

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Literary and feminist theory have recently begun to recognize William Shakespeare's character of Juliet as a possible feminist heroine, but communicating this interpretation on film will be complicated. Not only will the film need to deal with the issues of adaptation that come with moving any play onto film, but the finished product will also need to avoid the objectification of the female form. An investigation of literary theory, adaptation theory, and feminist film theory reveals that, although this is a formidable task, the original text offers enough power to overcome any obstacle of communication.

Once the earlier literary criticism of A. C. Bradley gives way to feminist literary theory which offers a more empowering interpretation of the character of Juliet, it seems clear that this character could be a powerful cinematic heroine. At this point, it becomes relevant to acknowledge the problems involved in the transfer of text to cinema and the adaptation theories of Andre Bazin, Susan Sontag, and others become applicable. Adding further dimension to the film discussion is Laura Mulvey's theory of "the masculine gaze" as well as Tania Modleski's theories on feminism as it applies to mass culture and audience interpretation.

The theoretical discussion suggests a unique combination of theories with which to investigate the three best-known *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations (George Cukor, 1936; Franco Zeffirelli, 1968; Baz Luhrmann, 1996) Each of these films uses the medium of cinema to communicate a specific interpretation of the original text. Although none emphasize a strong, decisive heroine, they each present different options for portraying the character of Juliet and offer valuable insight in their moments of oppression as well as empowerment.

Applying this blend of theories to the specific films leads to the idea that future filmmakers could take all the theories into consideration and learn from these previous works to produce a main-stream adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* which emphasizes the strength and agency of the main female character. The power of Shakespeare's Juliet is a prolific area of the text which, when explored on screen, has the ability to utilize film as an ally to unite feminist theory with popular culture.

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A Feminist Love Story: The Cinematic Possibilities of Shakespeare's Juliet

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Dionna E. Faherty, Author

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A Feminist Love Story: The Cinematic Possibilities of Shakespeare's Juliet

Introduction

Box-office successes such as *Titanic* and *Shakespeare in Love* offer a familiar tale of forbidden love fighting against a cruel society. The lovers battle many obstacles to be together in what is ultimately a temporary union. Their forbidden love, however fleeting, manages to leave an indelible mark on their world, and in this way the story offers hope. This mix of devastation and hope is a combination that theater audiences have seen reappear on screen in thousands of variations since the beginning of film. The story was well known previous to the film industry as it was a recurrent tale in books, legends and plays long before it ever hit the screen. The most famous of the ill-fated lover stories is that of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. His work is the vehicle through which the base story has been disseminated through our culture and it is the standard by which similar stories are judged.

Shakespeare did not create the story, so perhaps western culture gives him too much credit. "The tale of *Romeo and Juliet* had been popular in the literatures of England and the Continent before Shakespeare adapted it. . .[he] simply rearranged the material, changed the pace considerably, and expanded the roles of several characters, notably Mercutio and the Nurse" (Boyce 563). If Shakespeare's is just another version of the story, how has his *Romeo and Juliet* come to be the quintessential "star-crossed lovers" tale? Some would argue cultural bias and other influences outside the text helped give

this dominant-class-male author staying power. Though we cannot deny the impact of such outside forces, the text of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* exists to remind us that at least part of the reason it is the most popular bittersweet love story is because Shakespeare told the story so well. Shakespeare's enduring mastery as a storyteller is evident by the number of modern filmmakers who create film adaptations of his original texts. Films such as *Titanic* rely only on a base plot and thus might owe more to the origins of the tale than to Shakespeare's version, but the number of direct adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* specifically emphasize the power of Shakespeare's play.

Filmmakers George Cukor, Franco Zeffirelli, and Baz Luhrmann each created film versions of *Romeo and Juliet* which all tell Shakespeare's story using his text. Since the filmmakers all use Shakespeare's own language, it is interesting to note that each film conveys a different message. The multiplicity of Shakespeare's texts is part of the strength of his work and part of the reason his *Romeo and Juliet* is held in such high esteem. However, the malleable nature of his texts do spark some controversy as to what is authentic when the story is reproduced on screen. If each of the above mentioned filmmakers uses the same text and tells a different story, how do we know which is what Shakespeare wanted us to see? The best way to deal with this question is to leave it alone. Rather than pondering authenticity, it is more interesting, and productive, to ask what the text has to say to a modern audience. Is there a new angle to the text that has yet to be explored on film? Also, is this new angle valuable to a modern audience? In the specific case of *Romeo and Juliet* each of the above mentioned filmmakers has explored different aspects of the text and there are other, less well-known versions that look at other aspects

as well. However, there is an important area that remains, for the most part, unexplored on film: the strength and agency of the character of Juliet.

Modern feminine protagonists in similar stories such as Rose in *Titanic*, or Viola in *Shakespeare in Love* have been portrayed as strong decisive heroines. These female characters take a more obviously aggressive role in their own battles and audiences usually view these more aggressive actions as courageous and heroic. Clearly the time frame in which *Romeo and Juliet* was written does not lend itself toward an assertive female character and, for this reason, the character of Juliet is often interpreted as docile and passive, although certainly passionate. Yet, the text depicts a young woman who speaks with a strange man out her window, defies her father for her own beliefs, drinks an unknown potion that, at best, will allow her to awake in a room filled with rotting corpses, and finally plunges a dagger into her own chest. These actions hint that there is a way to interpret Juliet as a strong, assertive young woman equal her modern counterparts.

Admittedly, there are obstacles to overcome if one wishes to use Shakespeare's text to communicate a strong female character on film. The most important issue is that the project must find adequate support in Shakespeare's text for the new interpretation of Juliet. As discussed above, there seems to be adequate material within the text to argue such a point, but it certainly deserves further investigation within the text. The basis for an interpretation of a Juliet with agency should be located within Shakespeare's text or the interpretation loses some of the power that comes with using Shakespeare's story. The next issue is within the means of communication. The medium of film offers some unique challenges especially when merging a sixteenth century text with this modern art form. The three best known adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* (Cukor, 1936; Zeffirelli,

1968; Luhrmann, 1996) each dealt with obstacles unique to film adaptation when creating their films. Thus, they offer excellent examples of the possibilities and the problems that arise when one attempts such an adaptation. Also, as the character of Juliet exists differently in each film, these works are a valuable tool to examine how the character comes across on film and what might be adjusted or changed for an adaptation that chooses to emphasize her agency.

These existing films are of incalculable assistance for examining possibilities for the character of Juliet on film. However, before looking too deeply into these completed versions, we must first investigate the practicality of creating an adaptation that emphasizes the strength of the female protagonist. The most important place to start when looking to create such an adaptation is within the academic discourse surrounding the original text. Since I am arguing that a film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* with a powerful interpretation of Juliet would be a valuable asset to Shakespearean studies, it is important to understand some of the critical history, not only of the character of Juliet, but of the play as a whole. Interestingly, *Romeo and Juliet* has a colorful critical past. The play's popularity has been consistently strong from the beginning, as is evidenced by the four quartos of the play printed before the first folio. The critics, however, have never embraced the work as wholeheartedly (Marsh 52). It does not fall neatly into any strict definition of tragedy and thus many critics find several "flaws". A.C. Bradley, a critic whose thoughts on Shakespearean tragedy greatly influenced Shakespearean thought for the first half of the 20th century, identifies it as an "immature work" and cites the time gap between this work and Shakespeare's great tragic period as proof that the play was unsatisfactory to Shakespeare as well. Recent scholarship has been more generous with

the play and tends to accept it for what it is, Derrick Marsh argues that it “It is not *Hamlet* or *King Lear* but it is an excellent play of its kind”(48). It is a tragedy, many agree, but not a great one because it cannot stand out among such competitors as Shakespeare’s later plays. If not a great tragedy, then exactly what kind excellent play is it? Through looking at more modern critiques such as the above mentioned Marsh’s *Passion Lends them Power* and Evelyn Gajowski’s *The Art of Loving* it seems clear that the play is primarily a love story, thus it becomes a tragic-love story and succeeds critically when viewed from that perspective.

Viewing the work as a tragic love story rather than a pure Shakespearean tragedy removes the devastating comparison’s of Shakespeare’s later plays. Another advantage to viewing the work as primarily a love story is that it allows us to see Juliet’s textual equality to Romeo as a positive aspect of the play. Juliet is an extremely difficult problem for Bradley. He needs a single protagonist for the work to be a tragedy in the true Aristotelian sense, yet he acknowledges that “only in the love-tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, that the heroine is as much the centre of the action as the hero”(25). Regardless of this acknowledgement, his language and references continually look to Romeo as the central protagonist. Although he sees Juliet’s importance to the play, Bradley cannot break with tradition enough to investigate her character in the context of the tragedy “So that, having noticed the peculiarity of these two dramas [*Romeo and Juliet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*], we may henceforth, for the sake of brevity, ignore it, and may speak of the tragic story as being concerned primarily with one person”(25). His treatment of *Troilus and Cressida* solidifies the critic’s obsession with the Aristotelian cast “No play at the end of which the hero remains alive is, in the full

Shakespearean sense, a tragedy; and we no longer class *Troilus and Cressida* or *Cymbeline* as such as did the editors of the Folio” (25). Clearly Bradley is more concerned with investigating Shakespearean tragedy within a specific structure than he is of investigating the richness of the “peculiarities” of the love-tragedies. Letting go of the strict rules of Aristotelian tragedy as Bradley sees them, however, offers the advantage of viewing the character of Juliet as an equal protagonist. Both Marsh and Gajowski argue that seeing the play from this point of view allows for a more flexible critique of the work. A more in-depth look at these critics thoughts on *Romeo and Juliet*’s tragic nature can be found in the first chapter of this thesis.

A critical basis that supports a cinematic focus on the character of Juliet provides a strong beginning for such an adaptation. Such a modern adaptation should then look to feminist theory as a means to help discover the strength of Juliet that is an important part of Shakespeare’s original text. Unlike Bradley’s restrictive application of Aristotelian theory, feminist theory offers a less conventional and less restrictive lens through which to view the text and opens several avenues of interpretation. Unfortunately, feminist theory seems at odds with love stories in general and Shakespeare’s character of Juliet in particular. This character has not been taken as the ideal candidate for a feminist interpretation unless it is to explore her as a symbol of oppression. The character’s main defiant action is to fall in love, and the text has her die at her own hand rather than go on in a society without Romeo. Still, this character defies her father, proposes to Romeo and risks her life for her convictions. From a certain point of view this classical heroine exemplifies some exceptional feminist strengths. These actions, combined with some of the characters speeches could be emphasized and explored on film in a way that would

open up an entirely new viewpoint on Shakespeare's text. This new angle could inspire interesting interpretations of other characters within the film as well as they would need to work to support a stronger Juliet. This might produce a *Romeo and Juliet* unique in more respects than just that of the female lead. Also, using film to communicate a strong interpretation of a classical female protagonist is potentially politically influential in a way that a modern version of the story could never be. Merging a classical male authored work with the male-dominated Hollywood system to create a feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* could break down some of the existing barriers between feminism and mainstream culture. The works of Nina Baym, Annette Kolodney, Myra Jehlen and several others offer interesting theories that help focus on the strong, independent elements of the character of Juliet which would allow for such an important adaptation.

Although there are several examples of feminist theories that see the character of Juliet as a possible example of strength rather than oppression, it has been more common to use the character as an example of oppression. Feminist theorists who interpret Juliet as a victim offer important counter arguments that should be considered if a film is to assert a character so different than the usual interpretation. In Diane Dreher's book, *Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare*, Shakespeare's Juliet is analyzed as a victim of society completely controlled by her father and the societal concept of what a woman should be. Dreher's viewpoint is representative of interpretations which usually place much more emphasis on the patriarchal feud. For any film adaptation wishing to emphasize Juliet's strength, this type of interpretation points out possible problems. Not only is it important to emphasize Juliet's individual strength, but we need to take note of where her character fits into the larger picture of the plot.

How does a film emphasize the love story without making Juliet seem like a victim of a patriarchal feud? Two recent journal articles have decidedly different interpretations of the female protagonist and both of these authors see the relationship between the lovers as the primary story. Carolyn E. Brown wrote a work entitled “Juliet’s Taming of Romeo” for *Studies of English Literature* in which she discusses Juliet and Romeo in terms of the falconer and the falcon. Katherine Duncan-Jones argued another feminist interpretation of Juliet in the September 1998 edition of *Notes and Queries* entitled “ ‘O Happy Dagger’: the Autonomy of Shakespeare’s Juliet.” In it Duncan-Jones argues that the character’s suicide proves her autonomy rather than her oppression. These are relevant discussions of the character of Juliet and certainly offer solid possibilities for cinematic interpretations, but it is important to note that they focus primarily on the individual actions of the character. Works such as Dreher’s serve to remind us that interpretations need to address the character’s placement in the plot as well as the individual actions and speeches. Further discussion of feminist thought about *Romeo and Juliet* can be found in the first chapter which discusses literary theory.

Although there clearly seems to be the theoretical basis for a feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*, simply deciding that one wants to create such an interpretation on film is only half the problem. The second chapter of this thesis concentrates on the difficulty of transferring such a text onto film. It is incredibly difficult to find a way to move an interpretation onto the screen without allowing the medium through which the interpretation is disseminated to overshadow and/or obfuscate the message. There are two distinct problems within this proposed project that have to do specifically with film. The first is the difficulty in transmuting a classical text onto the

modern cinema screen. There are unique problems that occur when we create a film out of text that was never intended for this medium and there is also a theory which investigates these problems. Adaptation theory not only gives these problems a category, but allows us to foresee difficulties that would inevitably arise from any literary adaptation project. Also, this theory gives us a language through which we can discuss some of the choices made by the three adaptations previously discussed.

