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The Theme of Love in Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

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Acknowledgement:

To My Family

Teachers

Supervisor

With gratitude and respect

Introduction

Romeo and Juliet is probably the most famous. Our literary love story in the world. Even people who've never read or seen the play know the names of the two main characters. When Shakespeare wrote the play more than 400 years ago, arranged marriages were far more common than romantic love and would continue to be so for a long time.

The play takes a radical, and modern approach to male /female relationships, without being sentimental. It is after all a tragedy. What destroys the two lovers is not the hasty, impulsive nature of their love, but the fact that, because of the loathing their two families have for one another, they were never allowed to love freely or openly.

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Section one

1.Shakespeare's life and works

1.1 Shakespeare's life

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in April 1564. He was the third child and eldest son, of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. His father was one of the most prosperous men of Stratford, who held in turn the chief offices in the town. His mother was of gentle birth, the daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmore. In December 1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, daughter of a farmer of Shottery, near Stratford, their first child Susanna was baptized on May 6, 1583, and twins, Hamnet and Judith on 22 February 1585 little is known of Shakespeare's early life; but it is unlikely that a writer who dramatized such an incomparable range and variety of human kinds and experiences should have spent his early manhood entirely in placid pursuits in a country town

William Shakespeare (1994; p:7)

Since 1601 Shakespeare had writing less, and there were now a number of rival dramatists who were introducing new styles of drama, particularly Ben Jonson (whose first successful comedy, Every man in his Humour, was acted by Shakespeare's company in 1598 Chapman, Dekker and Beaumont and Fletcher who began to write in 1607. In 1608 the king's men acquired a second play house, an indoor private theatre in the fashionable quarter of the Blackfriars. At private theatre, plays were performed indoors; prices charged were higher than in the public play houses, and the audience consequently a memorial which still exists, with a portrait bust was set on the north wall His wife survived him. Ibid (1994;p.p.:10-11)

Shakespeare too borrowed freely though his sources are more varied than his predecessors, typifying his exalted muse and his all encompassing genius. He borrowed heavily from Plutarch's "lives" and Holinshed's "chronicles" and other classical translations. Yet he baffled and bewildered his critics and his admirers as he circumvented all established rules of his predecessors. He did the unthinkable when in one play after another he flouted the unities of time and place, and an exasperated Jonson, the unyielding traditionalist, pronounced that Shakespeare's plays were a blasphemy and could not have been more stages. The scholarly and revered Johnson could not prove. Shakespeare's plays were staged with brilliance by actors who had failed miserably with the prudishly correct plays of his starchy predecessors.

Praveen Bhatia (2001; p. 1-2)

Shakespearean plays depict the yearning for scientific learning and human philosophy in its more myriad and intense form. It is his unquestioned genius that made him so appealing to the era of flux in which he wrote and make him relevant even today after so much scientific advancement

Ibid (2001; p:3)

Since 1601 Shakespeare had been writing less, and there were now a number of rival dramatists who were introducing new styles of drama, particularly Ben Jonson (whose first successful comedy, *Every man in his Humour* was acted by Shakespeare's company in 1598), Chapman, Dekker, Marston, and Beaumont and Fletcher who began to write in 1608 the King's Men acquired a second play house, an indoor private theatre in fashionable quarter of the Black Friars was more select.

Shakespeare seems to have retired from the stage about this time :his name does not occur in the various lists of players after 1607 Hence forward he lived for the most part at Stratford, where he was regarded as one of the most important citizens. He still wrote a few plays, and he tried his hand at the new form of tragi - comedy -a play with tragic incidents but a happy ending - which Beaumont and fletcher had popularized. He wrote four of these - Pericles, Cymbeline, The winters pale, and the tempest, which was acted at court in 1611. For the last four years of his life he lived in retirement. His son Ham net had died in 1596: has two daughters were now married.

Shakespeare died at Stratford upon Avon on 23 April 1616, and was buried in the chancel of the church, before the high alter.

Shortly afterwards a memorial which still exists, with a portrait bust, was set up on the north wall. His wife survived him

William Shakespeare (1994; p.p. :10 -11)

Towards the end of Shakespeare's life, in Italy, a man Shakespeare's ago invented the telescope and looked at the stars. His radical discoveries caused him to be thrown out of the Catholic Church.

For fifteen centuries people had believed in a picture of the universe as held in crystal spheres with order and beauty, and everything century around the earth.

