

**Love vs. Lust: Media Representation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and
Antony and Cleopatra.**



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Antony and Cleopatra.**

A Thesis Submitted to Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nabila Afser", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. The signature is written on a light gray rectangular background.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	-----1
Chapter 1: Introduction	-----5
Chapter 2: Literature review	-----14
Chapter 3: Love in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	-----23
Chapter 4: Lust in <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	-----27
Chapter 5: Media Representation of Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> . -----	-----39
Chapter 5: Conclusion	-----41
Work Cited	-----45

Abstract

This research paper explores how love and lust are portrayed in Shakespeare's most well-known plays, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, as well as how these plays have been adapted in the media. Despite the fact that both plays feature intense romances, their interpretations of love and lust are different. While many people view *Antony and Cleopatra* as a tale of sensual, decadent desire, *Romeo and Juliet* is frequently seen as a narrative of pure, beautiful love. This study examines how the themes of love and lust are communicated to and understood by various audiences across a variety of mediums, including stage drama, film adaptations, comics, and critical interpretations. The study also examines the media representation with the old interpretations and new interpretations of these two plays and how they present shifting perspectives on love, desire, sexuality and lust. The purpose of this analysis is to offer new insight on Shakespeare's works continuing appeal and the ways in which they continue to influence how we view love and lust in modern culture.

Keywords: Shakespeare, love, lust, media representations, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, film adaptations, Stage drama, audiences, romance, desire, sexuality

Introduction

Before addressing whether Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* demonstrate love and lust, I would like to discuss the idea of love in Shakespearean time. For example, I first try to explain Petrarchan love which influenced discourse on love in Elizabethan time. Petrarchan love is essentially poetic love, where the lover is considered an ideal being. Lovers express their love in the form of devotion. As seen in much of Shakespeare's literature, the intensity of Petrarchan love confronts lovers with frustration, jealousy, suffering and heartbreak.

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare is a Petrarchan romance. Romeo initially feels a Petrarchan kind of love for Juliet. In the play, Romeo is fascinated by her beauty and considers her a desirable object. In the text, he alludes to Juliet as the sun. However, as the play progresses, he loves her with devotion and passionate feelings. He transcends the typical Petrarchan love. He is able to win Juliet's affection and devotion, unlike a Petrarchan lover.

Petrarchan love can also be found in Shakespeare's Sonnet 130, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the sonnet, the speaker rejects the ideal of beauty and describes the lover in eloquent terms, admitting his faults and imperfections.

In the two plays, love is portrayed as a force that can transform the characters with moral perfection. Even for love, they become ready to challenge their families, social norms and expectations. In this play, Hermia and Lysander go against their parents for their love.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Helena says that "Love shows not with the eye, but with the mind, / And so winged Cupid draws blind". (Shakespeare, 1.1.234-235) These lines suggest that true love is not mere physical attraction, but a deep connection between two people. The lover's death indicates not only divine love but also the power of finding individuality. Through death, they try to overcome their worldly conflict. Their death made their families the worth of true love. So *Romeo and Juliet* can be an example of a divine love story.

On the other hand, the romance between *Antony and Cleopatra* was a complicated fusion of lust and love. They shared a strong emotional bond despite their strong physical attraction to one another. Their love is still a part of mythology, despite the fact that both are recognized for their luxurious and passionate displays. But lust is a prominent theme throughout *Antony and Cleopatra*. Much of their action is driven by their physical desires for one another. In the play, Antony's reckless actions, which are driven by his lust for Cleopatra, finally result in his downfall. Because of his irresponsible action he lost his family, fame, power and position. Desire is so powerful that it pushes humans to action. Sometimes it may lead to destruction.

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is also a story of self-destruction. In this story the protagonists fail to balance their desires with their duties. And ultimately their action leads to their downfall. Meanwhile, Cleopatra utilizes her sexuality to control Antony and keep her position of power. Their relationship is full of intense passion, desire, jealousy, and betrayal. Antony loses the respect of the Romans as a result of his obsession with Cleopatra. For their imperial positions, Both Antony and Cleopatra utilized their affection for each other. They both passed away because they were afraid to acknowledge their lack of dignity and worth.

Romeo and Juliet and *Antony and Cleopatra* were not as famous back then as they are now all over the world. Over time, many romantic ideas emerged in Western civilization and are today frequently employed in media of all kinds to describe society. This modification highlights the development of romantic themes in Western culture over time while acknowledging the relative popularity of these plays in Shakespeare's time.

In my dissertation, I plan to look into how *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* deal with love, lust, and media representation. I will examine how these plays have been portrayed as either love stories or lust stories through its analysis of other media adaptations, including cinema, comic books, and theatrical productions. I will examine, using qualitative research Methods, how these adaptations develop the themes of love and lust as well as how media depictions influence how we see human desire. I want to do this in order to clarify the social implication of these representations.

The literature review will come after this introduction. The main body of the project will consist of three chapters, where I will establish the key thesis arguments using textual evidence, secondary literature, and theoretical interventions. Finally, I will provide a short concluding chapter to summarize the entire project.

The first main chapter will focus on the play *Romeo and Juliet*, while the second will analyze *Antony and Cleopatra*. The third and final chapter will explore the media representation of both plays.

Literature Review

The literature review section of this dissertation presents an overview and key ideas of some established works on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. These two plays have the element of love, seduction, separation and death that still appeal to the reader. These two iconic plays still create curiosity in the readers on the nature of love portrayed there.

It is believed that *Romeo and Juliet* is based on the life of two real lovers who lived in Verona, Italy in 1303 and chose to die for love. According to Seigel, Shakespeare has rewritten the story as a tragic narrative poem titled “The Tragical History of *Romeo and Juliet*” in 1562 which was adapted from an Italian novella. There are many aspects of the drama that researchers are still analyzing from different angles.

