

Romeo and juliet love analysis

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



Romeo and Juliet is a well known tragedy by the great 16-17th century playwright William Shakespeare. Various dramatisations and films have been made of this famous text such as Franco Zeffirelli's classic historical version, and Baz Luhrmann's modern spin on the story, but each of these still retain the original words written by the Bard. This play was one of Shakespeare's earlier texts — written in about 1595, and is very firmly themed around love. This essay will explore the different areas of this theme and discuss how Shakespeare presents love in different ways. Romeo and Juliet: the classic love story. But one has to explore what types of love this refers to. Romantic love is the most obvious; indeed this love is communicated between the two main characters throughout the majority of the play. The first sign of Romeo's feelings towards Juliet is in the first act, scene five so it's quite near the beginning of the play. " Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. " Act 1, scene 5, lines 51-52 This implies that Romeo's short-lived courtly obsession with Rosaline was nothing in comparison to the emotions he was now feeling. It is, to be clichéd, love at first sight. However Romeo is describing Juliet more as an object a " true beauty" implying that any other woman he has seen before this was not a beauty — not really. This does seem to be rather exaggerated and conflicts with how Romeo was earlier describing Rosaline: as " rich in beauty". Romeo becomes more devoted and passionate as he moves further into his relationship with Juliet. After the wedding night, although Romeo must leave before dawn he is so consumed by true love that he tells Juliet he will risk death just to stay with her a little while longer. " I have more care to stay than will to go; Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so. How is't, my

soul? Let's talk it is not day. " Act 3, scene 5, lines 23-25 The two top lines are a lovely example of the language feature; a sonnet. When Romeo and Juliet first meet they speak mainly in sonnets, as this was not only poetry symbolising love, but it also shows the connection between the couple — when they can finish each other's sentences in rhyme, there truly is a chemistry. In the above quote, Romeo is no longer using the fickle, poetic language of the infatuated lover as before when he described his "love" for Rosaline: "Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, O any thing of nothing first create!" Act 1, scene 1, lines 176-177 These two quotes, although they both refer to romantic love, differ greatly. Romeo is describing how he feels in both quotes but because he is more to the point when he speaks to Juliet about how he feels. It seems as if Romeo is hiding the fact he feels only Courtly love for Rosaline behind long elaborate wordplay and oxymorons — it implies that it is not sincere, and is quite childish in a way. One would expect that Romeo has read of noble knights speaking of their love interests in this manner, and is simply copying their style and idolising these great warriors. However, his passion for Juliet causes him to tell her the strength of his love in a much more realistically and truthfully — from the heart, and he really seems to grow up. Here, Shakespeare is cleverly creating a contrast of the "artificial" love and obsession with Rosaline that makes Romeo act in a very effeminate way, with the true heartfelt adoration Romeo has for Juliet, even though it is only young love. This particular technique may be less effective with a more modern audience; who is more used to true love lasting over a period before marriage, but with an Elizabethan audience, they are more accustomed to "rushing into things" perhaps even because the lack of

stability they have regarding their life expectancy. Therefore when Romeo and Juliet marry, it pans out as much more like true love, than a modern audience would see. However there is still a significant contrast in courtly and true passionate love which convincingly develops the bond between Romeo and Juliet audiences of both times, and makes the tragedy of both their deaths at the end seem so much more heart wrenching and devastating. Throughout the play, Juliet also goes on her own emotional journey as she falls in love with Romeo and then defies her family to be with him. When the audience first sees Juliet, she is just a young inexperienced child of only thirteen, sitting with her nurse and mother who are both beginning to think about marriage for her. Many directors of this play have interpreted this particular scene very differently, depending on the message they wish to give the audience. Indeed, some plays have depicted Juliet in this scene as much too young to marry; perhaps she would enter eating sweets, or playing puerile games as she listens to Lady Capulet describe a man lined up to marry her. These particular plays tend to be of a more modern era to put across just how juvenile Juliet was at this time, because in the 16th and 17th centuries it was much more usual for a girl in her early teens to be married than it is now. Juliet is in awe of marriage before she meets Romeo — her perception of it is a great and noble thing that she, at that point, feels too inadequate for: “ Lady Capulet : How stands your disposition to be married? Juliet : It is an honour I dream not of" Act 1, scene 3 lines 65-66. Lady Capulet responds to this by comparing Juliet to herself, as Lady Capulet was married before Juliet’s age (see later notes), and on asking Juliet’s opinion, she answers in a passive and obedient way: “ I'll look to like,