In this belief the sun, moon and stars were the heavens; they ruled human fate, they were distant and magical. Galileo proved his was not so. So, the world was no longer flat and the earth was not the center of the universe It must have felt as if nothing was to be trusted any more.(Jackie Head; p. vii)

1.2 Shakespeare's works

In the beginning no dramatist can create live characters save by bequeathing the best of himself into his work of art, scattering among them a largess of his own qualities, his own wit, his comprehensive cogent philosophy his own rhythm of action and the simplicity or complexity of his own nature.

Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries all excelled in one or more of them all time, or at least majority of times, as teased and tormented his readers with his exquisite wit on one scale, and sublimated them with his deep insight into human Psyche one another plays like those of Shakespeare are writing in blood; not run cold, but running warm and lively through the authors veins and spill like molten lava on every word that he writes.

Bhatia Praveen (2001, P. P2)

Shakespeare wrote in age out standing in literary history and its vitality of language. The Elizabethan literary language, in the era in which Shakespeare wrote, was addressed to mixed public, more trained in listening than in reading and more accustomed to group life than to privacy.

Elizabethan writing lacked the intimate conversation and psychology of the modern novel, but was supreme in expressing sensation and the outward, demonstrative aspects of feeling. This factor explains why drama was the chief form of Elizabethan art.

The era of Shakespeare saw the rise in capitalism. It brought about radical changes in the composition of society as society as spirit of competition became the focal point of the social hierarchy the sixteenth century as a result was largely restless due

to new found wealth, aided by political upheavals and religious wars, and a lack of intellectual synthesis.

The whole universe was governed by divine will. Nature was God's instrument and social hierarchy was a product of nature
Ibid (2001; p:2)

By the summer of 1598 Shakespeare was recognized as the greatest of English dramatists. Booksellers were printing his more popular plays, at times even in pirated or stolen versions, and he received a remarkable tribute from, a young writer named Francis Meres, in his book *Palladis Tamia*. In along catalogue of English out horse meres gave Shakespeare more prominence than any other, and mentioned by name twelve of his plays.

William Shakespeare (1994; p. :9)

When Shakespeare died fourteen of his plays had been separately published in Quarto booklets. In 1623 his surviving fellow actors, John Heming and Henry Condell, with the co - operation of a number of printers, published a collected edition of thirty -six plays in one folio volume with an engraved portrait, memorial verses by Ben Jonson and others, and an Epistle to Reader in which Heming and Condell make the interesting note that Shakespeare's hand and mind went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.

Ibid (1994, p. p:11)

Table (1) Shakespeare's Works

Period	Comedies	Histories	Tragedies
1584-1592	Comedy of Errors	1,2,3, Henry VI	Titus Andronicus
	Taming of the Shrew	Richard III	
	Two Gentlemen of Verona	King John	
1592-1594	Love's Labour's Lost	Venus and Adonis (poem)	
		Rope of Lucerne (poem)	
1594-1599	Midsummer Night's Dream	Richard II	Romeo and Juliet
	Merchant of Venice	1 Henry IV	
	Merry wives of Windsor	2 Henry IV	
	Much Ado About Nothing	Henry V	
	As you like it		
1599-1608	Twelfth Night		Julius Caesar.
	Troilus and Cressida		Hamlet.
	Measure for Measure		Othello.
			Timon of Athens.
			Lear.
			Macbeth.

Period	Comedies	Histories	Tragedies
	All's well that ends well		Antony and Cleopatra. Coriolanus.
1608-1613	Pericles. Prince of Tyre Cymbeline. The Winter's Tale .	Henry VIII	

Praveen Bhatia(2001; p.p :5-6)

Yet for all of its emphasis on scholarship, humanism could flourish in the popular theatre because it was attached to tradition to tradition as well as to nationalism and individualism. It was attached to the medieval traditional moral teaching through allegory. The heightened imitation of nature in poetry, inspired men to raucousness and civility and ultimately to the uprightness of human mind .

Ibid (p.:1)

Section Two

((Plot Summary of Romeo and Juliet))

This is peculiar consolation to give to the parents of a girl who has just died. If it means anything at all, it seems to be an implicit, criticism of the institution of marriage and the effect that marriage can have on love a short marriage, by implication, is better than a long one -perhaps because than the passion of love is frozen in eternity rather than trans for med into domesticity.