Bryan Reynolds and Janna Segal refuse to accept *Romeo and Juliet* as merely a love story. They believe that this idea has been imposed on the reader, as Christians of the Elizabethan period considered lovers as sinners rather than innocent victims. The play is composed by blending the glorification of passionate love with Christian moralistic condemnation, both of which are originally taken from the Italian novella. Renaissance ideas also influenced *Romeo and Juliet*, as it was believed that sexual love was an expression of divine love. The concepts of love and Christianity not only work as motifs in *Romeo and Juliet* but also create dramatic tension through contrasting actions. (Segal 371)

Bryan Reynolds and Janna Segal claim that in Christianity, suicide seems like a mortal sin. In *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, the paradise of the lovers is the feeling of love, not the afterlife. Although the play was written during the Elizabethan period, it can also be

considered "an extension of religion" or a "combination" of divinity. The play is not secular, as love is depicted here as a counterpart to God. The play shows the dominance of religion over the lovers which orthodox Christianity does not accept (Segal 372).

However, feminist scholars such as Coppélia Kahn and Janet Adelman, along with their critic Jonathan Goldberg, argue that this idealization is actually an ideological construct that reinforces patriarchal, heterosexist, and homosocial norms (Kottman 3).

According to Kottman, love is not the secret to happiness. It can lead to issues and conflict between what people expect from society and how they really behave. *Romeo and Juliet* exhibit this conflict as they attempt to reconcile their relationship with their circumstances. In the end, they decide to commit suicide to express their own sense of freedom, self-awareness, and self-realization. Some critics have argued that *Romeo and Juliet* is not a tragic drama but rather a tale about the personal tragedy of two people. In this view, the lovers are not simply victims of social tension, but instead choose to pay the ultimate price for their own frustration and sorrow (Kottman 5)

Robert Metcalf Smith claims that Shakespeare paints a graphic picture of tragedy that inevitably reveals the lovers' character flaws. Romeo and Juliet suffer the consequences of their impatient nature. So, the play is not an act of revenge against society, rather it shows the tragic folly of youth. In that case, we can consider them as victims. They have not sacrificed themselves for society but facing tragedy for their reckless youth. Professor Hahnemann points

to the impulsive nature of Romeo. For example, Romeo falls in love with Juliet after seeing her and quickly decides to marry her. He kills Tybalt and after knowing of Juliet's death, kills herself out of grief. Everything happens out of impulsive emotion, not of thoughtful consideration. The whole tragedy happens because of Romeo. So, Hahnemann claims that the lovers in the play have done poetic justice to themselves through death (Smith 65).

Just as Shakespeare inherited *Romeo and Juliet* from his Italian, French, and English predecessors, he put out his ideas there. Shakespeare denied the mortality of love through his plays. He tries to show that the bond of love can transcend the mortal world. In *Romeo and Juliet*, death is not something that can defeat love. He draws a clear, irrevocable end to love. According to Targoff, Shakespeare denies inherited traditional ideas about love. His Italian, French and English predecessors portrayed love as fleeting, brief, and limited. Shakespeare tries to establish the death of Romeo and Juliet as an alternative to living together. In that case, death thrusts their desire for posthumous intimacy. Thus, the importance of living together becomes paramount. Because of this, they choose death without any hope of heavenly life. For example, for Romeo, "love-devouring death" means to cease to exist after death (Targoff, 30).

Maurice Charney, on the other hand, does not consider the play to be the product of Shakespeare's mature thought. He highlights the idea of Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern in his essay. According to them, it is difficult to understand the reason for Juliet's fear. The playwright has forced the play into tragedy through Juliet's fear. Before he plans to

marry Juliet, Romeo is saying "love devouring death," as if his love for Juliet is naturally associated with death. Shakespeare's attempt to turn the play into a tragedy raises many questions about love between Romeo and Juliet. Before meeting Juliet, Romeo is heard saying that "this night's revels" inevitably lead to an untimely death (Charney 87).

On the other hand, William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* reflects on the cultural clash between the Egyptian and the Roman Empire through the love affair between Antony and Cleopatra. Shakespeare explores ancient Egyptian culture and habitat, the culture of the gypsies, and the Roman culture to understand Egyptians. Roman culture is represented as the dominant and authentic western culture. And to establish the Roman culture as the dominant and authentic culture, the other cultures are represented as the 'other'. Bill Ashcroft says, generally, "the 'other' is anyone separate from one's self" (Ashcroft, 154).

According to Haidari, Antony represents the masculine West and Cleopatra is seen as representing the feminine East. The play shows gender and racial hierarchies in the love affairs of Antony and Cleopatra. The play highly depicted the division between East and West. It portrays the patriarchal Roman Empire as rational and moral. But Egypt is portrayed as luxurious, corrupt, and hideous throughout this play. Despite this power disparity, Cleopatra is presented as a cunning woman. She persuades men for political purposes. In this play, a negative allusion is made to Cleopatra totally from an essential stereotypical concept. It is even presented

as a threat to the Roman Empire. Rather than supporting or defending established notions of East and West, Shakespeare questions them (Haidari 124).

Amany El-Sawy asserts that Shakespeare portrays Cleopatra as a person of infinite variety. She does not fall under any conventional and stereotypical frames. When Cleopatra is compared to the "whore of the Nile" and snakes, Shakespeare analyzed her quite metaphysically. In some cases, he incorporates it unnaturally, as if he blamed Cleopatra. Cleopatra is analyzed as a counter-discursive practice of Western hegemonic meta-narratives. Enobarbus asserts Cleopatra is not a linear or flat character but a multi-dimensional character (El-Sawy 13). Bamber points out, there are three Cleopatras – Cleopatra is "the embodiment of Egypt", Cleopatra "represents the Other as against Antony's representation of the Self", and finally, Cleopatra is a character "facing failure and defeat, motivated by the desire to contain or rise above her losses" (Bamber 45).

Michael Steppat talks about Cleopatra's 'passion' and 'truth of love' in his creation. But Richard Reynolds claims that a 'harlotte' like Cleopatra, who had committed 'horrible murders', was capable of dying for love". However, Shakespeare showed him as a political weapon in his play.

In the play, The Roman Empire is portrayed as logical and moral. But Egypt is attributed to feminized traits that are sensual, exotic, and corrupt. Though passionate love exists between Antony and Cleopatra, Antony's sexual desire for Cleopatra indicates the domination of Egypt by Rome. Roman claims that Cleopatra who is a leery and manipulative woman seduces men for her

political sake. Cleopatra is depicted as a threat to the patriarchal Roman Empire who seduces the Roman general Antony. Cleopatra is named "salt Cleopatra" and "Egyptian dish" refers to the desires among men toward her. The person of Rome claims that she is capable of making men "hungry where most she satisfies".

