

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY
ROMEO AND JULIET AND ITS SOURCE, ARTHUR
BROOKE'S POEM THE TRAGICALL HISTORY
OF ROMEUS AND IULIET

By

BETTY RAE SLAMANS
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Oklahoma State University

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Thesis Approved:

David S. Berkeley

Thesis Adviser

D. John Gilburn

William R. Kelley

Norman D. Hunsicker

Dean of the Graduate College

968390

PREFACE

This study is concerned with the analysis of Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet and Arthur Brooke's poem The Tragicall History of Romeus and Iuliet. The poem is acknowledged as being the primary source for Shakespeare's play, and there are many noted similarities in the two works. The purpose of this study is to concentrate on the significant differences between the works since little research has been done in this area.

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The Tragicall History of Romeus and Iuliet, a poem published by Arthur Brooke in 1562, is recognized as being the main source of Shakespeare's play entitled Romeo and Juliet because of its similarity of characterization and plotting. Brooke based his poem on a story published in 1554 by the Italian writer Matteo Bandello as translated by Belleforêt under the title Histoires Tragiques . . . de Bandel, published in 1559.¹

Although there are many similarities between the play and its source, there are also some significant differences between the two works. Brooke prefaces his poem with a long excuse for writing it and takes a moralistic attitude toward the characters and their actions; this attitude is not present in the play. The poem has a distinct medieval flavoring with its numerous references to fortune, but few such references occur in Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare compresses the months of action in the poem into days and thus strives for more intensity of action. In writing the play, Shakespeare makes some basic changes in the plot of the poem. Most of these changes either add to the intensity of the action or serve to develop the characters more fully. Shakespeare includes more characters in his play, develops

others from allusions in the poem, and in general develops all of his characters to a greater extent than does Brooke.

i

Unlike Shakespeare who maintains a favorable attitude toward his characters throughout the play, Brooke early in his poem passes moral judgment on the characters of Romeus, Iuliet, the Fryer, and the Nurce as is seen in his preface:

And as eche flower yeldeth honey to the bee: so euery exaump-
 ple ministreth good lessons, to the well disposed mynde.
 The glorious triumphe of the continent man vpon the lustes
 of wanton fleshe, encourageth men to honest restraynt of
 wyld affections, the shamefull and wretched endes of such,
 as have yelded their libertie thrall to fowle desires,
 teache men to withholde them selues from the hedlong fall of
 loose dishonestie. . . . And to this ende (good Reader) is
 this tragicall matter written, to describe vnto thee a
 couple of vnfortunate louers, thralling themselues to vn-
 honest desire, neglecting the authoritie and aduise of
 parents and frendes, conferring their principall counsels
 with dronken gossypes, and superstitious friers (the natu-
 rally fitte instrumentes of unchastitie) attemptyng all
 aduentures of peryll, for thattaynyng of their wished lust,
 vsyng auricular confession (the kay of whoredome, and trea-
 son) for furtheraunce of theyr purpose, to cloke the shame
 of stolne contractes, finallye, by all means of vn honest
 lyfe, hastyng to most vnhappye deathe.²

The strong language used in this passage indicates that Brooke does pass moral judgment on the two main characters who seek the "lustes of wanton fleshe." He feels that they are punished for their immoral behavior in that they hasten "to most vnhappye deathe." Brooke indicates that he wrote the poem so that these characters could serve as an example to readers. He also demonstrates an unfavorable attitude toward Roman Catholicism in general, and in the characterization of the Fryer and the Nurce in particular, in stating that auricular

confession is "the kay of whoredom, and treason" and in stating that the Nurce, "a dronken gossyppe," and the Fryer are the "naturally fitte instruments of vnchastitie." This attitude toward each of these characters is accented throughout the poem, as will be discussed.

There is no similar passage found in Shakespeare's play. He does not seem to pass moral judgment on any of his characters. As a dramatist, Shakespeare places the emphasis upon the promotion of the action, and the characters are developed to the point that they can achieve this end. Certainly, degrading the characters and passing moral judgment upon them, as did Brooke, could do nothing but detract from the plot and instead draw the attention of the reader to the characters and to his moralistic theme.

Brooke makes his position as an opinionated author clear in this lengthy preface to the reader; Shakespeare differs from this personal style in that he includes in the play no preface containing authorial comment. The play does have a chorus that appears at the beginning to give a brief background of it and reappears during the play to summarize the action. If any judgment is passed in the first entrance of the chorus, it differs from Brooke's preface in that it is not moral judgment passed on specific characters but against the feud, over which these four characters have no real control.

ii

In contrast to Shakespeare, who in his play makes few references to supernatural or mythological forces, Brooke includes over forty references to the force of fortune alone. It is this force that will be discussed. These references can be classified either as those that

illustrate the power given to fortune in that it is believed to exercise a great control over men, or those that personify the power as being false, fierce, good, or fickle.