Andre Bazin's influential book *What is Cinema?* looks specifically at the difference between "theatrical" and "cinematic" and thus investigates Shakespeare film adaptations as theater to film rather than print to film translations. Bazin has interesting thoughts about space and time that are relevant to any film which looks to turn a script that was originally a play into a film. He believes that film gives the director much more control of time due to the various editing techniques that are available. Bazin also notes that the director can manipulate space as well, but does not believe that this is positive. His interpretation of a successful film adaptation of theater is one that communicates an idea of theatrical space. Another viewpoint on several of Bazin's issues is raised by Susan Sontag in her work "Film and Theater". Looking at their work together brings up the interesting question of what is "theatrical" and what is "cinematic". This is exceptionally important to a film adaptation because a film that would champion the strength of the female lead in *Romeo and Juliet* needs to be a solid combination of the acknowledged strength of theater and the power of cinema. If the film relies too much on the cinematic, then the power that comes with the use of Shakespeare's story might be mitigated by the modern effects of the cinema. However, the film must be somewhat cinematic in order to pull in a mainstream audience and reach its full political potential. This is clearly a

tricky balance to strike, but the discussions of Bazin and Sontag help point out the issue. A filmmaker must then decide where he, or she, locates the theatrical and the cinematic and what balance best fits the adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Another aspect of film theory that is interesting to consider is the role of the spectator. Robert Scholes' article "Narration and Narrativity in Film" is helpful because he reminds us that the audience has a part in the film's interpretation. He discusses the process an audience goes through in order to turn the narrative into a cohesive story. He calls this process "narrativity". Scholes' concept of narrativity explains one way that the placement of scenes, or even camera shots, could be manipulated to help communicate the intended interpretation of *Juliet*. Scholes argues that the audience will create a story (narration) based on the order of the scenes and camera movement. If a film adaptation wishes to encourage the audience to create a strong, independent interpretation of *Juliet*, then the director should understand the process of connection which will go through the minds of the audience. Scholes' work also clarifies the different kinds of interpretation involved in verbal and cinematic; thus he explains why there is difficulty in moving a text from one venue to the other. Where the character of *Juliet* might clearly have agency in the theater because of the heavy reliance on verbal interpretation, it might be more difficult to communicate that agency on screen. Through his explanations of narration and "narrativity", Scholes offers one possibility open to filmmakers who wish to specifically direct their audience's interpretation. In the second chapter of this thesis, I explore the various theories about film and theater coming together to create adapted plays. This chapter discusses Bazin, Sontag, and Scholes in more detail and uses the three previously mentioned adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* to help clarify their theories.

Aside from general adaptation obstacles, film projects which hope to foreground the strength of women have another, more pervasive, problem. In the third chapter, I look specifically at the concepts of feminist film theory because they are so important to the communication of a strong Juliet in film. Cinema has a long and devastating history of objectifying and belittling women on screen and this penchant for objectification has worked its way into the system of film. Unless a film project is very careful, the movements of the camera, camera angle, editing, or any number of things might add an unintended element of objectification. Sometimes directors, or filmmakers are aware of this and use the objectification to work in with their overall theme, but this cannot be the case for a film which emphasizes the independence and agency of a female character. Many technical aspects of film should be acknowledged as potentially damning to a feminist interpretation. Looking at the three films previously mentioned is an excellent way to understand what might work and what might undermine such an adaptation. They all offer moments of clarity for the character, but especially with Cukor and Zeffirelli, there are moments when the power of Shakespeare's words and their wonderful delivery by the leading actresses (Norma Shearer, Cukor; Olivia Hussey, Zeffirelli; Claire Danes, Luhrmann) are not enough to break through the oppressive objectification of the camera. Of course, none of these films had the objective of communicating a strong Juliet; therefore, there is hope that this technical obstacle can be overcome.

Laura Mulvey's influential article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" explores this underlying issue and explains that on screen women become the bearers of meaning to men who are the makers of meaning. Mulvey firmly asserts that the overall gaze of the camera is a masculine one and thus all that it communicates has that gender

bias. The idea of bearers versus makers of meaning and the concept of the masculine gaze are the central issues of the feminist film argument. They are the main problems that must be addressed if a filmmaker has any hope of overcoming possibly devastating objectification. What this means to a potential feminist adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is that whoever creates such a film should consider the movement of the camera as a part of the story. If the camera is viewed as simply a way to record the story, then the penchant for objectification could slip in and undermine the project. Mulvey also discusses the film-goer's need to identify with main characters, but goes on to say that when women identify with a heroine they are participating in their own oppression. Her work relies heavily on psychoanalytic theory and thus connects with some important feminist literary theory, but her vision for the future is limited by the theories of psychoanalysis. Mulvey's work led the discussion of feminist film theory, but it is bleak. Mulvey's article suggests that it would be enough for a director to be aware of the potential problem of the masculine gaze of the camera. She sees no redeeming qualities in the male created women on screen and does not believe that it is possible even for a female film maker to create an accurate woman character within the male dominated world of main-stream Hollywood. "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" is a work that emphasizes the need to go outside mainstream cinema to create a feminist version of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Although moving the work outside mainstream Hollywood might alleviate some of the pressure to use the camera as a masculine window, it would lessen the potential impact of the film. The character of Juliet offers a chance of emphasizing the strength of a female character who emerges from a classical author often accused of objectifying women. Cinema, the vehicle which would be used to disseminate the adaptation usually

has a similar stigma. The lure to turn both of these conventions around is irresistibly compelling. Other feminist film theorists back up the idea that the concept of a feminist interpretation in mainstream Hollywood is not without hope. Some more recent articles reacting to Mulvey's work such as "Is The Gaze Male" by Ann Kaplan take a more positive stance on the issue of film depicting more realistic female characters. Teresa De Lauretis books *Alice Doesn't* and *Technologies of Gender* fall somewhere between Mulvey and Kaplan as far as optimism for the future of female characters on film. More importantly, however, these books offer discussions of Mulvey's theory specifically applied to films. This practical application allows us to more easily utilize Mulvey's important work as a basis for discussion of a conceptual feminist interpretation as well as of the past adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. "Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema" is dense and complex, De Lauretis's books are an asset to the clarity of the discussion.

Mulvey's article is extremely influential in feminist film theory and most articles written since refer to it. Her work spends a great deal of energy discussing the problem with audience response to characters. Combining Jacques Lacan's mirror theory with some of Freud's ideas on voyeurism, she sees the female identification with the heroine as detrimental to women. Tania Modleski's *Loving With A Vengeance* offers a completely different concept of audience response. Modleski's subtitle is "Mass Produced Fantasies for Women" and in some ways she agrees with Mulvey's points about encouraging women to participate in their own objectification. Yet, she also points out that there is a problem in assuming simple identification between female audiences and the heroine. In a chapter discussing Harlequin Romances she explains that the reader's already know the formula thus they have the power of "advance retrospection".¹ Although Modleski is

specifically speaking of books here, she later discusses television, a medium quite similar to film. Her theories also apply to *Romeo and Juliet* in both written and cinematic form.. Shakespeare's story of *Romeo and Juliet* works very well with the idea of advance retrospection because most viewers are familiar with the story. Modleski's theory suggests that the filmmaker might rely on the audience's previous knowledge to help avoid objectification. If a director allows for the fact that the audience arrives at the theater with some knowledge of Shakespeare's story, then he, or she, might be able to use that knowledge to the advantage of the adaptation. A much more detailed look at Modleski and Mulvey's theories as well as those of several other feminists can be found in the third chapter of this work.

The fourth chapter of this thesis is a specific look at the three films mentioned briefly in other chapters and this introduction. In this section I apply all of the various theories to the three films as a means for better understanding each work. Although we should consider each work's unique place in the history of film and literary adaptation, placing them side by side allows for a richer discussion of their creative works. Through this discussion I note their similarities and differences as well as look at the adaptation of the character of Juliet. These films demonstrate how emphasizing a textual based interpretation and dealing with the difficulties of adapting the story to cinema is a magnanimous task. Such a task will become even more arduous when a filmmaker wishes to emphasize a feminist interpretation. However, a project which emphasizes the agency of Shakespeare's Juliet is one of potential great importance to Shakespeare, feminist and film studies. Not only would the project communicate a new interpretation to a great

number of people, it could become a catalyst to further discussion of the feminist interpretation of the play.

When Shakespeare created his star-crossed lovers story, he simply combined some well-known versions and rearranged some aspects. In a way, modern filmmakers who write entirely new stories (*Titanic*) around the familiar base plot are actually performing the same action that Shakespeare did centuries ago. This is certainly a much easier choice than working with a previously written version of the plot because it is less complicated to assert a new interpretation of the story if one is not limited to the exact words of the Shakespearean text. However, as is evidenced by the numerous creations of Shakespeare's plays in general and *Romeo and Juliet* in particular, there are a lot of filmmakers who believe it is worth the challenge to assert their interpretation through the words of Shakespeare's text. This combination of Shakespeare and film creates an interesting connection for the discourse of cinema and literature. Both of these areas often connect with feminist discussions independently. A feminist film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* would create a forum for all three to connect.

Literary Theory

As a Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet* keeps some fairly impressive company since it is a category which includes both *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, as well as *Macbeth* and *Othello*. This same company creates some image problems for the tale of young love. These later tragedies are universally considered the playwright's best work and some of the best literature of the western world; therefore, they offer intimidating comparisons for *Romeo and Juliet*. The earlier work, as Charles Boyce's reference book *Shakespeare A to Z* points out, is "somewhat out of place in the line of Shakespeare's development as a writer of tragedy" (563). That is to say that it shares little in common with the playwright's other tragedies. Bradley, in his well-known *Shakespearean Tragedy* refers to it as "a pure tragedy, but an early work and in some respects, and immature one"(21). Further, H. B. Charlton goes so far as to refer to it as "radically unsound" and states that "as a pattern of the idea of tragedy, it is a failure" (qt. in Marsh, 48).

With due respect to these worthy critics, I feel that they are missing something about this work. This radically unsound, immature and out of place work is second only to *Hamlet* in theatrical and cinematic interpretations. There is evidence as far back as 1597 that the play was well received by the public and its frequent publication and adaptation since then is evidence of its staying power. Marsh acknowledges the greatness of the play, but does not go so far as to re-categorize the play. Rather he states that it requires a broader definition of tragedy than that with which most critics are familiar. Although I understand Marsh's need to keep the work in its familiar category, I believe

that we can more easily, and accurately, study the work if we remove it from its intimidating, albeit familiar, place in the canon. *Romeo and Juliet* is better critiqued as a love story, or more specifically a love-tragedy.

The first quarto edition of the play, and those that succeeded it, titled the work *An Excellent and conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet*; thus, it seems bold to remove the word “tragedy” from the title of the work, let alone recategorize the work as a love story. Perhaps this is true, but the reasons for doing so are extremely compelling. The first is that the play has little in common with tragedy in the Aristotelian sense which is strong in the playwright’s later work:

Romeo and Juliet bear no resemblance to [Shakespeare’s later] mighty protagonists; although they have faults, it is not their weaknesses that bring them to their unhappy end but their ‘inauspicious stars’ (5.3.111). The young lovers are the victims of fate. Thus the play does not belong to the volume of work . . . that concern[s] itself with the relationship of good and evil in a personal character. Rather, it its emphasis on fulfillment, its final reconciliation, and its celebration of the power of love, *Romeo and Juliet* anticipates the Romances, Shakespeare’s strange and great last plays. (Boyce 563)

Connecting *Romeo and Juliet* to the Romances rather than the tragedies with which it is usually associated is a clear indication that the love story is the core of the work.

Certainly the point is arguable, and by itself the play’s lack of certain tragic elements is not enough to constitute recategorization. Nor should we remove it from the canon of tragedy simply because it is often unfavorably compared to its tragic companions. The most powerful reason for studying this work as a love story rather than a tragedy is the character of Juliet.

Bradley's work on Shakespearean tragedy seems to have a great deal of trouble with Juliet. He acknowledge her importance when he states ". . .it is only in the love-tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, that the heroine is as much the center of the action as the hero" (24-25). Yet later his language places her in an adversarial role to Romeo:

We first see the hatred of the Montagues and Capulets; and then we see Romeo ready to fall violently in love; and then we hear talk of a marriage between Juliet and Paris; but the exposition is not complete, and the conflict has not definitely begun to arise, till, in the last scene of the First Act, Romeo the Montague sees Juliet the Capulet and becomes her slave (53)

Bradley is clearly conflicted about Juliet's role in the play because although he states that he sees the conflict of the work between the love of the couple and the hatred of the feud², in the above quote he describes Juliet as an enemy who captures Romeo. She seems to be the last piece of the trap set to ensnare the youth. If she is this, then she cannot hold an equal place as a protagonist. Another indication of Bradley's preference for Romeo as the tragic protagonist are his numerous references to him in this role:

In almost all [of his tragic characters we find a marked one-sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction; a total incapacity, in certain circumstances, of resisting the force which draws in this direction . . . This, it would seem, is, for Shakespeare, the fundamental tragic trait. It is present in his early heroes, Romeo and Richard II, infatuated men, who otherwise rise comparatively little above ordinary level. (36)

In this example Bradley not only specifically leaves out Juliet by name, but his description of a tragic hero is not one which fits her either. She, more than Romeo, is not "incapable of resisting" a force, but chooses her direction. Look, for example, at both of their planned departures to Mantua. Romeo leaves because he has no other choice. His

passionate response to Mercutio's death has created a situation where he must "be gone and live, or stay and die" (3.5, 11). His departure is a rash and reactionary one. Juliet seeks advice from her nurse and Friar Lawrence before deciding which path to take. Most importantly, however, Shakespeare creates a moment in Act 4 scene 3 when she clearly looks at all aspects of her situation before she decides to drink the potion. This is far removed from Romeo's impetuous howling in Friar Lawrence's cell after his banishment. Romeo might be an "infatuated man" who is helplessly propelled forth to his demise, but Juliet is a character who clearly chooses her fate.

Bradley goes on to discuss Romeo as a tragic hero by stating that "The fatal imperfection or error, which is never absent is of different kinds and degrees. At one extreme stands the excess and precipitancy of Romeo, which scarcely, if at all, diminish our regard for him; at the other the murderous ambition of Richard III" (37). In one more example Bradley looks sympathetically at Romeo's "tragic flaw" "How could men escape. . . such vehement propensities as drive Romeo, Antony and Coriolanus to their doom" (53). Bradley does, on occasion, make favorable mention of Juliet ³ and he clearly regards her character as an interesting and strong lead. However, it seems just as clear from his numerous mentions of Romeo as the tragic hero that while he may see Juliet as a great leading female character, he interprets Romeo as the protagonist of the piece. Perhaps Bradley's numerous references to Romeo are not purposely to exclude Juliet as a tragic hero, but rather a side effect of analyzing a Shakespearean tragedy by the Aristotelian lens. There are certain elements that must be present and the most familiar way to find them is to look to the male lead.