Cleopatra, Egypt, and Egyptians are portrayed in the play with attributes that are antithetical and opposite to the characteristic features of Rome and the Romans. To the Roman self, the Egyptian culture is the binary other compared with which the Romans make the image of that self. This process of 'othering' also defines the superiority of one culture above another and the power relation that exists between the two. Through the construction of the exotic other, the dominant culture finds the validation of the image of the self they construct. This process of 'othering' is crucial in any kind of imperial or colonial power relation (Linda Charnes 30).

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare has been adapted for a number of movies. Every movie tells the main story differently. For instance, Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), *Romeo Must Die* (2000), *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011), and Kaufman's *Romeo and Juliet* (1996), etc. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was modernized and punk rocked in the 1996 film *Romeo and Juliet*, which was directed by Kaufman. The movie was known for extreme violence and sexuality.

According to Bryan Reynolds & Janna Segal, The philosophical basis of "Tromeo-Juliet" and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are very different. For example, the movie's lead singer Bradley Nowell sings the song "Romeo" taunting his partner. The reason is that she did not give priority to his wishes. "Nowell's song indicates not only that manly charm is characteristic of being "a real Romeo," but that "a real Romeo" feels passionate, Petrarchan emotions, including "anger, pain and sorrow," (Segal 37). Bradley Nowell's song was- "Want the kinda woman who can make me feel right/ Not sloppy drunk sex on a Saturday night/ Because I'm a Romeo - Romeo - with no place to go."

In Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, The director emphasized the strengths of two teenage lovers rather than their weaknesses. Even Rotten Tomatoes gave the film a positive review and claimed the film as "the definitive cinematic adaptation of the play. The impact of Film Director Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) film version is so influential in popular culture, not only in films and pop music but also in comic books and Manga. (Tuan, 17)

Romeo + Juliet by Baz Luhrmann is a postmodern movie. The main story is presented in a distinctive and visually appealing manner in the film by blending various styles from the time of Queen Elizabeth I to the present. The film also incorporates elements of popular culture like music videos and fashion, to appeal to a contemporary audience. So, the self-referential and meta-fictional techniques of the film blur the boundaries between reality and fiction." Donaldson reads Verona filmed by Luhrmann as surreal, the boundary between the events and their replications are interrelated in the ubiquitous media as Guy Debord called the regime of "the

Spectacle" where fetishized images replace reality, and other theorists call hyper-reality."(Tuan, 17)

Shakespeare's plays have been presented differently in theaters over time. Shakespeare's dramatic style was further developed through changes in the style from time to time. As we know, Shakespeare's plays have been interpreted differently over time. In many cases, the plays are staged with relevance to the present. For example, productions once focused only on the romantic aspects of the play. But, now Shakespearean works have explored themes such as gender, caste, freedom, individualism, and human psychology in greater depth.

Sabrin Sarwar and Md. Mahadhi Hasan claims that the interpretations of Shakespearean plays are often performed locally in the South Asian subcontinent. In that case, the original script changes a lot. So sometimes the director and characters need to know the background history, culture, and language of Shakespeare's time to stage it. They also need to understand Shakespearean language terms, metaphors, meter and pulse, line endings, wordplay, vocabulary, shape, and structure. However, the story may be interpreted differently if the same play is edited by multiple people. Often to make the actors understand the plot of the play the director uses local analogy and interprets it in a local context. There are also many adaptations done in other languages. To keep the local audience in mind and therefore become a different story (Hasan 11)

In 2017, The British Council Bangladesh had taken an initiative to produce "A Different *Romeo and Juliet*". The production is directed by Jenny Sealy and produced by Nasiruddin Yousuff. Robina Rashid Bhuiyan argues that the play is based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the light of Bangladeshi culture. Instead of the Capulet and Montague families, the play shows the conflict between the Khan and Chowdhury. The first scene of the play opens with a cricket match between the Khan and the Chowdhury. First time Romeo meets with Juliet at a traditional Dhakaya wedding

The influence of Cleopatra can also be seen in movies, stage dramas, literature, advertising, fashion and catwalk shows, etc. According to Osmond, the nature of femininity is constructed culturally through the representation of Cleopatra and her various adaptations. "Cleopatra as a character was a central presence during the burgeoning of the cinema at the beginning of the twentieth century. She also played a pivotal role in the emergence of a new type of social identity formation: modern celebrity culture."(Osmond, 72)

The adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* has changed the perception of audiences. It also challenged their concrete ideas about traditional love, gender roles, racial stereotypes, class distinctions and fashion, etc. In the next chapter, I will analyze how both plays have been adapted in different forms of media.

Love in *Romeo and Juliet*

This chapter examines the point at which *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare can be considered a purely love story, as well as how the play influences audience perceptions of love. It focuses on the many factors that contribute to the two main characters' love, including the language and imagery used to express their emotions.

"Here's to my love! O true apothecary, Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die"
(Shakespeare, 5.3.119-120).

Romeo delivers these lines after having taken poison. In this scene, he chooses death rather than living without his lover. Believing Juliet to be lifeless, he remains committed to her even after her death, despite numerous obstacles. Both Romeo and Juliet remain committed to each other until death. When Juliet realizes that Romeo is dead, she sees no reason to live without him. Overwhelmed by grief Juliet says, "Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger, this is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die" (Shakespeare, 5.3.94-96). The quote highlights her devotion to Romeo. After discovering Romeo's dead body, she chooses to take her life to join Romeo.

Both Romeo and Juliet explored themselves in various forms through their love for each other. However, at the beginning of the play, they were both immature characters. Romeo is an emotional young man who was infatuated with Rosaline. Rosaline is a lady who had taken a

vow of chastity. He spent most of his time feeling depressed for Rosaline. To express his confusion and contradictions he says, "Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, [...] that feel no love in this." (Shakespeare 1.1.175-176) These lines suggest that he was never quite sure of his feelings for Rosaline. This uncertainty made him feel confused and frustrated, that is why he expressed his love using oxymorons or contradictory words, such as "brawling love" and "loving hate." At that time, he considered love to be a serious, futile, and chaotic feeling that could also be structured at times. Initially, he thought that he loved her, but later he claimed that he was not in love with her.