Whether true or not as a critique of marriage or an analysis of love. Friar Laurence's words seem singularly irrelevant under the circumstances. Harold Bloom (2010; p:18)

But friar Laurence is not actually offering the grieving parent, the bereft bride room, and the devoted nurse consolation. And the circumstances are different from what they appear to be to Juliet.

Moreover, Laurence is only giving the appearance of offering consolation. He actually scolding them reproaching them, as the opening lines of his speech clearly show, when he interrupts their keening over Juliet's body

Ibid (p:18)

Another important characteristic of Shakespeare comedy is music and dance. His comedies always end with music, dance and merry make, with Hymen, the God of love, presiding over the proceedings .

Praveen Bhatia (2001, p:18)

He is in with Juliet to thwart her marriage to Paris and to reunite her with Romeo, already her husband (Juliet is not, in fact dead. she has taken a potion the friar has distilled .

Its effect is to simulate the appearance of death for twenty. Four hours. After Juliet has been interred , Laurence in tends for Romeo secretly returned from banishment in manual, to meet her at the tomb and for the lovers, whom he has clandestinely married to flee to safety in consequence his homily is full of deception.

It is all the better for Juliet, as far as he is concerned, to be married to Romeo rather than to be in heaven, as he implies she is, or to be married to Paris as her parents wish her to be. This is his real and buried meaning .

Harold Bloom (2010, p. p :19)

Shakespeare plot -has been variedly interpreted by various critics Coleridge believe that is Shakespeare's .Sir Walter Raleigh and S. T . Magnificent characterization that creates interest and not the reverse.

This statement is partially true firstly Shakespeare did not have any original story. unlike in the tragedies, where the action develops out of characters naturally and without stress, this does not happen in the comedies.

The comedies have much that is superfluous ridiculous and artificial. There is also a lot of improbability and absurdity. Shakespeare leaves too much to fate or chance.

He indulges in such devices like deceits, disguise, mistaken identities and cross -purposes. These absurdities are hidden only due to magnificent characterization. Shakespeare takes no pain to

fasten loose ends. His main concern is dramatic effectiveness and not with plot construction .

Praveen Bhatia (2001, p. p:19)

All that is left now is for participants in the drama who have survived to gather and review the event that leads to the catastrophe and to find some resolution.

The noise in the tomb has brought the watch the prince, old Montague -his wife has died of grief at Romeos banishment -the capulets , Romeos man, and Paris's. Laurence is brought before them by the watch and quickly tells the story of the play; that retelling of the story serves as its resolution.

Grief at their children's death seems to bring the old men to their senses and they end their rift, each embracing the others loss. For these fathers, death bestows on both the lovers a mythic life as they are metamorphosed from living beings into frozen emblems of love.

Rather than a thing of living passion, love becomes symbolic, represented by the golden statue each father will have sculpted of the others child, not so much to represent the lovers as to represent the reconciliation both men have made with each other. The lover's integrity of passion is denied them, and they become in death emblems not of their won delight but of their fathers will to reconciliation .

Harold Bloom (2010, p. p:59-60)

It remains for the prince to recall the lovers and the tragic context of their living lore, fittingly for a play about the strength of language and the poetry in the construction and assertion of

identity, and a play that begins with a sonnet and uses a sonnet to represent the union of the two lovers .

Ibid (p.p:60)

As a summary we may say that viewed from one standpoint it is the struggle of youth and youth, of Tybalt and Romeo. From another stand point it is the clash of age and youth.

As far as this latter stand point in correct the play the antithesis of King Lear, where ago suffers because of youth.

In "Lear" Shakespeare looks out on life with the eyes of age in Rome and Juliet his sight is that of youth. Evans, (p. p:xix)

Now Romeo and Juliet have a terrible problem :

They married but can never live together in vernacular. Juliet is very upset, and her father, thinking that she is grieving for her cousins death, gives her a cheering surprise -she is going to marry Paris in three days! Juliet, horrified, goes to the friar.

He gives her a potion that will put her to sleep for 42 hours presumed dead, she will be carried to the Juliet's tomb; then the friar will rescue her and take her and take to mantua to be with banished Romeo and live happily ever after.

Trish Till man (2009: 6)

Section Three

((Theme of love in Romeo and Julie))

There is no doubt "Romeo and Juliet " primarily is a play of love. Romeo and Juliet are its famous lovers who have fascinated the human world since their very creation. The play has magnificent poetry and imagery which convey the heightened love of the two teenage lovers with exquisite magnificence .