Along with the problematic issue of choosing a protagonist(s) for the work, *Romeo and Juliet* offers a difficulty with the ever important “tragic flaw”. Clearly Bradley states this flaw as the “predisposition in a certain direction” and the “total incapacity” of resisting a certain force. Underneath the imprecise language, Bradley is simply stating that love is the flaw of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is, after all, the irresistible force which drives Romeo (and Juliet) to his doom. Yet, if the tension in the piece is between the love of the lovers and the anger of the feud, why is the love the tragic flaw and not the anger? The answer lies again in the idea that the piece must fit into an Aristotelian tragic mold. The tragic flaw, is by definition an internal force, so it must be love rather than anger, or hate, which sends the lovers to their death.

Clearly the traditional idea of tragedy is a difficult fit for this Shakespearean work. Not only is the idea of dual protagonists troublesome, their “flaw” is an emotion which the play is often said to celebrate⁴; therefore, naming love as the element which causes the heroes downfall (their tragic flaw) seems contradictory. In *Passion Lends them Power: A Study of Shakespeare's Love Tragedies*, Marsh not only notes the work's inability to fit within the mold of Aristotelian tragedy, but remarks that it does not even work to classify it as a tragedy in the medieval sense either. The fall of the main characters does not come from within themselves as an Aristotelian tragedy would dictate, but neither is it “an unexpected fall from grace” as a medieval tragedy. “If this is a tragedy, this is a tragedy of a very special kind” (Marsh 49). Gajowski agrees with Marsh that *Romeo and Juliet* does not fit within the normal tragic cast. In her book *The Art of Loving*, she points out that this is “because they [love tragedies] emphasize the relatedness or connectedness of two extraordinary individuals isolated from ordinary worlds, [who] are located at the

intersection of comedy and tragedy” (15). It is the emphasis on “relatedness or connectedness” as Gajowski puts it, that allows a female character to share the lead of a “love-tragedy”; thus, for purposes of interpreting the character of Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* it is imperative that we place the emphasis on the love aspect of the play and see the work mainly as a love story with some tragic elements.

To investigate this work as a love story, or even a love-tragedy, we must accept two very important ideas. First that their love is not a flaw, but rather a strength that allows them both a command of their own lives that was previously unknown to them. And second that their choice of death was a clear, reasoned decision and not a rash reaction to their surroundings. Although fate plays a large part in their demise, these lovers ultimately choose their death over life alone. “They choose to die. . .because each knows that he or she cannot live without the other, and knows this as a simple literal truth, to be acted upon at the first opportunity” (Marsh 51). If either of these ideas is not completely accepted the work remains a “rashly unsound” tragedy rather than a powerful love story. The importance of the character of Juliet to the story is also enmeshed in both of these ideas. Her presence in the work is tightly wrapped up in the idea of love; thus this emotion must be taken seriously if we are to take the female protagonist seriously. Even more important for this character, however, is the concept of choice. The character of Juliet becomes stronger through adversity and each new crisis compels her to make difficult choices, but each strengthens her independence:

Yet Romeo’s singular public crisis creates an impression of his loss of resolve, of his being overpowered by a social situation he cannot control, while Juliet’s several private crises create an impression of her increasing strength in isolation despite similar cultural forces acting upon her. (Gajowski 45)

This character is not a victim of society because she does not allow herself to be. She chooses to marry her true love, drink a death trance potion, and finally use the dagger; thus controlling that which is within her sphere of influence.

In “O’ Happy Dagger’: the autonomy of Shakespeare’s Juliet” Duncan-Jones looks closely at the idea of Juliet’s self-ruled choices, especially her final one, to turn a dagger on herself. Duncan-Jones points out that none of Shakespeare’s three substantive texts (the first and second quarto, or the first folio) implies that the dagger she uses in the tomb is Romeo’s, and there is significant evidence to consider the idea that the fatal dagger might be hers. Duncan-Jones looks at three other passages that indicate Juliet’s willingness to take her own life and state that she has the means to do so⁵. This is most noteworthy in Act IV scene 3 where Juliet’s long soliloquy precedes her act of drinking the potion. She implies that she has a knife with her “Shall I be married tomorrow morning?/ No this [knife] shall forbid it, lie thou there” (4.3, 23-24). Although I do not completely agree with Duncan-Jones’ theory that Juliet somehow managed to hide a knife on her person that would still be with her when she awoke in the tomb, I agree that her choice is an independent one. Several previous passages indicate Juliet is autonomous in her decision to use a weapon against herself rather than live a life which is displeasing to her, one without Romeo. The fact that it may have been Romeo’s dagger does not detract from the heroine’s self-reliance. She found a way to control her life through the means at her disposal.

Duncan-Jones’ article points out the important idea that this character’s self-inflicted death is a well thought out plan rather than a rash copy of her husband’s suicide. This heroine is an independent creature long before she picks up the fatal dagger. It is an

independence most notably displayed within the context of the love relationship. This specifically relates to the “relatedness/connectedness” idea that Gajowski discusses.

Juliet’s connection to Romeo allows the character’s strength and maturity to take center-stage when it appears in contrast to his dreamy petrarchian nature.

Juliet: How camest thou hither, tell me and wherefore?
 The orchard walls are high and hard to climb
 And the place death considering who thou art,
 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Romeo: With love’s light wings did I o’erperch these walls,
 For stony limits cannot hold love out,
 And what love can do, that dares love attempt
 Therefore thy kinsmen are no stop to me.

Juliet: If they see thee here they will murder thee

Romeo: Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
 Than twenty of their swords, Look thou but sweet
 And I am proof against their enmity.

We see the contrast again in this scene when Juliet speaks directly about their love.

Romeo sees their love as a fragile dream which might have been created by the night “O blessed, blessed night! I am afeared/ Being in night, all this is but a dream,/ Too flattering to be substantial”(2.2, 146-148). Conversely Juliet’s next line states “If that thy bent be honorable,/ Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,/ By one that I’ll procure to come to thee” (2.2, 150-152). Where Romeo wishes to dwell on the fantasy of the moment Juliet sees the very real need to solidify their relationship quickly if it is to have hope of continuing.

Both Gajowski’s work and “Juliet’s Taming of Romeo” by Carolyn E. Brown note this scene as a very important one in the critique of the character of Juliet as well as

the development of the couple's relationship. Gajowski believes that Juliet is teaching Romeo how to be in love:

The Orchard scene [2.2], the lengthiest of their exchanges, offers the most ample opportunity for the audience to witness their love interaction with one another and Juliet tutoring Romeo in love. . . One reason that the scene is so very pleasurable and memorable is that the lovers are as suffused in Juliet's good-natured generosity as the tangible moon-light. (35)

Brown's goes further than simply to state that Juliet is "tutoring" Romeo. Rather she believes that she wishes to control him in the same manner that a falconer controls the falcon. "During the balcony scene she [Juliet] can be read as trying to train Romeo, much as falconer Petruchio trains his bird Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*." (2). Juliet does at one point in the scene wish for a "falconer's voice" to call back Romeo and in fact she does call him back to the balcony three times, much like a falconer would do if he were training a bird to obey. More interesting than the bird imagery, however, is the type of relationship these actions communicate. Through Brown's interpretation, Juliet does not, as Gajowski suggests, wish for Romeo to rise to her level of practicality and maturity in love, but rather she wishes to dominate him.

What is unusual and refreshing at the same time is Juliet's overt mode of controlling Romeo and [through him] her life. She does not use the traditional feminine wiles. She does not disguise herself as a male, as do some of Shakespeare's heroines, in order to sanction what is traditionally male behavior. While she may offer a few obligatory excuses, she usurps the male role with aplomb and conviction (2-3)

Although Gajowski and Brown differ slightly in their interpretation of the character's strength and practicality in the love relationship with Romeo, they both point to this relationship as a large source of the heroine's power. This is an interesting take on the

character because it emphasizes a strong female character whose strength emerges from the very relationship that usually creates subjugated female characters.

At this point it is important to note that such an interpretation of Juliet, may be well outside the author's intention. His time period and gender certainly do not encourage the idea that he was interested in feminist causes. Yet the depth of Juliet's character is too rich to be ignored by feminist criticism. In order to view Shakespeare's work through a feminist lens we must, as Myra Jehlen points out in her essay, "The Paradox of Feminist Criticism", look only at the text, "As feminist at odds with our culture, we are at odds also with its literary traditions and need often to talk about texts in terms that the author did not use, may not have been aware of, and might indeed abhor." (Jehlen 79). If Shakespeare's intent were the only issue embodied in a text, then feminism would not look at his work and thus, would not discover the richness of his female characters. This is certainly very important to the concept of using feminist ideas to create a film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* which foregrounds a strong Juliet. It is in a way "at odds" with the original text, but at the same time it clearly emerges from it. Using feminist theory we can see justification for a strong interpretation of Juliet. There is evidence in the "shared sonnet" with Romeo when they first meet, in the aforementioned balcony scene, and the soliloquy prior to drinking the potion. When we look at the text in this manner we bring our own society into the interpretation and we deliver a classical text into a modern discourse.

It is interesting to note Jehlen's language in the above quote. She sees feminist theory as "at odds with the culture". Although the language is a bit harsh, her assessment is accurate, especially with regards to literature. The majority of literature, especially

classic texts, is male centered, or at least dominated by male authors. Therefore, feminist theory is automatically “at odds” with this literature because it looks into an area most likely not emphasized by the author. Feminist theory forces a discussion about female characters because the very act of doing so raises their level of literary importance and creates a connection between these characters and modern women. Although it is thrilling to reveal a strong interpretation of a female character in classical literature, especially when it is one, such as Juliet, that is often ignored as child-like and insignificant, we must acknowledge that many feminist investigations interpret oppression and objectivity rather than strength in this character. Thus, understanding the broader range of feminist studies clarifies less favorable viewpoints of the character of Juliet. For all of this character’s defiant actions, she does exist within an oppressive system, and has some typical problems in connection with this role. The less optimistic interpretations of the character of Juliet serve to help us understand her difficult position in her society. Annette Kolodny in her article, “Dancing through the Minefield”, wrote that thoroughly investigating oppression within literature:

Helped to bridge the gap between the world as we found it and world as we wanted it to be. For those of us who studied literature, a painfully personal distress at discovering whores, bitches, muses, and heroines dead in childbirth where we had once hoped to discover ourselves, could -for the first time- begin to be understood. (98)

In Shakespeare, all the above mentioned stereotypes are present along side the innocents, and the witty heroines. The main difficulty of feminist presentations of his work, be they filmed, theatrical, or written, is to get the audience to pay attention to them. Although I do not believe that it is difficult to encourage the audience to notice Juliet, this is particularly difficult with his traditionally oppressed women who were originally written

to fade into the background. For example, “It is, after all an imposition of high order to ask the viewer to attend to Ophelia’s sufferings in a scene where, before, he’d always so comfortably kept his eye on Hamlet” (Kolodny 101). Comfort, however, should not be of the highest priority. Actually, I would argue that it is only when the audience, or reader, is pushed out of his or her comfort zone that he or she can find a new interpretation. This is an area in which film can be a most effective medium. Through the visual narrative and the adaptive power of the camera the director can manipulate the viewers into an uncomfortable area and thus, force a new interpretation on them.

Shakespeare’s Juliet is an interesting phenomenon for feminist studies because she seems at once to be strong and decisive as well submissive and repressed. Diane Dreher’s book, *Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare* looks at many different Shakespeare daughters through separating them into the categories of “dominated,” “defiant,” and “androgynous”. Due to the character’s duality, Juliet falls into both “dominated” and “defiant” categories.⁶ Dreher believes that all of the female characters she explores are oppressed, but she focuses most of her energy on the women’s reaction to their oppression. Some characters, such as the witty Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and quietly defiant Cordelia in *King Lear*, stand up against a male dominated world while others like *Hamlet*’s Ophelia and *Much Ado*’s Hero, are completely controlled by their fathers and the masculine world in which they exist. Very few female characters manage to move between the categories, but Juliet does. Perhaps this is, in part, because, as Gajowski suggests, this character exhibits traits of both comic and tragic protagonists. As a comic protagonist she demonstrates a wealth of wit and charm, but the outside anger of the oppressive patriarchy turns her into a tragic heroine.

“Juliet is another tragic heroine whose love begins with the familiar pattern of comic defiance. The young lovers are at odds with their elders, who function as *alazons*, their feud creating impediments to young love”(Dreher 99). Although Dreher emphasizes that the women of Shakespeare “rarely go beyond the limits of what an Elizabethan audience would have found acceptable and tragic women such as Ophelia and Desdemona are destroyed by their deviation”(15), I argue that Juliet’s unique comic/tragic duality allows her to go beyond those limits without being destroyed by the patriarchy. She dies, but she controls her own destiny. Only a forced marriage to Paris would be real destruction to her. This female character’s complexity makes an excellent test case to push the limits of female characters in film adaptations of Shakespeare because the text offers a number of film adaptation possibilities which would emphasize a decisive mature heroine.

Dreher locates her study of Shakespearean women in relationships, which is a common way to investigate women in literature. Dreher, however, limits her study to the father/daughter relationship, which is not this character’s defining relationship. This is most likely why Dreher does not devote the same amount of time to Juliet as she does to other daughters in Shakespeare. Even in this limited study, however, Dreher takes time to note the power of Juliet’s love:

At fourteen, abandoned by all she has ever known. . . Ultimately, she chooses union with Romeo in death over the friar’s offer of life in a convent. Rejecting all compromise, she upholds love as the basis of her existence. In her courageous defiance of convention for love, Juliet resembles the women of romantic comedy, but her love blossoms in a tragic universe, a world poisoned by hate, in which there can be no redemption, only *anagnorisis* and remorse. (100)

The character of Juliet is a clear symbol of oppression and patriarchy, yet the character rises above that and through the love story of the text we see an example of decisive strength emerging from an oppressive situation. The character of Juliet offers an example of a strong reaction to patriarchal control. Emphasizing that *Romeo and Juliet* is a love story offers us help in bridging the gap to which Kolodny refers. In textual form, Juliet exhibits many of the traits women want to have (e.g. sense of self, presence of mind, and decisive maturity). Where the equality of Juliet creates problems for Bradley's approach to the play, it encourages a feminist discourse that creates a connection to modern society. As Kolodny points out, feminists go to classic literature looking for themselves and find only "whores, bitches, muses, and heroines dead in childbirth"; therefore, a character such as Juliet who is not representative of any of those categories is a rare find within classical literature and should be explored both by critics and mass culture.