After falling in love with Juliet, Romeo feels a strange vitality within him. He sneaks into Capulet's garden to meet her and stands beneath her balcony to profess his love. When he reveals his feelings, Romeo says to Juliet, "Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, who is already sick and pale with grief, that thou, her maid, art far more fair than she. Be not her maid, since she is envious." (Shakespeare 2.2.4-8) In this moment, Romeo praises Juliet's beauty and expresses his devotion and desperation towards her. The intensity of the balcony scene is evident when Romeo expresses his fear of losing Juliet with the line, "And if you love me, let them find me here. My life was better ended by their hate than death prorogued, wanting of thy love." (Shakespeare, 2.1.169-172) This quote suggests that Romeo would rather die by the hands of his enemies than live without Juliet's love.

Similarly, Juliet agrees to his proposal and confesses the depth of her love to Romeo while standing on the balcony. She claims that her love for Romeo is infinite like the ocean,

indicating that her love was boundless. She says to him, “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.” (Shakespeare, 2.2.140-143)"

In the play, Romeo is depicted as challenging social norms and risking his own life. To convey his desperation, he says, "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" (Shakespeare 2.2.66-68). Through these lines, Romeo expresses his desperate love for Juliet and his willingness to overcome whatever separates them. These lines suggest the strength and determination of Romeo's love, which inspires him to conquer all obstacles and physical barriers. He gradually transforms from an immature youth to a mature and responsible lover. He is so determined to settle with Juliet that he even consults with Friar Laurence.

Similarly, before Juliet met Romeo, she was a naïve young lady with no experience of the outside world. She belongs to a family where wealth and family reputation were more important than love. Juliet tries to like Paris because her parents chose him to be her husband, but initially, she was not attracted to him. She says to her parent, "I'll look to like, if looking liking move; But no more deep will I endart mine eye/Than your consent gives strength to make it fly" (Shakespeare 1.3.98-100), which means she will try to like him only as much as her parents allow her to. She also tries not to fall deeply in love with Paris until her parents fully approve of the marriage.

Romeo and Juliet both undergo a dramatic transformation throughout the play. Juliet exhibits courage and defies social norms despite the gender roles established in their time. Juliet matures quickly after falling in love, becoming a determined lover. In one scene, she says to 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." (Shakespeare 2.2.33-35) This quote suggests the intensity and devotion of her to Romeo, requesting that he deny his family name and identity, as she is prepared to deny her own family values as a Capulet. Her willingness to break the rules shows the depth of her love.

The divine and pure love of the protagonists transcended all boundaries at the same level. Even if they were crazy for each other, there was mutual respect, admiration and devotion between them. Their love was not just about physical attraction or possessing each other, they risked everything including their lives for their relationship. Juliet says, "My only love sprung from my only [...] a loathed enemy" (Shakespeare, 1.5.138-139). Juliet expressed respect and devotion to Romeo. She loved him as an individual person, even though he was a member of a trivial family. Romeo also expressed his admiration and respect by calling her "holy shrine". To praise her beauty and show her respect, he says, "O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! [...] for earth too dear" (Shakespeare, 1.5.43-44)!

So we can consider *Romeo and Juliet* an ideal love story. Antonio Barcelona Sanchez claims that *Romeo and Juliet*'s love is not a prototypical tragic love. However, it is a prototypical ideal love (Sanchez, 685). Their deaths were not due to fate or circumstances, but rather an unfortunate incident or wrong decision that led to tragic consequences. However, in this hostile world, their ideal love triumphed through their death. They overcame not only their weaknesses but also their vulnerabilities through their passionate love.

Shakespeare claims in his prologue that "Passion lends them power, time means, to meet / Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet" (Shakespeare 2.1.12-13). The statement suggests that one's passion makes them so strong to face challenges. So they can handle extreme situations with a clear sense of perspective. At the beginning of the play, Romeo and Juliet experience their love as dreamers. However, Romeo is afraid of falling in love too quickly, while Juliet is not. During their first conversation, Romeo quotes a few lines to express his fear for love. He says, "I fear too early: for my mind misgives [...] by some vile forfeit of untimely death" (Shakespeare 1.4.106-111).

From the beginning, Romeo is aware that his love for Juliet could have dire consequences, but he cannot resist his intense passion for her. Even wise men like Friar Lawrence acknowledge the danger and destructiveness of their love, but still agree to marry them due to its intensity. Friar Lawrence warns Romeo about the dangers of their intense love with the quote, "These violent delights have violent ends... like fire and powder, which as they kiss

Consume” (Shakespeare III.1.90-92). He warns Romeo that their intense passion can result in tragedy since the happiness their love brings them would not last and might have unfavorable consequences.

Similarly, Juliet's passion for Romeo is so strong that she disobeys her father by refusing to marry Paris. Juliet shows boldness and determination in her love for Romeo, declaring, "I will not marry yet; and when I do, I swear it shall be Romeo [...] rather than Paris" (Shakespeare 3.5.121-122).

Both Romeo and Juliet feel a strong passion for each other in both body and soul. Romeo considers Juliet to be his soul mate. This is influenced by their Christian love, as evidenced by Romeo's statement, "I have more care to stay than will to go: Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so. How is it, my soul? Let's talk; it is not a day" (Shakespeare 5.3.4-6). Their love is also influenced by other factors, such as their youth, impulsiveness, and societal restrictions.

Zhe Guan claims that Romeo's use of the word "soul" in expressing his love for Juliet reflects his deep Christian beliefs and understanding of the concept of love. The way he expresses his devotion to her emphasizes the connection between the soul and the body. "The real meaning of Christian love means the attraction between soul and body” (Guan, 11). Guan also notes that Romeo uses other spiritual and metaphorical language in expressing his

love, such as "blessed," "swear," "god," and "idolatry," that indicates the presence of religious belief in the play.

Both Romeo and Juliet's love is so intense that it transcends the physical world and binds them spiritually. Friar Laurence agrees to marry them because he understood their madness to be with each other. He wishes them good luck and prays that heaven will protect them from negative consequences and bless their union. In saying, "So smile the heavens upon this holy act" (Shakespeare 2.6.5), he expresses optimism and a belief that their love is approved by a higher power. The use of the word "holy" emphasizes the purity and sacredness of their love.

