

Sacramento Theatre Company

Study Guide



Romeo and Juliet

By: William Shakespeare

Study Guide Materials Compiled by Anna Miles

Sacramento Theatre Company

Mission Statement

The Sacramento Theatre Company (STC) strives to be the leader in integrating professional theatre with theatre arts education. STC produces engaging professional theatre, provides exceptional theatre training, and uses theatre as a tool for educational engagement.

Our History

The theatre was originally formed as the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre in 1942, an ad hoc troupe formed to entertain locally-stationed troops during World War II. On October 18, 1949, the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre acquired a space of its own with the opening of the Eaglet Theatre, named in honor of the Eagle, a Gold Rush-era theatre built largely of canvas that had stood on the city's riverfront in the 1850s. The Eaglet Theatre eventually became the Main Stage of the not-for-profit Sacramento Theatre Company, which evolved from a community theatre to professional theatre company in the 1980s. Now producing shows in three performance spaces, it is the oldest theatre company in Sacramento.

After five decades of use, the Main Stage was renovated as part of the H Street Theatre Complex Project. Features now include an expanded and modernized lobby and a Cabaret Stage for special performances. The facility also added expanded dressing rooms, laundry capabilities, and other equipment allowing the transformation of these performance spaces, used nine months of the year by STC, into backstage and administration places for three months each summer to be used by California Musical Theatre for Music Circus.

Sacramento Theatre Company can accommodate 292 patrons in the proscenium-style auditorium of its Main Stage, while the Pollock Stage offers a more intimate experience with only 87 seats in a black box-style theatre. Both provide good acoustics and sight-lines. This professional, Equity theatre presents seven professional productions per season with a reputation for excellent stage adaptations of classic literature. Three annual productions in the Cabaret Stage, which seats 100, round out the experience with high-quality Broadway musical revues.

The Young Professionals Conservatory, a training program for young theatre artists, was founded in 2003. The program, as well as the entire STC School of the Arts, is directed by Michele Hillen-Noufer.

For further information about the Sacramento Theatre Company please visit us online:

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*written for the Sacramento Theatre Company by Anna Miles
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Synopsis: *Romeo and Juliet*

The servants of the feuding Capulet and Montague families trade insults on the streets of Verona. The prince of Verona, having grown tired of their continual public brawls, decrees that the next member of either family to provoke a fight will be put to death.

Romeo Montague is infatuated with a girl named Rosaline, so, he and his friends decide to invite themselves to a ball where Rosaline is expected to be present. Unfortunately, the ball is hosted by their sworn enemy, Lord Capulet. In order not to provoke trouble, the young intruders go in disguise. However, all thoughts of Rosaline flee as Romeo falls instantly in love with Juliet, daughter of Capulet, and she with him. In only a moment's time, however, they discover each other's identity. Their love is forbidden.

As Romeo and his friends make their way home, they pass by the home of the Capulets, and Romeo, unable to restrain himself, climbs the garden wall just as Juliet appears on her balcony. They declare their love for one another, seal their love with a kiss and vow to meet the next day. Romeo turns to his old friend Friar Lawrence and tells him of his intention to marry the daughter of his family's enemy. The friar agrees to marry the young couple as quickly as an opportunity provides itself. Meanwhile, Juliet sends her nurse to make the necessary arrangements, and that afternoon Romeo and Juliet are secretly married in Friar Lawrence's cell.

Romeo soon finds himself in the middle of a fight between Mercutio (his cousin) and Tybalt (Juliet's cousin). He tries to be a peacemaker and put a stop to the fighting, but his interference succeeds only in getting Mercutio mortally wounded. Romeo, furious at the death of his friend and kinsman, challenges Tybalt and kills him. The situation is now desperate, and Romeo turns again to his friend, the friar, who informs him that the prince, having learned of his fight with Tybalt, has banished him to Mantua.

Juliet's nurse arranges for the newlyweds to spend Romeo's last night in Verona together in Juliet's bedroom. Unaware of her marriage to Romeo, Juliet's parents set about arranging her marriage to Paris, a noble kinsman.

The next morning, Romeo leaves for Mantua and a horrified Juliet, learning of the marriage plans, flees to Friar Lawrence, who offers a drug that will give her the appearance of death for two days. He assures her that he will get word to Romeo who will rescue her from the Capulet burial vault and take her to Mantua. She agrees to the plan and takes the potion before going to bed. Juliet's nurse finds her apparently dead the next morning.

Romeo, still in Mantua, hears of Juliet's reported death, but the messenger from Friar Lawrence never arrives to tell him the truth. Distraught with grief, he purchases poison and hurries back to Verona and the tomb. Here, Romeo is confronted by Paris, and, in the ensuing fight, kills him. In the vault, Romeo finds his apparently dead wife, drinks the poison, and dies by her side.

Friar Lawrence arrives just as Juliet awakes and tries to draw her away from the tomb, but flees when he hears voices approaching. Juliet attempts to join her dead husband by drinking the poison he brought but, finding the vial empty, kills herself with his dagger.

The feuding families arrive at the vault to find their children dead. They realize, too late, what their hatred has caused and vow to end the feud. The prince observes that because of their foolish hatred, "all are punished."

Characters: *Romeo and Juliet*

THE MONTAGUES

Romeo: Lord and Lady Montague's son, Romeo is initially in love with a girl named Rosaline; but he instantly falls in love with Juliet when he sees her. He is also responsible for the deaths of Tybalt and Paris.

Montague: The head of the house of Montague, he is Romeo's father and enemy of Capulet.

Lady Montague: Romeo's mother, she dies of grief soon after Romeo's banishment.

Mercutio: A temperamental and witty young man related to Prince Escalus, Mercutio is a close friend to Romeo. Tybalt kills him in a fight.

Benvolio: Romeo's cousin and friend, Benvolio is usually a peacemaker.

Balthasar: Romeo's servant, Balthasar tells Romeo that Juliet is dead.

Abram: A servant of the Montagues, Abram is one of the instigators of the fight that begins the play.

THE CAPULETS

Juliet: Daughter of Lord and Lady Capulet, Juliet falls in love with Romeo. Though she is initially very compliant with her family's wishes, she matures and becomes more independent as the play progresses.

Capulet: The head of the house of Capulet, he is Juliet's father and enemy of Montague.

Lady Capulet: Juliet's mother.

Nurse: A talkative and comic woman, the Nurse raised Juliet and loves her very much.

Peter: Servant to the nurse and Juliet.

Tybalt: Juliet's hot-tempered cousin. He kills Mercutio, and is killed by Romeo.

Sampson: Servant of the Capulets, he was among the instigators of the fight that begins the play.

Gregory: Servant of the Capulets, he was among the instigators of the fight that begins the play.

OTHERS

Friar Lawrence: A Franciscan friar and close friend to Romeo, Friar Lawrence performs the marriage of Romeo and Juliet and then does everything he can to help them through the rest of the play.

Paris: A relative of Prince Escalus, Paris wishes to marry Juliet and Capulet arranges the marriage which doesn't happen before she dies. Romeo kills him in the tomb.

Prince Escalus: The prince of Verona, he is related to Mercutio and Paris.

Friar John: Another Franciscan friar, he was unable to deliver the message about Juliet's "death" to Romeo.

About the Play: *Romeo and Juliet*

FROM ROMEO AND JULIET, ED. DAVID BEVINGTON,
BANTAM, NEW YORK, 1988. XX-XXIV.

Although stories of forbidden love have been around as long as tongues could speak, a tale involving an unwanted marriage, sleeping potion, and missed message from a friendly friar first appeared with characters called Romeo Motecchi and Giulietta Cappelletti in Luigi da Porto's *Histoira* in 1530. Various authors and poets adapted and translated the tale for the next sixty years until it made its way to the eyes or ears of the up-and-coming poet/playwright William Shakespeare. In or about 1594 Shakespeare refreshed the story by shortening its time frame from nine months to less than a week, creating a new level of urgency, and highlighting the parts of some characters like Mercutio and the nurse, probably to fit them to the strengths of his own acting troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. The play was performed at the Globe Theatre to an audience that would have been as familiar with its basics as we are today.

Over the centuries the play has been continuously performed, but altered according to the fashions of its audience. For many years it was popular for the lovers to share a brief moment of recognition together in the tomb before Romeo's poison took effect. This tradition was carried into the present in Baz Lurhmann's movie, *Romeo + Juliet*, in 1996. Another popular variation was to end the play happily with Romeo arriving just in time to rescue his beloved. It wasn't until the mid 1800s that Shakespeare's original text began to be commonly performed again.

Romeo and Juliet has now been performed in countless countries and dozens of languages and has been successfully shown on the big screen every thirty years since 1936. Shakespeare's plot has been transposed into ballet and opera and was freely adapted to the hit musical *West Side Story* where Tony and Maria fight for their love amidst the ethnic divides of 1950s New York. Today the play is probably the most read and performed of all of Shakespeare's works, and maybe one of the most well-known plays in the world.

A Power Almost Beyond Recognition

By Ace Pilkington

There is an undeniable power in tragic love stories, a power beyond reason, sometimes, it seems, a power almost beyond imagination. *Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps the quintessential example of such stories, the “most widely known” of their incarnations, and the most frequent source of tears and inspiration for their many fans (Lise Friedman and Ceil Friedman, eds., *Letters to Juliet: Celebrating Shakespeare’s Greatest Heroine, the Magical City of Verona, and the Power of Love* [New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2006], 15).

When James Cameron set out to sell the idea of his film about *Titanic*, he was well aware that he had a problem almost as big as the ship. He was pitching a costume drama where the audience knew the ending in advance and might very probably have seen an earlier film on the same subject. But as Cameron tells it, he knew what to do, “I said, ‘Romeo and Juliet on the *Titanic*.’ That’s all I said” (Cameron interviewed by Lipton, *Inside the Actors Studio*, Bravo TV, March 8, 2010). It was enough. He got his production budget and eventually, against almost everyone’s expectations, the finished product became the highest grossing film to that point in movie history. Only *Avatar*, another of Cameron’s films with a love story inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, has done better.