General Film Theory/Adaptation Theory

There are several compelling reasons to see a decisive, mature character in Shakespeare's *Juliet* and clearly it would be a benefit to many areas of study, as well as mass culture, to widely disseminate this interpretation. Film is certainly the best medium for a mass distribution, but it comes with some unique problems especially when the screenplay is an new adaptation from a well-known text. Adaptation problems that arise from a Shakespeare text can seem insurmountable due to the heavy burden of working with what many consider to be high culture. Films of Shakespeare plays are critiqued as independent works, but also as how they relate to the original work. Any choice made, such as scene editing or setting, is highly scrutinized by those who know the original text. For *Romeo and Juliet* this group is not as exclusive as it is with other Shakespeare plays. Many people know the story of *Romeo and Juliet* because it is widely taught in school and because the core story has become a part of western popular culture. Thus, any change made to the original text has a good chance of irritating a number of viewers, yet any adaptation must find a new way to approach the familiar story. This leaves those involved in a seemingly impossible situation.

One would think that because Shakespeare's works are plays that there would be little trouble in adapting the play script into a screenplay, but a tension between original play script and new screenplay are sure to arise. In his influential book, *What is Cinema?*, Andre Bazin discusses these difficulties in depth. One of his most relevant observations is that when a theatrical work is manipulated or adapted for the cinema it becomes a new

work. "However one approaches it, a play whether classic or modern is unassailably protected by its text. There is no way of adapting the text without disposing of it and substituting something else, which may be better, but is not the play"(84). In almost every cinematic adaptation of a Shakespeare play, and certainly in the adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* which exist now, the text is altered; therefore, it exists as a new work. It seems that Shakespeare adaptations offer us something that is at once Shakespeare and not. Thinking of it this way releases some of the encumbrance of doing Shakespeare for the masses; this point of view encourages film-makers to emphasize their own interpretations. Yet, such films cannot completely abandon fidelity to the text, or they will lose the power of Shakespeare's story. If there is no textual fidelity, then the project may as well create a new script rather than go to the work of adaptation. Thus, the difficulty lies in finding a way to foreground an interpretation while still respecting the original text.

Bazin believes that one way to do this is to distinguish theatrical reality from dramatic reality (81-83). He explains that although the dramatic is a necessary element of theater it can be present in other genres, such as film.⁷ Dramatic reality is the action oriented aspect of the play that is necessary to the narrative, but theatrical reality is the elements of a play that actually emphasize the theater. Often the two realities are difficult to distinguish:

Finally it may be argued that the greater the dramatic quality of a work, the more difficult it is to separate off the dramatic from the theatrical element, the synthesis of the two having been achieved in the text. It is significant that while novels are often dramatized, a novel is rarely made from a play. It is as if theater stood at the end of an irreversible process of aesthetic refinement. (Bazin 83)

According to Bazin, one of the marks of a great film adaptation is that it deals fairly with this fusion and acknowledges the theatrical elements as well as the dramatic. “The text determines the mode and style of the production; it is already potentially the theater. There is no way at one and the same time of being faithful to it [the work] and of turning it from the direction it was supposed to go [the theater]” (88-89).

This last quote can be a bit enigmatic, but that with which Bazin is concerned is the loss of theatrical roots to the exhibition of cinema. He believes that the plot of a play often becomes secondary to the filmmaker’s need to present his work as “cinematic”.

By and large this [the need to ‘make’ cinema] is responsible for the majority of adaptations of successful plays. If the action is supposed to take place on the Cote d’Azur, the lovers, instead of chatting in a nook of a bar, will be kissing at the wheel of an American car as they drive along the d’Antibes. (86)

Since Bazin believes that great plays have their dramatic and theatrical qualities enmeshed, he follows that it is imperative that a film version of a play must acknowledge the theatrical rather than giving in to the lure of the cinematic. He offers Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* as an example of a film that correctly acknowledges the conventions of the theater. This film begins by showing the audience an Elizabethan courtyard and backstage area of a theater set in Shakespeare’s time. Once this tour is completed, Olivier shifts the film into a more traditionally cinematic format. Bazin maintains that Olivier is free to delve into the cinematic at this point because he has already done his duty by the theater (Bazin 87-88). Bazin’s theory of consciously noting the theater is problematic. Although Olivier’s *Henry V* manages to acknowledge the theater and move to the cinematic, not every project can use that method, if only because it has already been done. Bazin’s theory seems like it could be an extra burden to a Shakespeare film adaptation

project which has specific interpretive goals. The cinema, even its exhibitionist tendencies, could be a useful tool in emphasizing chosen aspects of the character of Juliet; therefore, if we insist that the cinema remain in the theater it becomes more difficult to manipulate Shakespeare's work.

That being noted, there is cause for concern within Bazin's idea of spectacle of cinema. The filmed adaptation is a new work, but it is based on an important text, and thus the cinematic aspect of the film should work to support that text. Many viewers arrive at a film with certain ideas for Shakespeare adaptations and expect to see a level of fidelity to the text. When the presentation of the cinema overpowers the Shakespearean text, then the work moves from adapting the text to simply being inspired by it. An adaptation is a new work based on the classic text, but spectacle can relegate the text to a secondary position. Creating a version of *Romeo and Juliet* which was only inspired by, rather than adapted from, the original text would not be as relevant of a contribution to academic and cultural discourse. A true adaptation of the text must resist the lure of spectacle for its own sake.

Connecting Bazin's ideas to the three existing versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, helps clarify the difference. It seems clear that none of them have the respect of the theatrical elements that he believes so important, but they vary in their use of spectacle. The Cukor adaptation is similar to many other Hollywood events of its time. This film, more than the other three, uses the camera to emphasize the interior because Cukor does not disguise the fact that the bulk of the film was shot indoors on a sound stage. Cukor does, however, clearly believe that "everybody must be a somebody, and any hint of poverty or meanness in the everyday surrounding contributes, so they say, to a

flop”(Bazin 87); therefore, he saturates his film with well known actors and presents a very clean image of Verona. Zeffirelli has the opposite problem in that he clearly gives in to creating cinema by presenting “vast decor” and panoramic exterior shots to which Bazin objects (86-87). He does not succumb to the urge of casting stars, however, as he puts two unknowns in the title roles. If the Zeffirelli version gives in to the splendor of the cinematic, Luhrmann’s panders to it. Not only does he make full use of the outdoor scenery, he besieges the audience with action. In place of visual respect for the theatrical, Luhrmann offers us the occasional background of a gutted stage and shop signs which bear allusions to titles of other Shakespeare plays, such as “The Merchants of Verona Beach”. Although these may be intended as a nod to the text’s origins, in the midst of this chaotic work, they come across as immature jabs. Luhrmann really brings to life Bazin’s observation that the film industry seems insecure when working with theatrical pieces. “It is an inferiority complex in the presence of an older and more literary art, for which the cinema proceeds to overcompensate by the “superiority of its technique”(87). Once pointed out, one cannot ignore the superfluous nature of the spectacle embodied within these three works, especially in Zeffirelli and Luhrmann. Although one can argue that these “spectacles” are integral to a film’s cinematic purpose, it is hard to defend panoramic scenery and flashy camera work as being integral to the play’s dramatic purpose.

Let us look, for example, at the spectacle embodied in the Luhrmann version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Of the three previously discussed versions, it is the most embedded in cinematic spectacle. The film opens with a shot of a television set and a television news anchor within that set recites the prologue. The film closes in a similar manner as if to

emphasize that this *Romeo and Juliet* is a mass media production from start to finish. The two hours in between the monologues are filled with tricky camera movement, like the underwater shots of Romeo and Juliet, as well as creative editing and other visual effects. The camera focus moves so quickly and forcefully that this adaptation has been referred to as “The MTV version”. The heavy reliance on visual spectacle and cinematic display is outwardly at odds with Bazin’s belief of keeping the “cinematic” under control and not allowing it to overpower the dramatic essence of the work. However, given the post-modern theme of the Luhrmann version of this play, perhaps this film simply uses the spectacle of cinema to emphasize the dramatic elements of the play. The use of the cinematic does make some definite statements about the play. The fast and furious movements of the camera echo those of the gang members within the feud. The expansive camera shots of the city show the audience how far reaching the anger of the feud is as well as revealing the catastrophic consequences. As is evidenced by the film’s opening sequence, this adaptation wishes to align itself with cinematic spectacle and it does so consistently, but as the theme of the work unfolds, it seems clear that the adaptation is not indulging in spectacle for its own sake, but rather to emphasize its interpretation. The Luhrmann version does not adhere to Bazin’s theory of respecting the theatrical origins, but it does show us that the spectacle of cinema can be useful for emphasizing a theme. This work, more than either of the other films is an interesting mesh of Shakespeare’s play and our current culture and in that way it succeeds as a the “new work” that Bazin’s theory says it must be. It does this, however, by embracing the cinematic rather than turning away from it.

Susan Sontag also disagrees with some of Bazin's ideas about adaptation. Most specifically they clash in regards to finding the "theatrical" in cinema and remaining faithful to the text. Although one of the plays mentioned by Bazin as one which sticks closely with the text is Lawrence Olivier's *Henry V*, Sontag in her article entitled "Film and Theater" uses this play as a negative rather than a positive film example, "The [monetary and popular] success of movie versions of plays is measured by the extent to which the script rearranges and displaces the action and deals less than respectfully with the spoken text- as do certain films of plays by Wilde, Shaw, the Olivier Shakespeare (at least *Henry V*) and Sjöberg's *Miss Julie*" (Sontag 345).

Sontag's disagreement with Bazin regarding the textual fidelity of *Henry V* hints not only at their differing interpretations of "fidelity" but also at their discordant ideas of the relationship between film and theater. Although both authors investigate the issues of connection between theater and cinema, they make different observations. Bazin sees theater as the main influence on the evolution of film, (Bazin 76-77) while Sontag maintains that cinema is influenced by several other mediums such as painting and photography (Sontag 340-343). These authors do agree that more critically appealing film versions of plays are those which "betray their origin in plays" (Sontag 344). However, while Sontag is specifically speaking of a respect for the spoken text, Bazin believes that in order to show that respect for the spoken text, the film must also visually acknowledge the venue for which it was created. This puts Bazin and Sontag at odds because while Bazin insists that filmed versions of plays must infuse the theatrical element of the work into the film, Sontag does not believe such a thing exists:

Movies are images (usually photographs) that move, to be sure. But the distinctive unit of films is not the image but the principle of connection between the images, the relation of a “shot” to the one that preceded it and the one that comes after. There is no peculiarly “cinematic” as opposed to “theatrical” mode of linking images. (344)

These two author’s differing ideas about the concept of “cinema” and “theater” go a long way to explain their opposite views of *Henry V*. Bazin delightfully describes the opening of the film which he believes rightfully communicates that, “It is not with the play *Henry V* that the film is immediately and directly concerned, but with a performance of *Henry V*” (Bazin 88). Bazin views this as choosing an angle of approach that emphasizes the action in such a way as to remind us of its theatrical origins, but Sontag sees it as displacing the textually prescribed action and dealing less than respectfully with the spoken text. Sontag and Bazin do agree that films should broaden the theater experience, and that they should not do so through catering to the popular demand to produce spectacle for its own sake, nor should it give in to the cinematic ideas of vast decor and outside action if that is not inherent in the script.

This discussion emphasizes that there are different ways to communicate a respect and fidelity to Shakespeare’s work. If a feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* cannot find a way to adequately emphasize the theater, it can maintain a respect for the spoken text throughout the film and thus acknowledge its origins. It is within the text that all of the interpretations of a Shakespeare play exist, thus a great legitimizing force for a feminist interpretation is that original text. It would be ideal to give a respectful nod in the direction of the theater, but the most important responsibility of a feminist interpretation is fidelity to the written text. This is achieved through allowing the text to be the center of the story. Some cinematic techniques could be implemented to emphasize

an interpretation that is based in the text, but a feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* should be careful not to fall back on cinematic tricks such as special effects and panoramic scenery simply to hold the viewer's attention. An audience that is staying for the view are most likely missing the emphasis of the film. If such an interpretation panders to that, then the strength of the female lead will seem contrived. Although this might make little difference to the film going public, it will take away some of the film's power as a catalyst for Shakespearean and feminist literary discussion.

One aspect of the cinematic which has the power to manipulate the audience's reaction to the story is creative editing. Editing gives directors access to "discontinuous space" as Sontag calls it, and thus it allows them to put the characters in more elaborate backgrounds. These backgrounds could take away from the dialogue, but because the directors have access to editing, they can remove the background from our sight at any moment through camera angle and close-ups. Sontag points out that cinema is not contained "in the fluidity of the positioning of the camera nor in the mere frequency of the change of shot. It consists in the arrangement of screen images"(346). Thus, for Sontag, the adaptation is cinematic through the director's arrangement of shots. We are distracted by a vast decor until the director tells us through a close-up that we should now pay attention to the verbal element of the film. If the film makes it a point to focus on who is speaking then the close-ups seem to emphasize the text, but if the camera position is away from the speaker, then the director is clearly manipulating the viewer through the camera. This aspect of cinema can seem exceptionally manipulative, but it is simply a tool which helps the filmmaker communicate his or her idea of Shakespeare's story. Connecting Bazin's point that all filmed Shakespeare is, in a way, a new work and

Kolodney's words that "It is, after all an imposition of high order to ask the viewer to attend to Ophelia's sufferings in a scene where, before, he'd always so comfortably kept his eye on Hamlet" allows us to see that this type of manipulation seems appropriate for a feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Admittedly, there is a delicate balance to be achieved between using the camera to emphasize the text and keeping the camera from overpowering the text. Holding on to the power of the spoken word and using the editing to support rather than create the interpretation is the key to finding this balance.

Robert Scholes article "Narration and Narrativity in Film" indirectly discusses the power of editing. He defines narrative as, "a special class of symbolic activity which forces the interpreter to make a distinction between his own immediate situation and some other situation which is being presented to him through the medium of narration" (Scholes 390-391). He further defines "narration" as "Specifically a mimetic or representative behavior, through which human beings communicate certain kinds of messages." (390). It is relevant, then, to acknowledge that although *Romeo and Juliet* the text and *Romeo and Juliet* the film are both narratives, their narration is different because the type of "mimetic and representational behavior" they use to communicate their message is different. The malleability within Shakespeare's text also allows the film version of *Romeo and Juliet* to manipulate the message of its narrative; therefore, the message of the film may not be the same message as the text on which the film is based.. The message of the film and the mimetic behavior which conveys it are the key to understanding any film's interpretation of a literary character, such as Juliet, that exists as a part of an adapted narrative.

