

Romeo and juliet and fourteenth century verona

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



The Shakespearean tale of Romeo and Juliet is a story of two lovers from enemy families, the Montague's and the Capulet's, are forbidden from being together happily. They have to go behind their parents' backs and this ends in their tragic deaths. Tybalt is the cousin of Juliet and a Capulet who also acts as a catalyst for the heart wrenching events that take place further on into the story. I am comparing Act 1 Scene 1 of William Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' with the Baz Lurhmann film version.

The book is set in fourteenth century Verona, Italy in contrast the film is set in a modern day on Verona Beach, California. Shakespeare wrote the play between 1591 and 1596 whereas the film was produced in 1996. The main focus of my essay is the character Tybalt and how he is presented in both film and book. The name Tybalt would have connotations to a cat because an old fable ' Reynard the Fox' portrayed a cat called Tibbles as a sly character, Tybalt is referred to as ' Prince of Cats' further on in the story.

The four humours also played a large part of Elizabethan life as it was what they thought your personality was based on. The story offers many references to the four humours and Tybalt is described as ' fiery' very early on in the story to show his short temper and anger. We first see Tybalt in Act 1 Scene 1 where Benevolio is attempting to part a fight between two servants who have their swords out. Benevolio doesn't want anyone to get seriously hurt. As soon as Tybalt enters the atmosphere immediately changes. In his first line he insults Benevolio ' What art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? .

This is him referring to Benevolio as someone as low as the servants when he is of the same level of importance. He comes across angrier than any of

<https://assignbuster.com/romeo-and-juliet-and-fourteenth-century-verona/>

the other characters previous to him. Whereas the servants had been having a joke beforehand Tybalt enters and seems desperate for a fight. He then goes on to say “ What, drawn and talk of peace? I hate the word”. This emphasises the argumentative side of Tybalt and it’s almost as if he’s trying to contradict everything Benevolio is saying in order to have a fight.

In the film this line is said differently as the word ‘ peace’ is repeated as a question ‘Peace? Peace. I hate the word as I hate hell’. This shows that Tybalt is confused and almost can’t quite believe that he has actually heard Benevolio speak of such a thing. The way he spits the words show an element of disgust towards the very suggestion of parting a fight. Tybalt uses repetition of the word ‘ hate’ and also he uses ‘ death’ and ‘ coward’ to insult Benevolio. At this time these words would have been very strong and offensive.

Before Tybalt had entered this scene no words as harsh as these had been used and nothing was taken this seriously. The whole scene has escalated since Tybalt’s entrance. The first scene in the Baz Luhrmann film is set in a petrol station in California where the Montagues are getting petrol to fill their car and the Capulets step out of their car and again the mood changes suddenly. The first we see of Tybalt is the metal heels of his boots which have embossed on them his trademark cat imprint.

He drops the match he’s used to light his cigarette and crushed it under his shoe it one slick movement. This could be referring to the ease he would use to crush the Montagues. The first impression given of Tybalt in the book is very different to the film. In the book he is portrayed from the very beginning as an angry man who is desperate for a fight. In the film the first thing we

see of him is his shoes which automatically brings a huge element of mystery to the scene and makes the viewer question the character they have not yet fully portrayed.

Iambic pentameter is used in both the story and the book and this is used to show the difference in classes. Only the main characters speak in iambic pentameter the servants speak in prose. This would allow the audience to understand the difference in background of the different character. If they speak in iambic pentameter they automatically seen as more important and higher up in class. In the film Tybalt speaks slowly and pronounces every word clearly, this almost emphasises the hate he feels for the Montagues.

Likewise in the book his speech includes a lot of punctuation which demonstrates that although he is threatening Benevolio and insulting him throughout it he remains calm. Tybalt's speech in the film is very important because the majority of what he says is said in a tone which sounds like he is repulsed by the fact he is actually speaking to the Montagues. However one very ironic aspect is the use of the title ' Sir' used by both families when addressing each other. ' Sir' is used in case a higher member of authority saw this argument and they were reported.

They address each other as ' Sir' so neither one of them is as likely to get in trouble whereas if they insulted each other one or both families would have to pay the price. After the fight the Prince tells the leaders of the different families that if another fight breaks out one of them will pay with their lives. Tybalt in both film and book is portrayed as a sly, argumentative, and fiery catlike character that is always up for a fight, he hates the Montague family

more strongly than any other member of the Capulets or so it seems and he has no clear reason behind this hate.