if looking liking move: But no more deep will I endart mine eye Than your consent gives strength to make it fly. " Act 1, scene 3, lines 97-99 This quote is an example of Shakespeare's setting up a " primary" Juliet, if you like, who Shakespeare can then develop throughout the play into a young and independent woman, who knows in her own mind who she really loves, no matter what her parents think. Here, Juliet is showing her devotion to her family — in short, her love of Lady Capulet makes Juliet want to please her - by naively doing whatever Lady Capulet wishes her to do, which is to have a young arranged marriage. These were very common in Elizabethan times and the Elizabethan audience would therefore see Juliet's rebellion against this as a very controversial thing to do and explains the life-changing impact her love for Romeo has on her, which of course makes the story all the more dramatic for them. However, this aspect of the play for the modern audience is seen in a very different way, as arranged marriages are so uncommon nowadays and are often thought of as unfair and controlling of the parents. The modern audience will then see Juliet's rebellion not as dramatic exactly, but as a triumphant escape instead. Of course, in complete contrast to Lady Capulet's wishes, Juliet later on in the play marries a man whom she totally adores, but is worst enemy to her entire family. She then chooses to end her own life when she discovers he is dead. The transformation of the immature, naive Juliet into the independent, passionate determined Juliet happens throughout the play, but with key markers such as: meeting Romeo for the first time; their wedding night together (which symbolises Juliet growing up from a young girl into a young woman); the point at which she informs her father that she will not be marrying Paris as he wants her to and he revolts

her; and when she sees Romeo dead beside her. “ He shall not make me there a joyful bride. I wonder at this haste; that I must wed... .. I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam, I will not marry yet” Act 3, scene 5, lines 117-118, 120-121. Here is evidence that Juliet’s attitude towards the wishes of her parents has completely changed. This quite rude quote by Juliet in answer to Lady Capulet’s information that Paris will marry her is in such contrast in comparison to the quote above that in which Juliet vows to obey her mother, that the metamorphosis of Juliet’s will is clearly shown. Her love for Romeo is creating such a strong emotion in her that she is acting assertively in a way that she would obviously never have considered before learning what love really was. She even lies to her father about confessing and agreeing to marry Paris, which is in conflict with what her religion teaches. Therefore she and Friar Lawrence (who helps her) are showing she has prioritised that her love for Romeo, and Friar Lawrence’s will to make Juliet happy are more important. Friar Lawrence could be described as the source of paternal love for Juliet as he is the person who understands that she loves Romeo, and is willing to help her. Although romantic love is the most important theme throughout the play, the storyline also includes strong themes of paternal/maternal love. For instance, Juliet is particularly close, not to her mother, but to the nurse who has cared for her since birth, because in the 15-1600s (in such contrast to today) it was seen as normal for an important and wealthy lady to completely wash her hands of the labours of bringing up her child. This practice is certainly frowned upon in today’s society because it seems our morals have changed — for better not worse. A mother neglecting her child is rightfully seen as an unacceptable thing

