it could also mean that Shakespeare wants to show the daughters that any way you do it, betraying your father would only lead to self destruction. But overall, he did not agree with the choices that people were making around him and he expressed his opinions through his plays, in hope that the people would be affected by his stories and influence then to change accordingly.

The understanding between father and daughter appears to be very distant in Act 3 scene 5. The amount of commas and exclamation marks increase in Capulet's speech as his anger escalates indicating a louder, more aggressive tone; "hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!". Juliet's disobedience becomes clearer to Capulet, making his speech more rapid and broken. Capulet repeats the word "how" over in confusion. It has never struck him that Juliet might ever go against him.

He is bewildered and asks in surprise "is she not proud? He expects her to be happy that he has found her a match but is shocked that she doesn't accept it. Capulet objectifies Juliet using the word "baggage" twice, showing us how angry he is at Juliet for being wilful. At the height of his anger Capulet stops addressing Juliet directly. Before he would use "thou", but now he speaks to her as if she isn't there, using words such as "she" and "her". He loses control and shouts "my fingers itch!" in his fit of madness showing that he is unstable and is finding it hard to control his temper.

Juliet is distraught at her father's hateful words and kneels down to him in anguish; "Good father, I beseech you on my knees, hear me with patience but to speak a word." Juliet feels defeated and is seeking her father's attention. The stage direction "she kneels down" really emphasises the weakness Juliet feels towards the foul-tempered Capulet. The fact that she is now much lower than him says a lot about the situation; that indeed he has the upper hand in this broken relationship. In a desperate attempt not to get married, Juliet follows the friars plan to trick her family members.

The change to her personality happened as a defence towards her father's attitude. She becomes rebellious; possibly resenting the fact that her choices had been torn away from her, replaced by his selfish decisions. Juliet kneels down once again to Capulet and says: " Henceforward I am ever ruled by you". This could be surrender to her father's wishes. But from a different point of view this could be seen as the surrender of woman to man. It is as though men are of such great being that the woman must kneel to them to be forgiven for apparent sins, which in Juliet's case is falling in love with the wrong person.

This shows that the social standing of woman in the Elizabethan times, especially for father and daughter relationships, was very low. Juliet pretends to have given in to her father saying " I'll do whatever you want". She is smart in how she treats Capulet, knowing exactly how to fool him into thinking she has changed. However, instead of showing instant delight, Capulet turns to the servant and says: " Send for the county, go tell him". By not replying to her immediately it appears that Capulet does not feel that Juliet is worthy of his attention.

He is treating her as though she was an insignificant person who he wouldn't mind hurting. However afterwards, in Juliet's absence, Capulet expresses his relief at Juliet's approval. But this pleasant thought is only instant before Capulet returns to objectifying her by saying that he has " reclaimed" Juliet. The only genuine sadness we see after Juliet's " death" is from the nurse and Lady Capulet. When the nurse finds Juliet, she screams out " help help my Lady's dead! " in anguish. The repetition in her words show that she cannot believe what has happened.

Although, Lady Capulet has said before “ wish the fool married to her grave” she is distraught by the sight of her dead daughter and obviously regrets her words. A bald statement was made by Lady Capulet where she cries “ I will die with thee” as it shows the audience how much Lady Capulet cares for Juliet. This reaction is very different from Capulet’s and Paris’s which seem staged and fake. They only talk about how Juliet’s death affects them. Capulet goes on about the wedding, showing his self centeredness saying things such as “ oh son before the wedding day”.

Whilst Lady Capulet and the nurse complete iambic pentameter mirroring their sorrow; Paris and Capulet also do this showing the audience how compatible they are with each other. This brings us to think that maybe “ our wedding cheer to sad burial” means that instead of doing a grand wedding Capulet is going to make a grand funeral to raise his hierarchy. If Juliet was Capulet’s “ earth” then he, in no doubt, was the sun. Everything seemed to revolve around him as he always tried to be in control using any means necessary. He was constantly out to impress people just to raise his status.

At first Capulet was portrayed as being very kind and thoughtful towards Juliet but soon his true colours were brought to the surface through his aggressive language and violent actions. Juliet was forced into a corner by Capulet who was trying to make her marry Paris. Because of his rash behaviour and violent attitude Juliet died a tragic death. Only then was his pride so hurt that he forgave his “ ancient” enemy; The Montague’s. Overall their relationship was that of mistrust and deception and the end of Juliet was therefore inevitable.