There have been so many adaptations of Shakespeare’s play that even to list them all would be impossible in the short space of this article. They range from the nearly sublime in the form of Gounod’s opera and Tchaikovsky’s symphonic poem to the wholly ridiculous (and surely unnecessary) *Gnomio and Juliet*. The French *Romeo and Juliet, the Musical* is somewhere in between, complete with a song that might have been suggested by a line from Cameron’s film (and his Oscar acceptance speech) “Kings of the World” (Girard Presgurvic, Don Black, transl. <http://web.archive.org/web/20071013113444/libretto.musicals.ru/text.php?textid=602&language=1>).

Two additional (and much better) musicals are, of course, *West Side Story* and *The Fantasticks*. Depending on the order in which Shakespeare wrote the two plays, even *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*’s comic twin, could be one of the many other works which it influenced; plus, *The Winter’s Tale* is, in part, “a reprise and processing of *Romeo and Juliet*” (Joseph A. Porter, *Shakespeare’s Mercutio* [London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988], 15).

Still, the power of this play is much greater than its plot, and there is a reason why this tragic love story shines so brightly. At its center is the character of Juliet. In Barbara Everett’s words, “The heroine of *Romeo and Juliet* enters the play late. Not until the third scene of the first act is she called on-stage by her mother and her Nurse, who are also appearing here for the first time” (“*Romeo and Juliet: The Nurse’s Story*” in *Young Hamlet* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989], 109). However, once she appears, Juliet becomes not only the main focus of Romeo’s world, but also the main focus of the world that is the play. Angela Pitt declares, “Cleopatra and Juliet are the only women in Shakespeare who hold the centre of the stage in tragedy” (*Shakespeare’s Women* [London: David & Charles, 1981], 49).

A. D. Nuttall went even further in *Shakespeare The Thinker*, “The love of Romeo and Juliet is presented as actual. But this *is* something that fiction can do. It is not a con or a cheat. It is indeed a ‘reality-effect,’ but such effects are adequately produced only by artists who are willing and able to attend closely to the real world. Such attention allows them to present not indeed specific persons or things but real possibilities, things that in Aristotle’s phrase, ‘would happen’ ([London: Yale University Press, 2007], 112-113).

The words that A. D. Nuttall chooses to analyze in order to demonstrate that “reality-effect” belong to Juliet and include these lines: “Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud, / Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies, / And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine, / With repetition of

my Romeo's name" (2.2.160-163). It is, as he goes on to say, a "speech . . . about not being able to speak" (113). Here is his conclusion, "One tears fabric or human flesh more easily than one tears stone. Yet Juliet's love is so great she feels she can do even this. The bondage of Verona is played against the freedom of air, the dark constriction against the liberty of myth with extraordinary poignancy. . . . The expression is both complex and powerfully human. I know no writing better than this" (114).

A. D. Nuttall is a brilliant and careful scholar with a lifetime of experience behind him, but perhaps he has been carried away by the power of this play to a conclusion too strong for his evidence. Is this indeed the sort of thing that would happen, the kind of people who could exist, the brief, bright perfection of a love destroyed before it could be touched by disappointment, disagreement, or distaste and so forever beyond the reach of time? It is an immortal moment made possible by sudden death, mortality producing its opposite at least in the minds of the playgoers. Who would believe in the reality of such a thing, who would believe that it could or "would happen"?

And the answer is there are more than enough people to validate A. D. Nuttall's thesis, more than enough to keep the adaptations growing, more than enough to out shout the critics who call Romeo and Juliet mixed up teenagers, and finally, more than enough people to make of Juliet a seemingly real person or, if not that, then a patron saint of love. In Barbara Everett's words, "*Romeo and Juliet* is one of the first of Shakespeare's many plays whose peculiar quality is to make distinctions between art and nature seem false: 'the art itself is nature'" (123).

One of the clearest demonstrations of all this is the insistence by so many people for so long that Romeo and Juliet were real individuals who now have a real resting place—in Verona, of course. "By the early 1800s the site attracted an increasing number of pilgrims eager to venerate the tomb, now identified solely with the Shakespearean heroine. (Curiously, as the adoration of Juliet increased over time, Romeo's "presence" was no longer required.) Their reverence often involved swiping bits of the crumbling sarcophagus—as keepsakes or to fashion into jewelry" (Friedman and Friedman, 30). Two of the more distinguished "snapper[s] up of unconsidered" bits of marble were Lord Byron and "Marie-Louise of Austria, duchess of Parma and Napoleon's second wife" (Friedman and Friedman, 30).

The custom of leaving messages for Juliet, in one way or another, has been going on for almost as long. Today, "they arrive by the truckload, from all over the world, in almost every imaginable language. . . . Frequently addressed simply, 'Juliet, Verona'" (Friedman and Friedman, 9). They are about all the vagaries and vicissitudes of love, the first fears, the impassable barriers, the hopes long-deferred—which now begin to seem beyond reach—the betrayals, the boredoms, the desperations, in short, the thousand natural shocks which Juliet transcended. So, a French girl of seventeen wrote, "I am turning to you with faith as though to a saint." In the words of a young Italian man, "You are so beautiful, Juliet, and so on high, yet all hearts in love look to you and speak to you. Those who are in love and who suffer in love look to you" (Friedman and Friedman, 62). Often, it is clear that Juliet has become another name for love and love another name for hope. So, a man wrote from the old U.S.S.R., "There are people in the world who believe in the gods, in miracles, and there are people who don't believe, but there is one divinity in which all seek refuge. This divinity is Love, the most beautiful, superb sentiment in the world" (Friedman and Friedman, 91). And a soldier wrote from Vietnam, "A hand-to-hand battle awaits us. I feel I will die. I leave life with this brief note. I am entrusting it to you, symbol of universal love" (Friedman and Friedman, 93-94).

Today, all the letters which reach Verona with Juliet's name on them are answered. "The secretaries read, often translate, and answer each one, personally and by hand" (Friedman and Friedman, 9). This massive undertaking is another one of the play's spinoffs or adaptations, generating both a book and a movie in its own right (*Letters to Juliet*, dir. Gary Winick, Summit Entertainment, 2010). But the messages and letters were left behind in Verona and even mailed from around the world before anyone

thought of answering them, before anyone believed there would be an answer. The letters were and are one more way of affirming the truth of Shakespeare's world, of living for a time in that place, and of agreeing with A. D. Nuttall's judgment that these are real possibilities—things that would happen and people who could exist.

Family Matters

By Michael Flachmann

Romeo and Juliet is, above all, a play about families. From the opening choral prologue which invites us to meet “Two households, both alike in dignity” (prologue.1) to the bloody conclusion where both clans flood into the tomb as witnesses to the lovers’ tragic deaths, Shakespeare emphasizes the often contorted and always intense connection between individuals and the families to which they belong. In fact, one mark of the play’s greatness lies in the way different characters respond to the family pressures which alternately define, nourish, and sometimes suffocate them.

As the word “households” implies, many of the relationships in the play are based on the concept of extended families. The Capulet clan, for example, not only consists of such immediate blood relations as the father, mother, and Juliet, but also casts a wider circle to include Tybalt, the nurse, Peter, Petruchio, and many other assorted relatives and retainers. Like servants who don the livery of their masters, these family members wear their affiliation on their sleeves for everyone to see, much like modern gang members sport colors to identify themselves. Similarly, the Montagues, no less in “dignity,” claim an extensive variety of members in their familial turf.

Although such family affiliation nurtures and protects, it also smothers, which means that hot-bloods like Mercutio and Tybalt must continually press the envelope of social behavior to distinguish themselves as unique members of a common community. The feud persists, in part, because of the desire these younger men have to find identity through rebellion, to repudiate the rival family, and to differentiate themselves from the older and less aggressive members of their own tribes.

Part of the tragedy of the play, therefore, is that Romeo and Juliet must transcend their kindred in order to consummate their love. So long as they are trapped within their respective families, their relationship has little chance of survival. For Juliet, being smothered within the Capulet clan is like awakening in a tomb—a collective body of deceased relatives “whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in” (4.3.34). Surrounded by such stifling kinship, she will “die strangled” (35) unless rescued by her lover. Unfortunately, Juliet’s principal attempt to escape her family through Friar Lawrence’s sleeping potion is marred by a fatalistic lack of initiative that draws her deeper into the morbid embrace of her dead kinsmen. In seeking life with Romeo away from the clutches of her parents, she finds only death within the family burial chamber.

In like fashion, Romeo attempts to separate from his parents and friends in much the same way that Juliet does. As Montague explains to Benvolio at the outset of the play, Romeo “private in his chamber pens himself, / Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out, / And makes himself an artificial night” (1.1.138-140). With Juliet in the famous balcony scene, he willingly agrees to renounce his Montague family name because “it is an enemy to thee” (2.2.56). And in act two, scene four, he admits to giving Mercutio and his other friends “the slip” (48) when they pursued him after the party. All forces in the play, however, conspire to keep Romeo mired within his family. His attempts to “be new baptized” (2.2.50) are thwarted by Mercutio’s death, the nurse’s disloyalty, and the friar’s “osier cage” of “baleful weeds” (2.3.7-8). Even the plague, which keeps Friar John from delivering his fateful letter because he is “sealed up” within an infected town (5.2.11), emblemizes the deadly and claustrophobic nature of family relationships in this play.

