

## **Dramaturgy of Source and Text and Criticism of *Romeo and Juliet***

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**Halio, Jay L. *Romeo and Juliet: A Guide to the Play. Greenwood Guides to Shakespeare.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998.**

- The most visited text of Shakespeare at the Bodleian Library at Oxford was the First Folio (1623) and the Third Folio (1664/1665) of *Romeo and Juliet*.
- It has been argued that Shakespeare wrote one of his most major tragedies, which have tons of comedy, because of the death of his son Hamnet. After this play, he launched into writing some of his most major comedies.
- Continue to remember that Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance, not for dramatic literature or publication.

### Publication:

- R&J's first Quarto was published in 1597 and the second in 1599.
- Most scholars consider the second Quarto as the more authentic of the two published ones. It's also the longer one, has more notes of the bard, and names of the actors in the speeches. (1)
- In Q2, you can see Shakespeare's revising hand in Mercutio's Queen Mab speech. (6)
- It appears the development pattern was as follows: Shakespeare writes a full draft of the play (revising some parts as he goes along), making edits and cuts for length. This became the acting version for the play, which became the prompt book. The revised second draft became the published second Quarto in 1597. Burbage published the second draft 2 years later. 1609, the Q2 was reprinted. In 1623 the Folio was printed without any significant alteration. (7)
- Modern editing of R&J began with Richard Rowe's edition in 1709, based on the text printed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Folio – 1685. Alexander Pope's edition (1773 to 1725) first began the process of eclectic editing that continued through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in most editions subsequently. (8)
- The new Arden, which we are using, is considered the best edition. (9)
- R&J (1595-1596) falls in the lyrical period that includes *Richard II*, *Midsummer*, and a couple of acts of *Merchant*. (13)

### Origin:

- The main source for R&J is Arthur Brooke's 3,020 line poem *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) – made up of fourteeners (13).
- It's based on Italian writer Matteo Bandello's version in French.
- Shakespeare's interpretation for the couple is far more sympathetic than Brooke's
- Brooke sets it at Christmas and it's from a Protestant POV. (14)
- Shakespeare builds a much fuller portrait of Mercutio than Brooke's.
- The play is a definitive tragedy with the death of Mercutio. (15)
- The timeline in Brooke's is extended over weeks. (15)

- Lady Capulet is a far more shadowy figure in Brooke's poem – intentions are unclear. She is decidedly unempathetic. (15)
- Friar John is unable to deliver the letter in both Shakespeare's and Brooke's works. (16)
- Fighting/brawling was banned by all the Tudor monarchs and was a societal issue. Elizabeth I reduced the number of disturbances under her reign. (17)
- In the 1500s, in Europe, the age of Juliet marrying was atypical. Brides typically married around 21 to 22 and grooms around 26. The aristocracy married slightly younger at 19 and 24, respectively. Also, women didn't typically have children at 13 or 14. (17)
- Several cantos in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* inspired the Queen Mab speech, as well as Thomas Nash's *Terrors of the Night* (1594). (17)
- 1.2 preparations for the call and 4.2 Old Capulet inviting folks to the feast are balances. Juliet's forebodings at 3.5.51, 54-57 match Romeo's in 1.4.106. Friar Lawrence and 3.2 parallels the awaiting of Romeo's news for the Nurse in 2.5. Juliet meeting the Friar in 2.6 and then 4.1, under different auspices is a parallel. The Queen Mab speech (1.4) and visions of the Tomb (4.3) are parallels. (22)

#### Analysis:

- There are two groups in R&J: older and younger generations.
- Benvolio is an insomniac and worried about the circumstances of society.
- Tybalt embraces the conflict and always wants war. He lacks restraint.
- Mercutio is the poet and more complex than he appears.
- Unlike other Shakespeare heroes, Romeo is not dismissed at the beginning of the play but just a bit melancholy, as Lord Montague describes him.
- Act 4 is Juliet's. Romeo isn't in it.
- Juliet's age is decreased by two years from Brooke's poem.
- Juliet is far more than an obedient daughter and is the wooer to resolve the situation.
- The love poetry is what makes the language of the play so unique. Most of the play is in blank verse. (51)
- Like in the *Tempest* with Caliban, the Nurse, a character of a lower station, speaks in blank verse and at excess. (51)
- Mercutio is the wordsmith in the play and often breaks from blank verse to prose.
- Love and weddings always equate with death.
- Hate is represented as powerfully as love in this play.
- The play is connected to Dante's *Inferno* (canto 5).
- The lovers die joyfully. "Happy dagger" and "dateless bargain engrossing death." (73)

