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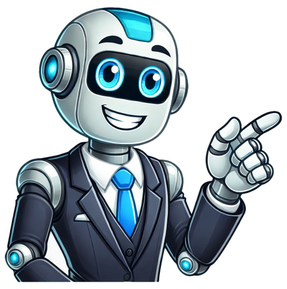

1996 film directed by Baz Luhrmann This article is about the film. For Peter Martins' 2007 ballet, see Romeo + Juliet (ballet). "William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet" redirects here. For the original play by William Shakespeare, see Romeo and Juliet. For other uses, see Romeo and Juliet (disambiguation). "Verona Beach" redirects here. For the park in Upstate New York, see Verona Beach State Park. William Shakespeare's Romeo + JulietTheatrical release posterDirected byBaz LuhrmannScreenplay byCraig PearceBaz LuhrmannBased onRomeo and Juliet1597 playby William ShakespeareProduced byBaz LuhrmannGabriella MartinelliElsa HermosoStarring Leonardo DiCaprio Claire Danes Brian Dennehy John Leguizamo Pete Postlethwaite Paul Sorvino Diane Venora CinematographyDonald M. McAlpineEdited byJill BilcockMusic byNellee HooperMarius de VriesCraig ArmstrongProductioncompanyBazmark ProductionsDistributed by20th Century FoxRelease dates 27 October 1996 (1996-10-27) (Mann's Chinese Theatre) 1 November 1996 (1996-11-01) (U.S. & Canada) 26 December 1996 (1996-12-26) (Australia) Running time120 minutes[1]CountriesUnited StatesMexico[2]Australia[3]Canada[4]LanguageEnglishBudget$14.5 millionBox office$147.6 million[5] William Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet (stylized as William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet) is a 1996 romantic crime film directed, produced, and co-written by Baz Luhrmann. It is a modernized adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name, albeit still utilizing Shakespearean English. The film stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes in the title roles of two teenagers who fall in love, despite their being members of feuding families. Brian Dennehy, John Leguizamo, Miriam Margolyes, Harold Perrineau, Pete Postlethwaite, Paul Sorvino and Diane Venora also star in supporting roles. It is the third major film version of the play, following adaptations by George Cukor in 1936 and by Franco Zeffirelli in 1968. The film was released on November 1, 1996, by 20th Century Fox. It was met with generally positive reviews from critics and grossed over $147 million against its $14.5 million budget. At the 47th Berlin International Film Festival in 1997, DiCaprio won the Silver Bear for Best Actor and Luhrmann won the Alfred Bauer Prize.[6] At the 69th Academy Awards, Catherine Martin and Brigitte Broch were nominated for Best Art Direction/Set Decoration.[7] In 2005, the film was included on the BFI list of the "50 films you should watch by the age of 14".[8] The film was also re-released in Luhrmann's Red Curtain Trilogy DVD box set in 2002 together with Strictly Ballroom (1992) and Moulin Rouge! (2001). In Verona Beach, the Capulets and Montagues are two rival business empires. The animosity of the older generation—Fulgencio and Gloria Capulet and Ted and Caroline Montague—is felt by their younger relatives. A shootout occurs between Montague Benvolio, Romeo's cousin, and Capulet Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, creating chaos in the city. The Chief of Police, Captain Prince, arrests Benvolio and Tybalt before reprimanding the families, warning them that if such an event occurs again, their lives "shall pay the forfeit of the peace". Benvolio and Romeo learn of a Capulet party that evening, which they decide to gate-crash. Romeo agrees on hearing that Rosaline, with whom he is madly in love, is attending. They meet their friend, Mercutio, who has tickets to the party, and Romeo takes ecstasy as they proceed to the Capulet mansion. The effects of the drug and the party overwhelm Romeo, who goes to the restroom. There he sees and meets Juliet, and the two instantly fall in love, both unaware of who the other is. Tybalt spots Romeo and vows to kill him for trespassing into his family's home. After Romeo leaves the party, he and Juliet each learn that they belong to feuding families, but Romeo returns to see her. He proposes. Juliet tells him that if he sends word by the following day, they will be betrothed. The next day, Romeo asks Father Laurence to marry them, and he agrees. Romeo passes the word on via Juliet's nurse, and they soon get married. Tybalt encounters Mercutio and Romeo at the beach. Romeo attempts to make peace, but Tybalt assaults him. Mercutio intervenes and batters Tybalt, and is about to kill him when Romeo stops him. Tybalt takes the opportunity to fatally wound Mercutio, who curses both houses before dying. Enraged, Romeo chases after the fleeing Tybalt and shoots him dead, avenging Mercutio’s death. Captain Prince banishes Romeo from the city, and he goes into hiding with Father Laurence. The nurse arrives and tells him that Juliet is waiting for him. Romeo climbs Juliet's balcony and they consummate their marriage, with Romeo departing the next morning. Meanwhile, Fulgencio decides Juliet will marry Dave Paris, the governor's son. The next morning, Gloria informs Juliet that she is to marry Paris, and when Juliet refuses, Fulgencio physically assaults her and threatens to disown her. Juliet runs away and seeks out Father Laurence, imploring him to help her, while threatening to commit suicide. Father Laurence gives her a potion that will let her fake her own death, after which she will be placed within the Capulet vault to awaken 24 hours later. Father Laurence vows to inform Romeo of the plot via overnight letter, whereupon the latter will sneak into the vault and, once reunited with Juliet, the two will escape to Mantua, a remote trailer park in the desert where Romeo has been hiding out. Romeo does not see the delivered letter, however, and, believing Juliet to be dead, buys a vial of poison from an apothecary. Romeo enters the church where Juliet lies and consumes the poison just as Juliet wakes up. Distraught over Romeo’s death, Juliet picks up his gun and shoots herself in the head, falling down beside his lifeless body. Romeo's body is being taken inside an ambulance with a crowd of spectators and reporters observing the incident from behind the police line, when the parents of both Romeo and Juliet arrive on the scene. Captain Prince approaches their fathers, and berates them both for the deaths of their children that their foolish brawl has caused. Main article: Characters in Romeo and Juliet The House of Montague Leonardo DiCaprio as Romeo Montague Brian Dennehy as Ted Montague, Romeo's father[9] Christina Pickles as Caroline Montague, Romeo's mother Dash Mihok as Benvolio Montague, Romeo's cousin Jesse Bradford as Balthasar, Romeo's cousin Zak Orth as Gregory, Romeo's cousin Jamie Kennedy as Sampson, Romeo's cousin The House of Capulet Claire Danes as Juliet Capulet Paul Sorvino as Fulgencio Capulet, Juliet's father Diane Venora as Gloria Capulet, Juliet's mother John Leguizamo as Tybalt, Juliet's cousin Vincent Laresca as Abra, Juliet's cousin Carlos Martín Manzo Otálora as Petruchio, Juliet's cousin Miriam Margolyes as Nurse, Juliet's nanny Others Harold Perrineau as Mercutio, Romeo's best friend Pete Postlethwaite as Father Laurence, the priest who marries Romeo and Juliet Paul Rudd as Dave Paris, the governor's son and Juliet's fiancé Vondie Curtis-Hall as Captain Prince, the chief of police M. Emmet Walsh as Apothecary Quindon Tarver as Choir Boy, the singer at Romeo and Juliet's wedding Edwina Moore as the anchorwoman / newsreader, who opens the movie, reading the prologue, and later assumes the role of the Chorus. Natalie Portman had been cast as Juliet but, during rehearsals, it was thought that she looked too young for the part, and the footage looked as though DiCaprio was "molesting" her.[10] Luhrmann stated that Portman was too young at the time, and made DiCaprio look older than intended. He was 21 at the time of filming and Portman was only 14.[11][12] After Sarah Michelle Gellar turned down the role due to scheduling conflicts, DiCaprio proclaimed that Danes should be cast, as he felt she was genuine in her line delivery and did not try to impress him by acting flirtatious.[13] Christian Bale read for the role of Mercutio, but the production crew decided to go with an African-American actor for the role instead.[14] While it retains the original Shakespearean dialogue, the film represents the Montagues and the Capulets as warring mafia empires (with legitimate business fronts) and the Capulets were "a Latin family, sort of,"[15] played by Latin-American and Italian actors.[16] It is set in contemporary United States, where swords are replaced by guns[17] (with model names such as "Dagger", "Sword", and "Rapier"), and with a FedEx-style overnight delivery service called "Post Haste".[18] Some characters' names are also changed: Paris, Lord and Lady Montague, and Lord and Lady Capulet are given first names (in the original, their first names are never mentioned); Friar Laurence becomes Father Laurence; and Prince Escalus is rewritten as the police chief of Verona Beach, being renamed Captain Prince.[19] The adaptation eliminates the character of Friar John, and some characters change families: in the original, Gregory and Sampson are Capulets, but in the film, they are Montagues; conversely, Abram, as Abra, is shifted from the Montague to the Capulet family.[19] The film was an international co-production involving principals from the United States, Mexico, Australia, and Canada. After the success of his earlier film Strictly Ballroom (1992), Baz Luhrmann took some time deciding on his next project: "Our philosophy has always been that we think up what we need in our life, choose something creative that will make that life fulfilling, and then follow that road. With Romeo and Juliet what I wanted to do was to look at the way in which Shakespeare might make a movie of one of his plays if he was a director. How would he make it? We don't know a lot about Shakespeare, but we do know he would make a 'movie' movie. He was a player. We know about the Elizabethan stage and that he was playing for 3000 drunken punters, from the street sweeper to the Queen of England – and his competition was bear-baiting and prostitution. So he was a relentless entertainer and a user of incredible devices and theatrical tricks to ultimately create something of meaning and convey a story. That was what we wanted to do."[20] Luhrmann obtained some funds from Fox to do a workshop and shoot some teaser footage in Sydney. Leonardo DiCaprio agreed to pay his own expenses to fly to Sydney and be part of it. Once Fox saw footage of the fight scene, they agreed to support it.[20] All of the development was done in Australia, with pre-production in Australia and Canada and post-production in Australia. While some parts of the film were shot in Miami, most of the film was shot in Mexico City and Boca del Rio, Veracruz. For instance, the Capulet mansion was set at Chapultepec Castle, while the ballroom was built on Stage One of Churubusco Studios; the church exterior was the Templo del Purísimo Corazón de María ("Immaculate Heart of Mary") in the Del Valle neighborhood.[21] The film premiered on November 1, 1996, in the United States and Canada, in 1,276 theaters, and grossed $11.1 million its opening weekend, ranking number one at the US box office. It went on to gross $46.3 million in the United States and Canada.[22] In Australia, the film opened on Boxing Day and was number one at the Australian box office with a gross of A$3.3 million (US$2.6 million) for the week.[23] It remained number one for a second week and returned to the top in its fourth week.[24][25] It was the ninth highest-grossing film in Australia for 1997 with a calendar year gross of A$12.9 million.[26] Overall, it has grossed US$12.6 million in Australia and US$147,554,998 worldwide.[5] Review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes reported 74% of 69 critics gave a positive review, with an average rating of 6.8/10. The site's critics consensus reads, "Baz Luhrmann's visual aesthetic is as divisive as it is fresh and inventive."