

# romeo and juliet movie analysis essay sample

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



Good morning/afternoon Mrs Douglass and class. Today I will be comparing two versions of William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet. One of the films was produced in the year 1996; this was directed by Baz Luhrmann. The two main roles of Romeo and Juliet were played by Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. The other film being analysed was directed by Franco Zeffirelli, it was released in 1968. Leonard Whiting had the role of Romeo and Juliet was played by Olivia Hussey. The scene being analysed in this assignment is Act 5, scene 3, this scene is the death of the lovers. To analyse these two different versions of the chosen scene, this assignment will discuss the editing, sound, mise en scene, shot size and camera angles used to determine which version executes the theme of tragedy more effectively.

Camera angles and shot sizes are used in films to reveal characters emotions and reactions when put in certain situations. This paragraph will look at the chosen scene and discuss the different camera angles and shot sizes used and how they affect the audience. In Act 5, scene 3 Luhrmann's version the shot sizes and camera angles include an extreme close up on Romeo's eyes as he enters the tomb of the Capulet's. This shot size is used to display the sadness in Romeo's eyes as this is the first time he is seeing his beloved Juliet dead. A subjective angle is then used to show the audience what Romeo is seeing as he enters the tomb.

Romeo then makes his way to Juliet and Luhrmann uses a medium close up of Romeo; this allows the audience to witness Romeo's emotions as he closes in on Juliet. A high angle is then used to show how Juliet is powerless to all that is occurring. As Romeo holds her hand an extreme close up is used, this shows that Juliet is starting to awaken as her hand moves. This

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shot size creates a great deal of anxiety for the audience, because they know what is going to happen. An extreme close up of Juliet's eyes at the end of this scene shows the audience her reaction as she watched her husband kill himself. Zefirelli's version of this scene is very different to the one previously analysed due to the time period between the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. This version uses a lot of close ups which helps build up the tension before the deaths of the main characters.

As Romeo enters the church where Tybalt and Juliet lie, a close up is used. It shows the sadness in Romeo's face as he sees her dead. Romeo makes his way to Juliet and removes her veil. As he is doing so a close up of Juliet is shown this lets the audience understand how Romeo feels as they get to see that she appears dead. Romeo then kills himself. A close up of Juliet's hand is shown as she is recovering from the drugs she has taken, this also reminds us that Romeo has just taken his life to be with her. As Juliet discovers Romeo's dead body a medium close is used to reveal her shock as she sees that Romeo has committed suicide. Baz Luhrmann's camera angles and shot sizes portray the theme of tragedy better as they more effectively capture not only the setting, but the emotion of the scene and they better pay homage to Shakespeare's original intentions.

Mise-en-scene is everything that you can see within a shot. Firstly I will be looking at the mise-en-scene used in Baz Luhrmann's version. He uses a very dark lighting at the start of the scene, by doing this, he creates tension between characters. This would also be used to help express the emotions of Romeo. Blue neon crosses are also used to show how important Christianity

was to both families. The lighting in the tomb was orange, due to the many candles around Juliet's body, Candles are used in this scene to mourn the recently deceased. the outer edges of the shot is still very dark which helps the audience feel the sadness that the characters are experiencing at this point in time. To display the wealth of Juliet's family, she is dressed in very extravagant clothes whilst lying in the tomb of the Capulet's.

Zefirelli's version is set in the Elizabethan era which means there are more traditional items used in the scene. By doing this it adds legitimacy to the film. The most commonly noticed item of this description is the clothing worn in the film. Another item that Zefirelli uses to show the age of the film is torches. Torches are used throughout the film but in this particular scene, we see them being used in the tomb where Juliet Lies. By having Tybalt's body in the tomb beside Juliet, it adds to the sadness of the scene as it reminds the audience of the death that has occurred recently in the film. Zefirelli's use of mise-en-scene displays the tragedy of the movie better because the audience is reminded of the recent deaths that have taken place due to the input of Tybalt's body in the tomb.

Editing is all those little extras that the crew adds to the movie to make it more enjoyable and exiting for you to watch. The editing in Baz Luhrmann's version is mostly cuts from characters and objects. The first instance of this is when Romeo is entering the tomb; the director has done this to expose Romeos emotions as he sees Juliet dead for the first time. We also see more of this in the tomb when Romeo is sitting by Juliet's side on her death bed. This is so the audience can really understand how Romeo is feeling.. In

Zefirelli's version he has left in more of the original piece than Luhrmann did in his variation of the film. These include Romeo talking to Tybalt's body in the tomb. Zefirelli's choice to put Tybalt's body alongside Juliet's helped remind the audience about the events that took place, in order for Romeo to end up where he is.

Another major difference between the films is the time between the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. In Zefirelli's version Juliet does not see Romeo die. But friar Laurence enters the tomb after Romeo killed himself, this minimizes the focus on the deaths and makes the audience think about the role that others have played in the deaths of Romeo, Tybalt, Mercutio and soon to be Juliet. As Romeo is talking to Juliet at the beginning of the scene in the tomb, the director has done a long take to expose the love and sadness between the couple. This long take of the two lovers has enforced the element of tragedy as the audience gets to see both of the lovers in one shot.

Sound is a major factor in movie editing. There are two types of sound. Diegetic and non-diegetic. Diegetic sound is all the natural sound that is made by the environment, characters and objects surrounding them. Whereas non-diegetic sound is the noises that the editing crew adds to the scenes after it is filmed, this may consist of voice overs, music that you hear during the movie and inner monologue. The diegetic sounds that Luhrmann has used in this scene include the sound of the helicopter that is chasing Romeo; we also hear Romeo's breathing as he has been running away from the police. All of the non-diegetic sounds in this scene are just different types of

music. This music consists of high violin sounds as Romeo is walking into the tomb and then it moves on to a very loud point or the peak of the piece.

This done to increase the intensity as Romeo finally realises that Juliet has actually died and as Romeo is talking to Juliet there is low stringed instruments being played to show how much Romeo really cared about Juliet. Luhrmann has also added in dramatic music when Juliet is awakening from the potion, to see that Romeo is taking his life to be with her. By doing this he adds a great deal of tension up until the point when Romeo drinks the poison. Zefirelli has used no music as Romeo enters the tomb, but he has used the sound of crickets outside the tomb. This lets the audience know that Romeo is the only one around. Zefirelli has done the opposite to what Luhrmann did as Romeo enters the tomb; he has used soft music, which symbolises the sadness that Romeo is feeling, as he sees Juliet dead.

The director has used the love theme song of the movie when Romeo uncovers Juliet's face; this reminds the audience of when they first met at the party. Then a change in the mood when Juliet wakes up and a happy sounding music is played. By doing this it shows that Juliet is relieved to be awake, but this is a short lived feeling as she discovers Romeo's body by her side. The theme of tragedy has been displayed better through the use of sound by Baz Luhrmann as he has used more tragic music through this scene where as Zefirelli used happy music in a section of his scene, this takes the focus off the sadness of the scene.

The aim of this essay was to deconstruct techniques used by the directors in two film versions of Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet to portray tragedy in Act 5,

scene 3. Through analysing the use of shot sizes and camera angles, the technique mise-en-scene, editing and sound it is evident that Baz Luhrmann's version of the film more successfully conveyed this theme to the audience.