

Romeo and juliet essay sample



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Shakespeare's sixteenth century story is captured and brought to life in a modern day movie. Baz Luhrman's twenty first century "Romeo + Juliet" is packed with romance, action and tragedy to create a spectacular movie.

Naive Romeo tries to overcome hatred and fights for pure love which becomes all too much to take. Luhrman puts in modern day movie selectors e. g. shooting of guns, helicopters etc. in the background there is different types of music to suit the mood and the place. This can cause the build up of tension and create passion.

Luhrman's Verona (where the film is acted) is a pastiche of locations shots. There are the towering Chicago type skyscrapers that symbolises the wealth and power of the rival families. The film is first set in the gang streets of Los Angeles, bordering a rather run-down Californian beach. Looming above all this is a statue of Jesus Christ (taken from Mexico City), highlighting the hypocrisy in the "fair" catholic city of Verona.

The unusual opening scene starts with news which is the prologue in the story. The prologue is repeated once more but this time with screen shots of the whole film with operatic music in the background just like a trailer. This is followed by the Montague boys in a car dressed as beach boys. Spaghetti western music is highlighted in the background.

The first fight scene starts with the Capulet's who are dressed as Mafia gang stars arriving at the petrol station. Spaghetti cowboy music is accompanies the fast and furious gun fight between the two in the petrol station. There is humour such as the exaggeration fear of the Montague by being banged on the head by an old woman and the humorous fear is

continued when the Capulet says “ boo” which extensively scares the Montague until he falls to the ground. The ensuing chaos is highlighted by a fiercely burning fire, screaming and shooting guns. Lührman cleverly changes the music from spaghetti western to operatic music when the helicopter arrives to create an effect to the audience and to show the fight is over.

Lührmans version of the famous balcony scene has a mixture of humour and romance. Naive Romeo bravely does dangerous thing by going to the Capulet mansion out of Love. Romance is put in with continuous eye contact, body contact and Juliet dressing in white night dress which symbolises her innocence. Soft romantic music is played smoothly with strings and violins; this plays a big bit in bringing the romance alive. Apart from romance, Lührman deliberately adds humour into it. Anxious Romeo is desperate to see Juliet. This makes him naive which makes him knock things down and falling in the pool.

At the car chase sequence Di Caprio shows Romeo as a desperate man. This is shown by Romeo taking the priest as hostage, the police shooting at him, dangerous driving and his physical appearance. The weather at this stage is dark, rainy and windy just like when Mercutio dies at the beach. Hypocrisy is shown by the frequent shot of the statue of Christ from ground surface and the above and frequently lit by searching lights. This statue is supposed to show peace and love but a mini car war is going on. Operatic-Wagnerian music is played which is very dramatic. All together this is a frenetic pace.

A handsome boy with good looks. Di Caprio acts as Romeo which brings the character to life. His looks are impossible to resist to the female audience. Di Caprio can catch well Romeo changing moods at different stages of the film. In the beginning he is the melancholic love sick poet. In the Balcony scene he is the very clumsy naive teenager knocking things down as he is in the garden. His looks are brought to life in the romantic scenes. He later becomes a vengeful killer who has no mercy for Tybalt.

Claudia Danes appearance as Juliet makes her a perfect combination with Di Caprio. She is able to switch her acting style agony, romance and happiness. Her beautiful body plays a big part in bringing up romance and male attention. She also shows her strong side by willing to kill herself unless Friar Lawrence helps her.

Harold Perrineaus acts as Mercutio which makes him a unique element in the film. He does everything accordingly and makes him special character. Harold Perrineaus first appearance as Mercutio is in a happy excitable mood in a red flashy sports car with a personalised number plate. He is able to intimidate the characters of a woman such as wiggling his hips. He is able to change his moods quickly e. g. as he starts the queen Mab speech he is cheerful mood but at the end he is angry so Romeo has to calm him down. At the beach Mercutio acts like a friend and fights against Tybalt instead of Romeo and he is later killed.