nowadays, and men have a much larger role in childcare. Juliet's father seems utterly unattached to his daughter — his only wishes are not for her happiness but for the wealth of his family, which shows how his not being involved with Juliet's upbringing has depleted any affection he might have had for her. The nurse whom he and Lady Capulet employed instead would dress, clean, breastfeed and care for the baby who was not hers. Therefore an extremely strong bond mutually exists between the nurse and the older Juliet. " Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace, Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed. And I might live to see thee married once, I have my wish. " Act 1, scene 3 lines 60-63. This quote shows only a small part of the Nurse's motherly devotion to Juliet. After a long monologue when the Nurse explains she had another child who died before Juliet, she ends with a rude sexual joke and a compliment to Juliet with a wish for her to marry soon (before the nurse dies). It seems as though the nurse feels she has revealed almost too much about her past life and love for Juliet (especially in front of Lady Capulet who has little respect for her), and some kind of defence mechanism comes into action — she starts making crude jokes about " falling backward". As the nurse ends with her wish to see Juliet married in this quote, the audience might almost think that the nurse is just as obsessed with marriage instead of true love as Lady Capulet is, with a hard determination to control Juliet's life and marry her into a rich family with a good reputation, as young as possible. However, when you look at scenes further on and observe actions that the Nurse takes to ensure that Juliet marries Romeo — a kind and loving husband, no matter what his reputation with the Capulets is — the audience begins to realise she really

does have entirely different motives to Juliet's mother. Perhaps it is something to do with her social class — as she is only a servant to the Capulets she has less wealth and is also less involved in the feud between the two houses. This means that the Nurse will understand that love is most important in a marriage, not riches or status. Lady Capulet however, married young and the wife of (what some would describe as) a money-obsessed, much her senior man, seems never to have known real love, therefore clouding her judgements for Juliet. However, in some interpretations of the play — such as Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film — Lady Capulet is openly shown to be having an affair with Tybalt, her nephew. It seems as if this particular relationship was not based around love, but around lust and physical attraction, showing a further misunderstanding of Lady Capulet regarding true love and almost depicting her as a jealous child, pining for something in a marriage that she really needs. When Tybalt is killed by Romeo, Lady Capulet as one of the first on the scene seems a little overly prostrate with grief: " Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child! O prince! O cousin! Husband! O, the blood is spilt O my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true, For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague. O cousin, cousin! " Act 3, scene 1 lines 146-150. Shakespeare may not have intended the severe grief that Lady Capulet displays when Tybalt is murdered to mean that she felt more than just an aunt's affection for him — this element of the storyline is interpreted differently depending on the director and audience it's written for. It is easy to envisage that an arranged marriage would be so much more likely to encourage an affair outside of it, than a real love match would. However, one could also argue that marriage in modern times is taken so

much more lightly than Shakespeare's time, because of the easiness to terminate it if it doesn't work. Therefore, it makes little difference which era the play is directed in (whether in Shakespeare's era when affairs were so common because of so many loveless marriages, or in modern times where adultery is not punished and people can fall in and out of love almost recklessly) the likelihood of Lady Capulet having a relationship with her nephew is similar in both times. This could also be used as further proof that Shakespeare was ahead of his time — he was already subtly casting a slur over arranged marriages, perhaps because he had begun to realise the unhappiness that could ensue in these situations. A type of love that is often forgotten in this play, aside from the romance, is that of Platonic love — or friendship. Whether knowingly or not, Romeo seems to interact or be acquaintances with the largest number of characters — Mercutio as one of his closest friends, Benvolio his cousin, Balthazar his personal servant... It is possible that Shakespeare was trying to show popularity in Romeo with people that no other character seemed to have, perhaps to show a contrast in hidden-away, obedient Juliet. On the other hand, this is a tragedy, so in true ironic Shakespearian manner the "lover not a fighter" character of Romeo still tragically dies in the arms of his love at the end. Of course before this, when Tybalt murders Mercutio, Romeo kills Tybalt — but with what motive? When Tybalt kills Mercutio, the platonic love Romeo feels for Mercutio drives him into this state of mind where all he wants to do is to hurt Tybalt, which for Romeo is quite out of character. "That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul Is but a little way above our heads, Staying for thine to keep him company: Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him." Act 3,

