

# How the teenage experience was portrayed in shakespeare's romeo and juliet essay ...

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Shakespeare's play, "The tragedy of Romeo and Juliet", is perhaps the most famous love story ever told, and is in turn one of Shakespeare's most famous plays. The title, "Romeo and Juliet", has become synonymous with the idea of 'intense romance' or 'tragedy'. The story it tells almost epitomizes these two ideas – a tragic tale of love between two people from rival families. Part of what allows the events in the play to unfold as they do is that the characters of Romeo and Juliet are teenagers, and their experiences as such are a very important part of the play.

The story is crafted with a degree of melodrama which emphasizes the incredible passion felt for one another by Romeo and Juliet. Although the concept of being a teenager did not exist during Shakespearean time, this is still relevant to this particular play, because of the age they got married and the way their attitudes toward elders change throughout the play. Many themes were explored in this play such as; The Forcefulness of Love, Love as a Cause of Violence, The Individual Versus Society, The Inevitability of Fate.

The conflict with the parents is portrayed throughout this play. Even though many teenagers are very close to their parents, Romeo seems to be more attached to the Friar than his father. Not once are he and Lord Montague shown together on stage, and when he decides to marry Juliet he consults the friar instead of his father. Naturally a man would go to his father for marriage guidance, especially at such a tender age. On the other hand, Juliet seems very close to both her parents, but she seems more connected to the nurse, who has taken care of her from a young age, '... and I might live to see

thee married once,' this quote says that the nurse has one wish and that is to see Juliet get married in her lifetime, usually a mother would say this.

She is shown on stage with her parents many times. Her mother is usually the one to tell her big news, such as her marriage proposal from Paris, and the marriage date of when Juliet, and Paris would be married. Like when they had decided for her to marry Paris Lady Capulet told Juliet the news and not Lord Capulet. Whenever father and daughter are shown together on stage they seem to be in conflict. But the real change comes after she meets Romeo.

At first, when Juliet is asked if she would marry the “ valiant Paris” she said she will think about it ‘ it is an honor that I dream not of/I’ll look to like/but no more deep will I endart mine eye,’(act 1 scene 3 lines 67, 98-99) but will have to meet him first. Both these statement were spoken by Juliet, after lady Capulet had spoken highly of Paris. But after she gets married, and is once again asked to marry Paris she says ‘ I will not marry yet, and when I do, I swear/ It shall be Romeo, whome I hate, Rather than Paris. ‘ This quote shows that she will not marry because of the fact that she is deeply in love with Romeo.

This also shows that she is rebelling more and more against authority.

During the period when a person is a teenager they usually experience their first love. Romeo’s first love was for someone who he had only seen. He talked of her using Petrarchan’s Love Conventions. He used oxymorons and superlatives to describe her ‘ loving hate/cold fire’ (167, 171 pages 13, 15).

Both these quotes represent oxymorons and even though Romeo thinks he loves Rosalind, but for gets her once he meets Juliet. When he sets sights on Juliet his thinking for her is completely opposite to that of how he thought towards Juliet.

When the first spoke the finished each other's sentences and had a balanced iambic pentameter ' give me my sin again/you kiss by th'book'. This shows that he really did love her, and she loved him back, they also thought of each other as equals. Teenagers do this in modern times by changing their lover in an instant. They say they love someone, but something or another causes them to leave them for someone else. Teenagers often go through many mood swings. This is very evident in ' Romeo and Juliet'. Before the Capulet Ball Romeo is depressed, but his mood quickly changes to happy and in love, when he meets Juliet ' give me my sin again'.

This quote shows that Romeo is really in love with Juliet and wants to keep kissing her. He goes through another mood swing later in the play. After he is married, he goes to tell Mercutio and others the good news, but when he finds them they are in a fray with Tybalt and other Capulet. When Tybalt sees Romeo he wants him to fight, but Romeo say ' I love you cousin, but I cannot tell you why' Romeo is trying to tell Tybalt to put his sword down, because they are related, but Tybalt ignores him and tries to kill Romeo. He then kills Mercutio. Romeo suddenly is angered by this and goes to avenge Mercutios' death.

He ends up killing Tybalt. Although, the audience believe Romeo is a peaceful character and does not like to get into frays, but this incident shows that he will fight when he has to. The mood in this scene was changed the whole outlook on the play. Before this act everything was peaceful and calm but on act by a teenager changed the whole outcome of the play. When Juliet heard the news, she was at first angry toward Romeo, then felt sorrow toward Romeo and the he was being banished. Still nowadays teenagers go through mood swings, and Shakespeare has portrayed this in his play extremely well, especially with Romeo.

As children become older they and an increased responsibility. Nowadays teenagers are expected to get a job, they are given the opportunity to drive, and consume alcohol (not at the same time), but in Shakespearean times teenagers were expected to settle down and have a family. Even though many, like Juliet, are not ready to take such a big step they are told to be adults. Juliet was told she must marry Paris but she said she was not ready. In an act to persuade her Lady Capulet said that when she was Juliet's age she had already married and had a baby ' I was your mother upon these years' (line 73 page 29).

This may have given Juliet the boost to get married, but she did not want to spend the rest of her life with Paris, and wanted to marry Romeo. This shows that she had been given increased responsibility but was not ready for it. On the other hand, Romeo was not told by anyone who he had to marry. At first he wanted to marry Rosalind (his first love), but after he had set his eyes on Juliet he knew she was the one he would be with for all eiterernity. From the

beginning the teenage experience is showed with great detail and emphasis. One of many themes which were explored intensively was divided between love and hate and fate.

Such was showed when Romeo and Juliet marry each other behind the parents back. Even though they were both kin of rival families they did not let that come between them ' what's a name/my name, dear saint, is hateful to myself/because it is an enemy to thee ;'( Act 2 scene 2 lines 43, 55-56). The quotes represented above shows the audience that they are both wanting to defy their name, and that love was more important to them than their family. Still today teenagers go behind their parent's backs and turn around getting hurt themselves.

Even though teenagers don't get married when they're of young age they still do things that Romeo and Juliet do in the play. Shakespeare may have unknowingly summarized how teenagers act in this play. In conclusion, there are many similarities between teenagers in the twenty first century and teenagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is also a vast amount of differences between the two and it they are both rendered in the play. The most similar theme between teenagers now and teenagers in Shakespearean times is that they are not as close to their parents and have an increased responsibility.