Both Romeo and Juliet feel incomplete without each other. If the lovers are spiritually and psychologically connected, they feel a sense of incompleteness without each other. Romeo decides to commit suicide after learning that Juliet has passed away. Without her, he could not have imagined himself complete and says, "Here's to my love! O true apothecary, Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die" (Shakespeare 5.3.119-120). When two people are truly in love, this sense of incompleteness might exist. As true love shows a profound and meaningful connection between two individuals, it is spiritually founded in the idea of interconnectivity. Romeo and Juliet believed their souls were intertwined because of their intense love for one another.

Gabriel Garca Márquez suggests in his novel "Love in the Time of Cholera" that love can give someone's life meaning and that the only regret one might have upon die is if it were not

for love. This suggests that love is a strong force that can add purpose and fulfillment to life. Even death can be a pleasurable experience if it happens for a loved one (Gabriel, 30).

Romeo and Juliet's portrayal of love and its complexity has had an impact on modern culture. The play has transformed how modern culture understands love and defines romantic relationships. Modern love stories usually depict the passion of first love and the difficulties of forbidden love. Many love stories, including the well-known *Twilight* series, which examines the complexities of love between a human and a vampire, have been influenced by conflict between passion and reason of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Another significant impact of *Romeo and Juliet* is on social class and its effects on relationships. The relationship between Romeo and Juliet is ruined by the conflict between the Montagues and Capulets, two wealthy families from different social classes. This issue is still relevant in modern times, when socioeconomic differences still influence relations. The play influences people's lives and decisions. Contemporary works like Baz Luhrmann's film adaption of *Romeo and Juliet*, this takes place in Verona Beach and examines the issue of gang violence and classes and its impact on two young lovers (Iftimie, 75).

The language and literature of today have been greatly influenced by *Romeo and Juliet*. The play's excellent language, poetic dialogue, and creative use of metaphors and images have impacted many writers and artists. Its impact may be seen in contemporary poetry and song lyrics like Taylor Swift's "Love Story," which alludes to the play's well-known balcony scene. So, *Romeo and Juliet*'s impact on modern society is undeniable (Tuan, 10).

Lust in Antony and Cleopatra

Shakespeare portrays a complex relationship between Antony and Cleopatra that refers to both lust and love. At the beginning of play, Antony uses sensuous language to praise Cleopatra and says, "Her lips suck forth my soul" (Shakespeare 1.5.29). Cleopatra also expresses her attraction to Antony when she refers to him as "the demi-Atlas of this earth" (Shakespeare 1.5.33). But throughout the play, it gradually becomes clear that their bond goes beyond simple physical attraction. They share a strong emotional bond that goes beyond lust. Antony is willing to risk everything, including his political position and reputation to be with Cleopatra. He expresses his love for her by calling her "infinite riches in a little room" (Shakespeare, 1.2.233). Similarly, Cleopatra is prepared to do anything to be with Antony due to her intense passion for him.

In this play, Shakespeare tries to demonstrate how difficult it is to distinguish between the emotions of love and lust between them. For instance, once Antony declares his attraction to Cleopatra, he says, "There's not a moment of our lives should stretch / Without some pleasure now" (Shakespeare 1.5.37-38). Their desire for pleasure in their relationship is highlighted by this statement. On the other hand, the news of Cleopatra's death makes him so devastated to commit suicide. To express his state, he says, "Let's do it after the high Roman fashion, / And make death proud to take us" (Shakespeare 4.15.58-59). This quote suggests that he loved Cleopatra so passionately that he preferred to die without her.

Shakespeare emphasizes Cleopatra as a symbol of Egypt's power and prosperity. The Egyptians worshiped Cleopatra like a goddess who embodies their values and traditions. To them, she was a powerful and independent leader who could negotiate with the Roman Empire with dignity. In contrast, she is viewed as a threat by the Romans. They perceive her as a seductive woman who has seduced Antony away from his responsibilities. They consider her a cunning and lustful queen who exploits her charm to achieve her goals. For example, Roman Enobarbus refers to her as a 'gypsy'.

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the theme of lust is portrayed as a destructive force that causes violence and tragedy. Lust clouds the judgment of both protagonists, ultimately leading to their tragic downfall. In the Christian New Testament, lust primarily refers to sexual desire outside of marriage that is primarily considered a sinful desire. The New Testament warns against lust (Matthew 5:27-28). According to Sigmund Freud, man's behavior is largely controlled by the unconscious mind that may sometimes conflict with conscious values and goals. He claims that "The unconscious is the true psychological reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs" (Freud 22).

Lust was the result of both Antony and Cleopatra's conscious and unconscious sexual desires and drives. At one point of the play, Antony expresses his disappointment by saying, "I am a soldier, more experienced and capable than you in making demands" (Shakespeare 2.2.105). This quote suggests that Antony is dissatisfied with Cleopatra for not standing with him

in battle. However, behind Antony's intense emotions towards her lies his strong desire to dominate and conquer a powerful and mysterious queen.

Cleopatra's desire for attention and political gain is disguised behind her sexual attraction towards Antony, whom she seeks to control. That is why she tells him, "I'll set boundaries for how much love I can give, and then you will have to discover new heavens and new earth" (Shakespeare, 2.1.44-45). Cleopatra claims to set the boundaries of how much she will love her lover. Therefore, it can be said that the two are not blindly in love, rather controlled by pleasure. The presence of manipulation, power play, dominance, and sex appeal has been observed in their relationship. By mixing lust and love, the play portrays the intense emotions and destructive transformations of the two central characters.

In order to convey Cleopatra's sensuality and power, Antony comments, "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety/ Other women cloy the appetites they feed, but she makes hungry where most she satisfies" (Shakespeare 2.2.245-247). This quote suggests that Antony is obsessed with Cleopatra's physical and sexual allure. He also mentions that 'vile' things become reasonable when it is related to Cleopatra.

Cleopatra's beauty and sensuality keep Antony so captivated that he never feels bored. He uses her as an escape from his burden of responsibilities. Meanwhile, the independent and determined queen Cleopatra is motivated not only by her pleasure, but also her ambition to rule Egypt. At the beginning of the play, Cleopatra shares her plan to win over Antony with her

servant. She says, "I'll set a boundary on how far to be beloved. / Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth" (Shakespeare, II.1.33-34). Even when she hears about Antony's marriage to Octavia by a messenger, chastises him and orders him to come back to her. She says to the messenger, "Tell him I am prompt / To lay my crown at his feet, and to kneel there." (Shakespeare 3.4.17-18) This shows that, if necessary, Cleopatra would be willing to disgrace Antony using her political influence as a queen. Through his action, she seems to be more attracted to Antony out of lust than love.