According to Scholes, when the work is one such as Shakespeare, where it exists in several mediums, each new level adds literary intensity to the narrative through providing more specifics. The specifics add a different depth to the narrative by limiting options and emphasizing the interpretation in a forceful nature. This creates the levels of intensity as the interpretation is thrust on the viewer with more strength depending on the details. This fits in with Bazin's idea of each adaptation existing as a new work. With this communication of intensity, however, comes a loss of interpretiveness. When Shakespeare is read all the choices are left to our imagination. When it is performed as a play interpretive choices are made for the audience, but they are transitory. Although some aspects, such as the set, remain stagnant, the message or theme of the play changes, even if just slightly, with each performance. A film's choices, however, are permanent (Scholes 392). Also, when a film makes choices they are thrust upon the audience with a greater intensity due to editing and other camera manipulation. For example, when Zeffirelli moves the camera for an extreme close-up on Juliet's eyes during her first encounter with Romeo in Act I scene V, the audience has no option, but to watch her eyes close. We cannot, as we can in when reading the text, imagine that she looks away, or turns to face him. We do not even have the luxury of noticing any other part of the scene, as we might in a play. The audience is forced to notice even the slightest movement of her eyes. Thus, our interpretation of this moment is controlled by Zeffirelli's choices.

A moment of film like this reminds us that the vast number of interpretations applicable to the text of *Romeo and Juliet* do not automatically transfer to Zeffirelli's, or any other director's adaptation of it. The avenues of interpretation that are lost to editing and other cinematic manipulation maintain some influence, however. The audience

knows from the text that other options could have existed within the film, thus it encourages them to look closely at the moments when a director so specifically edits or directs the audience's attention. In this way, literary adaptation is very different from other types of film because the general public has access to the source material. There is a danger in this, however, because film and literature do not use the same type of narrative and we must acknowledge the "different kinds of interpretation that verbal and cinematic texts entail".(Scholes 393)

Although the interpretations of these media are different, they still share the common bond of narration; the act of communicating events through some form of representation. Once the audience, or reader, recognizes a narrative as a series of actions happening outside of themselves, they construct a story. It is within this process that Scholes locates the concept of narrativity:

I should like to suggest that we employ the word 'narrativity' to refer to the process by which a perceiver actively constructs a story from the fictional data provided by any narrative medium. A fiction is presented to us in the form of a narration which guides us as our own active narrativity seeks to complete the process that will achieve a story.(Scholes 393)

As an audience of film or literature, we use narrativity to find a satisfactory order of events. To go even further, we look for a causal nature to exist between events. Therefore, we use narrativity to locate a sequence of events that will help us decipher the causal connections between these events. Shakespeare, or more specifically to the above mentioned versions of *Romeo and Juliet*. One of the most common changes directors make, aside from editing the language, is the relocation of a scene. Using Scholes concept of narrativity, we can understand that by moving the scene, the director changes the

causal connection of that event. Look, for example, at Luhrmann's location of Act III scene II. In the opening monologue of this scene Juliet speaks to herself about her own impatience as she waits for her wedding night to come which will bring Romeo to her. Luhrmann cuts most of this scene, but more importantly, he fuses what is left of it with the scene right before it in which Romeo kills Tybalt. Thus, the camera cuts from Juliet's gleeful expectation of her wedding night to Romeo's anguished face as he races through the night to find Tybalt. Luhrmann cuts again to Juliet's words of love and then back to Romeo as he shoots and kills Tybalt. This sequence the film communicates, not only that the events are occurring simultaneously, but that they are closely linked. This connection is available in the text as well, however, the film's visual nature emphasizes Juliet's connection to the deaths in a way that the text cannot. We see her speaking of this love seconds before Romeo raises his weapon, and thus the connection between the two is clear. This editing sequence also brings up the idea that the heroine may have some culpability in the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt. This idea is present in the text. After Mercutio dies at the hands of Tybalt, Romeo lays some of the blame with Juliet "O' sweet Juliet/ Thy beauty hath made me effeminate / And in my temper soften'd valor's steel" (3.1, 110-113). Through extremely unconventional editing, the Luhrmann version emphasizes this possibility. This begs the question: Can a filmmaker emphasize the text while downplaying the words? It seems that, in a way, Luhrmann remains true to the text because he uses the visual to back up an interpretation that is defensible in Shakespeare's words.

The unique type of "narrativity" that film requires of its audience is clear in the above example. Film, even more than theater, combines the verbal with the visual;

therefore, visual narration should be considered on an equal level to verbal. It is even arguable that the visual aspect of film has grown in importance over the past decade, and in some cases circumvents the language of a film. The Luhrmann adaptation is extremely reliant on visual narrative. The scenes and camera angles change so quickly that the visual competes with the verbal for the viewer's attention. When this occurs, the visual presentation of Juliet can overpower Shakespeare's language. The other two adaptations do not rely so obviously on the visual aspect of film, but it is still an important tool through which they communicate their message. Scholes goes on to discern that while written literature asks the reader to move toward an "impression of the real", film must, "achieve some level of reflection, or conceptualization, in order to reach its optimum condition as narrative" (Scholes 308). Film is itself an "impression of the real"; therefore, its narration should ask its audience to look beyond the initial impression and locate subtleties. Certainly a written text has various levels as well, but a film, because of its visual nature, can seem more straightforward than literature and important aspects can be overlooked. A reader's narrativity is usually actively working to put together the "impression of the real" in the text, and this type of narrativity is better situated to notice the multi-level nature of literature. Film viewers are usually less active participants in the narration; therefore, if the film is to reach its "optimum condition as a narrative", directors need to make clear, specific choices that manipulate the viewer's narrativity towards a very specific predetermined narrative concept. Viewers are less likely to look for the interpretation, so it must be extremely clear in the narrative and sometimes this means backing up a textual point through visual narrative.

The final aspect of adaptation theory relevant to a feminist adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is what Bazin calls “The presence of the actor”. This aspect of his theory is not concerned with the cinematic spectacle, but with its lack of physically present actors. Bazin does not completely deny the presence of film actors on the screen, he merely points out the difference:

It is false to say that the screen is incapable of putting us ‘in the presence of’ the actor. It does so in the same way as a mirror—one must agree that the mirror relays the presence of the person reflected in it—but it is a mirror with a delayed reflection, the tin foil of which returns the image. (97)

Bazin believes that although we lose the directness of the actor sharing our time and space, it is partially made up in the enlargement and proximity offered by the cinema. Still, it is a different type of presence. The mirror offered as metaphor is an apt connection to Bazin’s most powerful argument. In the cinema we identify with the hero of the work, that is we see ourselves in him, or her. However, in the theater we find ourselves in opposition to this character (98-99). Bazin argues that film audiences tend to identify themselves with the hero because he is the only one who can complete the story on screen. This does not happen in a theater because all the actors are physically present and sharing our space. Following that argument, we see ourselves in opposition to the actor because we are sharing the space of the theater and thus, the actor is not the only option. Thus, we see ourselves in competition with him, for excitement, love, and other desirable commodities. Bazin states, “Cinema calms the spectator, theater excites him” (99). Both theater and cinema can manipulate this psychology, but they must acknowledge the different mind set of their audiences.

Bazin's view is not as simple as identification versus opposition, however. He believes that a theater audiences see the action as reality happening in their space, but one from which they are protected. We participate in a theatrical drama, but with the safety that comes from the knowledge that while we could choose enter their world, they will not cross the footlights into ours (Bazin 101-102). In this way, we can choose to delegate the hero to fight for us while still seeing him as a competitor for the desirable, especially the sexual. Bazin further states that the theater is based on "the reciprocal awareness of the actor and the audience" and that "The theater acts on us by virtue of our participation in a theatrical action across the footlights and as it were under the protection of their censorship" (102). This is the opposite of cinema in which we watch people who are mirror images in a different world who usually seem indifferent to our presence and whose world we enter through passive identification with the hero rather than active analysis of the characters and the situation. The difference between a film audience's connection to a film and a theater audience's reaction to a play is another key issue in film adaptation and it also connects to feminist film theory. Feminism is extremely concerned with issues of identification and as Bazin strengthens this theory by emphasizing the difference between identification with a film character and that of a stage portrayed character. Bazin's presence of the actor concept points out that feminism is not alone in noting passive identification. The lack of physically present actors is another reminder that by simply moving the medium through which the narrative is presented, a new work is created.

Feminist Film Theory

As evidenced by recent works such as Gajowski's *Art of Loving* and Brown's "Juliet's Taming of Romeo", feminist critics have begun to note this character as one worthy of exploration. However, this broader perception of Juliet seems to be having a difficult time trickling down to mass culture. Cinema, a powerful force in pop culture and *Romeo and Juliet*'s most common vehicle, has yet to explore the aspects of Juliet that feminist criticism has been uncovering. This is exceptionally disturbing when we take into account the fact that this new direction of feminist criticism was emerging before the latest adaptation of the film. Cukor's (1936) and Zeffirelli's (1968) adaptations had some amazing moments for the character of Juliet, but each stopped short of investigating all the stronger possibilities for this character. Luhrmann's 1996 adaptation was set in modern times and seemed to have all the promise of a self-possessed, decisive Juliet, but the film took the story in a different direction. Emphasizing post-modern thought and capitalistic violence, Luhrmann spent less time exploring Juliet's character than his predecessors. There are several reasons that Juliet's strength of character seems trapped in the academic. Modern feminist interpretations of Juliet have a hard time breaking down stereotypes and clichéd ideas about Juliet. Even in theoretical discourse, a new idea must contend with the accepted ideas of *Romeo and Juliet*'s inadequacy as a tragedy as well as Juliet's questionable status as an equal protagonist to Romeo. For popular culture, however, the problem is more complicated. Although most film-goers are more than

ready to see the love story as the central element to the play, an issue that is still in question in academic discourse, there are other stereotypes which cause problems. Many viewers will arrive expecting to see the character portrayed as a love-sick teenager who swoons over a balcony proclaiming “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo” (2.2, 6) . Some viewers will hold other impressions of this character, but it is important to note that most of the audience will come in with some preconceived notion of the female protagonist. A successful feminist interpretation will understand that unflattering stereotypes exist and by doing so will be able to break through them.

Unfortunately, any director of *Romeo and Juliet* must work against more than a stereotype. If this were the only issue, many directors might see it as a challenge worth taking. Kenneth Branagh’s 1997 *Hamlet* showed that it is possible to break through a stereotype by offering the audience a Polonius quite different from the feeble-minded old fool which had become a standard fixture in most productions. When the character at issue is a woman and her stereotype is that of an oppressed female, it is a much harder task. Film as an industry has been accused of objectifying women, not only through the roles presented, but through the act of filming itself. Laura Mulvey, in her influential article, “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema” argues that the film industry has created a “male gaze” which is the result of the emphasis on the male protagonist’s point of view and certain camera techniques which emphasize the action of the male characters and the passivity of the female characters.

Mulvey’s work relies on the language of psychoanalysis to discuss the objectification of women on screen. She summarizes the phallogentric theory of psychoanalysis which relegates women to “The Other”:

The function of woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious is two fold, she first symbolizes the castration threat by her real absence of a penis and second she raises her child into the symbolic. . . Woman's desire is subjected to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound, she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it. (Mulvey 305)

As psychoanalysis only allows us a "lack" of something to define us, women are forced into the position of looking to men for identity. This is clearly a masculine created identity, but it permeates much of our culture and is a difficult obstacle to overcome.

Mulvey maintains that this attitude has worked its way into film and thus women who appear in a film bear a meaning created by men. Mulvey's work assumes that a masculine "visual pleasure" is the power behind cinema; a male spectator is created as the target audience of most films, so the story will be told through a male protagonist.

The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense; as the bearer of the look of the spectator. . . As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look. (310)

Where as the male character will be an active, three dimensional "figure in a landscape", female characters exist as an objectified "bearer of the spectator's look". Through Mulvey's theory we see that again women are defined by a comparison to men. Male characters are about action and moving the narrative forward while female characters are defined by their "lack" of action and a visual presence that "tends to work against the development of story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (309).

Mulvey argues that female spectators are a problem for Hollywood because they will not identify with a male protagonist. The only choice left is to identify with the

cinematic female image that is “the other”, but this is becoming unsatisfactory for most female viewers. Mulvey’s thoughts concur with Kolodny’s that we look to see ourselves in the female characters of the text, but do not find ourselves there. Rather what exists is a masculine idea of woman. Film is predisposed to emphasize a masculine visual pleasure because men have had the monopoly of control in mainstream Hollywood cinema. Even now, decades after Mulvey published this article, there is a definite masculine coding to mainstream Hollywood films and many of the problems discussed in this work still exist. The emerging genre of female films (commonly referred to as “chick flicks”) seems to be moving away from the patriarchal order because these films often focus on dual protagonists (one male and one female), or on one or more female protagonists. However, even these films fall into some old habits of narrative which emphasize masculine action and feminine passivity. If the film is able to overcome the habit of telling the story from the masculine point of view, the agency of the female characters may still be undercut by camera technology, movements and editing. For example, Mulvey points out the problem with the common practice of body fragmentation, the close-ups of legs or face. “One part of a fragmented body destroys the Renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative, it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon rather than verisimilitude to the screen.” (309). The practice of extreme close-ups is just one way the technology of the camera can undermine feminine power- soft focus, score, and unfavorable editing are also possible problems.

The misrepresentation of women in films created for men is regrettable , but if the idea of a masculine created “woman’ is so ingrained in the filming techniques of Hollywood that it will seep into films created specifically for a female audience, it

becomes extremely dangerous to female identity in mass culture. Jacques Lacan's mirror theory as discussed by Mulvey explains why this would be so devastating to feminism. She argues that the mirror of the cinema serves as a mirror to the spectator much the same way that a mirror works for children when each child begins to recognize himself or herself. The child sees, in the mirror, a reflection of himself, or herself, that is more perfect than reality; therefore, "Recognition is overloaded with misrecognition: the image recognized is conceived as the reflected body itself" (Mulvey 308). If we combine this idea with the pleasure of looking derived from the cinema we arrive at a sort of tension between an image created for voyeuristic pleasure and a self-image imagined for identification. This tension becomes increasingly difficult for women. For while women attempt to find a self-image in the mirror of the cinema, our images remain bearers, not makers, of meaning. Thus, women find themselves in passivity and identify our self-image within the image created for us. The effect becomes intensified when the film is one which seems to be speaking directly to women.