**White, R. S. *Romeo and Juliet*. New Casebooks. Houndmills, Hampshire, UK ; New York: Palgrave, 2001.**

- R&J deals with a paradoxical fusion of love and death – Liebestod – love-death (2)

“‘Death-marked love’: Desire and Presence in *Romeo and Juliet*” by Lloyd Davis

- The lovers’ deaths are announced at the beginning of the play. “The question is less on what happens than how it happens.” (28)
- The play is a contrast of sonnet lyricism and tragedy that is reconciled over death. (29)
- The prologue outlines the inescapable tie between sex and death. (39)
- Many characters link sex and death: the Capulet servants joke about raping and killing Montague women 1.1.22-4; the Friar parallels birth and death (2.3.9-10), as does Romeo 2.5.45). (40)
- There are 4 kisses between Romeo and Juliet and there are also 4 counterpoint violent eruptions. (41)

“Romeo and Juliet: Love-Hatred in the Couple” by Julia Kristeva – Famous article on work

- “The loving couple is outside the law, the law is deadly for it – that too, is what the story of Romeo and Juliet proclaims, as immortalized in Shakespeare’s play. And young people throughout the entire world, whatever their race, religion, or social status, identify with the adolescents of Verona who mistook love for death. No other text affirms as passionately that, in aspiring to sexual union as well as to the legislation of their passion, lovers enjoy only ephemeral happiness. The story of the famous couple is in fact a story of the impossible couple: they spend less time loving each other than getting ready to die. That accursed love, however, has nothing in common with the impossible meeting of lovers in the Song of Songs...” (69)
- “Breaking the law is the initial condition of amatory exhalation: even though the Capulets and the Montagues hate one another, we are going to love each other. This challenge (for Romeo knows perfectly well that both Rosaline and Juliet belong to the enemy family) is protected by secrecy.” (70)
- Shakespeare creates a play that is reliant on the erroneous sending of messages and misinterpretation. (71)
- “Neither Tybalt nor Paris, killed by Romeo, can reduce the passion mixed with violence that impels amorous feelings. They leave us dissatisfied, as they leave Romeo himself dissatisfied and disturbed—not guilty but nonplussed because he did not strike the right object.” (74)
- “There you have the most beautiful love dream in the Western world. Love, a solar dream, a thwarted idea? And a nocturnal, solitary reality, a frigid death together. Whose fault is it? The parents? Feudal society? The Church, for it is true that Friar Laurence departs in shame? Or love itself, two-faced, sun and night, delightful, tragic tenseness between two sexes?” (75)
- Shakespeare writes the play when he was 30. It’s his 9<sup>th</sup> play; his first real great success and part of his second group of works (written along with *Midsummer*). His 11-year-old-

son died in 1596 – same year it was written. His son was a twin and the play is filled with parallel after parallel (KL). (67)

- Romeo knows he's going to a feast of hatred at the Capulets'. (78)
- "In the denial that makes us dream of two corpses as being mere sleepers it is perhaps our thirst for love – magical challenge to death – that speaks out. The risky game with the sleeping drug in the very events of the play already suggests such a confusion. Nevertheless, the final image of the motionless couple perhaps leads to the promised land constituted by the sleep of lovers. Indeed, the erotic satisfaction of desires is not the soothing primary identification, and in that sense love confiscates narcissism." (82)

"The Ideology of Romantic Love: The Case of *Romeo and Juliet*" by Dymphna C. Callaghan

- "Shakespeare's version of the fate of that desire is presented as profound injustice as much as proper punishment." (85)

Misc.:

- *R&J* makes a tragedy out of the lyrical and comical.
- *Midsummer* is a summer comedy and *R&J* a summer tragedy.
- Romeo loves twice, Juliet dies twice, and there are many structural doubles.
- The corpses of Romeo and Juliet continue a social function: they unite two feuding families. (195)