Similarly, the desire of Juliet’s father to entice the wealthy and well-connected Paris into the Capulet family is thwarted by his daughter, who like an ill-trained hawk “mewed” in its cage (3.4.11) refuses to snatch up this rich morsel of food to sustain her family. Confronted by Juliet’s apparent suicide in act four, scene five, Capulet thinks immediately of his own loss of progeny when he tells Paris that “Death is my son in law, death is my heir; / My daughter he hath wedded. I will die / And leave him

all” (38 40). The loss of his only child will mean the eventual demise of the family line that defines his very existence. Juliet’s suicide in the tomb in act five, scene three brings death, therefore, not only to herself, but to her entire future “household.”

Like *Romeo and Juliet*, we must all separate from our families, as the children we used to be grow into the adults we must become. In this play, however, the sin of breaking away proves fatal because of the deadly context into which these young lovers are placed. Beset by feud, plague, dysfunctional relatives, and a sense of isolation, Romeo and Juliet become “poor sacrifices” to the enmity of their elders (5.3.33) through their vain attempt to transcend family for love and kinship for self-identity. The loss of childhood becomes real rather than symbolic, and the cost of leaving the family emphasizes the brevity and fragility of young love just as it confirms the price of revenge in a world where forgiveness has never been a virtue. The deaths of Romeo and Juliet achieve, therefore, a tragic beauty which allows us to see the brilliance of their devotion to each other set within the dark hatred of the family feud. Ironically, in separating from their families, they lose their lives at the exact moment that they find themselves.

***Romeo and Juliet* and Sonnet of Love**

By Kay Cook

"This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long."

—Sonnet 73

Romeo and Juliet is Shakespeare's best-known play and, after *Hamlet*, the most frequently performed. Although it is a tragedy of two young adolescents caught in the eddy of their own youthful passion, it is also a tragedy of two young people at the mercy of a feud not of their making and of fateful events over which they have no control. Regardless of our experience with this play, as first-time viewers, as seasoned Shakespeare festival attendees, as scholars and as critics, we have a common response of deep sadness over the senseless deaths of the two young lovers. Regardless of the cause of the tragic events, we are on their side.

There are several ways to think about *Romeo and Juliet*, but recent discussions of the play look at the form and language of love that Shakespeare uses and how his use of one particular form, the sonnet, enhances our sense of the play. By directing our attention to the sonnet qualities in *Romeo and Juliet*, we are able to discern a growing maturity in these two characters, one which, especially in the case of Juliet, belies their untried youth. This article will examine how the sonnet conventions found in *Romeo and Juliet* reflect the play's stance on young love as well as how Juliet's resistance to the sonnet reveals a character that allows her to endure the desertion of virtually everyone around her.

The sonnet is a fourteen-line love poem. Perfected by the Italian Petrarch in the fifteenth century, the form followed certain conventions. The subject matter was that of unrequited love. The sonneteer would write a cycle of sonnets dedicated to a woman, his "sonnet lady," whom he knew only from afar, who was unavailable, whose very presence changed one's earthly existence into heaven. The fourteen-line sequence was often marked by a reversal, a "turn" between the first eight and the last six lines. Frequently, the turn would move from the physical to the spiritual or from the outward contemplation of the woman to the inner anguish over her unavailability.

Shakespeare himself became a master of the sonnet, having written a total of 154. Like Petrarch, his subject matter was love, but Shakespeare was as innovative with the sonnet as he was with his plays. He wrote of the relationship between the intensity of love and its ephemerality, as in Sonnet 73, quoted above, and of the reality rather than the idealized version of the sonnet lady, as in Sonnet 130: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun." Clearly, then, his decision to evoke the sonnet and then actually to embed one within the action of *Romeo and Juliet* was a conscious one, intended to draw attention to the way those conventions were at work in the play.

Romeo and Juliet begins with a choral sonnet that announces the fate of the "two star-cross'd lovers" (prologue.6; all line numbers are from *The Riverside Shakespeare* [Boston: Houghton-Mifflin], 1974). After the opening scenes that establish the rowdiness and ribaldness of Verona's youth, Romeo enters. He is in many ways a stark contrast to his companions, especially Mercutio, who have displayed all the energy and crassness associated with adolescent boys. Above all, Romeo is a Petrarchan lover languishing over the unattainable Rosaline: "O, she is rich in beauty, only poor / That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store . . . / She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair / To merit bliss by making me despair / She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow / Do I live dead that live to tell it now" (1.1.215-216, 221-214).

The contrast of Romeo's mood with his playful companions and their sexual punning is underscored by his speaking in rhymed couplets as opposed to the mostly free verse that characterizes this scene. Forswearing love and dragging himself to the Capulet ball, Romeo performs an emotional

somersault on first viewing Juliet: "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it sight! / For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night" (1.5.52-53). Shakespeare proceeds to set their first encounter in the form and content of a sonnet (1.5.93-106) with two remarkable exceptions: the sonnet lady has a speaking voice, and, far from being the aloof and unattainable Petrarchan spirit, she reciprocates Romeo's passion with her own. In fact, she playfully resists the conceit that compares pilgrims' hands touching in prayer to lovers' lips touching in kisses, while not, in fact, resisting the actual kisses that Romeo gives her.

Much has been made of Juliet's role in this first encounter as well as her subsequent role in the famous balcony scene. In both scenes, states Evelyn Gajowski, "Juliet demands of [Romeo] active engagement" (*The Art of Loving: Female Subjectivity and Male Discursive Traditions in Shakespeare's Tragedies* [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992], 33). Quoting Jill Levenson, Gajowski also points out that these scenes mark "the male protagonist's movement beyond the confines of tradition and his quest into unknown psychological terrain, freed of convention" (32).

Playful and actively involved in the "pilgrim" encounter, Juliet next counters Romeo's Petrarchan hyperboles with practicality in the balcony scene. Her pointed questions, for example when she asks him "by whose direction foundst thou out this place" (2.2.79), are met with rhapsodic responses: "By love, that first did prompt me to inquire" (2.2.80). But Juliet's directness wins out as she makes the marriage proposal that requires him turn his Petrarchan rhapsodies into action: "If that thy bent of love be honorable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow" (2.2.143-44). Discussing the numerous allusions to falconry in the play (see 2.2.177, for example), Carolyn E. Brown argues that Juliet plays the falconer in her taming of the falcon, Romeo, by ridding him of his "Petrarchanism" ("*Juliet's Taming of Romeo*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36:333).

Much has also been made in the play itself and by Shakespeare scholars concerning Juliet's age; she is not yet fourteen. Current criticism suggests that although Lady Capulet herself was married and had borne her child by the time she was Juliet's age, Elizabethan women actually married at a much later age, usually between twenty-five and thirty (J. Karl Franson, "*Too Soon Marr'd: Juliet's Age as Symbol in Romeo and Juliet*," *Papers on Language & Literature* 3, Summer 1996, 245).

Because the age references recur throughout the course of the play, it is clear that we are intended to take notice of her youth, especially when her father suggests to Paris that she is too young: "Let two more summers wither in their pride, / Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride" (1.2.10-11).

Perhaps it is to make a greater contrast with the world of the adults that Shakespeare places practicality and true passion in the words of a thirteen-year-old. One by one, they abandon Juliet until she is left to her own resources and to the vial of the untested drug given her by Friar Laurence: Romeo, of course, is exiled for his killing of Tybalt; because of her refusal to marry Paris, her parents threaten to disown her and, worse, tell her they wish she were dead; the nurse counsels her to commit bigamy since "Romeo's a dishclout compared to [Paris]" (3.5.219); and Friar Laurence, rather than admit to the marriage that he performed in hopes of reconciling the two houses, comes up with an elaborate scheme that places Juliet in profound physical and mental danger, a fact that she herself realizes. Further, the friar's fright at voices approaching the tomb causes him to abandon Juliet in the tomb of her dead ancestors with the body of Romeo. Throughout the chaos that occurs when the tragedy in the tomb is discovered by the outside world, Juliet remains firm and resolute, a stark contrast to the confusion that even spills into the streets of Verona: "For I will not away" (5.3.160). Preferring death to the hostile world around her, she stabs herself with Romeo's dagger.

Although we see the chastened adults receive their greatest punishment, the deaths of their children, it seems far too great a price to pay for the settling of a feud. Our hearts remain with Romeo and Juliet, who found passion in love rather than in hatred and who matured far beyond their adult role models.

A Tragedy of Pity and Pathos

Romeo and Juliet is certainly among the world's greatest plays, and the story of Shakespeare's 'star-crossed' young lovers whose fate is sealed by their quarreling families, the Montagues and the Capulets, is the touchstone fable of romantic love. Love so threatened and fragile is beautiful because it is so brief. Coincidence, chance, unawareness: fate weaves its inexorable pattern against the background of a bitter and deadly feud, working through persons who would never knowingly harm the lovers, but who do so nonetheless. It has been stated that the real tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* is the lack of a telephone.

The play is not one of Shakespeare's cosmic tragedies like *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, or *Macbeth*. In the Greek concept of the tragic hero as a great personage destroyed by some tragic flaw, referred to as the "Fall of Princes," *Romeo* has no place. He is merely a young man in love with love, and it is his misfortune that his eye falls upon the beautiful daughter of his father's enemy. All disasters that befall the two families flow from this situation; thus the drama becomes one of pathos and pity rather than the type of soul-purging tragedy Shakespeare came to write in his maturity.

Vivid poetry, likely unsurpassed in lyrical exuberance, contributes to 400 years of audience fascination with the play. The balcony scene (Act II Scene 2) is one of the most famous in all literature; Shakespeare makes essentially complete his own triumph over the most difficult medium of words. Using a variety of rhyme schemes (couplets, octets, sonnets) and reveling in punning, metaphor and wit combat, the play's language grows in intensity to the final scene, wherein apostrophes to death are in one moment of lyrical magnificence welded intimately to our hearts and to our world heritage of quotations.