[27] Metacritic gives the film a weighted average score of 60 out of 100 based on 20 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".[28] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A−" on an A+ to F scale.[29] James Berardinelli gave the film three out of four stars and wrote, "Ultimately, no matter how many innovative and unconventional flourishes it applies, the success of any adaptation of a Shakespeare play is determined by two factors: the competence of the director and the ability of the main cast members. Luhrmann, Danes, and DiCaprio place this Romeo and Juliet in capable hands."[30] Conversely, Roger Ebert gave the film a mixed review of only two stars out of four, saying, "I've seen King Lear as a samurai drama and Macbeth as a Mafia story, and two different Romeo and Juliets about ethnic difficulties in Manhattan (West Side Story and China Girl), but I have never seen anything remotely approaching the mess that the new punk version of Romeo & Juliet makes of Shakespeare's tragedy."[31] Some reviewers significantly revised their opinions of the film as time passed. For example, Stephanie Zacharek went from describing it as "destined for the trash heap of Shakespeare adaptations[32]" in her original review to saying "I Panned Romeo + Juliet in 1996. Now I Think It’s One of the Best Shakespeare Adaptations" when revisiting the movie in her 25-year retrospective review[33] for Time magazine. Romeo + Juliet competed for the Golden Bear at the 47th Berlin International Film Festival, winning the Alfred Bauer Prize for Luhrmann and the Silver Bear for Best Actor for DiCaprio.[34] It received seven nominations at the 51st British Academy Film Awards and won in four categories, including Best Direction and Best Adapted Screenplay.[35] The film received a single nomination for Best Art Direction at the 69th Academy Awards.[36] Other notable ceremonies where it received much recognition included audience oriented award shows, such as the Blockbuster Entertainment Awards, and the MTV Movie Awards. Award Category Subject Result Ref. Academy Awards Best Art Direction Art Direction: Catherine Martin; Set Decoration: Brigitte Broch Nominated [7] Australian Film Institute Awards Best Foreign Film Baz Luhrmann and Gabriella Martinelli Nominated Berlin International Film Festival Golden Bear Baz Luhrmann Nominated [6] Alfred Bauer Prize Won Silver Bear for Best Actor Leonardo DiCaprio Won Blockbuster Entertainment Awards Favorite Actor – Romance Leonardo DiCaprio Won [37] Favorite Actress – Romance Claire Danes Won British Academy Film Awards Best Direction Baz Luhrmann Won [38] Best Adapted Screenplay Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce Won Best Cinematography Donald McAlpine Nominated Best Editing Jill Bilcock Nominated Best Original Film Music Nellee Hooper, Craig Armstrong and Marius de Vries Won Best Production Design Catherine Martin Won Best Sound Gareth Vanderhope, Rob Young and Roger Savage Nominated London Film Critics Circle Awards Film of the Year Romeo + Juliet Nominated Director of the Year Baz Luhrmann Nominated Actress of the Year Claire Danes Won MTV Movie Awards Best Movie Romeo + Juliet Nominated [39] Best Male Performance Leonardo DiCaprio Nominated Best Female Performance Claire Danes Won [40] Best Kiss Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio Nominated [39] Best On-Screen Duo Nominated Best Song from a Movie "#1 Crush" by Garbage Nominated Saturn Awards Best Costume Design Kym Barrett Nominated [41] American Film Institute recognition AFI's 100 Years ... 100 Passions – Nominated[42] The film was originally released on DVD on March 19, 2002, by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.[43] A 10th anniversary special edition DVD containing extra features and commentary was released on February 6, 2007, and a Blu-ray edition was released on October 19, 2010.[44] The film maintains a popular reputation among English teachers, as a means through which to introduce secondary school students to the play. Although not to every critic's taste, the film is now recognised as one of the most influential Shakespeare film adaptations ever made.[45] Retrospective reviews are generally positive. While discussing Luhrmann's adaptation there are comments that include "... the most consistent source of delight in Luhrmann’s movie: the way he sticks so close to Shakespeare yet manages to update the Bard’s play so thoroughly"[46] and lamenting the lack of Oscar success ("though it was sadly overlooked at the Academy Awards"[46]) and, in an updated review on RogerEbert.com a headline that comments how the film "is irreplaceable".[47] The film's timelessness is another theme of these retrospecive reviews,[48] as is praise for the mix of modern images with traditional languages which challenged some early reviewers, leading to comments including "he proved you don’t need to change the language to make Shakespeare accessible".[49] Miriam Margolyes, who played the nurse in the film, wrote about her experiences on the film in her 2021 memoir This Much Is True. On her co-star Leonardo DiCaprio, she wrote:[50] Leonardo has grown into an extremely fine actor but back then he was just a handsome boy who didn't always wash; he was quite smelly in that very male way some young men are. Sometimes he wore a dress. "Leonardo, I think you're gay," I said. He laughed and said, "No Miriam. I'm really not gay." But I was wrong. We filmed in Mexico City, paradise for someone like me who loves fossicking around flea markets and antiques shops, and, like me, Leonardo was into bling in a big way, too. We'd spend hours going through the markets together. I don't know that I've ever had such fun."[51][52] She further commented on the chemistry between the film's two leads: I liked [DiCaprio] tremendously and admired his work, but luckily I was immune from his groin charms, unlike poor Claire Danes, then only 17. It was obvious to all of us that she really was in love with her Romeo, but Leonardo wasn't in love with her. She wasn't his type at all. He didn't know how to cope with her evident infatuation. He wasn't sensitive to her feelings, was dismissive of her and could be quite nasty in his keenness to get away, while Claire was utterly sincere and so open. It was painful to watch. Many years later, I was in a restaurant and she came up to me and said: "We worked together on a film once, I don't know if you remember me? My name is Claire Danes." It was the opposite of the arrogant behaviour of some stars and so typical of her.[51][53] Main article: Romeo + Juliet (soundtrack) "#1 Crush" – Garbage "Local God" – Everclear "Angel" – Gavin Friday "Pretty Piece of Flesh" – One Inch Punch "Kissing You (Love Theme from Romeo & Juliet)" – Des'ree "Whatever (I Had a Dream)" – Butthole Surfers "Lovefool" – The Cardigans "Young Hearts Run Free" – Kym Mazelle "Everybody's Free (To Feel Good)" – Quindon Tarver "To You I Bestow" – Mundy "Talk Show Host" – Radiohead "Little Star" – Stina Nordenstam "You and Me Song" – The Wannadies ^ "William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet (12)". 20th Century Fox. British Board of Film Classification. December 2, 1996. Archived from the original on January 3, 2015. Retrieved October 10, 2013. ^ "Romeo + Juliet (1996)". shotonwhat.com. Archived from the original on March 4, 2021. Retrieved June 6, 2019. ^ "WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO & JULIET". American Film Institute. 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Retrieved September 29, 2021. ^ "This Much Is True by Miriam Margolyes review – a wickedly honest memoir". the Guardian. September 22, 2021. Archived from the original on September 29, 2021. Retrieved September 29, 2021. Lehmann, Courtney. "Strictly Shakespeare? Dead Letters, Ghostly Fathers, and the Cultural Pathology of Authorship in Baz Luhrmann's 'William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet'." Shakespeare Quarterly. 52.2 (Summer 2001) pp. 189–221. Malone, Toby. Behind the Red Curtain of Verona Beach: Baz Luhrmann's 'William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet' Shakespeare Survey. 65 (1), 2012. pp 398–412. Wikiquote has quotations related to Romeo + Juliet. Official website at the Wayback Machine (archived December 26, 1996) Romeo + Juliet at IMDb Romeo + Juliet at AllMovie Romeo + Juliet at the TCM Movie Database Romeo + Juliet at the AFI Catalog of Feature Films Romeo + Juliet at Box Office Mojo Romeo + Juliet at Metacritic Romeo + Juliet at Rotten Tomatoes Romeo + Juliet Archived March 8, 2021, at the Wayback Machine at Oz Movies Retrieved from " First, I will discuss some of the plot changes that were implemented to adapt to a modern day movie's visual capabilities. If we were to read just the play, the only pictures we would see would have to be imagined. Since we now have the ability to see a movie, the director had to change some of the story to help us visualize some of the scenes. One such example is when, in the play, Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice at the Capulet masked ball. When Tybalt hears him, he becomes enraged. In the film this is different, Romeo takes off his mask at the fountain, and forgets it there. As Romeo is following Juliet, Tybalt sees him; however, the results are the same. Tybalt becomes angered, and vows to get revenge on Romeo. Another example of a change in plot is when Romeo visits the apothecary. Romeo, in the movie, sees the apothecary in Verona, where as Romeo sees him in Mantua, in the play. Finally when Romeo and Juliet kill themselves, the Friar does not see them first, and the Prince does not say that Mercutio and Paris were his kinsmen.... Baz Luhrmann’s kaleidoscopic film adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, while often leaving much to be desired from the two main actors in the way of delivery, presents a fascinating modern interpretation of the 16th century drama. David Ansen, film critic, describes it as “alternately enrapturing and exhausting, brilliant and glib…a "Romeo and Juliet" more for the eyes than the ears” (Newsweek). Sir Philip Sidney states in his Apology for Poetry that poetry should both delight and teach, and both the text and the film serve this purpose well—each suited to the time in which they were presented. Shakespeare incorporated jokes of the time, mentions of royalty, and allusions to historical events in his plays. Luhrmann does this as well, pulling in numerous references to recent pop culture. Both Shakespeare and Luhrmann endeavored to delight their audiences with beautiful costumes and familiar music, and to teach them with the basic moral precepts inherent in the story. A mere glance at the film will show anyone with even the slightest knowledge of the play that the two are ferociously different in terms of setting, costume, casting, music, and props. A closer reading, however, will also illuminate significant deviations in verse. The differences between these two works are distinctly illustrated in Act One, Scene One of the text and its matching film scene. Here Shakespeare's text shows Samson and Gregory of the house of Capulet exchanging in witty banter: SAMSON: I strike quickly, being moved.GREGORY: But thou art not quickly moved to strike.SAMSON: A dog of the house of Montague moves me (1.1 5-7). They continue their repartee until Abraham and another servingman of the Montagues arrive. Gregory advises, “Draw thy tool. Here comes of the house of Montagues” (1.1 29). Samson responds, “Quarrel, I will back thee” (1.1 30). Gregory suggests that frowning in their general direction will suffice initially. Samson disagrees: SAMSON: Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them, which is a disgrace to them if they bear it. [He bites his thumb]ABRAHAM: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?SAMSON: I do bite my thumb, sir.ABRAHAM: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?SAMSON [to GREGORY]: Is the law of our said if I say ‘Ay’GREGORY: No.SAMSON [to ABRAHAM]: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir (1.1 37-45). They proceed to argue about whose master is better, and fight until Benvolio arrives and tells them to put up their swords. Tybalt shows up and further provokes the fight. Curiously enough, the corresponding scene from the film shows instead Benvolio and the “Montague boys” cruising along the freeway in a bright yellow convertible, laughing raucously, with one of them turning around to face the camera and yelling: “A dog of the house of Capulet moves me!” They pull up to a gas station, Benvolio goes inside, and immediately afterward arrive Tybalt and the “Capulet boys,” Abraham (here abbreviated to Abra) and another. Tybalt goes inside, but Abra remains next to the car, sees the Montague boys, and faces them with an intimidating glare. The Montague boys quake with fear, and jump when Abra yells, “Boo!” Abra, of course, laughs hysterically and gets back into his car; ready to drive away until he sees one of the Montague boys bite his thumb. The ensuing fight scene provides an excellent example of the difference in choreography and props. In the text, the characters all fight with swords, on a stage empty of all but citizens of the watch. In the ultra-modernized film, the characters are all possessed of pistols bearing the name of their respective houses, and they make use of the surrounding cars, film extras, and various architectural trappings of the gas station where the fight is staged. Interestingly enough, though, when Benvolio entreats the Capulets and his fellow Montagues to lower their weapons, the wording does not exchange swords for guns, but remains as it reads in the original text (1.1 57). The film’s setting is a cunning twist on the original: instead of Verona, Italy, events take place in a teeming seaside metropolis called Verona Beach (bearing a striking resemblance to modern day Miami) that has been ravaged by the ongoing feud between Capulet and Montague. Verona Beach is a modern-day city, with cars, high-rise buildings, gas stations, and hot dogs stands, none of which were even conceived (or much less, available) during the time that Romeo and Juliet was written or performed. Luhrmann’s costumes are also highly modernized. This opening scene finds the Montague boys parading around in Hawaiian shirts and sporting unnaturally colored hair, while the Capulet boys favor leather and metal-heeled boots. These are some drastic changes from the traditional Elizabethan wear of the time. In addition, the film makes no pretense at any English or Italian (to fit the original setting) accent from its characters. Luhrmann explains that this is because he considers the American language as better attuned to Shakespearian text: "When Shakespeare wrote these plays, they were written for an accent that was much more like an American sound, and when you do Shakespeare with an American accent it makes the language very strong, very alive” (Weinraub). Musically in this act, the audience is provided with modern hip-hop, electric guitar sound effects, a nod to musical themes from spaghetti Western showdowns, and a chorus chanting a direct Latin translation of the play’s prologue. Luhrmann explains in an interview on the Music Edition of Romeo + Juliet that Shakespeare used all varieties of music to reach the highly varied audience in the Globe Theater: church music, folk music, and popular music of the times. Luhrmann echoes this in his version of the drama. Sidney explains that poetry is the most effective means of instruction, as poetry can “teach…not only by delivering forth his very being, his causes and effects, but also by making known his enemy, vice, which must be destroyed, and his cumbersome servant, passion, which much be mastered” (Duncan-Jones 220). Luhrmann takes Shakespeare’s task of instructing the masses against the folly of absurd family feuds and artfully updates it for the 20th century, retaining its essential moral argument while making it something to which modern audiences can more easily relate. References Ansen, David. "It's the '90s, So the Bard Is Back." Newsweek 4 Nov. 1996: 73. Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. Sir Philip Sidney: A Critical Edition of the Major Works. New York: Oxford UP, 1989. Romeo + Juliet. Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Perf. Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. DVD. Twentieth-Century Fox, 1996. Shakespeare, William. The Norton Shakespeare, Based on the Oxford Edition, Second Edition One-Volume Hardcover. New York: W. W. Norton, 2008. Weinraub, Bernard. "Audiences In Love With the Doomed Lovers." New York Times 5 Nov. 1996, Late ed., sec. C. Page 2 I talk of dreams, Which are the children of an idle brain, Begot of nothing but vain fantasy, Which is as thin of substance as the air, And more inconstant than the wind…(Romeo and Juliet, I, iv, 96-100) William Shakespeare wrote these lines, but his use of the mythological tradition of otherworldly appearances in his plays is anything but insubstantial. Sometimes he crafted them as a permeating presence, other times passing rather quickly, but even so still an important representation in the work. Whether the supernatural aspect is in the appearance of a ghost or the description of an ancient god, it often bears a connection to the larger scheme of the play. Hamlet and Macbeth are both examples in which the supernatural element enters the play at the opening of the action. The way a theatrical production begins has a great effect on the audience’s perception of the play, and both of these plays emphasize the supernatural from the start. The witches are the first characters we see in Macbeth, already prophesying and spouting paradoxical sayings. The stormy stage and odd characters establish early that this story occurs within an eerie and unnatural place. Hamlet brings the Ghost of the dead king to the plot’s fore in the first few scenes, beginning with a silent, awe-inspiring appearance in the first scene. Although the Ghost does not speak and is only onstage briefly, attention is directed toward that strange vision as soon as we meet Horatio. The eager introduction of the otherworldly being does two important things. One, it makes the audience pay attention. Two, it creates a somewhat uncomfortable atmosphere as we recognize these plays as stories in which the world is not quite natural. As Hamlet puts it, “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (I, iv, 67). Or in Scotland, as the case may be. Both of these presences carry through multiple scenes, and the sights are at one point confirmed by multiple witnesses, but later seen only by the play’s title character. Hamlet is actually the last to see the Ghost of all characters who report the sight. The first to see it are the guards Marcellus and Barnardo, who bring in Horatio, Hamlet’s school friend, to confirm the appearance. When it appears in Queen Gertrude’s room in Act III, it is visible only to Hamlet. As Macbeth opens, the audience sees the weyard sisters before any of the play’s characters. When Macbeth crosses paths with them, Banquo is there as a witness to their presence and their prophecy. When Macbeth approaches the lair of the witches he is alone, and they are the only others present when they show him the visions that describe his defeat. When Banquo’s ghost appears closely following his murder, Macbeth alone can see the apparition. This could very well be a factor in the portrayal of the madness of Hamlet and Macbeth, or it may attest to the unpredictability of the supernatural – or both. Such visions incite the curiosity of any observers, who want to know whether the sights are real, and to understand their nature. In Hamlet and Macbeth, the origin of any of these supernatural elements is always questioned, and never determined. The weyard sisters never actually reveal what they are: we know they are strange, and are witches, but beyond that we are told nothing. They make no effort to answer “What are you?” (I, iii, 45), and when Macbeth demands that they explain what they have declared, they vanish. Hamlet believes that the Ghost is either truly the ghost of his father or a devil, and expresses that doubt even with his resolve. Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell, Be thy intents wicked or charitable, Thou com’st in such a questionable shape That I will speak with to thee (I, iv, 21-25). However, although distrusting the supernatural visions themselves, the characters are put in a position to believe the words of ghosts and witches. Hamlet forestalls that belief until he has tricked Claudius into a show of remorse, but after the trick he will “take the Ghost’s word for a thousand pound” (III, ii, 264). In his mother’s chamber, he addresses the Ghost as his father, but he still displays an air of reservation. Although he never determines the true nature of the spirit, he sees the truth of its words. Macbeth first speculates in wonder, “to be king/ stands not within the prospect of belief,/ no more than to be Cawdor” (I, iii, 71-73). When he learns that he has in fact been named Thane of Cawdor, he reasons that the rest of their foresighted speech must be true as well. That belief leads him to conspire with Lady Macbeth, to kill King Duncan, and later to kill Banquo. This seems a fundamental difference between Hamlet and Macbeth. As soon as a part of the witches’ address to him comes to pass, Macbeth takes all of it as truth, so early trusting in that which should still be shrouded in uncertainty. Hamlet takes much more time to believe the Ghost’s revealing words. More than anything else this indicates Hamlet’s tendency to doubt, and Macbeth’s ambition. We see all of these parallels in the dramatic functions of supernatural beings in Hamlet and Macbeth, yet supernatural characters represent different thematic elements of each play. Hamlet’s Ghost is an embodiment of uncertainty, a very strong force in the dramatic action. As previously stated, the nature of the Ghost is continuously questioned. Hamlet speaks, “The spirit that I have seen/ may be the devil, and the devil hath power/ t’assume a pleasing shape,” i.e., the shape of his father (III, i, 575-577). Later, he described the Ghost as it leaves the scene, “My father, in his habit as he lived,” but it appears a more superficial description than a real trust in the form (III, iv, 126). Uncertainty pervades Hamlet, questions infusing the text from the first line, “Who’s there?” (I, i, 1). It faces the characters at every turn. Hamlet comes under scrutiny for his actions as others try to determine the cause of his madness. Polonius speculates to Ophelia, “Mad for thy love?” (II, i, 86); Claudius states “What… hath put him/ so much from th’understanding of himself, I cannot deem of” (II, ii, 7-10); Gertrude believes that the cause is “his father’s death and our o’er-hasty marriage” (II, ii, 57). In Claudius’s prayer scene, both he and Hamlet have important questions to ask: Claudius wonders how he can repent for his deed, while Hamlet hesitates in that moment to make the killing blow, asking, “Am I then revenged?” (III, iii, 84). In many other ways uncertainty rears its head in this play. Claudius becomes so unsure of what to do about Hamlet, once he suspects that Hamlet knows what he has done, that he ships him off to England. Equal consideration could be given to accident and suicide as the cause of Ophelia’s death, since no one witnessed her drowning. Hamlet offers one of the most famous literary uncertainties known: “To be, or not to be” (III, i, 58). Here he is questioning the very purpose of existence, and what happens after death, the existential question that no philosopher has yet been able to answer with surety. Shakespeare brings all of this questioning into focus with the Ghost’s presence. The characters at first search for confirmation that the spirit is not a trick of the eyes, and then must wonder at its origins and its intentions. Uncertainty is so prevalent that we may begin to understand Hamlet’s troubled state: it would be difficult to reconcile one’s existence in a world in