

Lysander and romeo's transient love

Literature



**ASSIGN
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Whether a comedy or a tragedy, William Shakespeare often portrays young men in love as intrepid, capricious creatures. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the title character of the play succumbs to his obsession with love, rendering him fearless to the conventions of society. Similarly, in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, the pursuit of love leaves men under deep, yet evanescent spells, transforming them into emotionally driven warriors. Despite their differences in genre, the two plays examine the volatility of love, by comparing the phenomenon to allusions of hunting and battle.

In constructing the overwhelming power of love, Shakespeare utilizes poetic language and transformative metaphors in both *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, to present the treacherous pursuit of love as a blinding and transient experience. The volatility of love plays a crucial role in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Although considered one of the greatest love stories ever written, unlike *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, the lovers in the famous tragedy only know each other for a few fleeting days.

While Romeo, a love struck young man, comes to view his feelings for Juliet as true, initially his infatuation with another women, named Rosaline, leaves him with the impression that love's "view is muffled still" (I. i. 160) This is explored in the opening scene of the play, in which Romeo personifies love's paradoxical ability to leave young men "without eyes", yet able to "see pathways to his will"(I. i. 161). Blinded to the reality that his affections for Rosaline will never be reciprocated, Romeo transforms the pursuit of her love into a metaphorical attack on his heart.

Demanding to know " what fray was here", Romeo uses poetic language to explain that his feelings for Rosaline are constantly at war with each other having " much to do with hate but more with love" (I. i. 167). Romeo furthers this conflicting view of love by making Rosaline the embodiment of " Diana," the goddess of the hunt, explaining, " she hath Dian's wit" (I. 1. 200). By transforming Rosaline into a figure that has perfected the art of the chase, Romeo equates the pursuit of love to a dangerous battle.

Romeo elaborates on his metaphorical battle for love further by describing Rosaline's impenetrable affections as well " arm'd" against the " siege" of his love and " Cupid's arrow," (I. I. 206). Although his affections for Rosaline do not endure throughout the play, by paralleling Romeo's pursuit of love to images of battle, Shakespeare foreshadows the play's view that young men in love must face difficult hurdles in order to attain true love. Rosaline, however, is not the only woman in the play that captures Romeo's will to fight for love.

Following his declaration that no other women " canst not teach [him] to forget" his affections towards Rosaline, Romeo, immediately disregards his " love" for her upon his first encounter with Juliet (I. i. 228). While this scene is meant to demonstrate the instant and genuine love felt between Romeo and Juliet, it conflictingly portrays Romeo's pursuit of love as volatile and transient, paralleling characteristics of war. Although he never mentions Rosaline's name again, Romeo, however, makes several references to his old love, measuring Juliet's beauty in terms of Rosaline's figurative jealousy.

By asserting that "Juliet is the sun", Romeo's allusion to Juliet's heavenly status contrasts with his comparisons of Rosaline's likeness to Diana, a symbol of the dull moon (I. ii. 3). By elevating his love for Juliet above the feelings he once felt for Rosaline, Romeo puts the two women in conflict with each other, making Rosaline an obstacle in his pursuit of Juliet's love. Romeo only further promotes this metaphorical war between the two ladies by ordering his "fair sun, to kill the envious moon" in order to facilitate their love (II. ii. 4).

By creating a metaphorical battle between Rosaline, and Juliet, Romeo transforms his old love for Rosaline into an obstacle he must overcome to validate his love for Juliet. By paralleling the act of love so closely to acts of violence, Shakespeare portrays love as a volatile yet powerful force. To emphasize the similarities between the pursuit of love to the act of war, Shakespeare utilizes violent language to transform the love affair between Romeo and Juliet into a volatile battle of survival. This portrayal of love is explored heavily in the infamous balcony scene of the play.

Blinded to the inevitable consequences, in this powerful scene the two lovers fight against the conventions of reality. Like a warrior "with love's light winds", Romeo breaks through the "O'erperch walls" of his enemy, irrationally declaring that Juliet's love has made him "proof against their enmity" (II. ii. 65-67). Ignorant to the penalties his actions could bring by trespassing on his enemies property and vowing to elope with out permission, it is apparent that Romeo holds love higher than his own life.

Believing his life were better ended by hate/Than death prorogui?? d, wanting" Juliet's love, Romeo not only shies away from reality but he comes to view that the pursuit of love is a life or death fight, similar to act of war (II. ii. 77-78). By the end of Shakespeare's tragedy, Romeo is so disconnected and reliant on his love for Juliet that when his lover is reported dead, he comes to a " violent end", losing his volatile battle gain love.

Romeo's inability to recognize the blinding power of love, and therefore the rashness of his actions, helps solidify his pursuit of love as a " violent delight", too volatile to be everlasting. While Shakespeare's A Midsummer's Night Dream is considered a comedy, similar to his tragedy Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer's Night Dream features a hopeless romantic, who falls under the volatile control of love. Told over a short length, the lovers in the play, unlike Romeo and Juliet, have had longer histories together.

However in the beginning of the play, Lysander must leave the world of reality, to pursue his true love, similar to Romeo, Determined to win the hand of women who has already been betrothed, in the Lysander understands the battle for love as an often difficult experience. After being commanded that he can not marry his love, Hermia, Lysander explains that throughout history, " The course of true love never did run smooth; (I. i. 134) Lysander's pursuit of love like Romeo's, transforms into a difficult battle, one in which is not easy to win. Just like Romeo, Lysander's must overcome challenging and dangerous hurdles to win the hand of Hermia.

Whether it's a disapproving parent, or rival lover to overcome, in both Romeo and Juliet, and A Midsummer's Night Dream, Shakespeare transforms the

pursuit of love into a metaphorical battle against the preventions of society. Similar to Romeo, Lysander becomes obsessed with securing his love, succumbing to its blinding powers, ultimately leaving the connotations of reality behind for the pursuit of love. Although, Lysander loses a sense of reality, falling prey to the powerful effects of love, unlike the character of Romeo he is still able to see that true love can often be transient.

Before his descent into the forest where his affections for Hermia will be tested, Lysander clearly recognizes that lovers face a million obstacles and can be quickly separated by "war, death, or sickness" (I. iv. 24). Knowing that love can be volatile and often short lived, Lysander portrays the effects of love as "momentary as sound,/ Swift as a showdown, Short as any dream;/ Brief as the lightning collided in the light", so quick and in nature that "darkness do devour it up"(I. v. 25-30).

However, Lysander's ability to recognize the transience of love is what allows him to escape the same tragic end that befell on Romeo. The volatility of love, in *A Midsummer's Night Dream* is transformed and portrayed as a humorous phenomenon, rather than a life ending power. Although Romeo and Lysander hold overwhelming similarities in the pursuit of love, their respective plays embody two very different genres.

While *A Midsummer's Night Dream* features a tragic beginning, the final scene sticks to the classic comedic ending, with a final image of a valiant young lover and his prosperous love. Romeo and Juliet on the other hand is a model tragedy, emphasizing love's power to bring "violent ends". Both Romeo and Lysander symbolize the figure of the hopeless romantic who is

blinded to the consequences of chasing after forbidden love. However by the end of the play Lysander breaks free of the blinding and transient effects of love, and sustains, while Romeo succumbs to the destructive effects.