A reference to the power of fortune is found when Brooke introduces the two feuding families and stresses their equality of class: "there were two auncient stockes, / which Fortune high dyd place" (1.25); (virgules are Brooke's). This power is emphasized three lines later when Brooke speaks of the feud and the unhappiness that it brings the two families through the power of fortune: "and like vnhappy were they both, / when Fortune list to strike" (1.28). When Romeus and Iuliet first see each other, fortune is given the credit for their being able to meet: "Dame Fortune did assent / theyr purpose to aduance" (1.245). Iuliet seems to equate the power of fortune with the unavoidable power of death when she declares that she will love Romeus regardless of what happens: "I force it not let Fortune do / and death their woorst to me" (1.860). Romeus again refers to this power one night when he is with Iuliet:

Since Fortune of her grace / hath place and time assinde,
Where we with pleasure may content / our uncontented minde.
(11.881-82)

In speaking with her mother about the proposed marriage to Paris, Iuliet acknowledges her belief in the power of fortune:

But suffer Fortune feerce / to worke on me her will,
In her it lyeth to do me boote, / it her it lyeth to spill.
(11.1921-22)

A personal comment from the author emphasizes further the power that is attributed to fortune throughout the poem. After describing a night

that Romeus and Iuliet spend together, Brooke seems to regret that fortune has not smiled upon him in the same way that she has the lovers: "but Fortune such delight as theyrs / did neuer graunt me yet" (1.908). It seems ironic that the author who condemns Romeus and Iuliet for seeking "the lustes of wanton fleshe" would want to experience this delight. That Brooke wishes to stress the power of the outside force of fortune upon his characters becomes obvious when one considers the numerous times that he alludes to this power. It is significant that Shakespeare chooses generally to omit this type of reference and instead develops his characters to such an extent that, despite their "star-crossed" love, they seem responsible for their own actions.

Both authors personify fortune, but Brooke uses this literary technique much more frequently. He usually personifies it as being fickle, but he also describes it as being false, fierce, and good. An example of a reference to its falseness is found after Romeus realizes that Rosaline would never love him, just before he meets Iuliet and the new problems associated with this romance. It is stated that "false Fortune cast for him poore wretch / a myschiefe new to brewe" (1.154). The fierceness of fortune is seen when Romeus begins to blame fortune upon his discovery that Iuliet is a Capilet: "wherefore with piteous plaint / feerce Fortune doth he blame" (1.327). As Romeus goes to be with Iuliet for the first time, fortune is said to be good: "[Romeus] walkes toward his desyred home, / good Fortune gyde his way" (1.828). Thus fortune is given the varying qualities of its being false, fierce, and good; however, most of the passages that personify fortune stress its fickleness. Before Romeus comes to Iuliet the first night, it is

uncertain how fortune will treat him, whether fortune will "smyle on him / or if she list to lowre" (1.818). It is stated that Romeus and Iuliet for approximately two months meet each night before fortune decides to change the course of events and causes Romeus to kill Tybalt.

And so he doth till Fortune list / to sawse his sweete, with sowre.
 But who is he that can / his present state assure?
 And say vnto himselfe, thy joyes / shall yet a day endure.
 So wauering Fortunes whele / her chaunges be so straunge.
 And euerywight ythralled is / by fate vnto her chaunge. (11.932-36)

In a further reference to fortune that also foreshadows the fight with Tybalt, the following is stated:

But winters blast with spedy foote / doth bring the fall agayne.
 Whom glorious fortune erst / had heaued to the skies:
 By enuious fortune ouerthrowne / on earth now groueling lyes. (11.951-53)

Fryer Lawrence also stresses this quality of fickleness when he tries to calm Romeus' fears about his banishment:

Wherefore the chaunge of chaunce must not / seeme to a wise man
 straunge.
 For fickle Fortune doth, / in chaunging, but her kind,
 But all her chaunges cannot chaunge / a steady constant minde.
 Though wauering Fortune toorne / from thee her smyling face,
 And sorrow seeke to set him selfe / in banished pleasures place,
 Yet may thy marred state be mended in a while. (11.1404-09)

It is difficult to determine whether Brooke himself believed in the power of fortune, whether he was writing the poem for a superstitious audience who did, or whether he was merely imitating a style of writing that desiderated this type of reference. The main point is that Brooke includes numerous references to fortune, some of which are quite lengthy.

Brooke had already drenched the poem in fatality when Shakespeare decided to use the poem as the source for his play; thus it is significant that Shakespeare chose to alter these ominous overtones. Although the concept of fortune or fate is not totally absent in the play, it is handled quite differently here. The idea is advanced mainly by dramatic premonitions and dreams, not by the characters' constant statements about it as in Brooke's poem.³ Romeo has a premonition of doom just before he goes to the Capulet ball.