Antony's lust for Cleopatra becomes increasingly apparent as the play progresses. He constantly seeks out new experiences at lavish parties, feasts, and displays of wealth with her. It makes him so reckless that he is aware the consequences of his actions. In order to be with Cleopatra in Egypt, Antony abandons his family and political duties in Rome, causing him to lose the political support of Rome completely. He rebels against the patriarchal Roman Empire and puts his own people at danger. When a Roman messenger comes to speak with him in one scene, he aggressively rejects him and declares that he only wants to stay in Egypt with Queen Cleopatra. He says to him, "here is my place" (Shakespeare 2.5.118). His neglect of his duty is considered a womanizing behavior by Rome.

The story of *Antony and Cleopatra* has had a lasting impact on modern society. Their story has been portrayed in numerous literary and creative works, notably Margaret George's book "The Memoirs of Cleopatra." The popular culture has also been influenced by Antony and Cleopatra, with influences ranging from music to fashion.

Media Representation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The reason behind the massive popularity around the world of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*'s is its media adaptations that have made his timeless story accessible to new audiences. This chapter explores some adaptations of these plays and their relevance and influence to modern times.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has been adapted over time with modern settings and characters, and Baz Luhrmann's 1996 version is a modern adaptation of the play. The danger and violence of the original play are brilliantly mirrored in the movie, which is based on a fictional city called Verona Beach, California. *Romeo and Juliet*'s story is made more accessible to modern audiences by taking it in contemporary Verona Beach.

The movie examines current issues that weren't present in the original drama, like gang violence and drug addiction. Additionally, viewers who are unfamiliar with Shakespeare's time and language can still understand its language pattern. The characters of the movie speak with current American accents and modern slang. For instance, Mercutio taunts Romeo about his obsession with Rosaline in the play, but the movie presents this moment of teasing in a completely modern style.

The dialogue in the movie was written by Luhrmann in collaboration with Craig Pearce using a mixture of contemporary language and slang. 'Yo, check it out, it's Romeo and Juliet!' and 'What's up with that, yo?' are a couple of examples. The director tries to make the story more relevant using contemporary language to modern audiences (Iftimie, 75).

The movie also makes use of modern technology, such as the news broadcast that serves as the prologue and has a presenter narrating events as if they were current events. Along with using fast-paced, stylized action scenes and cutting-edge visual effects like slow-motion shots and quick cuts, Luhrmann also employed contemporary filming techniques. The fictitious city in this film is populated by gangs that drive modern cars and carry guns rather than traditional swords (Iftimie, 78). The characters are also shown wearing modern clothes. For instance, when the Montagues and Capulets are portrayed as competing gangs, the Montagues are seen wearing Hawaiian shirts and the Capulets are shown wearing black leather. Romeo, the romantic hero, has long hair and is dressed in a colorful shirt, whereas Juliet is dressed in white. Overall, Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* version is a good update of the original play that appeals to audiences today.

The film features modern music, including songs by popular artists like Radiohead and Garbage. It blends modern and classical music, including compositions by Nelly Hooper and Craig Armstrong, as well as songs from The Cardigans. Although Shakespeare's play is set in a

patriarchal society, Luhrmann's film presents an egalitarian view of gender roles. For example, in this film, Juliet is portrayed as a strong and independent girl who can stand up for herself and challenge social norms. In one scene, she confronts her father about the arranged marriage and firmly declares that she will not marry Paris. Shakespeare portrays her as a young and obedient daughter. After her relationship with Romeo, she becomes more personable and courageous than before.

Both Shakespeare's and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* portray love and sexuality in different ways. Luhrmann's version emphasizes the physicality of Romeo and Juliet's relationship and adds a sexual dimension. He has used sensual music to convey their physical attraction. Additionally, the famous balcony scene contains a kiss, which is not shown in Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare's original work expresses love through metaphors, while Luhrmann's adaptation takes a more explicit approach to depicting sexuality. In the movie, there is a scene where a statue of Jesus is pulled from the water naked. The scene could be interpreted as a symbol of sexual freedom. Additionally, Luhrmann's film portrays the sexuality of the supporting characters in a more complex way, such as Mercutio flirting with both men and women and presenting sexual imagination as an obvious aspect of human nature through his "Queen Mab" speech (Iftimie, 79).

Despite the modern updates, Luhrmann maintains the central themes and motifs of Shakespeare's original play, with the love between Romeo and Juliet remaining the focus. The movie shows the tragic ending resulting from the conflict between the Montagues and Capulets

still present. The film includes the iconic balcony scene and the final death scene of Romeo and Juliet.

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has had a significant impact on society and its audience since its 1996 film adaptation. It has been successfully reintroduced to a new audience with innovative interpretation using modern elements. Luhrmann's version has influenced society in various ways. The movie has made *Romeo and Juliet* more accessible to a wider audience. Despite having a similar storyline, Luhrmann's adaptation differs greatly from Shakespeare's in terms of its style and interpretation. The two pieces have very different looks and feelings.

Moreover, in modern times, numerous comic books adapted from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* have become very famous. Comic books are a popular storytelling genre in the modern era. Children and teenagers really enjoy them. Readers can better comprehend the story and characters because of these adaptations, which give the drama a visual illustration. The graphic novel *Romeo and Juliet* by John McDonald serves as an illustration of a successful comic book adaptation.

MacDonald's adaptation effectively conveys the themes and messages of Shakespeare's original text with crafted scenes. Without any whitewashing or stereotyping, the characters are portrayed accurately. They are depicted with emotional depth and dramatic intensity. MacDonald provides comprehensive explanations and insightful criticism on the book's characters and plot. A timeline and a glossary of crucial phrases are also included to help readers comprehend the background of the novel (MacDonald, 6).

Another example of a comic book adaptation is *Romeo and Juliet: Manga Shakespeare* by Richard Appignanesi and Sonia Leong. This adaptation has been set in a modern context. The manga has consciously moved away from the social and political contexts of the play. But it stereotypically presents the characters of an original play. For example, Juliet is depicted as a typical manga character in *Romeo and Juliet: Manga Shakespeare*. Some adaptations maintain the main story and characters, while others make changes. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is still admired because it deals with issues like love, conflict, and tragedy that are still worthy in modern times (Rosanna, 2).