Shakespeare lifted much of the plot for *Romeo and Juliet* directly from a poem by Arthur Brooke written in 1562. Brooke's poem, in turn, was deeply indebted to Bandel, an Italian novelist. Since no copyright laws existed in Shakespeare's time, such "lifting" was permissible; indeed the Elizabethans expected it.

Popularity of this play has been constant since its first appearance. A printed version appeared in 1597 stating that the play had even then "been often (with great applause) plaid publicly." When the playhouses reopened after the Puritan Revolution, *Romeo and Juliet* was one of the plays selected for revival, and it regained at once its place on the popular stage.

About this time someone prepared an edition with a happy ending in which hero and heroine were saved and lived happily ever after. Two versions, one tragic and one happy, played on alternate nights and spectators could choose whichever suited their moods.

David Garrick produced a vastly influential version of *Romeo and Juliet* in the Drury Lane Theatre in 1748, and Gounod's opera, another "modernization" of Shakespeare's material, appeared in 1867. A 1753 picture from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, shows Juliet on a balcony. . . this famous staging convention apparently originated at this time; Shakespeare mentions only a window.

In our own time, the Zeffirelli motion picture and the Broadway production of *West Side Story* are well established. In fact, given the realism and visual power of today's media, theatre is challenged to restore concepts that preserve the tragedy of the young lovers in Shakespeare's setting, meanwhile renewing and refreshing our experience with the play.

A Plot by Any Other Name

By Diana Major Spencer

How many times do we have to watch *Romeo and Juliet* before they get it right? Just once, couldn't Friar John be on time? Couldn't Juliet wake up just a little sooner? Just once? Or do we need the tragedy to tell us its real story?

Romeo and Juliet is the best known love story in Western Civilization. It was told many times before the Bard worked his magic, and it has been told many times since. Aside from its traceable sources and direct descendants, an astonishing number of unrelated works share motifs: ill-chosen lovers, sleeping potion, live entombment and double-death. The first and last of these are common to all the examples below; the second or third also occurs. Shakespeare used all four.

The "ill-chosen lover" theme was defined by a high school student as, "Your parents never like your friends." Sound familiar? I have both used it and been accused of it. An early example of paternal disapproval is the well-known story of Pyramis and Thisbe told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* (c. 10 A.D.), and used twice by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Pyramis and Thisbe are forbidden to associate, so they whisper through a chink in the wall their fathers have built to separate their houses. They promise to meet outside the city walls and thence to run away. Thisbe arrives first and, frightened by a lioness, runs to a cave, dropping her veil behind her. Pyramis finds the veil bloodied by the lioness, and concluding that Thisbe has been devoured, stabs himself. Thisbe returns from the cave, finds the dying Pyramis, and, distraught, falls on his sword. They die in each other's arms.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia's father forbids her love for Lysander, and the young lovers agree to meet outside the city walls and thence to run away. After a night of brilliant confusion in the forest they, presumably, live happily ever after—but not until they've watched Bottom and his friends perform a "rude mechanical" version of Pyramis and Thisbe. The "frame" story ends happily; Pyramis and Thisbe, as usual, end disastrously.

Shakespeare found the motif of a sleeping potion to avoid an unwanted marriage in *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, 3,000 lines of uninspired poetry by Arthur Brooke (1562), based on a French novel. The Bard was also familiar with an English prose translation of the same French novel (1567). These English versions culminate a chain of no less than ten novels, plays, poems, adaptations and translations in Italy and France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The third motif, live entombment, occurred in classical Greece, Christian Rome and nineteenth-century France. Thisbe sought refuge in a cave, though she did not die there, and Antigone and Aida go to their deaths in "vault[s] of stone." The title character of a play by Sophocles (495-405 B.C.), Antigone was born from the unholy union of Oedipus and his mother. Antigone's two brothers have slain each other in battle, and her uncle, Creon, assumes the throne. His first decree forbids the burial of one brother. Antigone defies the edict and performs the necessary burial rites. She is condemned to be "locked living in a vault of stone."

The play concerns personal integrity versus civic duty, and divine prerogative versus human, but Antigone and Creon's son, Haimon, are in love. Haimon runs to the cave to save her and finds that "in the cavern's farthest corner. . . [she] made a noose of her fine linen veil/And hanged herself." Distraught, he stabs himself and dies with Antigone in his arms.

An 1871 opera by Verdi is yet another example of ill-chosen love leading to double-death in a tomb. Aida, daughter of the Ethiopian king, living in slavery in Egypt, is in love with Radames, leader of the Egyptian armies. As war, love and jealousy intertwine, Aida's father is captured, and Radames helps them to escape. He is accused of treason and sentenced: "Beneath the altar of the offended god,

you, living, shall be entombed." As the fatal stone seals Radames in his tomb, Aida emerges from the shadows to join him in their last duet.

What makes this basic story so universal? Do adults and societies impose rules? Do kids defy them and dream up outlandish schemes to outwit them, and sometimes run away? Do they think their love is really strong enough to make everything turn out okay in spite of others' experience—and they'll take incredible risks to prove it? Do we mean to say, "See what happens when you disobey your elders"?

Surely, children choose friends and actions outside their parents' preferences. But do we have to die for it? Probably—a little. Do we really hope the message will get through? Probably not. Perhaps the potion symbolizes our youthful illusion of invincibility. Perhaps the tragedy suggests that our passion for risk and romance is entombed with our youth, that we trade it for children to repeat the cycle.

Have you heard the one about the boy and girl who fell in love at first sight and their parents objected and . . . and . . . and . . .? Just think of how it might have been!

"More Rich in Matter than in Words"

By Cheryl Smith

One of Shakespeare's best loved and most frequently produced plays, *Romeo and Juliet* is arguably the greatest love story ever told. Audiences throughout the centuries have been drawn to the tale of ill-fated lovers, hoping that just once, the letter will reach Romeo in time, but understanding that, if it does, the love story loses its universal appeal. Audiences experience tension as they watch the lovers' story, and this very tension adds to the experience of the play. Part of what makes *Romeo and Juliet* so appealing, in fact, is the emotional rollercoaster ride audiences embark on from the moment the Prologue is spoken.

Not surprisingly, much of this emotional upheaval is due to the play's brilliant language, which includes such well-known phrases as "That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet" (2.2.43-4); "Deny thy father and refuse thy name" (2.2.33); and "Parting is such sweet sorrow" (2.2.184).

Schoolchildren know the verses spoken by Romeo and Juliet, in part because the timelessness of Shakespeare speaks to the love we all hope to find in our lives. Most audience members are unaware, however, of just how deftly Shakespeare uses language throughout the play. In addition to the masterful way he tells his story, Shakespeare cleverly controls the element of rhyme in the script to manipulate the audiences' feelings of tension as they watch the play.

Typically, rhyme is a unifying device, artfully tying together words and their speakers through the satisfying sound of verbal repetition. Melodious and agreeable, rhyme is often used to create a harmonious atmosphere, as is evidenced in the countless love poems in which it appears. With this in mind, audiences naturally assume that *Romeo and Juliet*, the definitive play about love, is filled with abundant rhyming episodes that bind the two lovers together. However, this is seldom the case. When audiences expect rhyme to be present, either none exists or it clashes with the action onstage; likewise, when audiences expect a lack of rhyme, it flourishes. Both of these cases create an unconscious tension for viewers of the play.

For example, in Act 3 Scene 1 when Tybalt kills Mercutio, Romeo kills Tybalt, and Romeo flees—the very moment Romeo has sacrificed his life with Juliet for the honor of his friend—the scene shifts into rhyme:

Benvolio: Hence, be gone away!

Romeo: O, I am fortune's fool!

Benvolio: Why dost thou stay?

(3.1.134-135)

Rhyme in this section of the script signals to audiences that Romeo's actions will unite the two lovers, yet we know this is not the case; Romeo's actions begin the downfall of his relationship with Juliet. Similarly, when Juliet plans to kill herself after learning of Romeo's action, she speaks in rhyme:

Juliet: He made for you a highway to my bed;

But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.

Come, cords, come, nurse. I'll to my wedding bed,

And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

(3.2.134-37)

As a unifying force, the rhyme suggests Juliet should, in fact, kill herself, never consummating her marriage to Romeo. Instead, the rhyme is pulling Romeo and Juliet apart by coupling it with action antagonistic toward the lovers. Often when strife occurs in the action onstage, rhyme is coupled with it, and this awkward marriage of harmonious rhyme and discordant events unconsciously adds to the

tension audiences feel while watching *Romeo and Juliet*. But this conflict also occurs when audiences expect rhyme to appear in the verse and it doesn't.

When Romeo and Juliet meet (2.1), they do, in fact, share several lines of rhyming verse. However, their scenes afterward contain very little rhyme. In their famous balcony scene—the exciting moment where Romeo and Juliet profess their eternal love for each other—very little of the verse is in rhyme. Some of the most famous lines in the history of theatre come from within this scene. For example:

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name!
(2.2.32-33)

and

Juliet: What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet
(2.2.43-44).

In arguably the most romantic scene in the literary canon of love stories, audiences unconsciously anticipate that rhyme will help join the two lovers together. Rhyme should dominate this scene in order to grant audiences an emotional union, yet only one-tenth of the lines rhyme. Furthermore, following this scene, Romeo and Juliet share very few rhyming lines of verse. Once again, rhyme is absent where it is expected, and the tension between the action and the rhyme contributes to the conflict audiences experience while watching this play.

Rhyme plays a crucial role in *Romeo and Juliet* by adding to the tension audiences experience while watching the play. During scenes where the action of the script brings Romeo and Juliet together, rhyme is obviously absent, and in scenes where actions tear the lovers apart, the dialogue is often saturated with rhyme. Since rhyme is distinctly at odds with the action onstage, audiences naturally feel the tension this clash creates. In fact, because tension is an integral component in this play, rhyme refuses to allow audiences to escape it. From the first scene that uses rhyme to describe the fate of the star-crossed lovers to subsequent scenes that unite the lovers without the use of any rhyme, tension intensifies within audiences to guarantee they never lose sight of the fact that the love between Romeo and Juliet is forever doomed.

