

# Baz Luhrman: romeo and juliet transformation

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



Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet Transformation* A hugely successful transformation of the complex written version to the action packed film took place when accredited writer Baz Luhrmann redefined the classic tale of Shakespeare's *Romeo And Juliet*. Luhrmann and co-writer Craig Pearce were tenacious in deciding "to stick absolutely to the Shakespearean text, to keep as many of the Elizabethan customs as possible, such as a highly evolved code of etiquette and honor, even in the use of violence" in the context of a created world, based on twentieth century icon.

They discovered that one of this century's most powerful and effective icons, the movies, best exemplify the notion. "There are textual facts in *Romeo and Juliet*, having to do with Elizabethan society, which exist in Mexico," Luhrmann explains. "For instance, during Shakespeare's time religion was very involved in politics; there was a very small percentage of great wealth and a large population of poor; it was violent; and people were openly armed. We've interpreted all of these Elizabethan things in the context of the modern, created world. In fact, much of this occurs in modern-day Mexico, in varying degrees. You could actually set the piece in Mexico City itself and just play it. It has mysticism about it and, for me it's exotic.

It has a music and magic to it. It's not *Verona Beach*, but it certainly had a lot of the elements to it. "The costume party was a fabulous pretext for the romantic quality of the film; Romeo being the knight in shining armour, Juliet the angel that comes into his life, completely absorbing him like some fantastical being, driving his obsession with love. There were also a few clever imageries Luhrmann used to further show exactly what the situation was-which, to be honest is challenging for many younger readers of the

<https://assignbuster.com/baz-luhrman-romeo-and-juliet-transformation/>

Shakespeare novel, both in terms of the language used and the fact that it somewhat lacks in the nature of popular entertainment). These were: the fish tank which was the barrier between the two lovers- just like the water and the beautiful little fish, so exciting, but there was the glass ( thefamilyrivalry) that wouldn't budge and to break it (defy the rules) would only mean death. What was so clever was that one imagery summarized the main fact of the story of Romeo and Juliet- they are only truly free from their parents when they've taken the poison. Imageries are only a part of the beauty of this transformation - as Luhrmann relates, the way it sounds also has a huge effect on audiences.

" To me, the language in Leonardo's mouth is a wonderful thing to hear because the words have resonance. He speaks them as if they really are his words, and that's something you don't always get in a Shakespearean performance. And it's certainly something you don't get in his written plays! For enhanced comprehension of Shakespeare's language, Luhrmann set the film in what he calls " a created world," a collage of modern and classic images, portraying aspects of religion, theater, myths, technologyand of course, popculture. " Basically, the created world is a universe that is recognizably modern but has a little distance," Pearce reveals. " It's like a fairy tale world, a world of stories which really parallels the movies. The reality' we see in the movies is always a bit magnified, even when it is supposedly realistic. " Luhrmann's main focus was in getting the youth to appreciate as well as enjoy the purity and brilliance of Shakespearean literature, by appealing to their general love for all things action and romance.

Perhaps also, to some extent, even connect with some of the incidents and characters, which is always a factor in movies. This is shown in one way by the characters: The Lady Capulet, for instance, who is so incredibly self-absorbed that she doesn't see the emotional gulf between herself and daughter Juliet. Everything about the transformation was trying to simplify the understanding of this, and give connections to contemporary society; "Lady" was dropped to be replaced with the highly religious, uncommon (but well-known) name Gloria, which is a perfect choice. The simple but effective use of over-applied make-up and magnificent clothes illustrates the matter further, and anyone can relate to an egotistic peer. Furthermore, Juliet's father, the imposing and unpredictable drunken monarch is portrayed using a bloated, somewhat hideous actor, which doubtless, reminds many youngsters of the Julius Caesar's senate as well depicted in the popular Asterix comics. There is also the obvious approach of beginning the film with an attention-grabbing opening of headline articles thrown in a very in-your-face manner, followed by an loud (though not obnoxious) fast action scene, including the ever popular use of guns and impressive somersaulting, only to end in a very cliché CSI like discovery, where the whole affair, complete with police choppers, ends up on the news. Another obvious symbol was the huge statue of Christ which seemed to tower over everything, like some silent guardian watching over all the tragedies, doing nothing for the sufferers.

Luhrmann envisions Fulgencio Capulet as "... the classic Godfather patriarch.", which shows quite clearly As for Romeo, "...

in a way, he was the original rebel without a cause, the first James Dean. His is a non-politicized rebellion. He is a Byronesque rebel in love with the idea of love itself. "