which everything must be questioned. The weyard sisters are illustrations of the duality and paradox that melds reality and fantasy in Macbeth. Within their first lines comes a confusion of nature, as they tell us “Fair is foul, and foul is fair” (I, i, 10) – a mixed-up sentiment Macbeth echoes at his first entrance: “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (I, iii, 36). Their physical appearance reflects that confusion as well. When Banquo addresses them, he remarks, “You should be women,/ and yet your beards forbid me to interpret/ that you are so” (I, iii, 42-44). Very plainly there on the stage for the audience to see, the witches do not share the same kind of existence as Macbeth or Banquo. They seem instead to exist between the corporeal world and another, less tangible plane, a mingling of being and non-being exemplified by the dagger Macbeth envisions in his hand. “I have thee not, and yet I see thee still” (II, i, 35). The remainder of that speech makes it clear to us that the dagger is not a literal presence, but the sight of it is real enough to Macbeth that it is in question. The same sort of question occurs in the encounter with the weyard sisters: “Are ye fantastical or that indeed/ which ye outwardly show?” (I, iii, 51-52). Their nature is so mysterious as to allow us to believe that they are both. That duality of being is an important facet of the drama of Macbeth, and it manifests in the concealment of intentions. Lady Macbeth advises, “Look like the innocent flower,/ but be the serpent under’t” (I, v, 63-64). After Duncan arrives at Macbeth’s home, Macbeth goes to “mock the time with fairest show,” and declares, “False face must hide what the false heart doth know” (I, vii, 81-82). In this we see the necessity for things not to appear as they are. This is a prevalent need for Macbeth. His faltering leads him to plead, Stars, hide your fires, Let not light see my black and deep desires; The eye wink at the hand (I, iv, 50-52). He wishes not only for his thoughts to be hidden from others’ knowledge, but from his own – for his hand to carry out the murder while his eye looks the other way. The concept of concealment may seem to escape the weyard sisters, as they never hesitate to proclaim their wicked deeds aloud, but they support the theme by hiding their true natures. They are “secret, black and midnight hags” (IV, i, 64). That one word, “secret,” is a potent presence in Macbeth. In other ways, too, we see the blurring of the real world with those of a more fantastical variety. Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking affliction brings the dream world into that of the waking; ironically, it is the appearance of that indefinite world through which the character reveals the reality of her actions. The conflation of fantasy and reality is even more apparent in the advancement of Birnam Wood. A messenger reports to Macbeth, As I did stand my watch upon the hill I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought The wood began to move (V, v, 31-33). The image is strange and wonderful, but although Macbeth buys into the fantasy of this account, the audience knows better. In the previous scene, we witness Malcolm command that “every soldier hew him down a bough/ and bear’t before him” (V, iv, 4-5). The approach of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane is both logical and extraordinary. Beyond that, the weyard sisters interrupt the natural order of things, to some extent. Macbeth reacts “against the use of nature” after the first meeting with them (I, iii, 136), and they cause him to “start and seem to fear/ things that do sound so fair” (I, iii, 49-50). The entire kingdom is thrown into chaos as Macbeth is driven to kill the king. The witches talk of the trouble they cause to people with glee, leading their unfortunate targets “unto a dismal and a fatal end” (III, v, 21). The final outcome, if predestined, will come to pass no matter what the witches do, as one of them indicates when she speaks of a man whose sea vessel she intends storm: “Though his barque cannot be lost,/ Yet it shall be tempest-tossed” (I, iii, 23-24). They are therefore as limited as Macbeth, who manages to kill Banquo but not his son Fleance. To rid the world of both would be impossible by the terms of the play, as Banquo’s descendants are fated to wear the crown. Other supernatural images in Macbeth, namely Banquo’s ghost and the visions the weyard sisters show to Macbeth, could be viewed as striking representations of fear. The word “fear” appears often in Macbeth. Both Macbeth and his wife feel fear surrounding the murder of Duncan, he in its contemplation and she in the act itself. Malcolm and Donalbain, the sons of the king, flee in fear at their father’s death, as does Fleance at Banquo’s (granted that Banquo instructs him to run). When the spirit of Banquo appears to Macbeth, we see him respond hysterically, insisting that the ghost not lay blame on him – “Never shake thy gory locks at me” (III, iv, 49-50). Lady Macbeth exclaims to him, “This is the very painting of your fear (III, iv, 60). The apparition only occurs because Macbeth and his lady are still in the midst of their murderous scheme. He has already said, “If it were done when ‘tis done… we’d jump the life to come” (I, vii, 1-7). The evil of the deed itself is not enough to quell Macbeth’s desires. His problems begin because the act will have to extend to others, and because he will have to live with the murders. Therein lies his fear, and brings about this vision of Banquo’s ghost. The apparitions, the first two rather fearful in appearance, create an intriguing paradox as, in revealing what Macbeth should fear, they in fact defer his fears. Beware Macduff, the armed head tells him; no man of woman born will harm you, says the bloody child; a crowned child with a branch – probably a representation of Malcolm – assures him that he will be defeated only when Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. Macbeth appears to accept the interpretation that he will remain undefeated, yet he retreats to Dunsinane and fortifies its defenses as an extra precaution. In retrospect, it would seem that Dunsinane was the one place he should have avoided to keep the visions’ words from coming to pass. Elements of the supernatural appear in Shakespeare’s plays in more than the visual staging; they sometimes appear in fantasy-laden speeches of the characters. The beauty of the words alone is commendable, but supernatural images in Shakespeare’s speech are more than mere flowery language. These emergences of the supernatural usually extend for a few lines, unlike the ongoing images of Hamlet’s Ghost and Macbeth’s witches, but they can still have marvelous impact on an attentive audience and a solid connection with the rest of the play’s content. Romeo and Juliet contains one notable speech of that variety. Mercutio talks of a fairy called Queen Mab, a tiny creature that stirs dreams and desires. Immediately we see a connection to the work at large: desire has a significant role in the story. However, the contents of the dreams Mab invokes go beyond simple wish fulfillment. The way Mercutio describes it, Mab is in the business of inflaming natures. She makes lovers dream of love and lawyers of lawsuits, And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig’s tail Tickling a parson’s nose as a lies asleep; Then dreams he of another benefice. Sometime she driveth o’er a soldier’s neck, And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats, Of breaches, ambuscoes, Spanish blades… (I, v, 79-84). This inducement of disposition-appropriate dreams calls to mind the argument that Romeo is only responding to his lover’s nature when he meets Juliet. Witnessing the swift transfer of his hopeless pining for Rosaline to his incredible longing for Juliet, it does not seem much of a stretch to believe that he is merely following his lust. Chasing women is an inborn quality in Romeo. Mercutio deems, “You are a lover” (I, iv, 17). If we accept this as an explanation for Romeo’s pursuit, then Juliet is another Queen Mab, inciting Romeo’s nature to seduce her. The dreams that Mab reportedly sets on offset the possibility of pure love with their depravity. When the fairy rides in her hazelnut chariot across the lips of ladies, “oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues/ Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are” (I, iv, 75-76). These ladies are indulgent and impure; their breath is “tainted.” The lawyer Mercutio describes will go to “smelling out a suit,” like a predatory animal catching the scent of blood (I, iv, 78). The soldier is disturbingly bloodthirsty, and once Mercutio’s speech has built up he talks of Mab as follows: “This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,/ That presses them and learns them first to bear” (I, iv, 92-93). The descriptions of the dreams begin simply, and increase in detail and immorality with each new dreamer. In an account of a societal structure that is being pulled apart by desires, Mercutio’s language deteriorates accordingly. The construction of his speech becomes less coherent as the speech continues. Eventually, it becomes obvious that he is ranting. At this point, Romeo cuts him off. The way in which this speech ends speaks quite powerfully to Romeo and Juliet as a whole. Romeo interrupts Mercutio mid-sentence, saying, “Thou talk’st of nothing” (I, iv, 96). The idea that speech is an insufficient medium recurs throughout the play. We witness the concept’s expression in the infamous balcony scene. Romeo begins to profess his love by the moon, but Juliet interjects, “O, swear not by the moon” (II, i, 151). After a short exchange, she then bids him not swear at all: “I have no joy of this contract tonight” (II, i, 159). She has enough intelligence to see that she cannot trust an oath made so impulsively. The contract that will bring her joy is a vow of marriage, the promise of a lifetime together. Being the romantic he is, Romeo is all too willing to prove his words. Unsupported talk means nothing; actions show the character - and this is true not only in Romeo and Juliet. Hamlet’s vow to kill Claudius is barely convincing until he carries it out; Lady Macbeth asks, “Art thou afeard/ to be the same in thine own act and valour/ as thou art in desire?” (I, vii, 39-41); Hamlet and Macbeth question the tidings of their otherworldly visions until they have seen sufficient evidence. Still, we see a difference here: Romeo can tell Mercutio that he talks of nothing, but neither Hamlet nor Macbeth can extricate themselves from the grips of the fantasies they experience. When the supernatural appears only in language, rather than in the play’s reality, it has a very different effect on the characters. Romeo is allowed to dismiss the strange fairy Queen Mab because it is clear that she is Mercutio’s invention, and does not have any bearing on the real world. Because Romeo does not see her with his own eyes, she does not dwell in his mind. In Macbeth and Hamlet, the witches and ghosts are waking apparitions, not so easy to ignore. It is difficult to disregard such things as unreal, because in order to do so they would have to admit that they cannot trust their sight. Indeed, we find that the guards Marcellus and Barnardo call for Horatio to “approve our eyes” – unable either to dismiss the Ghost or to believe in it on their own (Hamlet: I, i, 27). Macbeth, too, must doubt what he sees: “Mine eyes are made the fools o’th’ other senses,/ or else worth all the rest” (II, i, 44-45). Inevitably the characters of these plays decide that they really do see Ghosts and weyard women, dreamlike visions in waking moments. These supernatural beings they see “look not like th’inhabitants o’th’ earth/ and yet are on’t” (Macbeth: I, iii, 39-40). The world of Romeo and Juliet remains one in which we can trust our eyes and set expectations for what may appear before us; that is how a supernatural presence functions when it is contained in another character’s language. When the fantastic vision appears before us and speaks its own speeches, we know that we have entered a different and unpredictable world. Shakespeare, William. The Norton Shakespeare. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, 1997. Romeo and Juliet was the first Shakespeare play the freshman read as a class this year. After they finished reading the play, they watched the 1968 movie of Romeo and Juliet. Then they were asked to compare and contrast between the movie and the play. Now they have to write an essay about what they came up with. Two similarities they came up with were that the movie and play both played the characters well, and they both followed the scene of the story well. Two differences between the movie and the play were that, the play had Friar Lawrence tell Prince what really happened between Romeo and Juliet, but the movie didn’t. The other difference was that in the movie, Paris didn’t converse with Romeo in Juliet’s tomb. The characters were the Eye C Watching this movie in the church where it all takes place was a religious experience. The performances