Through this in-depth discussion of women on film, Mulvey emphasizes how controlled women become on screen and how this emerges from main-stream cinema. Thus, Mulvey believes that a true feminist cinema can only emerge from a counter-cinema created for and dependant upon female spectators. Ann Kaplan looks at Mulvey's theory as well as that of other feminist film theorists in her work *Women and Film*. Interestingly she, like Mulvey, also believes that as women we must speak the language of psychoanalysis if we are to clearly understand the power which has positioned us in the role of "Other" (25). Mulvey and Kaplan both agree that it is only through working with this language and theory that we will be able to overcome it, or at least work around it.

Kaplan, however, does not agree that Mulvey's solution for avoiding the male gaze is a practical one:

Aware that a feminist counter cinema would almost by definition deny pleasure, Mulvey argued that this denial was a necessary prerequisite for freedom, but did not go into the problems involved. . . we have been wary of admitting the degree to which the pleasure [of main-stream films] comes from identification with objectification. Our positioning as "to-be-looked-at" as object of the (male) gaze has come to be sexually pleasurable. (34-35)

Kaplan believes that Mulvey is being unrealistic in expecting female spectators to give up that which is pleasurable, namely enjoying the cinema. Rather she believes that through understanding psychoanalytic methodology we will be better equipped to change the discourse of main stream cinema as well as academia. The best way of breaking through patriarchal discourses such as psychoanalysis and cinematic representation is to analyze them and learn from them (35).

In her work *Alice Doesn't: Feminism Semiotics and Cinema*, Teresa De Lauretis investigates the image of women in film and she also agrees that the language of psychoanalysis is one with which women should be familiar. De Lauretis shares much of the same philosophy of Mulvey and believes that women should understand the ideas behind psychoanalysis to better understand the "fictional construct of woman, a distillate from diverse but congruent discourses dominant in Western cultures" (De Lauretis 5). Freud and Lacan both have key contributions to this fictional construct and they are discourses in which the representation of woman "is sharply focused and clearly articulated" (6). Since both Freud and Lacan clearly communicated their theories on women's "lack" their well-established discourse is easily adopted for the purpose of destabilizing and altering the meaning of the discourse:

So well-established [are masculine discourses] that, paradoxically, the only way to position oneself outside of that discourse is to displace oneself within it- to refuse the question as formulated, or to answer deviously (though in its words), even to quote (but against the grain). (De Lauretis 7)

Through the adoption of the psychoanalytic discourse feminism can begin to question why our culture's narratives need to objectify women to communicate myths. "For there would be no myth without a princess to be wedded or a sorceress to be vanquished, no cinema without an object. . .no society without sexual difference" (De Lauretis 5). In cinema, De Lauretis points out, the stakes are especially high because the representation of women as object or other "finds in narrative cinema its most complex expression and widest circulation" (4).

Mulvey argues that we should go completely outside of main-stream cinema to find representation, but I believe that we should deal with the images presented to us. Following De Lauretis' ideas on destabilizing psychoanalysis from within the discourse, we must acknowledge and work with that which main-stream cinema has to offer. Mulvey has some excellent points about the male gaze of the camera and the masculine nature of the industry, but that does not negate the fact that main-stream cinema is a pervasive power in this culture. Movies turned out by the Hollywood industry have the greatest effect on western culture. "The stakes for women in cinema, therefore, are very high, and our intervention most important at the theoretical level"(De Lauretis 38). If women are "bearers of meaning" in films, then feminist theory needs to communicate this idea to women so that film-goers will not blindly buy into a cinematic myth of woman. More importantly than pointing out a negative, however, is noticing when these films offer a moment outside of the common stereotypes. Although few films sustain a female

image who is not the bearer of meaning or the object of desire, many films offer moments when these female characters step outside of that role if only for a second. These moments are worthy of study because if we acknowledge them then we can expound upon them and work within the discipline of main-stream cinema to help it communicate stronger female images.

The very complicated arena of feminist film theory has some interesting repercussions for the character of Juliet. This character could be a great tool to bridge the gap between a classical author's female character and the modern women who view her. However, a difficulty lies in that the most powerful way of disseminating any new adaptation to the mass culture is a vehicle that will most likely mitigate the strength of the character. Although it seems hopeless, there is a way out of this cyclical problem. Mulvey clearly emphasizes that one of the main masculine aspects of cinema is the identification with the male protagonist. However, if Juliet is a protagonist equal to Romeo, then the film should allow her gaze as much power as his. Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* discusses the feminine genre of television soap operas and states that one aspect that makes the serials uniquely feminine is the "multiple identification". "The subject/spectator of soap operas, it could be said, is constituted as a sort of ideal mother: a person who possesses a greater wisdom than all her children, whose sympathy is large enough to encompass the conflicting claims of her family" (Modleski 92). If the two principles of *Romeo and Juliet* were given equal screen time and equal amount of camera viewpoints, then the viewer might be inclined to react in a manner similar to the spectator described by Modleski. It is not that I would advocate treating *Romeo and Juliet* as a soap opera, but rather utilizing the aspects of the multiple

viewpoint narrative that would help break the stereotypes of male centered narrative cinema. Because the film is a love-tragedy, the relationship between the principles is key to the power of the film, thus the better connected the viewer is with both characters, the stronger their love will seem. The character of Juliet will gain strength in the eyes of the viewer if the love for which she is suffering is deemed a worthy love. This is a judgement which relies on an intimate knowledge of Romeo. One could argue that allowing Juliet's gaze more power and time than Romeo's would communicate her as the dominate partner and thus be a feminist interpretation. However, it is unlikely that simply creating a female gaze in place of the male gaze would work. After all, it is not a good idea to advance a class of people by creating a new inferior class; therefore, objectifying men rather than women simply encourages a practice of objectification. More films objectifying women would emerge and feminist criticism would have a more difficult job condemning the habit. Offering the integrated narrative communicated by multiple viewpoints is an avenue of interpretation which seems to hold more promise for the future of feminist film studies.

Due to *Romeo and Juliet*'s dual protagonist structure, it seems ideal for this viewpoint that would allow the female spectator to see the feminine point of view placed on an equal level to the masculine. This encourages the female spectator to look beyond any feminine objectification that might still exist in the film and see her equality to men instead. Mulvey is decidedly pessimistic and does not believe that a female spectator can do anything but participate in her own objectification. De Lauretis believes that female spectator-ship is more complex. In her first work, *Alice Doesn't*, much of her energy was devoted to drawing the line between the "woman" of fictional construct and the real

women who go to see the films. Relying on Virginia Wolf's idea of the "woman as looking-glass metaphor"⁸, De Lauretis asks what happens when these real women go to see their fictional construct on film "What happens, I will ask, when woman serves as the looking glass held up to women?" (6). It might be a formula for misrecognition as we could see our objective image on screen and confuse it with our own identity. Will all the interpreted strength of a female character be lost through the looking-glass? There is no quick answer to this questions as the length of both De Lauretis books might suggest. It seems, however, that with some help through such tools as multiple viewpoint and camera technology, a viewer could look past objectification and identify the strong, independent aspects of the character of Juliet.

In her work, Modleski makes convincing arguments for the power of the audience. Modleski points out that although the genres of female centered entertainment seem to encourage women to participate in their own objectification, the audience of such entertainment are sometimes offered tools that allow them to stand a little outside of the objectification. She argues that often there are avenues around simplistic identification between the spectator and the image. It is easy to assume, and most popular culture critics have assumed, a large degree of identification between reader and protagonist, but the matter is not so simple. Since the reader knows the formula, she is superior in wisdom to the heroine and thus detached from her. The reader, then achieves a very close emotional identification with the heroine partly because she is intellectually distanced from her (Modleski 41). Modleski adopts a phrase coined by Wolfgang Iser called "advanced retrospection" which applied here simply means that the audience who is familiar with the ending of a film is able to interpret all action based on this pre-knowledge of the

outcome of the narrative. For example, if we see Juliet threaten to kill herself, as she does several times, but most petulantly in the Friar's cell prior to receiving the sleeping potion, we are more likely to take the threat seriously because we know she will eventually follow through with it. Modleski's work does not specifically speak about *Romeo and Juliet*, or even about film in general, but her theories, especially that of the power of advance retrospection are quite helpful to an audience of an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* because it helps fight the misrecognition of the looking glass. This idea works for this narrative because most people approach the play knowing the end, and even if someone managed to avoid all the cultural allusions in society and plot similarities in other films, the play begins with a prologue that explains how the story will unfold.

Modleski's book discusses advance retrospection because she is looking into some traditional female genres which are all female centered works, which all offer women an opportunity to participate in her own oppression⁹ Her discussion of advanced retrospection brings up the interesting point that the audience is not always buying into the fictional construct of woman presented to them. It also discusses the fact that certain mass culture phenomena seem to be subjugation of women, but can be a source of strength for feminist studies. This depends on what the spectator does with the "Mass-produced fantasies for women". This point is key because it acknowledges that the audience can be made up of independent thinkers who come to the cinema armed with knowledge of their own. Although some works, like De Lauretis previously mentioned books and Mary Ann Doane's *The Desire to Desire* acknowledge the complex nature of audience, Modleski gives spectators the most credit for bringing something to the interpretation of the cinematic narrative.

Doane's comments on the danger of oversimplifying the gender of the audience

hint at a the larger problem of over generalizing the spectator:

There seems to be a general agreement, however that the terms *femininity* and *masculinity*, *female spectatorship*, and *male spectatorship* do not refer to actual members of cinema audiences or do so only in a highly mediated fashion. Women spectators oscillate or alternate between masculine and feminine positions (as de Lauretis points out, identification is a process not a state), and men are capable of this alternation as well. (8)

After acknowledging the inadequacies of such separation, however, Doane goes on to base her feminist work on the "feminine aspects of spectatorship". This is typical of feminist film theory. Most work, certainly de Lauretis' and Doane's, acknowledges the oversimplification of the idea of audience identification, but does not explore it. Modleski shows us that the spectator cannot be ignored because the final interpretive power is hers. There is potential power even within the standard oppressive plot of the Harlequin novel because the reader has an omniscient knowledge of the coming events. Viewers have a similar power with soap operas. An extensive knowledge through the multiple viewpoints offers viewers the opportunity to sympathize as well as condemn based on a complete knowledge of every situation. Certainly these spectators are still participating in their own objectification to some extent. Harlequin novels still end with the male character overpowering the female and even the best informed soap opera fan has no power to influence the lives of the characters.¹⁰ However, these viewers are in a limited power position. As we investigate the three cinematic adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* it is imperative that we keep in mind the power of the spectator.

Application/Film Discussion

In the three major motion pictures of *Romeo and Juliet* we have not yet seen an interpretation of Juliet which takes advantage of all the depth and strength possible in Shakespeare's text. There are, however, amazingly strong moments for Juliet within each of the three. This offers hope that one day a film adaptation will be able to string enough of these empowering moments together to create an entire film which communicates a decisive, mature, and non-objectified Juliet. The problems that exist for the female lead within these three adaptations show us how important it is to consider the theories discussed above when creating a film adaptation which hopes to champion the underlying power of this heroine. Although it is doubtful that any of these adaptations intended to foreground feminist issues, they inadvertently point out some areas of concern if such an adaptation were created. Through these existing *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations we learn what is and is not important for a feminist film version of the play.

Looking at Cukor's 1936 film, one might expect to find many problems with objectification of the female image, and certainly the film does struggle with this issue. It is, however, a strong film, which, when viewed within the context of its time period holds up exceptionally well to scrutiny. Cukor's work presents an interesting mix of literary theory and adaptation theory. Both of these ideas are important to the empowerment of Juliet's character, and this adaptation works so well with them, that the problems which emerge from the masculine centered nature of the narrative do not completely undermine her strength. Adaptation theory helps explain why this 60+ year-old-film would be, even in the least bit, empowering for Juliet. Although Cukor edits the language, his editing

choices favor, rather than hurt, Juliet. Also, he leaves the order of scenes alone and he does not redistribute any lines and thus, sticking with Shakespeare's order will help filmgoers connect with Shakespeare's Juliet as well as Cukor's. Thus, this portrayal of Juliet has more of the richness of the text available.

This is not to say that Cukor's piece is not a new work, but his adaptation clearly places the spoken text in the most powerful position of the film. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in Cukor's inclusion of Juliet's monologue in Act 4 Scene 3. This work is the only one of the three to include this monologue which is one of the most powerful moments for the character. Although this adaptation must contend with all of the stereotypical problems of the masculine gaze, such as camera angle and point of view, she is allowed this moment of independence in that monologue. In this film we see her recognize her isolation and search through her options. The Cukor adaptation is the only film in which we see her make an informed and conscious choice to take the potion. Thus it is a decisive and mature action. Shearer, who plays Juliet in Cukor's film, does have to contend with the overpowering sound track, the back-lighting and the upward angled close-ups that all seem intent on undercutting the power of this scene. Yet, the power of Shakespeare's words and the skill of Shearer's performance work together to overcome these obstacles and manage to communicate a mature, decisive Juliet.

The obnoxious music and lighting severely limit Juliet in other scenes, most notably in Act 2 scene 2, the balcony scene. As discussed earlier, this is a scene in which Juliet's practicality is juxtaposed with Romeo's petrarchian idea of love. Yet, as the scene exists in the Cukor adaptation, a spectator could easily infer the opposite. Most of the lines are there, but the practical way in which Leslie Howard (Romeo) is shot in contrast

to the dreamy overkill of back-lighting and music which surround Shearer communicate the idea that Juliet and not Romeo is the unrealistic suitor. This is a good reminder that a film's visual narrative always has the potential to overpower the verbal narrative. In a situation such as this, where the two compete for meaning, the visual often wins. That Shearer's later monologue is able to overcome this limitation is a direct reflection, not only on her talent, but also on the power of that particular scene. Cukor's reliance on standard camera tricks and a stock-sounding score, put him a bit at odds with Bazin's theory that film of adapted literature should avoid the need to "make cinema" because these lighting, score and camera tricks obviously exist under the umbrella of cinema. Still, Cukor does not offer us sweeping views of Italy as proof that we are in Verona. Nor does he bother to hide the staged nature of his set. He emphasizes the interior through his reliance on an obvious sound stage set. Cukor's work has an aura of the theatrical that neither of those that follow will capture. Certainly this is important to Bazin, but it is also relevant to a feminist interpretation because we do not see a stark contrast between the internal female world and the external masculine world.