Praveen Bhatia (2001, p .p: 126-127)

We are immediately aware that this is ideal love. Shakespeare makes us even more aware of its nature by the manner in which contrasts it with other kinds of lore. He does this to enable his audience to compare it with other relationships and consider them in their right perspective. He skillfully introduces a young Romeo in melancholic love with Rosaline.

It is only when he falls in love with Juliet that the difference between love and infatuation become evident. What Romeo feels for Rosaline is essentially negative It is self -deceiving. He is in love with the idea of being in love.

This is Shakespeare's way of laughing with kind -hearted joy at the folly that most of us have for Juliet and hers for him, are rooted in regard for each other

Ibid (p. p :127)

The lovers themselves enjoy idyllic moments together in which time is almost suspended, even as its onrushing force presses against them.

The chief source of their trouble is that their love and their will are powerless to alter reality. not by the stubborn insistence

of language nor by the sacrificial devotion of love can they stop the Movement of the hours or redefine day and night only death can still time.

Harold Bloom(2010, p. p:53)

It is only when his words become congruent with Romeos desire that they become effective.

Thus, Friar Laurence is not a dispassionate preacher whose allegiance is to the soul's correction. Despite his earlier, in - sight full words about grace and rude will, he is a chief practitioner of willfulness in Romeo and Juliet, intent on shaping the lover's story to his will despite its apparently destined course, something he realizes too late when he flees from Juliet's tomb

Harold Bloom (2010, p. p:52- 53)

Shakespeare humanizes the love in his play through the development that his lovers undergo. This becomes amply evident if we compare the Juliet of But no more deep will I determine eye than your consent gives strength to make it fly "[I. iii. 98- 99]

With the Juliet of :

"Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger! This is thy sheath ;there rest ,and let me die "

[V. iii167 -168]

This is also evident in the development of Romeo as a lover. The Romeo of the beginning of the play is full of egoistic posturing.

By the time the play nears it end he has gained inner strength and know ledge and acquired that rarely achieved inner peace. It is this tranquility that makes him sympathize with the

miserable apothecary with Paris, his rival for Juliet's love, and even Tybalt in his "bloody sheet" , who had been the prime cause of his miseries Praveen Bhatia (2001, p. p 127 -128)

There a stark contrast between the love of Romeo and Juliet and the attitude of the servants, Sampson and Gregory, and Mercutio and the Nurse for them love is nothing more than sexual and physical pleasure, and between them they provide an abundant amount of bawdy humor in the play. some critic have Un successfully tried to show its absence through euphemism. The bawdry has been introduced by Shakespeare with a distinct purpose. If the play were to be bowdlerized , it would lose one of its very vital purpose. It provides humor.

Praveen Bhatia (2001, p. p:130)

Amidst all this is the intense love of Romeo and Juliet. Once we overlook the lack of intellectual content in their love we can, with some trepidation, accept the point of view of some critics that their Love is the ethical energy of tragedy. The moralizing is done by friar Lawrence and Prince Escalus, and by the dramatist himself through the prologue.

But it is the absolute nature of the love between Romeo and Juliet that dominates the lyric heights of the first scenes of the play.

From the standpoint of experience, though not from moral and intellectual code of conduct, the private lyric intensity of lovers is the moral center of the drama. How can Shakespeare render this fact and yet convey that it is public as well as redemptive?

He manages this through a brilliant manipulation of traditional idea. From the very beginning of the play both Romeo

and Juliet address each other as saints or pilgrims. Romeo is even in a pilgrim's costume when he first meets Juliet at the Capulet feast.

Praveen Bhatia (2001, p. p:132)

Romeo and Juliet are teenagers who fall in love deeply . but their families are bitter enemies. With help of friar Laurence and he is Romeos confidant who hopes to reconcile the two families through their children's union, they are secretly married. And after many problems faced Romeo and his problem with Tybalt, the prince exiles Romeo from crone.

Juliet visits Friar for help he offers her a drudge that will put her in to a death -like coma. The Friar promises to send a messenger to inform Romeo of the plan.

Juliet takes the drudge and the messenger, however, doesn't reach Romeo, but when Romeo learns of Juliet apparent death from his servant.

Romeo bugs poison and goes to Capulet crypt when he saw Juliet he still believing Juliet to be dead, he drinks the poison. Juliet awakens and finding Romeo dead stabs herself with his dagger, and the two lovers death .

Danter (p. p :3,4)

Mercutio's ribald jokes are sharp and early contrast with Romro's airy word play about Rosaline , and then contrast with romantic scenes in which the lovers meet and fall in love.