from DiCaprio and Danes are perfect, but Mr. Luhrmann it’s the star here, he took a world classic play and then bring it into the nineties in such a charismatic way. Well done good sir. Rated 4.5/5 Stars • Rated 4.5 out of 5 stars 05/31/25 Full Review Riley R Headline: “Shakespeare on Speed: Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo + Juliet Dazzles and Divides” Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 alteration of Romeo + Juliet, available on Amazon Prime and Youtube, is a disheveled, colorful redefining of Shakespeare's emotional romance. This play is just under two hours long. The play switches swords for guns, Verona for a stylish modern city girl, and Renaissance clothes for Hawaiian shirts. All while making sure to keep the original Shakespeare dialogue. The outcome is a whirlwind of emotions that feels more like a fever dream than a traditional film. Many viewers have different opinions on this reimagination of Romeo + Juliet, some love it or hate it, it depends on your views. Two performances control the film, Leonardo DiCaprio as Romeo and Claire Danes as Juliet. DiCaprio, right out of his Titanic rise, brings an intensity to Romeo that fits the character emotionally. He conveyed Shakespeare very well, though sometimes felt a little rushed. Though his famous “Then plainly know my heart’s dear love is set...” speech at Juliet’s balcony is both vulnerable and heartfelt, reminding us of the character’s youthful emotions. Claire Danes, on the other hand, finds a way to ground Juliet with a new honestly. Her performance was emotionally intelligent and surprisingly calm, in a film that is usually a tear-jerker. She makes the dialogue easier with a clear and natural rhythm, especially in serious scenes that are about her family and her tragic reunion with Romeo. Supporting performances, like John Leguizamo’s Tybalt and Harold Perrineau’s flamboyant Mercutio, add theatrical energy; they fit the film’s operatic tone. Luhrmann’s direction is anything but subtle. Known for his energetic styles in films such as Moulin Rouge and The Great Gatsby, Luhrmann stages Romeo + Juliet like a music video mixed with television. The editing is very high- strung, and the visual symbolism is overwhelming. Knowing that, his choices reflect an attempt to translate Shakespeare for a more modern audience raised on MTV and gun violence. Luhrmann also makes many smart decisions that clarify the narrative: the opening news begins with the reading of the prologue like a breaking story sets the tone. Also, the visual cues like costume colors (Montagues in blue, Capulets in red) help guide the viewer through the chaos. He doesn’t lighten the tragedy either in the final scene, where Juliet wakes up just seconds too late to save Romeo, lands with tragic impact. It’s melodramatic, yes, but the emotion is real and serious. The film’s production design is arguably its most special feature. Catherine Martin, Luhrmann’s collaborator and the film’s production and costume designer, creates a visual world that feels timeless yet based in 1990s pop culture. Verona Beach is neon-drenched and full of religious iconography, crumbling cathedrals, and billboards. The use of Catholic imagery (crosses, angel wings, stained glass) reinforces the story’s themes of fate, sin, and sacrifice. The music choices from Radiohead’s emotional “Exit Music (For a Film)” to the energetic chaos of “Young Hearts Run Free” are intentionally traditional but emotionally placed with the characters’ inner personalities. The score by Craig Armstrong is both broad and intimate, helping keep the gap between Shakespearean tragedy and modern melodrama. This film has a lot of emotions for me. It’s loud, fast, overwhelming, and not for Shakespeare lovers. But as a more modern version to reframe the old for a new generation, it does a great job in being both innovative and emotionally powerful. However, when the film slows down, especially during the intimate moments between Romeo and Juliet, it captures something inspirational about love, youth, and loss. Personally, I really enjoyed this modern version of Romeo + Juliet. It’s not perfect, and the editing occasionally gets in the way of the performances. Also, the hyper-stylization can make the language seem unclear. But when the film slows down, especially in the lovers’ quieter scenes, it captures the powerful intimacy that makes Romeo and Juliet timeless no matter what version it's in. Rated 4/5 Stars • Rated 4 out of 5 stars 05/06/25 Full Review Audience Member If you enjoy a bit of humour and a spin on a Shakespearean classic, this is brilliant! The acting is top notch from all the cast, and i like how they didn't change the script to fit the time, so you had people in the late 90s talking like they're in the 1500s. i found that hilarious. its such a large juxtaposition that it works. Top class from Baz. Rated 5/5 Stars • Rated 5 out of 5 stars 04/13/25 Full Review thiago s Filme mais ou menos, o roteiro é fraco, as cenas são mais ou menos, a história é fraca, o elenco é bacaninha, mas quase ninguém ajuda a melhorar o filme, os personagens sao até fracos, e o filme deveria ter cenas bem melhores e relevantes, para fazer o filme ser bom. Rated 0.5/5 Stars • Rated 0.5 out of 5 stars 04/04/25 Full Review Evangaline E The most stupidest movie ever never watch it DONT WATCH Rated 0.5/5 Stars • Rated 0.5 out of 5 stars 03/14/25 Full Review Blu : this film was beyond dumb 😵😵 Rated 1/5 Stars • Rated 1 out of 5 stars 03/12/25 Full Review Read all reviews Literature plays have continuously made their way into film versions. Of course, the result of so much labor by scholars, producers, directors, and all their team has to reaffirm the original inspiration. But to what extent do makers understand themselves as interpreters, bearing in mind that this is a 450-year-old play? This research examines Joseph V. Russo's 1968 film production of Romeo and Juliet, as well as William Shakespeare's play. It gives a brief overview of the play and film adaptation, compares the structure, performative elements, and characters of the play to the film. The research concludes that the fundamental essence of the characters is maintained. However, the play delves deeper into the psychology of the protagonists. Furthermore, the rewriting of famous lines of the play and the calculated designs generate a specific emotional payload in the original play and an unintentional load in the film. In stating intentions, some elements of the play lose weight in the movie. Therefore, the film relies heavily on key characters and situations to maintain focus and comprehension.1.1. Background of Romeo and JulietLecture Notes Background of Romeo and Juliet Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy about two young star-crossed lovers whose tragic deaths ultimately reconcile their warring families. It was among William Shakespeare's most popular plays during his lifetime and, along with Hamlet, is one of his most frequently performed plays. Today, the title characters are regarded as archetypal young lovers. Romeo and Juliet belong to warring families, the Montagues and the Capulets, who recognize their love for each other at an early age despite the dissension between their respective families. After the prince's declaration, Romeo and Juliet are separated, but they still manage to marry in secrecy. However, a series of misgiving events leads to the death of the two lovers. These events are the final reconciliation between their families. The play ends with the Prince's directive, "A glooming peace this morning with it brings." The resolution of the family feud results in the end of the Chorus's narration.2. Similarities between the Play and FilmThis section will introduce the similarities found between the play and the film. It should be the portrayal of the same scene in both mediums. The much of base of comparison should be from the text. For example, nearly every line of the balcony scene from the 1996 film can be found in the text of act two's balcony scene. A paragraph or two will be written about this particular interpretation, followed by the written and physical explanation of the scene, another paragraph or two should will be written afterwards about the room where Juliet and Lady Capulet are staying. The first point of comparison was during the first several acts of the play. Nearly all shared lines between the play and the film version were displayed in the film adaptation. The first of which is when the Duke's Page reads the names of the families that have lost their lives because of Romeo and Juliet. At the beginning of the second act, a few of Juliet's lines had been act out by the nurse and Juliet in the film. The next point of comparison came in the same act when, on the balcony, Romeo and Juliet stumble upon each other coincidentally. From that point, starting in act three but mainly in act four, the same lines are read by Juliet and are portrayed by her, Lady Capulet, and with the apothecary in the film. It was not until the cheerful wedding night that the play and film shared any similarity. Both the actress that played Juliet and the actress that played Lady Capulet worked together in two spoken scenes at California University twelve years ago (personal interview with Pete Postlethwaite). On the night before Juliet's wedding, in the play the two will read their lines to each other in the hallways, while in the film they will share their lines in the living quarters. At the beginning of act five, Romeo and Juliet's goodbye lines were repeated in the play and displayed by the action in the film. Then when Juliet says, "It is just something that we have been talking. Just a little argument that we have," while her mother proceeds to attempt to comfort her and cover her up in a neutral colored robe. This leads to the next room where a dressed protective Romeo encounters a frightened nurse that looks very differentiating from Juliet's family. The only similarity to describe here would be that both the film and the play scenes worked in relation to each other that one can describe at least one thing that was the same between the two.2.1. Themes and MotifsThe themes and motifs throughout the written play of Romeo and Juliet and that of the film's incarnation differ only slightly. This could be interpreted that it is harder for text to invoke emotion given it is merely words on paper, which in turn is true to an extent. In the play, light and dark are made prominent through Romeo, whose last line in Act One, Scene One is "This love feel I, that feel no love in this," lending to the idea that Romeo is infatuated with his concept of being in love rather than in love with Rosaline as he is in a state of subjective contemplation feeling able to manipulate the syllables of words such that they reflect his present mood. As mentioned before, a small change in Juliet's love is evident in the entire story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which is