Another strength of the 1936 adaptation is that it clearly places emphasis on the love story, and in that way communicates an important and strong female lead. Since Juliet must come across as the heroine of a love-tragedy for the character to seem equal to Romeo, this is an important element. Because Cukor's work emphasizes the love of Juliet and Romeo, their actions, even the suicidal ones, can be interpreted as decisive choices rather than reactions. Even in emphasizing the love story, however, the work is hindered by timing. The Juliet of Cukor's film is not as strong as she could be were the film created by someone watching out for the problem of the image of woman on screen.

Cukor's camera is a textbook example of the male gaze. The camera often appraises her from an omniscient point of view, and it does so just as often from Romeo's viewpoint. Her close-ups far outnumber Romeo's because his whole person is necessary while she is simply the idea of beauty and is fragmented in just the way Mulvey describes. Given the time period in which the film was released the nature of Juliet's objectification is not surprising, rather, it is surprising that any image of her within this film is an active/non-objectified one. That there is even a moment, (and indeed there are several) where we believe that Juliet is self-reliant and strong-willed, is notable. Also, when the film is viewed by a modern audience they can offer a different insight than the contemporary one. Since we are looking back at the work as a piece of cinematic history, we can see its importance in relation to other works of the time. This, as well as Modleski's idea of advance retrospection which allows the audience to interpret both the hero and the heroine's actions in the context of the whole story, offers a modern audience some tools of interpretation that will allow us to see a stronger, more mature Juliet within the confines of this dated work.

Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* which came out in 1968 and was re-released several times after its original dates, is one of the most well-known adaptations of Shakespeare. It is even currently advertised as "one of the most popular motion pictures of all time."¹¹ Zeffirelli's version, like Cukor's, relies heavily on the narrative aspect of the play and he includes a voice-over which emphasizes this narrative. Although Zeffirelli, like Cukor, succumbs to the notion of "making cinema" that Bazin is so adamantly against, he does so in exactly the opposite way. Cukor falls prey to the stock ideas of the day by using well-known actors and familiar lighting and score choices, but

he avoids the presenting the “vast décor” of the outside. Zeffirelli, however, abandons many cinematic conventions and even casts two unknowns in his starring roles, but he cannot resist the use of panoramic exterior shots which are clearly cinematic rather than theatrical. The opening fight scene is an excellent example of this. Zeffirelli uses many cinematic camera tricks to show us a brawl between the two households. Although there are relatively few men involved in the fight, the numerous cuts and dissected human figures give the impression of a larger brawl. As Coppelia Kahn points out, “The feud [is] an extreme and peculiar expression of patriarchal society, which Shakespeare shows to be tragically self-destructive. The feud is the deadly rite de passage that promotes masculinity” (Kahn 84). Zeffirelli wastes no time setting up the destructive nature of the feud, but he does so through “making cinema”. Although this is an interpretive choice with which Bazin’s adaptation theory takes issue, it seems to work quite well for this film.

Zeffirelli’s use of the exterior has some repercussions for Juliet. In Cukor’s film even the outside looks staged, so there was no stark contrast between the worlds of Romeo and Juliet. The exact opposite is true in Zeffirelli’s work. Juliet is strongly connected with the interior. In the beginning, we see her only within her own home and it is not until she leaves to marry Romeo that she exits that safe harbor. Save for her trips to the church and her death at the tomb, she does not leave her home. Romeo, on the other hand, is constantly outside. Clearly the narrativity that Zeffirelli would like us to create is one which connects Juliet to home and Romeo to the rest of the world. This is an obvious problem for Juliet’s strength of character because she seems housed and controlled. I believe, however, that Zeffirelli offers these insulated images of Juliet to

encourages a narrative construct with a controlling patriarchy at the center. Zeffirelli's work spends a lot of time critiquing the patriarchy and the feud which emerges from it. He relies heavily on visual imagery to connect the anger and waste of youth with the feud started by the patriarchy. The Zeffirelli film is a story in which the patriarchal system is at fault not only for the feud, but for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet as well.

As feminist literary theory explains, most women are viewed in terms of their relationships to men. As previously noted, Juliet's most important relationship is to Romeo because it is through this love that she expresses all of her strength. Zeffirelli's work gives us clear imagery which connects her to Romeo, but we first see her through her father's eyes as he barter with Paris for his daughter's affection. Once the bartering is complete, Juliet appears framed in a window. Although the young woman's spark and vitality are clearly depicted through her joyful face and energetic movement, the framing of Juliet in a window suggests she is a beauty "to be looked at" in Mulvey's terms. Yet this framing is so obvious and Zeffirelli has already established the faulty nature of the patriarchy through the wasteful images of the opening brawl. Thus, I believe that this framing of Juliet is a criticism of her father's treatment of her rather than an actual depiction of her as an object. The spoken text around the image is the preceding marriage brokerage in which her father is engaged and the following marriage discussion she has with her mother. Her boxed image within the window frame reminds the viewer that she is the object of the transaction (marriage), but her spirit within her confinement hints that she will not submit easily to her subjugation.

Although Zeffirelli may be commenting negatively on the patriarchy, it is clear Juliet exists within it. Later in the film as she stands up to her parents, her independence

is further mitigated by Zeffirelli's visual narrative. After her secret marriage to Romeo and his subsequent banishment, she is told that she will marry Paris. Furious at the idea, she screams at her mother that she will not. However, when her father enters the room, she is forced to run from him rather than face him. The camera follows over his shoulder as he menacingly approaches her. Finally she is forced to hide behind the nurses skirts to keep herself physically unscathed by her father's wrath. Afterwards, when she goes to him to seek his forgiveness and the camera angle is an above shot looking down at her as she kneels submissively before him. Although Juliet's "submissive" actions are a trick to gain her freedom, Zeffirelli uses the camera to enforce the patriarchy rather than Juliet's willfulness. However, although a lot of Zeffirelli's camera work emphasizes the patriarchy and the trapped nature of Juliet's position in society, this works to her advantage. If a spectator's narrativity has created a world in which men are incredibly dominant of the outside world and women exist only within defined parameters of the home, then Juliet's actions will have the power that is possible within Shakespeare's text. The more realistically the patriarchy is established, the more brave and mature Juliet seems in opposition to it.

The feminist interpretation of Zeffirelli's work is further emphasized by his visual celebration of the masculine. True, he encourages the viewer to blame the patriarchy for the destruction of the lovers, but he seems to locate this patriarchy predominately in the older men. The fathers are, in the original text, the originators of the brawl, but Zeffirelli even downplays the fiery Tybalt. Although Tybalt seeks Romeo for a fight in Act 3 Scene 1, he begins to walk away without one, and even when he and Mercutio fight, Zeffirelli emphasizes that it is clearly a jest until Mercutio is hurt. With the blame of the feud most

heavily on the fathers, Zeffirelli then visually argues the waste of the young men involved. He dresses the men in revealing tights and dedicates long camera shots to their bodies. He does not fracture them into body parts, as Mulvey argues is often done with women, but rather gives the audience full views of their healthy and attractive bodies. The most explicit example of this is the scene just prior to Romeo's departure to Mantua. He lies with Juliet, but he lays nakedly prostrate on the top of the sheets while she sleeps covered under his arm and the bedding. After a long camera investigation of his body, the camera moves to his face and we watch him wake up. However, instead of working the camera from his point of view and admiring Juliet, we see him get up from the bed and stand facing the window. Again, the camera admires the lines of Romeo's naked physique (necessarily from behind) as he poses "to be looked at". We do not see what Mulvey describes as the "figure in the landscape" who actively moves the action forward. Rather, he exists as an objectified image of youth and masculine beauty. Turning the objectification around and making a man the bearer of meaning seems to indicate a friendlier environment for the female image, however, if a film is thrusting meaning upon either gender's physicality it means that it has not totally removed objectification from the film. Thus, there are most likely objectified moments for the female characters as well.

The Zeffirelli adaptation indicates strength in the female protagonist, but unlike Cukor, he does not edit the original text in her favor and cuts several important lines. Most notably, he cuts her entire monologue prior to drinking the potion and leaves her with only "I drink to thee". This is an extremely unfortunate choice because this Juliet is not allowed the decisive moment that Cukor's Juliet is. Thus, the causal nature of the text's sequence is disturbed. We do not see Juliet ruminate over her choices and thus her

act has a desperate edge to it rather than a mature decisive one. Another problem for Juliet is that, although Zeffirelli's work is clearly a love story, he spends a lot of time on the feud and the patriarchy that causes it. Thus, Juliet and Romeo still choose to die for each other, but their identity as victims is also strongly in place. The film uses camera work like the framing of Juliet and the naked inspection of Romeo's body, to emphasize that these lovers do not have the power in this world. They are courageous in their efforts to be together, but they are clearly the pawns in this society. This victimization brings a different type of equality to these lovers. Instead of emphasizing the equal strength of Juliet, this film points out the equal hopelessness of Romeo, thus stressing their equality as victims.

In contrast to Zeffirelli's dreamy period *Romeo and Juliet*, Baz Luhrmann offers us a visually shocking present-day version. While Zeffirelli adheres somewhat to Bazin and Sontag's argument that the use of camera space should work to emphasize the interior and theatrical nature of a play, Luhrmann completely abandons it. He gives into cinematic beauty and the "vast decor of the outdoors" (Bazin 85). In place of visual respect to the theatrical, he offers us the occasional background of a gutted stage and shop signs which bear allusions to titles of other Shakespeare plays, such as "The Merchants of Verona Beach", to remind us of the theater, but it is a poor substitute for what Sontag calls, "respect for the spoken text." Luhrmann's notion of space is decidedly discontinuous as well. He moves from shot to shot so quickly that it is hard to keep up. Although this could be dismissed as pandering to a short attention span audience, it might be something more subtle. He creates a different type of narrative in which the quickness of the shots tell as much of the tale as the images embodied in them. Through this

movement the audience understands a sense of the urgency of Romeo and Juliet's situation and of the temporary nature of all things, including life.

Luhmann's *Romeo and Juliet* takes much of the blame of the feud away from patriarchal society and gives it to such modern notions of gangs and capitalism. The Montagues and Capulets dress in such a way as to identify their allegiance, similar to gangs, and the visual representation of their mansions is two large skyscrapers bearing each of their names which offers the scapegoat of capitalism. The effect of the modern theme and fast pace is a removal of power from the character of Juliet. Luhmann removes her as an object of adoration by such decisions as bringing her down from the balcony during the "balcony scene" which could communicate a sense of equality. However, he also lessens the effect of their first meeting by placing a fish tank between the lovers. The water has a reflective quality and thus, when they first fall in love, they speak more to their reflections than to each other. This throws doubt on the genuine quality of their love, and the subsequent scenes do little to appease that doubt. This is problematic for the character of Juliet because the heart of her strength comes from the love relationship, so even though Luhmann later physically moves her to Romeo's level, he has removed her source of strength. Taking into account Scholes theory of adaptation which insists that the viewer must assume purposefulness, the poor recitation of the Shakespeare's lines must be added to this interpretation. In an article entitled "Postmodern Shakespeare: Strictly Romeo", Jim Welsh argues that "Claire Danes handles Juliet's lines better than Leonardo DiCaprio handles Romeo's" (152). I would argue the opposite, which just proves the point that neither are very good. The stilted speech of the lovers simply emphasizes the less than genuine nature of their feelings.

Once this love is cast in shadow, all actions taken on its behalf fall under scrutiny as well. For example, one of the most powerful moments for Juliet in this film is her threat of suicide in Friar Lawrence's church. Luhrmann gives her a gun, which replaces swords in this film, and thus she has a man's weapon. As she screams her intention to take her life the shot gives her all the space of the frame. We get a close-up of the gun as she places it to her temple and the power of her threat is clear. However, as wonderfully liberating as this shot is, it is undermined by the ingenue nature of her affection for Romeo. Instead of seeing this as a desperate act of true love it is rather viewed as an act of defeat. She has just come from her home where her father has physically assaulted her because of her refusal to marry Paris. Her suicide attempt could easily be read as an attempt to get back at her family. This interpretation is emphasized further by Juliet's costume in this scene. She is dressed in a sailor-type outfit which is commonly connected to children. Luhrmann seems to be emphasizing the childlike aspect of this character, so she emerges as petulant rather than assertive. Luhrmann's version emphasizes the immaturity of Juliet perhaps so that the audience can understand her position as a victim in a powerful, corrupt masculine society.

The relocation of the script to the modern world is another choice that works against a decisive character. The audience will not view Juliet in the same manner as she is when she is located in 16th century Verona, Italy. When they see her in a modern setting, they will believe she has the power to walk away because she is not as completely bound by a patriarchy. Luhrmann further emphasizes this by removing the patriarchy from the feud. So, when Juliet puts the gun to her head in that powerful scene, a part of us is wondering why she cannot simply drive to Mantua to be with Romeo, thus again her

act seems ridiculous rather than noble. Although it is certainly arguable that there are several situations in which women are oppressed in today's society and do not have the power or the strength to walk away, it is also true that the general public does not accept this victimization as readily as they do that of women of a different era. This might be the reason behind Luhrmann's child-like Juliet. The audience might more easily accept her oppression by the masculine powers around her if the film continually encodes her as childish. The more impulsive and childish she seems, the more we accept her helpless situation. This certainly works to emphasize the violence and helpless aura that surrounds Luhrmann's text and may contribute to an effective film which emphasizes a different interpretation. However, it does this by letting go of some of the strength possibilities available to the character of Juliet in Shakespeare's text.