Shakespeare is trying to considerably temper the profound sweetness of Romeo's love for Juliet with Mercutio's cute bawdry.

It is Due to this that Shakespeare introduces the scene of bawdry just before and immediately after the exquisite balcony scene. There is no doubt in our minds that the balcony scene epitomizes dramatic and poetic brilliance .

It is arguably of the finest love scenes conceived by Shakespeare. Shakespeare would not have tarnished the effect of such a scene by placing bawdry on either end of it .

It was his own confidence in stage craft and dramatic skills that he could introduce it and then fine tune it for every delicate effect . Shakespeare understood that extremes of anything , even of sweetness in love , have a sense of unreality about it.

It is likely to create disbelief rather than sublimity that he desired . He manages to achieve that sublime effect despite the contrasting emotions due to his excellence dramatic technique . The contrast , however , should not be seen in terms of extremes.

The love between the teenagers is not merely ethereal and other -worldly . It is the sort of love which has distinct earthy tunes where sexual hunger is not only strong but eagerly anticipated .

Their love becomes ethereal only because Romeo and Juliet are able to sublimate their desires and transcend beyond mere physical love . it is this transcending of love that both Mercutio and the Nurse are unable to fathom .

Praveen Bhatia, (2001,p.p130, 131)

Shakespeare also explores filial love through the love between parents and children . he stresses on the household at the Capulet at the expense of the more agreeable Montagues.

He does this to bring about the heartlessness under the facade parental love , something which would not have so well suited had it been depicted through the love that the Montagues have for Romeo .

To Capulet Juliet is a mere commodity . His love for her has distinct tyrannical overtones . There comes a stage in the play when Capulet's cruelty towards Juliet surfaces with so much vehemence that the very nature of affection that exists between them becomes questionable :

"An you be mine , I'll give you to my friend ;

An you be not ,hang , beg, starve, die in the streets"

[III. v.192-193]

Capulet is so vicious in the fifth scene of the third act that it is impossible to agree with some critics who find him only an irritable old man. If Capulet is heartless , then lady Capulet is brutal towards Juliet : even the hitherto gentle Nurse betrays Juliet in her hour of greatest crisis when she asks her to forget Romeo and enter into a bigamous marriage with Paris .

The heartlessness of it all forces us to question the virtue and stability of family values , and the agony and violence that is an intrinsic part p of existence in a family.

Some critics have fleetingly written about the psychological violence and the incessant pressures that are within the frame work of family under the pretence of affection and family honor.

Shakespeare understood the true nature of this with absolute clarity.

Ibid, (p.p:131)

All goes according to plan , except that Friar sends a letter to Romeo that never arrives . All Romeo hears is that his beloved wife is dead . He obtains a poison from a pothecary and goes to drink it at his dead wife's tomb.

There , he meets a grieving Paris whom he does not recognize , and kills him in his desperation. Romeo then, drinks down his poison and dies . Juliet awakens and finds her husband dead, and the Friar arrives and offers to take her to convent, sense she no longer has a husband . But then the Friar thinks he hears a noise and runs off , thinking he will be blamed for the tragedy. Juliet tries to kiss the poison from Romeo's lips , then picks up his dagger and kills herself. The prince and the Montague and the Capulet parents come in and they all declare that , since they are united in their grief , they will take a lesson from Romeo and Juliet, and the family will live in peace.

Trish Tillman , (2002, p.p:6)

Section four

((Conclusion))

It remains for the prince to recall the lovers and the tragic context of their living love. Fittingly for a play about the strength of language and poetry in the construction and assertion of identity , and a play that begins with a sonnet and uses a sonnet to represent the union of two lovers, the prince ends the play with a recognition of the lovers using the final sestet of his own sonnet :

A glooming peace this morning with it brings; The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head :

Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things; some shall be pardoned, and some punished :For never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo. Romeo and Juliet is as much about hate as. The play opens with a scene of conflict between the two feuding families and ends with their reconciliation nonetheless, the play is considered one of the greatest love stories of all time, complicated by the inter play of fate and repeated misfortune in the timing. The juxtaposition of light and dark, the injection of comic moments and the beauty of the language of love further enhance the play and make it a classic for all time

Romeo and Juliet died for their love, because they love each other, and even when they die in the end their story didn't die with them, it lived to be told and remembered, The death couldn't separate the two lovers.

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