relatively unnoticed in the film. The love of their characters is very similar to that of our two protagonists. The use of light and dark in literature has a fairly longstanding history; it is easy to prove this. Religious beliefs range far and wide throughout history, and integral to this was the use of the concept of a savior who is good and a devil who is evil. The shadow of evil, as all should be justly defeated.3. Differences between the Play and FilmThe play was changed into a more violent film. Aesthetically, the film portrays an actual war going on in the background. It suggests that there are bigger wars going on in Verona. These two families are fighting their own battles because of their name. One of these wars, we see, is poverty. The setting of the film was also quite different from the play. The play took place in Verona, Italy; the film was being depicted in a modern-day Verona, and the war was being fought in Verona's streets, where people actually get killed. The Capulets have taken the place of the Montagues from the original story, and the Montagues are the Capulets. Tybalt was the leader of the Capulets and was like the Prince of Verona, whereas Mercutio is the leader of the black Montagues. They are black and multiracial and they take the place of the white Capulets. The Capulets have taken over all of the citizens living in the city of Verona, and the Montagues are some of the citizens who are fighting to get their place back in Verona. Romeo is in love with a Capulet, but her family is fighting him because of his name. Juliet is not in love with him; she has no choice but to love him. The film used the people who are very important in the original play and kept them in the film. They didn't follow the story of the play; they changed some names of the people they used in the film. The play was about two people who are in love with each other. The people who belong to their families are fighting each other. The name of the guy is Romeo, and he is part of the Montague family. As for the girl, her name is Juliet from the Capulet family. In the film, we were to see both names used in the play, but the play that was performed in the film was the one from the Capulet side called Romeo and Juliet. The actors playing in the film often carried guns, and it made the film portray violent scenes. The film seemed to give off more of a modern-day type of feel to it with all of the firearms. The younger characters in the film represented the original younger characters of the play.3.1. Character PortrayalWhen an audience views or reads a production of a play, seeing the characters come to life is something they look forward to. For it is from these characters that the very essence of the play or film is derived. The essence or overall goal of a story is for the reader to interpret, enjoy, and understand the author's plot and the intended message. A reader must first be able to discern and comprehend the character of the character. Character portrayal, indeed, is an important practice in both plays and films. The casting of a particular character can certainly detract from the success of a play or film adaptation. For example, the 1968 and 1996 films of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet had a number of defects in the portrayal of the characters, and such defects can detract from the overall feel and appeal portrayed in a film, as well as the influence on the viewer of certain scenes. For a playwright or director to cast a character in a certain role, it signifies that the playwright or director considers that particular actor or actress as being capable of effectively and accurately representing that character. For a literary character to be well cast, the character should resemble the description provided by the author, and the character should have the capabilities of transforming the role he or she was asked to play from a written format to a stage or screen format, and from words to a presentable performance or visual image. Can a playwright or director create a female Hamlet played by a male actor? The director has the images of mature, noble-looking, handsome characters when casting the Capulets. What happens when immature, pimple-faced figures are cast to represent the Capulets? Miscasting of characters has a major spin-off effect for a performance. How can we possibly believe in the seriousness of a love crisis when two spotty-faced teenagers passionately declare their undying love for each other, and their untimely death through a bed of purple pimples? Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Verona becomes Verona Beach in Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet, set in modern times with guns and TV news updates. Luhrmann modernizes Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, changing characters and setting but keeping original dialogue. Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of Romeo + Juliet uses guns instead of swords, updated costumes, and modernized character names. In 1996, Baz Luhrmann turned his eye to the works of Shakespeare and created a finished product with several differences between the Romeo and Juliet play and the movie. William Shakespeare's 38 plays have proven to be quite memorable, but the one most adapted is Romeo and Juliet. It may have been first performed in the 1500s, but elements of the tragic play ("the star-crossed lovers") can be found in the likes of several popular TV shows, rom-coms, musicals, and even video games. None remained as loyal while making such drastic changes, as Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet. Watch on Hulu There are many modernizations of Shakespeare's works, such as 10 Things I Hate About You bringing Taming the Shrew to modern times. Few have done anything as kinetically different as Luhrmann's story using the original dialogue, but setting it in a modern-day Verona Beach. Shot almost like a long-form music video, Baz Luhrmann's Romeo + Juliet uses the original Shakespeare dialogue, but intersperses it with television footage, news crews, and car chases, making it like nothing fans of the Bard had ever seen while making it accessible for contemporary teenagers to understand the tragic love story. Related Some of these adaptions are popular teen movies dating back to the 80s, many of which cleverly adopted many themes of Shakespeare's original plays. The Setting Is More Modern In The Romeo + Juliet Movie Fair Verona Becomes Verona Beach The original version of Romeo and Juliet is set long ago, with most guesses being the 14th or 15th century. People acted differently and the world operated with a different structure. The main change here is that Baz Luhrmann’s version is set in the modern-day (or at least 1990s America). The Romeo and Juliet movie changes to allow cars, guns, FedEx trucks, cafés, and TVs. Everyone is also dressed in modern clothes and many people have dyed their hair. It couldn’t look more different, but the language remains unchanged. Despite the language of the play remaining mostly unchanged, notably with the characters still referring to their guns as "swords," a few things did have to be adapted if it was to be shown on the big screen. One of the differences between the Romeo and Juliet play and movie was Luhrmann cutting some of the lines since he only had a certain run time to tell his version. Additionally, despite the majority of Romeo and Juliet being written in iambic pentameter, Father Laurence (Pete Postlethwaite) is the only character in Romeo + Juliet to speak in this meter. Tying in with the updated location and time period, the actual presence and existence of the Montagues and Capulets are drastically different from the original play. Rather than being two families at war, the difference between the Romeo and Juliet play and movie is that the war here is between two rival businesses. In the movie, it is rival mafia empires. That made them criminal empires rather than prominent families. However, they pretend to be legitimate corporations with law enforcement in their pockets. With this comes a change in motivation for a lot of the major plot points in the story. As the film modernizes the original play, it naturally had to find a new way to present the role usually fulfilled by the chorus, such as in the opening prologue. This is cleverly done by having a news anchor read these lines, presenting the chorus lines as if it were a news report on television screens. Additionally, the TV also fulfills the role of the messenger that was in the play. Instead of the cast finding out about the Capulet's party by messenger, they see it announced on TV. This is not only a good way to modernize the story, but to make it work cinematically. Rosaline is a character that doesn't actually appear in the play but still plays an important factor. She is Romeo's (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) first love and the reason he is distraught at the beginning of the story, as she does not love him, instead swearing a vow of chastity. Rosaline is the main reason the Montagues visit the Capulet's party, as she is meant to be there. In the film, Rosaline's role is reduced, though she still acts as a device to get Romeo to the party. Despite Romeo brooding at the beginning, his feelings for Rosaline appear to be presented as more of a crush, and Romeo's emotions are downplayed when Benvolio (Dash Mihok) asks why he is sad. Rosaline's fate after the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet's romance has actually prompted much speculation. Books and movies both have speculated about how Rosaline might have reacted to her previous suitor dying after a whirlwind romance. Shows like Still Star-Crossed and movies like Hulu's Rosaline have attempted to answer those questions. Related The romantic comedy Rosaline has a great cast full of talented young stars and Hollywood veterans. Here's a guide to the film's cast and characters. The balcony scene is arguably the most iconic scene of not only Romeo and Juliet, but of Shakespeare's entire works. It is a scene frequently referenced in pop culture and it is well-known to most people, even if they have never read or watched the play in any form. So it's pretty surprising that the film decided to change this legendary scene. In Romeo and Juliet 1996 vs the play, Luhrmann first reduced the 190 lines to just 90 lines. Secondly, the setting changed from an orchard scene to a more modern scene in a swimming pool. In the original play, the scene where Romeo proposes that he and Juliet (Claire Danes) should get married is normally perceived as being a serious part of the play. However, one of the differences between the Romeo and Juliet play and the movie is that the characters are less serious. Instead, they are giggling and laughing as they relay the lines that are more commonly acted out more earnestly on stage. Of course, this could be Luhrmann's way of presenting how happy the two are, so joyous that they keep smiling and laughing, but it downplays the importance of their union and how it would unite their two houses. In the original version of Romeo and Juliet, Romeo goes to the Capulet crypt to find Juliet. However, when he gets there, Paris is there grieving the loss of Juliet and Romeo kills him during a fight. The Romeo and Juliet movie changes this. Firstly, Paris is called Dave Paris in the Romeo and Juliet cast, and secondly, he isn’t in the crypt at all, meaning Romeo doesn’t bump into anyone there. In turn, this means Dave Paris ends the film very much alive, while the Romeo and Juliet play provided that cruel twist ending everyone is too familiar with. This makes a major change, as his death showed how the battle even killed innocent people who were not part of the feud. Although six people died in the play, Baz Luhrmann's version reduced this number to four as he left two individuals alive. Not only did he omit Paris' death from his script, but he also omitted Lady Montague's death too (who can be seen sitting in the limousine at the very end). While the Shakespearean