In 2021, Simon Godwin adapted *Romeo and Juliet* for stage drama. The setting of the play is set a modern context with characters using cell phones, laptops, and social media to communicate. Godwin's portrayal of the characters differs slightly from Shakespeare's original play. For instance, in Godwin's version, Juliet is depicted as a more independent and self-assured character. In the scene when she first meets Romeo, she takes the initiative and kisses him first. Additionally, Juliet speaks out against her father and the patriarchy of the Capulet family, reflecting modern feminist ideals. On the other hand, Romeo's emotional and reckless nature leads him to engage in physical violence. In Godwin's adaptation of the play, Juliet's personality is portrayed more strongly through the dialogue in the famous balcony scene. The setting of Godwin's version is modern-day Italy that incorporates contemporary elements into the costumes, music, and staging. The wealthy Capulet family hosts lavish parties with modern music, while the Montagueros dress in a more bohemian and casual style. The play's actors come

from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. it differs from how the play is often performed in traditional interpretations. As a result, the casting is more inclusive and diverse (Billington).

Moreover, the adaptation includes scenes and characters not present in Shakespeare's original play, such as a scene where Juliet confides her fears and doubts to her mother. Despite these changes, the adaptation maintains the fundamental plot and themes of Shakespeare's play and also offers new perspectives and contemporary relevance through various adjustments and refinements.

Romeo and Juliet and *Antony and Cleopatra* both have long lasting impacts on modern culture. From movies and television dramas to theater and books, numerous adaptations have retold the story of forbidden love and its tragic end. These adaptations have helped to shape popular ideas surrounding themes of love, tragedy, and power

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* was adapted as a movie by Joseph L. Mankiewicz in 1972, and it is considered as a great masterpiece and is particularly renowned for its lavish visual style. Throughout the movie, the lead actors Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor give fantastic performances. Mankiewicz's film also exhibits a degree of independent creativity, despite being faithful to the original text. He portrays Cleopatra as a multi-faceted character, exploring her vulnerabilities, insecurities, intellect, wit, and political acumen. In this movie, Cleopatra openly cries over Antony's adultery reveals a previously unrecognized emotional depth in her personality. Mankiewicz's *Antony and Cleopatra* gives a new and exciting interpretation of Shakespeare's one.

The movie portrays Cleopatra as a powerful queen who has complete control over her kingdom. People respect and fear Cleopatra because she is a personality. She confidently bargains with a Roman ambassador at the beginning of the film and defies Rome's demands. The film emphasizes Cleopatra's seductive nature, as she is shown with flashy clothing that intended to provoke those around her. There is a scene where Cleopatra uses her charm and wit to engage Antony in an interesting dialogue that leads to them an emotional bond (Ryle, 5).

Mankiewicz takes creative license in his portrayal of Anthony in the film. The film depicts him as a flawed and tragic figure who struggles to balance personal ambitions with leadership responsibilities. However, in one scene, Antony drunkenly beats his soldiers, revealing his character flaws and instability. Additionally, his jealous, possessive, and insecurity make it hard to accept that Cleopatra may have romantic relationships with other people. The film also presents a complex and multifaceted picture of the Roman world. For instance, Octavius Caesar, played by Roddy McDowall, performs noble and virtuous characteristics. In contrast, John Mills portrays Pompey, a corrupt and power-hungry politician who is willing to do anything to gain power. In addition, some Romans are portrayed as noble and virtuous, while others are depicted as corrupt and power-hungry." (Ryle, 13)

In addition to the movies, many different staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* have been developed for the stage. These versions may differ from one another based on the director's desire. While some directors remain faithful to the original text, others modernize the plot with their own style. One modern adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* was directed by Simon Godwin and produced by the National Theatre in London in 2018. The drama starred Ralph Fiennes and

Sophie Okonedo as Antony and Cleopatra, presenting a contemporary political landscape with both characters portrayed as powerful leaders. The central theme of the play is the contrast between the grand geopolitical game and the individual desires of the characters. The director conveys the changing political landscape through impressive set designs, such as enormous walls that move like tectonic plates during the play. Scenes of war are also evoked through the destruction of the ornate buildings of Egypt.

The drama portrays Rome as glamorous and belligerent, while Egypt is portrayed as restless and introverted. Cleopatra is depicted as both a dazzling goddess and a violent bully, while Antony is presented as a warm-hearted but flawed ruler. Enobarbus plays a significant role in the drama and Agrippa exploits his weakness for women to gather information about Antony and Cleopatra. Rather than emphasizing intimacy between the characters, the stage drama emphasizes the distance between them, depicting the grim and messy reality of the play.

The director incorporated modern elements, such as a nuclear submarine, into the battlefield scenes. A live snake was also used in one scene to grip the attention of the audience. The production came to a shocking conclusion with the set pieces collapsing and dramatically ravaging the Egyptian environment. At the end of the play, the fruit basket was shown on stage as it had been at the beginning. The director intended to convey that the conquerors had not learned from history and remained oblivious to the impending dangers. Overall, it appears that this production emphasized the story's cruelty and tragedy rather than presenting it in a glamorous way.

Godwin's production of *Antony and Cleopatra* is considered a modern adaptation for several reasons, including the contemporary costumes and set design that give the play a more relevant feel. Ancient Roman and Egyptian costume has also been modernized to fit fashion trends. In addition, Godwin changed the text and structure of the play in a number of ways to make it easier to understand to modern viewers. The production challenges conventional notions about race and ethnicity in Shakespearean performances by casting two black British actors in the main roles of *Antony and Cleopatra*. This casting decision adds a new dimension to the play.

The media plays an important role in the social construction of reality. Elfriede Fürsich argues that it determines the issues of the society and addresses which one is glorified or ignored in society. The media promotes cultural diversity and social values as well as democratic values. Many critics believe that the media has a direct and powerful effect on its audience that influences people's behavior and attitudes through various means. Media representations not only reflect the reality but also it forms the worldviews and ideologies of people (Fürsich, 114).

So the adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have long lasting impact on contemporary culture and people. From movies and television dramas to theater and books, numerous adaptations have retold the story of forbidden love and its tragic end. These adaptations have helped to shape popular ideas surrounding themes of love, tragedy, and power.