Luhrmann clearly is not creating an adaptation based on the importance of the love of the main characters. Although the version at times seems to champion the love, his visual connections communicate that love is either destroyed by society, or becomes a destructive force itself. By his previously discussed enmeshing of Tybalt's death and Juliet's anticipation of her wedding night, Luhrmann creates a connection between that love and the destruction around it. Through this scene alone we begin to wonder if the lover's are partially to blame for their own downfall. Combine this with the radical reinterpretation of suicides, and their love is not one of choices and sacrifice, but rather impetuous youth. At the tomb, when Romeo sees Juliet awake after he has taken the poison, but before it has taken effect, it is as though Luhrmann wants us to see that their choices were erroneous. No longer are the noble lovers who choose death over life alone. They are children who acted too quickly and made a mistake. Juliet's character is

especially damaged because she reacts rashly to seeing her lover die before her eyes. She, like Zeffirelli's Juliet, did not clearly state her intentions in an earlier monologue, thus it seems to be a reaction. Also, the use of a gun rather than a knife makes it too easy. It takes quite a sacrifice to plunge a dagger into one's own chest, but less so to pull a trigger on a gun. One might argue that she is just as dead either way, but the gun takes no effort on her part and thus she loses the respect of the audience. Although both the Zeffirelli and the Luhrmann version of the play edit out the Juliet's monologue, the Juliet of the Zeffirelli adaptation manages to retrieve some strength of character in that final suicide scene. Where Luhrmann's adaptation offers a the sound of gunshot and the distant view of a falling body, the suicide of Zeffirelli's version is a slow and visibly painful one. The character forces the dagger into her chest with two strong thrusts before she collapses over Romeo's body. This visually communicates a clear and conscious choice.

Finally, the most important aspect of Luhrmann's text is its previously mentioned disjointed editing and rapid fire images. This adaptation moves so quickly that the audience barely has time to focus on one image before it is replaced with another. The frame created in this adaptation is one which is meant to exhibit cinematic power rather than the power of any one character or even the text in general. The spoken text is clearly subordinate to the visual imagery of this piece and thus much of the detail of the story seems lost in the quick movement its visual representation. A different way to view this framework is that the story is not lost, but rather presented in a radical new way.

Although Luhrmann loses a lot of the power of Shakespeare's words, he does use visual imagery to communicate his interpretation of the story. There is an exceptionally violent and fast paced world in which two idealistic children- for only children would be

idealistic in this world- fall in love. This love, rather than triumphing over the darkness, turns into violence because love is not a strong enough defense against capitalism and anger. The film tells this story very well and it is arguably an interpretation of Shakespeare's text. Luhrmann offers a new way to communicate interpretations and it is intriguing in many ways, but I believe he gives up too much of the power of Shakespeare's story because he sacrifices so many of the lines. The film clearly offers us a view of how Shakespeare's version of the 'star-crossed lovers' story would look caught in a capitalistic feud and it makes some clear comments on media and violence.

In a way Luhrmann does what Shakespeare did in that he takes something of "high culture" and reinvents it for mass consumption. He recreates a standard story by including issues of modern concern, violence and power. One wonders, however, if the film could have communicated this message using more of Shakespeare's language and thus retained more of Shakespeare's storytelling power. Certainly the Luhrmann version stands somewhere between the more narrative adaptations of Cukor and Zeffirelli and such *Romeo and Juliet*-inspired works as *Titanic* and *Shakespeare in Love*. He relies on the language, but changes it enough through both editing and visual narrative that it is more his than Shakespeare's. One could argue that this may be the very method that keeps Shakespeare fresh and new for future generations because it more specifically exists in our time rather than his. However, for those of us who wish to see a strong Juliet emerge on screen, Luhrmann's work is disheartening because its clear and specific choices move so far away from that interpretation. The most discomforting aspect of Luhrmann's film is that his visual narrative is so radical and different that it might very well lure future filmmakers in that direction. Welsh states that, "[Luhrmann] should have

titled it *Baz Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet*" (151). I hope future Shakespearean directors understand the difference and return to the text and rediscover the power of Shakespeare's story.

Conclusion

Luhrmann's adaptation is the image of Juliet that a generation will have in their minds when they are finally introduced to the original text. Thus, there is a possibility for serious setbacks in Juliet's future as an example of a feminist literary character. Luhrmann does an excellent job of utilizing the story to communicate some modern issues, but he does not focus on feminist concerns. Current box office trends clearly show that strong female protagonists are just as profitable as the fast-paced action of Luhrmann's work and strong female leads can hold an audience with minimal special effects. Although potentially profitable, the main reason to create an adaptation with a strong Juliet is to provide better cinematic representatives of female agency as well as give a powerful voice to the wave of emerging feminist theory which champions the feminist strength of this character. The critical landscape is expanding and formulaic criticism, like that of Bradley, is giving way to a more individualized look at the play. The female character's equality, or even superiority, as it emerges in the midst of the tragic love story would be the main focus of a feminist interpretation, thus the feminine strength of the character of Juliet does not exist until we let go of preconceived notions of tragedy. However, when the constraints of the strict Aristotelian tragedy, are lifted, the character of Juliet can emerge as an equal protagonist in the love-tragedy. As an equal protagonist, the character becomes all about choice and fighting against adversity. This is a side of the character that can be accentuated by emphasizing the character of Juliet during such scenes as the balcony scene, her soliloquy before drinking the potion, and the suicide

scene. The text of these scenes should be left in tact as much as possible, not only to connect the work securely with Shakespeare's , but also because it is through the words that the character's strength emerges.

The balcony scene (2.1) gives us a preview for the strength of that emerges before the character's consumption of the potion. Even in the midst of giddy passion Juliet states "Although I joy in thee/ I have no joy of this contract tonight/ It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden"(2.1, 167-169). The scene clearly shows her besotted with Romeo and yet she has the presence of mind to question their hasty affection. This foreshadows her courage and clarity of thought in the soliloquy where she conjures up frightening images, but still drinks from the vial:

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
 I wake before the time that Romeo
 Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point
 Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
 To whose foul mouth not healthsome air breathe in
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
 Or if I live, is it not very like
 The horrible conceit of death and night
 Together with the terror of the place-
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
 Where for this many hundred years the bones
 Of all my bury'd ancestors are pack'd
 Where bloody Tybalt yet but green in the earth
 Lies festering in his shroud. . .
 Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink-I drink to thee.(4.3, 31-44, 59)

This is the most powerful part of this monologue, because although she is clearly agitated and bordering on hysterical, these images are very real. As the play moves forward we see that there is every reason to believe that Romeo will not be there when she wakes up and there will be stale air and rotting corpses all around her. Still, she drinks the potion and finds the strength to do so through her connection to Romeo. This emphasizes that her

strength comes from her “relatedness/connectedness” to which Gajowski refers in *The Art of Loving*. Although Juliet is a strong character, she is this way because of her love relationship to Romeo and this aspect of the text must be foregrounded if the heroine is to be interpreted as decisive and strong. This quote also emphasizes the importance of the monologue that both Zeffirelli and Luhrmann cut out. I believe a feminist adaptation must emphasize this scene because it is obviously such a strong moment for the character of Juliet and the love of the couple.

The final scene that a feminist adaptation must emphasize is the suicide. As previously discussed. The other films handled this scene very differently and I believe that Zeffirelli’s painful, deliberate insertion of the dagger is much better suited to an adaptation which plans to emphasize her courage and power through this action. This is also an action that is supported through the text. Upon realizing that Romeo is dead, Juliet quickly decides to end her life as well. She first searches for poison in Romeo’s cups and then his lips, but when he cannot give her an easy transition into death, she takes the only way available “O happy dagger. /This is thy sheath-there rust and let me die” (5.3, 177-178). Although the character’s actions are expedited by the sound of the coming watch, she looks for the poison before she hears the sounds and it is clear from the earlier reference to the knife in her potion soliloquy that the decision was previously made. Although this is the one scenario for which she did not plan before drinking the vial of potion, she adapts her earlier plan to suit it. She will not live her life without Romeo and the conscious choice of her suicide must be emphasized if any of her previous actions are to be read as mature and decisive. If the suicide is played as impetuous, the audience might call into question earlier actions into question.

Clearly these three scenes, especially the soliloquy, must be played close to the text or the character of Juliet will not emerge with the strength of her the text. These scenes are areas where Sontag's idea of fidelity to the spoken text are essential. Also, any visual must emphasize her choices if a feminist interpretation is to work. The Luhrmann adaptation not only mitigated the character's strength by cutting the important soliloquy, but also by moving the setting of the suicide. The visual backdrop of rotting corpses, as the text indicates, is much more conducive to a feminist interpretation of the character of Juliet because it emphasizes the strength of will that she needed in order to agree to such a plan. It also emphasizes the characters' love for each other because it is from that love that she draws the strength. Emphasizing these important moments is exceptionally relevant to a feminist interpretation of the character, but it is not enough by itself. The Cukor adaptation emphasizes the destructive force of the masculine gaze of the camera because this film has the balcony scene, keeps the potion soliloquy and offers at least the idea of the crypt for the suicide. However, the back-lighting, camera angle and grating score all work to undercut the power of Shakespeare's text and are, for the most part successful. Even though the soliloquy is well-delivered and mostly in-tact, the words alone cannot combat the movie starlet appearance of Shearer in all three of the previously mentioned scenes. The film so deliberately objectifies the female lead that is almost a good template of what not to do with the camera to communicate strength in a female character.

The character of Juliet has power within the text of *Romeo and Juliet*, but for many reasons we seem unable to translate that power onto the screen. Cukor's adaptation shows us the amazing power of the spoken text because it is, although only briefly, able

to overcome a filming style which creates images of females “to be looked at”. It also shows us how destructive the camera can be because even with all the above discussed power within the words, the overall affect of the film subjugates the image of Juliet into a masculine framework. Luhrmann and Zeffirelli abandon the text during Juliet’s textually strong moments. Their Juliets then become bearers of meaning as they each stand for an edited version of the textual character. There needs to be a film project which combines the fidelity to the text that Cukor offers with the friendlier filming style of Zeffirelli. Also, the project would need to appeal to a similar audience that the Luhrmann adaptation did without resorting to micro-second shots and cinematic technology. It is possible to hold an audience through a story line especially when Shakespeare and strong female roles are so popular. Due to the character’s unique position as a strong Shakespearean female character and the possibility of multiple viewpoints, we just might be able to combat Mulvey’s “masculine gaze” of the camera. However, the time for such a project is now before the character’s new found critical niche in feminism completely gives way to the cynical, victimized ideas of Luhrmann. If academic criticism, or Hollywood’s recent love of strong heroines in love stories, changes, the opportunity will be gone. We will then be left with the Luhrmann version’s post-modern Juliet for perhaps another thirty years.

Endnotes

¹ qtd from Wolfgang Iser *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*

² Specifically he states that “The love of Romeo and Juliet conducts them to death only because of the senseless hatred of their houses” (47)

³ He does so most notably out of context in a discussion of Desdemona when he refers to her strength in front of the Senate as an “action carried through with a confidence and decision worthy of Juliet or Cordelia. (192)

⁴ See earlier Boyce quote

⁵ Specifically, Duncan-Jones is looking at Juliet’s line after her Nurse advises her to marry Paris “If all else fail, myself have power to die” as well as her suicide threat in Friar Lawrence’s cell and her reliance on her knife in 4.2

⁶ Dreher does not look at Juliet specifically as she does some of the other daughter characters, but she does use her as a comparison and means of example throughout these two categories.

⁷ “That is to say that a play cannot not be dramatic while a novel is free to be dramatic or not. One would not praise a play for its novel like qualities, yet one may very well praise a novelist for being able to structure in action” (Bazin, 83)

⁸ De Lauretis quotes Wolf “Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magi and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size”

⁹ Modleski looks at the Harlequin Romance Novel, The Gothic Novel, and The Soap Opera. All of which are marginalized forms of entertainment because they are specifically geared to women.

¹⁰ In her discussion on soap operas Modleski specifically discusses the viewers lack of control as an example of feminine powerlessness (91).

¹¹ Admittedly this proclamation comes from the back of the video box and therefore is a form of self-glorification

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Appendices

Juliet's soliloquy before taking the potion in Act 4 Scene 3

Juliet: Farewell. –God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.
I'll call them back again to comfort me.–
Nurse! –What should she do here?
My dismal scene I must act alone.
Come vial.
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?
No, no this shall forbid it. Lie thou there.
What if it be a poison which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored
Because he married me before to Romeo
I fear it is. And yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the that Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place–
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle
Where for this many hundreds of years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed;
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort–
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad–
O, if I wake shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all of these hideous fears,
And madly play with my forefathers' joints
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,
And in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point! Stay Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink. I drink to thee.

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.
 [JULIET appears above at a window]
 But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
 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, 5
 That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
 Be not her maid, since she is envious;
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green
 And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
 It is my lady, O, it is my love! 10
 O, that she knew she were!
 She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
 Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
 I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, 15
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven 20
 Would through the airy region stream so bright
 That birds would sing and think it were not night.
 See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek! 25

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

She speaks:
 O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
 Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
 Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
 What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part

Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
 What's in a name? that which we call a rose
 By any other name would smell as sweet;
 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
 Retain that dear perfection which he owes
 Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
 And for that name which is no part of thee
 Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
 Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
 So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO

By a name
 I know not how to tell thee who I am:
 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
 Because it is an enemy to thee;
 Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
 Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
 Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
 The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
 And the place death, considering who thou art,
 If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
 For stony limits cannot hold love out,
 And what love can do that dares love attempt;
 Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
 Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
 And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
 And but thou love me, let them find me here:
 My life were better ended by their hate,
 Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
 He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
 I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
 As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
 I would adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
 Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
 For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night
 Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
 What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!
 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'
 And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,
 Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
 Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
 I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
 So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
 And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
 My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
 And not impute this yielding to light love,
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops--

JULIET O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,

Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love--

JULIET

Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROMEO

The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

JULIET

But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
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.

[Nurse calls within]

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little, I will come again.
[Exit, above]

ROMEO

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.

Being in night, all this is but a dream,

Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.
[Re-enter JULIET, above]

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,

By one that I'll procure to come to thee,

Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse

[Within] Madam!

JULIET

I come, anon.—But if thou mean'st not well,

I do beseech thee—

Nurse

[Within] Madam!

JULIET

By and by, I come:—
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:

To-morrow will I send.

ROMEO

So thrive my soul—

JULIET

A thousand times good night!
[Exit, above]

ROMEO

A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from
their books,

But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
[Retiring]
[Re-enter JULIET, above]

JULIET

Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
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.

ROMEO

It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,

Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET

Romeo!

ROMEO

My dear?

JULIET

At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO

At the hour of nine.

JULIET

I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.

I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,

Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET

'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,

And with a silk thread plucks it back again,

So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.

Good night, good night! parting is such

sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
[Exit above]

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,

His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.
[Exit]