play said she died as a result of Romeo being exiled, it appeared that Luhrmann didn't think it was as important in his adaptation since she didn't have much impact on the story. Of course, her fate could have remained the same, but it was not part of the movie's tale. Luhrmann continued to create differences between the Romeo and Juliet play and movie by not including the reconciliation. This came in the final act of the tragedy when the two fathers walked into the church and discovered that their children died. To pay tribute, they decide to end the feud and build two statues of them side-by-side. It's possible Luhrmann decided not to include this scene because it overlooked Romeo and Juliet's deaths. However, they were the most important people in their parent's lives, so Luhrmann instead had them contemplate the brevity of the situation and how their violent feud cost several people their lives. There was a feud going on between the two families that lead to a series of tragedies. In the play and movie of Romeo and Juliet there were two young teens. One was named Juliet, her mother was forcing her to marry a guy named Paris. However she did not want to marry Paris. Then there was Romeo who was from a different household; that happened to be enemies with the Capulet household. Romeo then goes to Juliet house party; they end up falling in love that night.While some differences between the movie and play are weapons,when Romeo sneaks out and when Juliet wakes up before romeo dies.The similarities are how Mercutio dies in both the play and movie. In Romeo and Juliet the two different families didn’t get along. In the movie it can make it more action packed when using guns in a fight. In the fighting scene they use pistols in the movie whereas in the play they use swords (Shakespeare 1.1). It could also make it more appealing to people if they uses pistol instead of swords.It is more common and exciting to watch. The movie and play were different because they changed it up to make it more modern day. The director could have’t changed it to pistols instead of swords so it would catch more people’s attention.This could explain why the director changed the weapon to a pistol in the movie. In act 2 this would be when Romeo sneaks out to see Juliet outside her window this is another difference. Juliet says, “By whose direction found’st thou out this place?” ‘Romeo and Juliet’ by William Shakespeare continues to be one of the most influential and widely spread pieces of literature in history, even over 400 years after the play was written. The 16th Century play has had countless adaptations, interpretations, and works that have been inspired by the timeless plot surround young, forbidden love. In 1996, yet another version of the play was released with Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. The film was directed by Baz Luhrmann and produced by Baz Luhrmann and Gabriella Marinelli. According to its official IMDB page, the film grossed over $147 million. Susan Bye, a film reviewer, wrote in her comparison of the film and the play that “Romeo and Juliet is a musical and visual extravaganza, its aesthetic of excess combining fast paced editing, unconventional cinematography, an ornate and eclectic soundtrack, a pastiche of styles, and a collage of religious and pop-culture iconography” (Bye, 109). Baz Luhrmann’s 1996 blockbuster ‘Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet’ takes the classic, old English stage production of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and transforms it into a fun, vibrant spectacle by injecting the original play and the lines of the original play with emotion, changing the original setting of the play into a colorful, modern cinematic masterpiece, adding a queerness and a relatability to the characters with costumes and a cast of attractive, well known actors, and adding a soundtrack and score to the film. The changes made to the play were done to reach a younger audience, mostly teenagers, to keep Shakespeare relevant and show that his original works can still be relatable and entertaining. Personal Reflection and Understanding I first read Romeo and Juliet when I was in high school, as part of the mandatory high school English curriculum. Beyond being frustrated with the unfamiliar old English I was being exposed to, I remember being extremely frustrated and upset at the characters Romeo and Juliet themselves. I was dumbfounded that love could make kids so careless, so naive, and so stupid. It wasn’t until I saw the play interpreted by Baz Luhrmann, in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, that I finally understood a little more why and how Romeo and Juliet ended up in the situations they did, and how they eventually ended up dead. It was a mixture of all the aspects of the film- the use of the play’s original lines, Leonardo DiCaprio, the soundtrack, and the beautiful cinematography as well as the comedic nature of the work- that made me understand the original play more and understand the characters to an extent I never expected I would. Save your time!We can take care of your essay Proper editing and formatting Free revision, title page, and bibliography Flexible prices and money-back guarantee Place an order When watching Luhrmann’s interpretation of Romeo and Juliet, the visuals steal the show when compared to any other aspect of the original play. Very few plot points(but still, a few) were changed from the original play. Props, stage directions, and settings are changed drastically from the original play though. This is evident in the act one scene one ‘fight’ scene that was seen in the play. The play shows Benvolio telling his opponents to “put up their swords”, after being provoked by the House of Capulets. The play shows this scene as being a fight that starts organically, when two opposing houses (the Capulets and Montagues) finally face each other. The film, however, shows and tells a different story. The film version shows the Montague ‘boys’ riding around in a yellow convertible, seemingly carelessly. When the fight starts between the two groups, while Benvolio still states the original lines for the men to put up their swords, the scene shows the men each holding their own pistol, engraved with their respective houses. The modernity of just this first act and scene quickly showed Luhrmann’s desire to create a new type of story with Romeo and Juliet- one infused with today’s world. The presentation of the storyline makes the original play, now in the film medium, much more relatable and palatable. One scene that stands out in particular is Romeo and Juliet’s first ‘meeting’, in the film. Like in the play, the two are dumbfounded by their attraction to one another. The film separates them with a fish tank, with the two lustfully and curiously eyeing one another from each side. While in the play, the mutual attraction (and obliviousness to the fact that even the attraction is forbidden) is evident from just this first encounter, the film uses the bright colors of the fish tank and the melodramatic costumes of the partygoers to both modernize the interpretation and use the fish tank to aesthetically and metaphorically create the divide between the two main characters. Costumes, Setting, and Relatability The costumes throughout the film are a sight to see. According to Bye, Luhrmann wanted to steer away from “the snobbery of the Victorian inheritance in theater and the power of the Shakespearean tale for a less hide-bound audience”. Bye, when referring to the costumes n the play, states “dressing Romeo in blue or silver and Juliet primarily in white, costume designer Kym Barrett intended for the simple tones to ‘emphasize that they are in a way like specters, the ones whose hold on life in the most tenuous’”(Bye 110). The film’s producers and contributors were intentional about every decision they made. While Romeo and Juliet follows the story of two affluent, rich, teenagers and the film could not disregard that part of the play, the film makes it its mission to make the characters relatable. Not putting Romeo and Juliet in fancy, golden garments and rather having Romeo drive around in a yellow convertible wearing ‘regular’ clothes contributes to this relatability. The scene in which Romeo and Juliet die in the film also strays just a little from the original plot and portrayal. The play's death scene happens after a quarrel with Paris, and Paris dies with Romeo and Juliet. In the film, Paris dies separately from Romeo and Juliet. In the film version of the play, Romeo and Juliet die together, on a beautiful altar littered with candles, flowers, and other Catholic allusions. The scene shows the heart wrenching realization Juliet has when she finds Romeo dead. Making Romeo and Juliet die alone together makes the scene more intimate and heart-wrenching. Film critic David Ansen wrote in Newsweek, describing Baz Luhrmann’s interpretation as “alternately enrapturing and exhausting, brilliant and glib… a ‘Romeo and Juliet’ more for the eyes than the ears”. The assessment that the film version of the play was created to be more visually appealing than other, earlier attempts of the work could not be more correct. It is peculiar that Baz Luhrmann opted to use the original lines of the play when creating and producing his film, though it feels like almost a necessity . The film takes advantage of the fact that while people may not be able to understand old English completely, they can understand love. Keeping the original lines of the play gave room to the producers to have room to play with visuals and sound, while still keeping the essence and should of the original play. Even if you do not understand what Romeo and Juliet are saying, you understand what they are feeling. Inclusion, Casting, and Soundtrack The characters of the original play seem as if they were written to be distant from the audience. Romeo and Juliet have a naiveness that is very unrelatable, even to teenagers. It seems in Baz Luhrmann’s version of the play, he was determined to tackle this dilemma (either out not necessity, to sell movie tickets, or out of a desire actually to enrich Shakespeare’s work). The move to make Romeo and Juliet a little more relatable could also contribute to the acceptance of the inevitable ending of the play and film, the death of both Romeo and Juliet. While desire and lust are both evident in the original play, it is withheld, especially from Juliet(most likely as a way to not portray her as too promiscuous and to give her an innocence). The film does not shy away from the fact that Juliet is just as lustful as Romeo is. In the article posted in Shakespeare Studies, ’Audiences Writing Race in Shakespeare Performance’, “According to this theory, each age restates a Shakespearre play to represent its own particular preoccupations, so that there is a reflective relationship between cultural surrounding and theatrical performance”(Cline 112). The article written by Kline was about if audiences would be receptive to people of color in adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays and if the inclusion of people of color in Shakespeare’s plays would and could change the meaning of the works in any ways. While the people of color in the film were not a focal point of the plot, their inclusion was a necessity. Latinx and black characters are included throughout, with no reference to the color of their skin. This is pivotal in a film that is catered to an audience and generation that values inclusivity and diversity. There is a tendency to associate Shakespeare with white men on a stage(a correct correlation, considering Shakespeare wrote his plays in 16th Century England). The film, however, tackles this assumption by quietly and without fuss including various people of color, making the film more relatable and inclusive to a new generation. Leonardo Dicaprio is a household name and is known both for his looks and acting ability. The film was released during a breakthrough point in his career: just a year before academy award