scene 1, lines 126-9 The audience sees this lovelorn, passionate man suddenly turn into an enraged murderer, which might not just have been out of anger. Romeo, having been taunted and sneered at by aggressive Tybalt and by the whole family for years, when he personally had done nothing particularly wrong might have just needed one push over the edge. He also makes some religious references in this quote to enhance the seriousness of the situation. Perhaps it was not just Mercutio he was avenging — it was himself as well. Also, an aspect that can be looked further into is whether or not Mercutio's death was entirely Tybalt's fault — or of his own free will. Due to the way in which he was brought up, he felt the need to fight to defend himself from the Montagues, who in actual fact were then secretly related to him. If his parents had not been so prejudiced, and not then passed on this trait to Tybalt, so much could have been avoided — and this problem is still true of today. For example, baptism can occur as young as a few months old in some religious cases, giving the child no chance to decide consciously for themselves, until it is too late. The parents and family are therefore forcibly passing on this faith whether or not the child will agree with it when they are older. Some interpretations of this scene differ in the length of the fighting and the way in which the deaths happen. In Franco Zeffirelli's film of 1968 the fight between Mercutio and Tybalt starts out in a slightly mocking way — as if each opponent is unwilling to actually kill the other, but are slashing swords to make themselves look important; it is not a particularly serious and perilous fight, until Romeo comes between the two and Mercutio is stabbed, but it is made to look like an accident that wasn't supposed to happen. Therefore, when Romeo says the above, Tybalt is made to

understand that Romeo truly means to kill him. There is then a quite drawn-out fight scene in which Romeo is quite desperately lunging at Tybalt. However, Baz Luhrmann's version of this had the actors directed to say and mean each line very seriously, as if death was the intention throughout the fights. There is some clever Dramatic Irony woven into these scenes as well, as when Romeo tries to tell Tybalt that they are related and receives violence back, the audience feels like shouting at them to stop and feels very involved in that particular scene. There are some quite harmful weapons involved, instead of the swords they would have had in Elizabethan Theatre — a dagger of glass pushed into Mercutio's side for instance, and Tybalt was shot, no fight leading up to it. This differs quite greatly to Elizabethan theatre because firstly they had no guns to be carried around and shot at various times, and also that this huge swordfight was part of the entertainment — the Elizabethan audience's love for the style and feel of this play would be broken if the heroes did not have a heroic death that befitted them! Lastly, but by no means least, the love that each house had for its power and wealth is the type of love that really is the reason that there was the story of Juliet and her Romeo. Sadly humans have an unvanquished, inauspicious love for money, and the fight for it seems to have been the reason that there was such rivalry and hatred between the two houses of Capulet and Montague. They were "both alike in dignity" (prologue line 1) but there is no given reason for why they hate each other so much. The servants who are of a lower social class even become involved, but the nurse and Friar Lawrence are impartial judges of the fights. Although the nurse is in the Capulet house, she only wants what is best for Juliet no matter who that involves. The Friar

wishes there to be harmony between the houses, and says that he will marry Romeo and Juliet in the hope that this will occur: " For this alliance may so happy prove, To turn your households' rancour to pure love. " Act 2 scene 3, lines 91-92. [31/01/2008] The Friar, like the nurse, is not as dependent on wealth and power, and as he loves his religion, this has taught him to see that humans are equal no matter what their class. This means his aims are not money based, but instead for happiness. It would not be untrue to say that Friar Lawrence is one of the " dark horse" characters who most understands love in this play, but is influenced by it to do what some would believe were foolish things — in desperation to help Juliet, he gives her the dangerous potion which effectively sends the lover's path downhill to their awful ends. It really almost seems that no-one can think rationally in this play — love gets in the way of their judgement! In conclusion, Shakespeare has presented the theme of love by making his characters really believably human by showing how they feel all different types of love. His use of language, direction and moral and philosophical issues causes the audience to think: If there had been no hatred between the houses of Capulet and Montague, Romeo and Juliet would not have had to overcome this, so would their love have been as strong? " Does the fruit taste as sweet if it is not forbidden? "