Shakespeare: Words, Words, Words

By S. S. Moorty

“No household in the English-speaking world is properly furnished unless it contains copies of the Holy Bible and of The Works of William Shakespeare. It is not always thought that these books should be read in maturer years, but they must be present as symbols of Religion and Culture” (G.B. Harrison, *Introducing Shakespeare*. Rev. & Exp. [New York: Penguin Books, 1991], 11).

We, the Shakespeare-theater goers and lovers, devotedly and ritualistically watch and read the Bard’s plays not for exciting stories and complex plots. Rather, Shakespeare’s language is a vital source of our supreme pleasure in his plays. Contrary to ill-conceived notions, Shakespeare’s language is not an obstacle to appreciation, though it may prove to be difficult to understand. Instead, it is the communicative and evocative power of Shakespeare’s language that is astonishingly rich in vocabulary—about 29,000 words—strikingly presented through unforgettable characters such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Rosalind, Viola, Iago, Shylock, etc.

In the high school classroom, students perceive Shakespeare’s language as “Old English.” Actually Shakespeare’s linguistic environment, experience, and exposure was, believe it or not, closer to our own times than to Chaucer’s, two hundred years earlier. Indeed, the history and development of the English language unfolds as follows: Old English, 449-1100; Middle English 1100-1500; and Modern English 1500-present. Shakespeare was firmly in the Modern English period.

At the time Shakespeare wrote, most of the grammatical changes from Old and Middle English had taken place; yet rigid notions about “correctness” had not yet been standardized in grammars. The past five centuries have advanced the cause of standardized positions for words; yet the flexible idiom of Elizabethan English offered abundant opportunities for Shakespeare’s linguistic inventiveness. Ideally it is rewarding to study several facets of Shakespeare’s English: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, wordplay, and imagery. The present overview will, however, be restricted to “vocabulary.”

To Polonius’s inquisitive question “What do you read, my lord?” (Hamlet, 2.2.191) Hamlet nonchalantly and intriguingly aptly replies: “Words, words, words” (2.2.192). This many-splendored creation of Shakespeare’s epitomizes the playwright’s own fascination with the dynamic aspect of English language, however troubling it may be to modern audiences and readers. Shakespeare added several thousand words to the language, apart from imparting new meanings to known words. At times Shakespeare could teasingly employ the same word for different shades of thought. Barowne’s single line, “Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile” (Love’s Labour’s Lost, 1.1.77), as Harry Levin in his *General Introduction to The Riverside Shakespeare* (9) explains, “uses ‘light’ in four significations: intellect, seeking wisdom, cheats eyesight out of daylight.”

Another instance: Othello as he enters his bedroom with a light before he smothers his dear, innocent Desdemona soliloquizes: “Put out the light, and then put out the light” (Othello, 5.2.7) Here ‘light’ compares the light of Othello’s lamp or torch to Desdemona’s ‘light’ of life.

In both instances, the repeated simple ordinary word carries extraordinary shades of meaning. “Usually such a tendency in a Shakespeare play indicates a more or less conscious thematic intent.” (Paul A. Jorgensen, *Redeeming Shakespeare’s Words* [Berkeley and Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1962], 100).

Living in an age of the “grandiose humanistic confidence in the power of the word” (Levin 9), Shakespeare evidently felt exuberant that he had the license to experiment with the language, further blessed by the fact that “there were no English grammars to lay down rules or dictionaries to restrict word-formation. This was an immeasurable boon for writers” (Levin 10). Surely Shakespeare took full

advantage of the unparalleled linguistic freedom to invent, to experiment with, and to indulge in lavishly.

However intriguing, captivating, mind-teasing, beguiling, and euphonious, Shakespeare's vocabulary can be a stumbling block, especially for readers. "In the theater the speaking actor frequently relies on tone, semantic drive, narrative context, and body language to communicate the sense of utterly unfamiliar terms and phrases, but on the page such words become more noticeable and confusing" (Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents* [Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996], 184).

Unlocking the meaning of Shakespeare's vocabulary can prove to be an interesting challenge. Such words include those which "have dropped from common use like 'bisson' (blind) or those that the playwright seems to have created from Latin roots . . . but that did not catch on, such as 'conspicuities' (eyesight or vision) or 'unplausible' (doubtful or disapproving). Especially confusing are those words that have shifted meaning over the intervening centuries, such as 'proper' (handsome), 'nice' (squeamish or delicate), 'silly' (innocent), or 'cousin' (kinsman, that is, not necessarily the child of an aunt or uncle)" (McDonald 184). Because of semantic change, when Shakespeare uses 'conceit,' he does not mean 'vanity,' as we might understand it to be. Strictly following etymology, Shakespeare means a 'conception' or 'notion,' or possibly the 'imagination' itself.

Perhaps several Shakespeare words "would have been strange to Shakespeare's audience because they were the products of his invention or unique usage. Some words that probably originated with him include: 'auspicious,' 'assassination,' 'disgraceful,' 'dwindle,' 'savagery.'" Certainly a brave soul, he was "a most audacious inventor of words." To appreciate and understand Shakespeare's English in contrast to ours, we ought to suspend our judgment and disbelief and allow respect for the "process of semantic change, which has been continually eroding or encrusting his original meaning" (Levin 8).

Shakespeare's vocabulary has received greater attention than any other aspect of his language. Perhaps this is because it is the most accessible with no burdensome complications. Whatever the cause, Shakespeare's language will forever be challenging and captivating.

Not of An Age, But for All Mankind

By Douglas A. Burger

After an enormous expenditure of money and effort, Shakespeare's Globe Theater has risen again, four centuries later, on London's south bank of the Thames. Designed as a faithful reconstruction of the original, it uses the building methods of the time and traditional materials (oak timbers, plaster walls, wooden pegs, water-reeds for thatching the roof). From above, the shape seems circular (actually, it is twenty-six sided) with three covered tiers of seats surrounding a central area which is open to the sky.. There the "groundlings" may stand to see the action taking place on the stage, which occupies almost half of the inner space. There are no artificial lights, no conventional sets, no fancy rigging.

Seeing a Shakespeare play in the afternoon sunlight at the new Globe must come very close to the experience of those early-day Londoners, except, of course, that we in the twentieth-century behave better. We don't yell insults at the actors, spit, or toss orange peels on the ground. We also smell better: the seventeenth-century playwright, Thomas Dekker, calls the original audience "Stinkards . . . glewed together in crowdes with the Steames of strong breath" (Shakespeare's Globe: The Guide Book [London: International Globe Center, 1996], 42). And we are safer. The first Globe burned to the ground. The new theater has more exits, fire-retardant insulation concealed in the walls, and water-sprinklers that poke through the thatch of the roof.

That hard-headed capitalists and officials would be willing, even eager, to invest in the project shows that Shakespeare is good business. The new Globe is just one example. Cedar City's own Utah Shakespeare Festival makes a significant contribution to the economy of southern Utah. A sizable percentage of all the tourist dollars spent in England goes to Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon, which would be a sleepy little agricultural town without its favorite son. The situation seems incredible. In our whole history, what other playwright could be called a major economic force? Who else--what single individual--could be listed along with agriculture, mining, and the like as an industry of a region? Why Shakespeare?

The explanation, of course, goes further than an attempt to preserve our cultural traditions. In an almost uncanny way, Shakespeare's perceptions remain valuable for our own understandings of life, and probably no other writer remains so insightful, despite the constantly changing preoccupations of audiences over time.

The people of past centuries, for example, looked to the plays for nuggets of wisdom and quotable quotes, and many of Shakespeare's lines have passed into common parlance. There is an old anecdote about the woman, who on first seeing Hamlet, was asked how she liked the play. She replied, "Oh, very nice, my dear, but so full of quotations." She has it backwards of course. Only the King James Bible has lent more "quotations" to English than Shakespeare.

Citizens of the late nineteenth century sought in the plays for an understanding of human nature, valuing Shakespeare's character for traits that they recognized in themselves and in others. The fascination continues to the present day as some of our best-known movie stars attempt to find new dimensions in the great characters: Mel Gibson and Kenneth Branagh in Hamlet, Lawrence Fishburn in Othello, Leonardo de Caprio in Romeo, to name just a few.

Matters of gender, class, and race have preoccupied more recent audiences. Beatrice sounds a rather feminist note in *Much Ado about Nothing* in her advice to her cousin about choosing a husband: Curtsy to your father, but say "Father, as it please me." *Coriolanus* presents a recurring dilemma about class relations in its explorations of the rights and wrongs involved in a great man's attempt to control the masses. Racial attitudes are illuminated in *Othello*, where the European characters always mark the hero by his race, always identify him first as the "Moor," are always aware of his difference.

London's new/old Globe is thus a potent symbol of the plays' continuing worth to us. The very building demonstrates the utter accuracy of the lines written so long ago that Shakespeare is not "of an age" but "for all time."

Mr. Shakespeare, I Presume

By Diana Major Spencer

Could the plays known as Shakespeare's have been written by a rural, semi-literate, uneducated, wife-deserting, two-bit actor who spelled his name differently each of the six times he wrote it down? Could such a man know enough about Roman history, Italian geography, French grammar, and English court habits to create Antony and Cleopatra, The Comedy of Errors, and Henry V? Could he know enough about nobility and its tenuous relationship to royalty to create King Lear and Macbeth?

Are these questions even worth asking? Some very intelligent people think so. On the other hand, some very intelligent people think not. Never mind quibbles about how a line should be interpreted, or how many plays Shakespeare wrote and which ones, or which of the great tragedies reflected personal tragedies. The question of authorship is "The Shakespeare Controversy."