winning Titanic was released. He was already a somewhat well known actor when Romeo and Juliet was filmed, and his inclusion in the film was huge. Giving the film a heartthrob gave it more credibility as a film created for teenagers. Even if the films old English lines could not relate to a younger audience- an attraction to Leonardo DiCaprio is almost universal amongst teenage girls. Attraction to a character in a film also changes how you see that character and where you want that character to go (you probably want that character to succeed and, not die). My own attraction to Leonardo while watching the film made me weary of his character’s death. The original play portrayed Romeo and Juliet as young teenagers. In the play, Juliet was 13 years old while the entire dilemma was unfolding and when she eventually took her life. While the film was catered to a younger audience, its difficult as a teenager to relate to someone younger, or someone who looks younger than you . Maddie Weinland, a scholar from Denison University, writes that “the actress that plays Juliet in this film, Claire Danes, was seventeen at the time of production, making her appear obviously older than a thirteen year old girl… so the audience greets her with more of an expectation for maturity than they do in the play”(Weinland, 44). Making the characters appear older takes away from the usual frustration at their naiveness. Juliet gains more agency as an older character because she seems more determined about what she wants. Seeing a 13 year old girl fall in love deep enough to kill herself can be eye roll inducing. The film, however, gives time for the characters to fall in love and the characters themselves unravel on their own. The soundtrack to the play is a huge part of its appeal. While plays that are turned into films often have scores filled with orchestras and huge string sections, Baz Luhrmann’s version took a different, and necessary route. Young, teenage audiences are not usually known to be receptive to the classic of anything. While this posed its own constraints, considering the film is a take on a Shakespeare play, the music that is in the film is another dilemma and task. The soundtrack to the film is still considered one of the best film soundtracks in a generation. The soundtrack is littered with alternative and punk rock, a staple of the 90’s. This inclusion of genre in the film makes it even more appealing to a younger audience. Conclusion: A Timeless Story Reimagined Romeo and Juliet is a timeless story about forbidden love. It is a classic example of literature living through hundreds and hundreds of years. Creative liberties are often taken when works are remade, and reinterpreted. Baz Luhrmann’s version of Romeo and Juliet is no exception to this. The producers of the film, along with Baz, worked to make the film more relatable to a younger, more technological and award generation. The film, a blockbuster, take the old English, 16th Century original play and injects it with cinematography that can be described as bizarre and aesthetically pleasing, characters that are relatable and attractive, and a soundtrack that is a staple of its time. The film took the creative liberties of changing the original play as a way to relate to a younger audience that does not always expose itself to theater and old Shakespeare. Works Cited CLINE, LAUREN ERIKS. “Audiences Writing Race in Shakespeare Performance.” Shakespeare Studies (0582-9399), vol. 47, Jan. 2019, p. 112. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f5h&AN=138977003&site=eds-live&scope=site. 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Edubirdie. 2022 Feb 18 [cited 2025 Jun 25]. Available from: Get original paper written according to your instructions Save time for what matters most Place an order Fair Use Policy EduBirdie considers academic integrity to be the essential part of the learning process and does not support any violation of the academic standards. Should you have any questions regarding our Fair Use Policy or become aware of any violations, please do not hesitate to contact us via support@edubirdie.com. Cast & crewUser reviewsTriviaFAQSign in to rate and Watchlist for personalized recommendationsSign inSuggest an edit or add missing contentYou have no recently viewed pages How do both directors reflect atmosphere, mood, and staging techniques of Shakespeare’s play? Which version is most dramatically effective, and why? Romeo and Juliet, a tragic tale of two “Star crossed lovers”, is believed to be written by Shakespeare in 1595. The famous playwright and poet copied the original works of Arthur Brooke and William Painter to develop a play that dramatises the story of two youths who fall deeply in love. However despite their feelings, their plans, and their emotions, they cannot be together. The romantic account has recently been recreated though, the recreations becoming two internationally renowned films, that both take a special stance on the story of the Montagues and Capulets. Don't use plagiarized sources. Get your custom essay on “ Comparison Between Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet and the Film by Baz Luhrmann ” Get custom paper NEW! smart matching with writer Shakespeare sets the scene at the beginning of the play with an almost concluding speech. It tells the viewer or reader of what is to come, it gives great clues, it reveals insight that lies at the heart of the play throughout. Baz Luhrmann, in his modern version of the play, replicates Shakespeare’s opening, as he decided for the crucial beginning words to be spoken by a news reader. However, despite Luhrmann’s copy cat start, he soon differentiates his film from the original play, when he opts to change Shakespeare’s minimalist first scene. Although Rome and Juliet, Baz Luhrmann’s film interpretation of the famous 16th century story, uses the same old English that Shakespeare’s text is written in, his first scene could not be more different than the traditional opening to Romeo and Juliet. The Montague boys can be seen near the origin of the film, noisily riding along a Verona road. Despite the vast difference between Luhrmann’s film opening and Shakespeare’s, West Side story goes to an even further extreme. There is little resemblance to the play compared to the beginning of Francesca Zambello’s West Side Story. The New York located film opens with a zoom out view of the Jets, (the Montagues), arrogantly clicking. The authority with which they strut around on the basketball court, the chosen scene, shows the same swagger but naivety with which Luhrmann’s Montague boys drive recklessly around “Fair Verona”. Both opening scenes alter greatly from the play, but they also differ from each other. West Side Story gradually increases in pace, whereas Luhrmann’s rapidly changing camera shots set the pace quickly from the off. I prefer Luhrmann’s opening, as Zambello’s interpretive dance style start leaves the viewer wondering what they have witnessed. Luhrmann’s talkative beginning, which word for word replicates the original play, shows what each character is like, and truly reveals the traits of both Montagues and Capulets. Zambello’s start, however, is eventually of an interesting pace, but barely declares much of the Jets and the Sharks, the two gangs in the film, apart from the fact that they hate each other, almost as much as they hate the police. It could be felt that the beginning of both films lacks the serious nature of the play, and merely show juvenile boys acting up, therefore not giving a good sense of what is to come. But although both directors have chosen to start the movie with a jovial mood, Luhrmann’s piece progresses briskly to show the families’ shared hatred. “Talk of peace? I hate the word. As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee. ” There is no doubting the frightening sincerity of Tybalt’s words in the play and Luhrmann’s interpretation, however West Side Story’s introduction lacks sincerity. Luhrmann’s staging technique style is clear from the very start, with a massive 90 shots in the first 4 minutes of the film. The film’s first five minutes talk 4 weeks to capture, as the “garage scene”, is very complicated. Luhrmann chose to start the film in a real environment, (not a set), but the effects are many. While Shakespeare may have intended for his play to be simple in its staging techniques, Luhrmann is able to convey an abundance of information about both families. Whilst Zambello’s start may reveal a few things about the many gang members, Romeo and Juliet the film is in a different league. All Boys, both Montague and Capulet, in the first scene drip with manufactured detail put in place to show as much as possible about the several boys. The guns, the religious iconography, Tybalt’s grinding shoes, the over the top cars, all give a sense of wealth. This clue, doubled with the characters lack of awareness and obedience, shows that the out of control young men do not care for the police, or anybody else. Although the sound in West Side Story is less non-dietetically changed than the sound in Luhrmann’s film, it is effective. The spooky whistling at the very beginning of the film and the sole sound of the Jets clicking shows slight similarities to that of a Spaghetti Western, and as the film continues through the actors emotions and actions there is further confirmation of this. The bravado dancing, clicking and laughter show that image is everything to the two big apple gangs, yet there is also a hint of playfulness. The swingy, bouncy music continues throughout the beginning despite the many chases at the start of the film. Luhrmann obviously had a very different idea to the type of sound that should be used at the beginning of what is labelled a tragic tale. Once the cocky stereo music of the Montague’s has disappeared, the music creates a tense creepy atmosphere. All spooky diegetic sounds are amplified, such as the grinding of a heel, or the cocking of a gun, and there is a chilling undertone of music, that also replicates a Spaghetti Western. The exaggeration of many sounds underlines the feud between the families, and the all-too serious gun warfare. The sound of the wind, the panting of a scared Montague, the fall of a gun, all of these sounds are very cleverly accentuated sounds in Luhrmann’s piece. This is dramatically, very effective. Whilst it is very difficult to judge a film against a script, even a film against a play, I believe that Luhrmann’s film far more successfully emulates Shakespeare’s play than Zambello’s. This may be because Romeo and Juliet (the film) nearly word for word copies the great playwright’s prose, so how can it greatly differ? Shakespeare’s play directions are few and far between, so the original play and Luhrmann’s film are perhaps too close to judge, whereas West Side Story and Romeo and Juliet the film are perhaps too different to judge! Although Zambello’s film is based around Shakespeare’s play, unlike Luhrmann’s film, it is not meant to replicate it. How can a modern film spoken in full old English verse be compared to a youth gang quarrel. The world of guns and full scale weapon fights is one incomparable with a youth argument fought out, or danced out, on a basketball court. This is why it is so different and interpretative at the beginning. It is intentionally different from Shakespeare’s play. However despite both films being surprisingly individual, I believe that for its many sound effects, staging techniques and other technical visual codes Baz Luhrmann’s films is more dramatically effective. The following essay will explain some similarities and differences between the 1968 movie rendition of “Romeo & Juliet” and the play written by William Shakespeare. Some similarities are the clothing, setting, and ending. Some differences are the characters, and scenes. One similarity is the clothing that the actors wore in the play and movie. In both, the clothing was from the Elizabethan era.Another similarity is the setting. In the play, and movie, the story took place in Vienna