In the article "Reexamining the Links between Social Network Opinions and Romantic Relationship Outcomes," H. Colleen Sinclair, Kristina B. Hood, and Brittany L. Wright claim that they examine the role of social network views on romance in understanding *Romeo and Juliet's* impact on society. The authors conducted two studies to investigate the *Romeo and Juliet* effect to determine if social network attitudes moderate the association between disapproval and commitment. The study found that *Romeo and Juliet* still has an impact on certain students who are in romantic relationships. Students who perceive more disapproval from their social networks are more devoted to their relationships. Others have partially mediated the relationship between rejection and commitment. According to this article, social network beliefs have an impact on romantic relationship outcomes and the *Romeo and Juliet* effect is still relevant in modern society (Sinclair, Hood and Wright, 176).

Shakespeare has a strong connection to popular culture, particularly through the adaptations of numerous films and pop music of *Romeo and Juliet*. According to Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, young people's attitudes are influenced by popular culture. They claim that popular culture blurs the lines between leisure entertainment and academic study.

There are a few examples of how *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare has influenced popular culture. The film "West Side Story," is an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a musical movie that focuses on racism in 1960s America. *Romeo & Juliet*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, is another illustration of how young love in Shakespeare's tragedy is depicted naturally. The third example is Taylor Swift's hit song "Love Story," which uses mainstream music to modernize Shakespeare. The final example is an entertaining TV performance by James

Corden and Emily Blunt of the music. *Romeo and Juliet* have had a profound and diversified impact on popular culture in modern times. The themes of *Romeo and Juliet* are still relevant in modern time. The play is constantly being adapted through various forms such as stage plays, films and even modern retellings. Additionally, many of the phrases and themes of the play have become permanent in the society. It highlights how drama and its adaptations still have an impact and importance in people's daily lives. As for example, Adam Hansen's *Shakespeare and Popular Music* explores a range of popular music genres, including mainstream pop, jazz, country, folk, and hip-hop. In his analysis, Shakespeare's works are linked to pop song lyrics from the 1960s (Tuan, 10).

Fashion has been greatly influenced by *Romeo and Juliet*. Many fashion designers have taken inspiration from the story. As for example, the doublet, which was a common occupation for men in the 16th century, still very famous in modern times? This outfit is frequently seen in contemporary *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations. For example, in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, the costume of Leonardo DiCaprio was a modern version of the doublet.

The costumes of *Romeo + Juliet* are an excellent example of how fashion can create a lasting cultural impact. According to costume designer Kym Barrett, the reason the film is still valued in the industry, because those in charge of fashion companies now were young, when the film was released 25 years ago. Even if they were unaware of it, that generation was influenced by the film's unique approach of telling a Shakespearean story (Hess).

At the same time, *Antony and Cleopatra* still have influence on modern times. For instance, Cleopatra continues to have an impact on fashion. She was renowned for her beauty and fashion sense during her time and her style still influences modern fashion trends. The "Cleopatra Eye," which was Cleopatra's trademark style of eye makeup is still regarded as fashionable for ladies.

According to Alison Berry, people has frequently imitated and reinterpreted Cleopatra's unique sense of style. Elizabeth Taylor's style continues to influence and inspire fashion after she portrayed Cleopatra in the 1963 film. Cleopatra's use of jewelry and other luxury items is still relevant in modern day. Modern fashion designers use gold as a symbol of luxury and glamor like ancient Egyptian. Cleopatra's ornate crowns and headpieces are still popular fashion accessories today.

Cleopatra's hair was perfectly coiffed and attended to, often arranged in the "melon hairstyle" of her day which combined multiple braids into a bun at the nape of the neck, akin to a complicated updo today. She was known to wear copious amounts of perfume, a predilection perhaps passed down to her silver screen counterpart Elizabeth Taylor, who would go on to make millions off her signature perfume White Diamonds (Berry).

Society is significantly impacted by both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. The adaptation of these plays has altered our perceptions of gender roles, history, romance, and other human interactions as well as those of fashion and popular culture. For audiences from all over the world, these plays are still relevant.

Conclusion

Romeo and Juliet and *Antony and Cleopatra* offer us a deeper understanding of the complexities of love and lust. Both plays reveal the different dimensions and consequences of love and lust. *Romeo and Juliet's* love was pure and innocent, yet so passionate and irrational that they made several wrong decisions. Ultimately, their rash actions to overcome social barriers lead to their untimely death. In contrast, *Antony and Cleopatra's* love was dominated by lust and the desire for political power. Both of them forgot the consequences of their actions for their uncontrollable desires. This is the reason for their downfall. Both plays present different forms of expressions of love and lust, as well as different consequences.

Romeo and Juliet and *Antony and Cleopatra* have each been performed in different mediums over the years. Modern film and theater adaptations have undergone significant changes since their early versions that reflect the perspectives of their times. However, despite these changes, these works continue to resonate with audiences today due to their exploration of universal themes such as love, passion, jealousy, and betrayal.

Analyzing the different adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* help to understand how cultural and historical contexts, social norms, and values influence the presentation of the plays. Furthermore, research findings have demonstrated that media representations of these plays are not limited to their original contexts, but transcend

geographical and temporal boundaries. Themes such as love, lust, deception, and politics enable both plays to be adapted and reimagined in new and exciting ways.

Another significant finding is that media representations challenge our old assumptions about dramas while also developing new understandings and perceptions. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* have become a part of audience for their different adaptation of media. However, flaws can also be noticed in media representations of these dramas, as some adaptations have distorted the original narrative, and others have been accused of perpetuating harmful stereotypes by reinforcing social attitudes. But over the year, *Romeo and Juliet* becomes a symbol of true love for the common people. The love of the play is depicted as a tragic love story, exemplifying self-sacrifice through the media. In contrast, *Antony and Cleopatra* are presented as a love story in which lust takes precedence over love. However, Cleopatra is often portrayed as an erotic woman.

Although the plays themselves do not necessarily support these media representations, both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antony and Cleopatra* explore the complexities of love and lust. In many cases, the media simplifies or exaggerates certain aspects for dramatic effect. It is through plays and media representations that we gain a deeper understanding of love, passion, and tragedy,

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