Since Mr. Cowell, quoting the deceased Dr. Wilmot, cast the first doubt about William of Stratford in an 1805 speech before the Ipswich Philological Society, nominees for the "real author" have included philosopher Sir Francis Bacon, playwright Christopher Marlowe, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the earls of Derby, Rutland, Essex, and Oxford--among others.

The arguments evoke two premises: first, that the proven facts about the William Shakespeare who was christened at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 26, 1564 do not configure a man of sufficient nobility of thought and language to have written the plays; and, second, that the man from Stratford is nowhere concretely identified as the author of the plays. The name "Shakespeare"--in one of its spellings--appears on early quartos, but the man represented by the name may not be the one from Stratford.

One group of objections to the Stratford man follows from the absence of any record that he ever attended school--in Stratford or anywhere else. If he were uneducated, the arguments go, how could his vocabulary be twice as large as the learned Milton's? How could he know so much history, law, or philosophy? If he were a country bumpkin, how could he know so much of hawking, hounding, courtly manners, and daily habits of the nobility? How could he have traveled so much, learning about other nations of Europe in enough detail to make them the settings for his plays?

The assumptions of these arguments are that such rich and noble works as those attributed to a playwright using the name "Shakespeare" could have been written only by someone with certain characteristics, and that those characteristics could be distilled from the "facts" of his life. He would have to be noble; he would have to be well-educated; and so forth. On these grounds the strongest candidate to date is Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford.

A debate that has endured its peaks and valleys, the controversy catapulted to center stage in 1984 with the publication of Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Ogburn, a former army intelligence officer, builds a strong case for Oxford--if one can hurdle the notions that the author wasn't Will Shakespeare, that literary works should be read autobiographically, and that literary creation is nothing more than reporting the facts of one's own life. "The Controversy" was laid to rest--temporarily, at least--by justices Blackmun, Brennan, and Stevens of the United States Supreme Court who, after hearing evidence from both sides in a mock trial conducted September 25, 1987 at American University in Washington, D.C., found in favor of the Bard of Avon.

Hooray for our side!

Shakespearean Snapshots

By Ace G. Pilkington

It is hard to get from the facts of Shakespeare's life to any sense of what it must have been like to have lived it. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon and died there in 1616. The day of his birth is not certain, but it may have been the same as the day of his death—April 23—if he was baptized, as was usual at the time, three days after he was born. He married Anne Hathaway in the winter of 1582-83, when he was eighteen and she was twenty-six. He became the father of three children. The first was Susannah, who was born around May 23, close enough to the date of the wedding to suggest that the marriage was not entirely voluntary. Shakespeare's twins, Hamnet and Judith, were baptized on February 2, 1585. Hamnet died of unknown causes (at least unknown by us at this distance in time) in 1596. Shakespeare's career as actor, theatre owner, manager, and, of course, playwright began in the vicinity of 1590 and continued for the rest of his life, though there are clear indications that he spent more and more time in Stratford and less and less in London from 1611 on. His work in the theatre made him wealthy, and his extraordinary plays brought him a measure of fame, though nothing like what he deserved or would posthumously receive.

It's hard to get even the briefest sense of what Shakespeare's life was like from such information. It is probably impossible ever to know what Shakespeare thought or felt, but maybe we can get closer to what he saw and heard and even smelled. Perhaps some snapshots—little close-ups—might help to bring us nearer to the world in which Shakespeare lived if not quite to the life he lived in that world. In Shakespeare's youth, chimneys were a new thing. Before that, smoke was left to find its way out through a hole in the roof, often a thatched roof, and there were even some who maintained that this smoky atmosphere was better than the newfangled fresh air that chimneys made possible—along with a greater division of rooms and more privacy.

In the year of Shakespeare's birth, Stratford had more trees than houses—"upwards of 400 houses as well as 1,000 elms and forty ashes" (Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Professional Career* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 1). Peter Levi says, "The town was so full of elm trees that it must have looked and sounded like a woodland settlement. For example, Mr. Gibbs's house on Rothermarket had twelve elms in the garden and six in front of the door. Thomas Attford on Ely Street had another twelve. The town boundaries were marked by elms or groups of elms (*The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* [New York: Wings Books, 1988], 7). Shakespeare's "Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang" becomes a far more majestic image with the picture of Stratford's elms in mind. And the birds themselves had a sound which modern ears no longer have a chance to enjoy. "We must realize that it was ordinary for . . . Shakespeare to hear a dawn chorus of many hundreds of birds at once. . . . as a young man thirty years ago I have heard a deafening dawn chorus in the wooded Chilterns, on Shakespeare's road to London" (Levi 10).

Exactly what Shakespeare's road to London may have been or at least how he first made his way there and became an actor is much debated. He might have been a schoolmaster or fifty other things, but he may well have started out as he ended up—as a player. We can then, in John Southworth's words, "Picture a sixteen-year-old lad on a cart, growing year by year into manhood, journeying out of the Arden of his childhood into ever more unfamiliar, distant regions, travelling ill-made roads in all weathers, sleeping in inns, hearing and memorising strange new dialects and forms of speech, meeting with every possible type and character of person; learning, most of all perhaps, from the audiences to which he played in guildhalls and inns" (*Shakespeare the Player: A Life in the Theatre* [Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000], 30). At some time in his life—in fact, many times—Shakespeare must have known theatrical tours very like that.

In London itself, the new Globe, the best theatre in (or rather just outside of) the city, was in an area with a large number of prisons and an unpleasant smell. "Garbage had preceded actors on the marshy land where the new playhouse was erected: 'flanked with a ditch and forced out of a marsh', according to Ben Jonson. Its cost . . . included the provision of heavy piles for the foundation, and a whole network of ditches in which the water rose and fell with the tidal Thames" (Garry O'Connor, *William Shakespeare: A Popular Life* [New York: Applause Books, 2000], 161). The playgoers came by water, and the Globe, the Rose, and the Swan "drew 3,000 or 4,000 people in boats across the Thames every day" (161). Peter Levi says of Shakespeare's London, "The noise, the crowds, the animals and their droppings, the glimpses of grandeur and the amazing squalor of the poor, were beyond modern imagination" (49).

England was a place of fear and glory. Public executions were public entertainments. Severed heads decayed on city walls. Francis Bacon, whom Will Durant calls "the most powerful and influential intellect of his time" (*Heroes of History: A Brief History of Civilization from Ancient Times to the Dawn of the Modern Age* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001], 327), had been "one of the persons commissioned to question prisoners under torture" in the 1580s (Levi 4). The opportune moment when Shakespeare became the most successful of playwrights was the destruction of Thomas Kyd, "who broke under torture and was never the same again," and the death of Christopher Marlowe in a tavern brawl which was the result of plot and counterplot—a struggle, very probably, between Lord Burghley and Walter Raleigh (Levi 48).

Shakespeare, who must have known the rumors and may have known the truth, cannot have helped shuddering at such monstrous good fortune. Still, all of the sights, smells, and terrors, from the birdsongs to the screams of torture, from the muddy tides to the ties of blood, became not only the textures and tonalities of Shakespeare's life, but also the information and inspiration behind his plays.

Vocabulary: *Romeo and Juliet*

Since *Romeo and Juliet* was written, many words in English have changed their meaning, and some are no longer used. If you remember the slang you used a few years ago, it seems dated. Who now uses the word “groovy”? Shakespeare used the rich vocabulary of his day within his plays. When reading Shakespeare read the line in context of the scene. Try translating the lines into your own words, use today’s vernacular.

Amerce: to punish with a fine.

“I’ll amerce you with so strong a fine / That you shall all repent the loss of mine.”
— Prince Escalus (3.1.152)

Aqua vitae: Latin, “water of life,” strong liquor, whiskey.

“Give me some aqua vitae.”
— Nurse (3.2.89)

Caitiff: miserable, despicable.

“Here lives a caitiff wretch.”
— Romeo (5.1.54)

Charnel: a vault for the dead, sepulcher.

“Hid me nightly in a charnel house.”
— Juliet (4.1.83)

Choler: wrath, anger.

“Patience perforce with willful choler meeting makes my flesh tremble.”
— Tybalt (1.5.88)

Cock-a-hoop: a state of boastful exultation.

“You will set cock-a-hoop!”
— Capulet (1.5.80)

Countervail: outweigh, offset.

“Sorrow . . . cannot countervail the exchange of joy.”
— Romeo (2.6.4)

Endart: to pierce, or shoot with a dart.

“No more deep will I endart mine eye.”
— Juliet (1.3.100)

Fettle: strengthen, prepare, make ready.

“Fettle your fine joints ’gainst Thursday next.”
— Capulet (3.5.153)

Gadding: rove, wandering.

“Where have you been gadding”

— Lord Capulet (4.2.13)

Gyves: shackles, bonds, fetters.

“Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves.”

— Juliet (2.2.182)

Hilding: worthless person, wretch.

“Out on her, hilding!”

— Capulet (3.5.68)

Jocund: cheerful, helpful.

“Jocund day stands on tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.”

— Romeo (3.5.9)

Mickle: great, much.

“O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies / In herbs.”

— Lawrence (2.3.15)

Physic: medicine, healing power.

“Both our remedies within thy help and holy physic lies.”

— Romeo (2.3.2)

Presage: forewarn, portend.

“My dreams presage some joyful news.”

— Romeo (5.1.2)

Proof: protected, impervious.

“Look thou but sweet / And I am proof against their enmity.”

— Romeo (2.2.73)

Prorogued: Postponed, deferred.

“My life were better ended by their hate / Than death prorogued.”

— Romeo (2.2.78)

Ropery: knavery, saucy tricks.

“[Who] was this that was so full of his ropery?”

— Nurse (2.4.74)

Trencher: Wooden dish or plate.

“He scrape a trencher?”

— Servingman (1.5.2)

Examining the Text

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

Shakespeare uses many types of figurative language like metaphor, simile, and personification. Recognizing when his characters are speaking figuratively helps to understand what they are saying. The famous balcony scene of the play is overflowing with figurative language.

Romeo begins by using the sun as a metaphor for his beloved Juliet:

“It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.” (2.2.3–6)

In these same lines Romeo has furthered his metaphor by using personification. He creates for us the idea that the moon is a woman who is “sick and pale with grief,” seemingly jealous of Juliet’s beauty.

Toward the end of the scene, Juliet tries to tell Romeo how much she loves him. She uses the sea as a simile to help him understand:

“My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite. (2.2.133–136)

SHAKESPEARE’S LANGUAGE: PROSE VS VERSE

Many students—and adults, for that matter—find Shakespeare difficult to read and hard to understand. They accuse him of not speaking English and refuse to believe that ordinary people spoke the way his characters do. However, if you understand more about his language, it is easier to understand. One idea that may help is to remember that his plays are written in two forms: prose and verse. In *Romeo and Juliet* prose is less common than verse.

Prose

Prose is the form of speech used by common, and often comic, people in Shakespearean drama. There is no rhythm or meter in the line. It is everyday language. Shakespeare’s audiences would recognize the speech as their language. When a character in a play speaks in prose, you know that he is a lower class member of society. These are characters such as criminals, servants, and pages. However, sometimes important characters can speak in prose. For example, the majority of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is written in prose because it deals with the middle-class. The first scene of *Romeo and Juliet* is written in prose, until Benvolio and Tybalt, the more important and higher born characters in the play, enter:

Abraham: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

Sampson: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

Gregory: Do you quarrel, sir?

Abraham: Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

Sampson: But if you do sir, I am for you. I serve as good a man as you.

Abraham: No better.

Samson: Yes, better, sir.

Abraham: You lie.

Samson: Draw, if you be men.

Enter Benvolio

Benvolio: Part fools! / Put up your swords. You know not what you do.

Enter Tybalt

Tybalt: What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? / Turn thee, Benvolio, Look upon thy death.

Benvolio: I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword, / Or manage it to part these men with me.

(1.1.44–69)

We can recognize the beginning of this passage as prose. The servants, who have crossed paths in the street, insult each other hoping for, but not wanting to be blamed for, a fight. Their words flow freely, without concern for where the line ends on the page.

Verse

The verse lines begin when Benvolio enters in an attempt to break up the fight. He is followed by Tybalt, who wants to get in on the action. As with most of Shakespeare's important characters, these two speak in blank verse. It contains no rhyme, but each line has an internal rhythm with a regular rhythmic pattern. The pattern most favored by Shakespeare is iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is defined as a ten-syllable line with the accent on every other syllable, beginning with the second one. The rhythm of this pattern of speech is often compared to a beating heart. Examine Benvolio's final line and count the syllables it contains:

“Or manage it to part these men with me.”

place the words with syllabic count:

1-2 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10

Replace the words with a 'da' sound to hear the heart beat:

da-DA da-DA da-DA da-DA da-DA

Now put the emphasis on the words themselves:

Or-MAN age-IT to-PART these-MEN with-ME

In *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare used prose to create moments of confusion, especially when there is fighting or arguing on stage. Interestingly, Mercutio, the highest born of the leading characters in the play, jumps rapidly between prose and verse. This is perhaps to show his mercurial, or erratic, nature. Whether he is speaking in a rhythmic pattern of dreams and fairies or exchanging biting banter with Romeo, he is a master of wit and never misses an opportunity to "one up" his friends or rivals.

An Example of Prose

Mercutio (upon being mortally wounded by Tybalt): No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o' both your houses! Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat, to scratch a man to death! A braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm. (3.1.95–102)

An Example of Verse

Friar Laurence (counseling Romeo just before marrying him to Juliet):

These violent delights have violent ends
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder
Which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite.
Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.
Too swift arrives as tardy too slow. (2.6.9–15)

A Verse Scene

Romeo and Juliet (saying goodbye after their wedding night):

Juliet: Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;

Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo: It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

Juliet: Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I.
It is some meteor that the sun exhaled
To be to thee this night a torchbearer
And light thee on thy way to Mantua.
Therefore stay yet. Thou need'st not to be gone.

Romeo: Let me be ta'en; let me be put to death.
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye;
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.
Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.
I have more care to stay than will to go.
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? Let's talk. It is not day.

Juliet: It is, it is. Hie hence, begone, away! (3.5.1–26)

Activities: *Romeo and Juliet*

THE MISSING LETTER

Write the letter that Friar Lawrence wrote to Romeo and never got delivered. Then write a new ending to the play assuming that he had received it. Consider that this doesn't necessarily mean that things will end happily.

YOU'RE THE DESIGNER

Create costume designs that show the difference between the Montagues and the Capulets. Pay attention to the meaning or feelings behind the colors you pick. Consider what era you want to set the play in and what impact that will have on the play.

YOU'RE THE DIRECTOR

Safely act out the fight scene between Romeo, Mercutio, and Tybalt. Stage it first showing that it was Tybalt's fault, again to show it as Mercutio's fault, and lastly to show it as an accident.

YOU'RE THE WRITER

Rewrite Juliet's "Farewell Compliment" speech in the balcony scene (2.2,80–106) in modern language. Try to include several idioms, allusions, and examples of figurative language.

YOU'RE THE ACTOR

Option A: Monologue- Pick a speech of at least ten lines. Repeat the speech using several different techniques. Try it dramatically, angrily, humorously, sarcastically. Try emphasizing different words to change the meaning of the words.

Option B: Dialogue- Pick a bit of dialogue of at least ten lines. Play the scene using several different techniques. Try it dramatically, angrily, humorously, and sarcastically. Try emphasizing different words and swapping roles to change the meaning of the words.

QUEEN MABB

Read Mercutio's Queen Mabb speech (1.4.53–95). Draw a picture of Queen Mabb and write a story of one of her adventures.

ANIMAL GAMES

Tybalt is called the "Prince of Cats" by Mercutio. Consider what is catlike about him. Draw or list what animals you would assign to other characters in the play.

FAMILY FEUD

Write or improvise a scene between Prince Escalus, Montague, and Capulet (or their wives) in which they discuss their differences and the cause of the feud and attempt to find a solution.

PARIS

Write or improvise a scene at the feast in which Paris attempts to woo Juliet. How does Juliet feel about him? Does she “look to like if looking liking move”?

Elementary School Discussion Questions: Compare and Contrast

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

1. Who is your favorite character and why? Who do you dislike, why?
2. If you were acting in a production of the play, which character would you want to be? Why? Who would you not want to play? Why?
3. Compare Romeo and Juliet to the story of Cinderella. Think about how they are similar and different in time frame, characters, settings, and ending.

RELATIONAL

1. Who is to blame for each of these deaths: Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet? Is there a real hero or villain?
2. Should Juliet have agreed with her parents to forget Romeo and marry Paris? Is it ever right to disobey?
3. How could the Montagues and the Capulets have settled their problems? What effect does violence have on the feelings of the characters?

TEXTUAL

1. Look at what Juliet says to Romeo about love in 2.2.116–124. Do you think she is wise?
2. What does the prince mean when he says at the end of the play, “All are punished”?
3. The words fate, fortune, and star-crossed appear in the text many times. Also, both Romeo and Juliet say that they have a bad feeling about how things will turn out. Does this mean that they couldn’t change the way things ended? Was it destiny or bad choices that led to their deaths?

SHAKESPEARE’S WORLD

1. Is fourteen a good age to get married? What did Shakespeare think?
2. What would it be like to see this play at Shakespeare’s theatre, The Globe, in the hot afternoon, standing up, with men playing all the roles (even Juliet)?
3. How do you think Shakespeare would react if he knew that you were learning about his play more than 400 years after he wrote it?

Middle/High School Discussion Questions

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

1. Study the characters Benvolio and Mercutio, including the meaning behind their names. What are the differences in their functions, words, and fates in the play?
2. Romeo and Juliet is Shakespeare's first tragic love story, being written about 1594. Examine Antony and Cleopatra, written about 1607 and another passionate story that ends in a double suicide. How do they relate to each other? How has Shakespeare changed as a writer in thirteen years?
3. Watch the movie West Side Story, 1961. How do changes in the character's relationships (i.e. Maria and Bernardo being close siblings instead of cousins and Riff living with Tony's family) and the added problems (i.e. ethnic relations) affect the meaning and feeling of the story?

RELATIONAL

1. At what point in the story did things begin to go wrong? Whose fault was this? Discuss how the choices of the following characters affected the outcome of the play: Romeo, Juliet, Friar Lawrence, Mercutio, Lord Capulet, Tybalt.
2. Were Romeo and Juliet really in love? Romeo only first caught sight of Juliet about an hour or two before they decided to get married; they had only spoken for at most ten minutes. Was their love as Juliet said, "too rash, too unadvised, to sudden"? Can love at first sight be true love?
3. The cause of the "ancient grudge" between the Montagues and the Capulets is never explained. Why do you think Shakespeare chose not to tell us? What do you think might have been the cause? What do you think would have happened had Romeo and Juliet gone to their parents and explained their love and asked their families to work out their differences?

TEXTUAL

1. Read the balcony scene of Act 2 Scene 2. Who is in control of this conversation, Romeo or Juliet? Look for other examples in the text to support your idea of who is the stronger character.
2. In Act 3 Scene 1 who is really responsible for Mercutio's death: Mercutio, who provoked the fight, Tybalt who stabbed him, or Romeo who got between them? How would you stage this as a director?
3. In the Prologue the audience is told how the story will end, "a pair of star-crossed lovers take their life." Does knowing the ending change our reactions as we watch or read the play?

SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD

1. In 1582 at the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married a woman who was several years older than him. She gave birth to a child seven months later. Assuming Shakespeare had personal experience with young

and passionate love, what does this play say about his later attitude about twelve years later when he wrote the play?

2. In one of the earliest manuscripts of *Romeo and Juliet* someone wrote enter Will Kemp instead of enter Peter in Act 4 Scene 5. William Kemp was a popular comedic actor in Shakespeare's troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. What does this tell us about Shakespeare's writing process? How would writing for specific actors affect the types of characters he wrote?

3. How do you think the actors, all male, would have overcome the challenges of performing this very dramatic script to a widely diverse audience (some very rich and some very poor), in the middle of the day, with no special effects? What would they have to do to keep their attention? How does Shakespeare's arrangement of the action help?

Study Guide Questions: Engage With the Play

By Anna Miles

Take charge of your theatre-going experience and make it your own by asking yourself questions before, during, and after watching a play.

Questions to ask before the play:

If you **HAVE** read the play:

How did you envision the set, or the visual world of the play, while reading?

How did you imagine the characters looked while reading the play?

What themes did you notice repeating throughout the play?

What images jumped out at you while reading the play?

How would you describe the central theme of the play in one sentence?

If you **HAVEN'T** read the play:

Do you know anything about the play? If so, what do you know?

In General:

When you think about "theatre," what impressions come to mind? What does "theatre" mean to you?

What do you expect your experience to be when you watch a play? Do you expect to be bored? Excited? Engaged? Curious? Angry? Tired?

Questions to ask after the play:

If you **READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the production set differ from what you had imagined while reading the play? How was it similar? How did these changes affect your understanding of the story?

Did the characters look different from how you envisioned them looking while reading the play? Did they sound different? Act differently? How did these changes affect your understanding and opinion of each character? How did these changes affect your understanding of the overall story?

How did the themes and images you noticed while reading translate to performance? Did the same themes and images jump out at you? Did you notice new ones?

Did this particular production seem to have the same central theme, or a different central theme from the one you discovered while reading? What elements of the staging, acting, or design helped convey the theme?

Did they play gain or lose anything in performance? Did you enjoy reading it more, or watching it?

If you **DIDN'T READ THE PLAY BEFORE SEEING IT:**

How did the play live up to your expectations? Did it turn out the way you thought it would? Was your knowledge of the play correct?

Were you able to follow the story?

Which part of the story did you most respond to? What themes and images jumped out at you?

Which character did you most relate to? Why?

In General:

How did this production change or confirm your original impressions of "theatre"?

How did your experience watching the play differ from how you expected it would go?

In your own words, how would you summarize the plot of the play? How is the plot different from the story, or the thematic implications, in the play?

Did you feel the story was relevant to your life? How and why?

Did you feel the story said something about our society, or about the world at large? If so, what?

Do you feel this story is an important one to tell and keep telling? How and why?

What kind of stories do you most respond to?

California State Standards

Giving students the chance to experience live theater at the Sacramento Theatre Company not only gives them the chance to enrich their understanding of literature, humanity, and the world, but also includes the added benefit of fulfilling several of California's State Standards for Education, including:

California Arts Standards in Theater:

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists reflect to understand the impact of drama processes and theatre experiences.

Essential Question: How do theatre artists comprehend the essence of drama processes and theatre experiences?

Process Component: Reflect

PK.TH:Re7	K.TH:Re7	1.TH:Re7	2.TH:Re7	3.TH:Re7	4.TH:Re7	5.TH:Re7
With prompting and supports, recall an emotional response in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	With prompting and supports, express an emotional response to characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	Recall choices made in a guided drama experience .	Recognize when artistic choices are made in a guided drama experience .	Understand and discuss why artistic choices are made in a drama/theatre work.	Identify artistic choices made in a drama/theatre work through participation and observation.	Explain personal reactions to artistic choices made in a drama/theatre work through participation and observation.

6.TH:Re7	7.TH:Re7	8.TH:Re7	Prof.TH:Re7	Acc.TH:Re7	Adv.TH:Re7
Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.	Compare recorded personal and peer reactions to artistic choices in a drama/ theatre work.	Apply appropriate criteria to the evaluation of artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.	Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.	Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of a drama/theatre work.	Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists’ interpretations of drama/theatre work are influenced by personal experiences, culture, and aesthetics.

Essential Question: How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?

Process Component: Interpret

PK.TH:Re8	K.TH:Re8	1.TH:Re8	2.TH:Re8	3.TH:Re8	4.TH:Re8	5.TH:Re8
a. With prompting and supports, explore preferences in dramatic play , guided drama experience or age-appropriate theatre performance.	a. With prompting and supports, identify preferences in dramatic play , a guided drama experience or age-appropriate theatre performance.	a. Explain preferences and emotions in a guided drama experience or age-appropriate theatre performance.	a. Explain how personal preferences and emotions affect an observer’s response in a guided drama experience or age-appropriate theatre performance.	a. Consider multiple personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.	a. Compare and contrast multiple personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.	a. Justify responses based on personal experiences when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work.
b. With prompting and supports, name and describe characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	b. With prompting and supports, name and describe settings in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	b. Identify causes of character actions in a guided drama experience .	b. Identify causes and consequences of character actions in a guided drama experience .	b. Consider multiple ways to develop a character using physical characteristics and prop or costume design choices that reflect cultural perspectives in drama/theatre work.	b. Compare and contrast the qualities of characters in a drama/theatre work through physical characteristics and prop or costume design choices that reflect cultural contexts .	b. Explain responses to characters based on cultural contexts when participating in or observing drama/theatre work.
c. With prompting and supports describe how personal emotions and choices compare to the emotions and choices of characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	c. With prompting and supports describe how personal emotions and choices compare to the emotions and choices of characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	c. Explain or use text and pictures to describe how personal emotions and choices compare to the emotions and choices of characters in a guided drama experience .	c. Explain or use text and pictures to describe how others’ emotions and choices may compare to the emotions and choices of characters in a guided drama experience .	c. Examine how connections are made between oneself and a character’s emotions in drama/theatre work.	c. Identify and discuss physiological changes connected to emotions in drama/ theatre work.	c. Investigate the effects of emotions on posture, gesture, breathing, and vocal intonation in a drama/theatre work.

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Theatre artists apply criteria to understand, explore, and assess drama and theatre work.

Essential Question: How do analysis and synthesis impact the theatre artist’s process and audience’s perspectives?

Process Component: Evaluate

PK.TH:Re9	K.TH:Re9	1.TH:Re9	2.TH:Re9	3.TH:Re9	4.TH:Re9	5.TH:Re9
a. With prompting and supports, discuss and make decisions about dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	a. With prompting and supports, discuss and make decisions with others in dramatic play or a guided drama experience .	a. Build on others’ ideas in a guided drama experience .	a. Collaborate on a scene in a guided drama experience .	a. Understand how and why groups evaluate drama/theatre work.	a. Develop and implement a plan to evaluate drama/theatre work.	a. Develop multiple criteria to evaluate drama/theatre work.
n/a	n/a	b. Compare and contrast the experiences of characters in a guided drama experience .	b. Describe how characters respond to challenges in a guided drama experience .	b. Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective.	b. Analyze and evaluate characters’ choices in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective.	b. Analyze and evaluate a character’s circumstances in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective.
n/a	n/a	c. Identify props and costumes that might be used in a guided drama experience .	c. Use a prop or costume in a guided drama experience to describe characters, settings, or events.	c. Consider and analyze technical theatre elements from multiple drama/theatre works.	c. Explore how technical theatre elements may support a theme or idea in a drama/theatre work.	c. Assess how technical theatre elements represent the theme of a drama/theatre work.

California Reading Standards in Literature:

Standards in Integration of Knowledge and Ideas for grades 6-12: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Grade 6 students: Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

Grade 7 students: Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

Grade 8 students: Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

Grade 9-10 students: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

Grade 11-12 students: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. **(Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)**

Theatre Etiquette

- Arrive at the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not speak on the phone or text during the performance.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to the show about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance unless you are encouraged by the performers to participate.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in musical theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and can cause a mishap. It can also be a violation of an actor's contract.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment.
- Do not eat or drink in the theater.
- Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over... this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great (a standing ovation).
- Do not whistle, stomp your feet, or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.

Additional Resources

ArtsEdge

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/>

ArtsEdge offers free, standards-based teaching materials for use in and out of the classroom, as well as professional development resources, student materials, and guidelines for arts-based instruction and assessment.

Utah Shakespeare Festival Education Website

<http://www.bard.org/education.html>

Expand your horizons, your outlook, your understanding with our myriad of educational resources, not just for students, but for students of life.

ProjectExplorer, Ltd.

<http://www.projectexplorer.org/>

ProjectExplorer, Ltd. is a not-for-profit organization that provides an interactive global learning experience to the kindergarten through twelfth grade community. Providing users globally the opportunity to explore the world from their own computer, it is a free, all-inclusive site that uses story-based learning to spark students' imaginations.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

<http://shakespeare.met.edu/>

The web's first edition of the complete works of William Shakespeare. This site has offered Shakespeare's plays and poetry to the internet community since 1993. Downloadable plays are available by scene or in their entirety.

Absolute Shakespeare

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

Absolute Shakespeare provides resources for William Shakespeare's plays, sonnets, poems, quotes, biography and the legendary Globe Theatre. Absolute Shakespeare also offers a review of each character's role in each play including defining quotes and character motivations for all major characters.

Royal Shakespeare Company

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/Learning.aspx>

This site provides resources materials for teachers and students from Royal Shakespeare Company.

Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://www.folger.edu/>

The Folger Shakespeare Library, located on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., is a world-class research center on Shakespeare and on the early modern age in the West. It is home to the world's largest and finest collection of Shakespeare materials and to major collections of other rare Renaissance books, manuscripts, and works of art.