For my mind misgives
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date.
(I.iv.106-08)⁴

Another example of this type of foreboding occurs after Mercutio's death when Romeo senses that evil things are going to take place. It is at this point that he states the follow lines:

This day's black fate on more days doth depend;
This but begins the woe others must end.
(III.i.110-11)

Juliet has a presentiment the morning after her first night with Romeo. When he is preparing to leave for Mantua, she has the following vision:

O God! I have an ill-divining soul.
Methinks I see thee, now thou are below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.
(III.v.53-55)

Shakespeare also uses dreams to advance the action of his play. An example of this is found when Romeo is waiting in Mantua for some news of Juliet, and he states the following:

I dreamt my lady came and found me dead--
 Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think!--
 (V.i.6-7)

These examples help to advance the action by foreshadowing events that will take place. They also serve to develop the characters; in this way the audience can learn the characters' inmost thoughts without being constantly burdened with such solemn references as are found in Brooke's poem.

Shakespeare sharply contrasts with Brooke in making few references to fortune, which are listed below. Romeo calls himself "fortune's fool" after he kills Tybalt. Juliet refers to fortune in speaking with the nurse before she marries Romeo when she exclaims, "hie to high fortune!" Friar Laurence mentions this power in the following line when he reprimands Romeo for reacting so immaturely to his banishment: "thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love" (III.iii.144), and again briefly when he discovers that Friar John was not able to deliver his letter to Romeo. At this time he merely states, "unhappy fortune." The longest reference to this force occurs when Juliet realizes that Romeo is leaving for Mantua. In the following speech, Juliet stresses the fickleness that she believes the power to possess:

O fortune, fortune! All men call thee fickle:
 If thou are fickle, what doest thou with him
 That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, fortune;
 For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,
 But send him back.

(III.v.59-63)

Most of these references are short and somewhat insignificant compared with those of Brooke. There seems to be no real power attributed to fortune in these speeches.

In the play are references to heaven and the stars that are generally absent from the poem. An example occurs when the Friar Laurence speaks to the Capulets upon finding Juliet "dead."

Heaven and yourself
 Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all . . .
 Your part in her you could not keep from death;
 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
(IV.v.66-69)

A reference to the stars appears at the very beginning of the play when Romeo and Juliet are called "star-crossed lovers" by the chorus. Another reference to the stars has been mentioned in Romeo's premonition before the ball. Still another appears when Romeo learns of Juliet's supposed death while he is in Mantua. When he learns the bad news, he exclaims: "then I defy you, stars!" (V.i.24). It is at this point that he decides to take his own life. Most of these references, like the references to fortune, are brief and to the point; the emphasis in this work is placed upon lively action--there is no time for lengthy references of any type.

In considering each of these references to outside forces in the play, one discovers that Shakespeare does not emphasize the power of these forces to the extent that Brooke does in the poem. It will be suggested later that Shakespeare developed his characters to the extent that they seemed responsible for their outcome themselves, at least to a degree. Shakespeare makes the conception of fate hardly more than a matter of bad luck, just as he makes the feud, which is an influence on the characters in the play and in the poem, quite nugatory.⁵ The first view of the feud is a vulgar brawl among the servants of the two families. When the two lords enter, they appear ridiculous. Capulet is

attired in a dressing gown in the public streets and calls for his long sword, which was an obsolete weapon. To this his wife answers satirically, "a crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?" (I.i.69). When Montague wants to take part in the fight, his wife also makes him appear comical when she does not listen to his desires and instead retorts: "thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe" (I.i.73). Thus, the feud is not presented by Shakespeare in such a way as to seem to be a force, working against the lovers, as terrible and as serious as Brooke presents it. Brooke includes none of these humorous and satirical passages; in fact, he seems incapable of imparting such a feeling to his poem. There are places in the play where the feud does seem to be a powerful force, as in the fight scenes and in the fact that the courtship is handled so secretly--to the point that the lovers die rather than tell of the marriage; however, Shakespeare does not sustain the idea throughout with full conviction.⁶ He certainly does not belabor this point as does Brooke, who includes at least one reference to some power outside the characters' control every few lines.

Although neither author explains the cause of the feud, Brooke sustains the idea of the feud and its influence upon the actions of the characters throughout his work with a stronger belief in its power than does Shakespeare, who includes at least one incident that is inconsistent with the concept of the total influence of the feud. Before Romeo meets Juliet, he is supposedly in love with Rosaline, who is also a Capulet. However, the feud is not mentioned as being one of the problems in this relationship; the only problem given is that she has forsworn not to love. The idea of the feud is inconsistent in this point, since it is the major obstacle in the relationship between Romeo

and Juliet.⁷ Brooke does not mention that Rosaline is a Capulet, so Shakespeare does not borrow the idea from his source; this indicates that Shakespeare does not want to give the feud or supernatural forces as excuses for all of his characters' thoughts and actions; he is much stronger in his characterizing than is Brooke, who makes his characters seem to be automata that move in a vacuum.

Unlike the poem that contains one all-pervading thought--the idea of the social evil that is brought about by the feud (ultimately ruled by fate) and its influence upon the characters, Shakespeare includes still another important thesis: the idea that the causes of the tragedy lie in the sufferers themselves.⁸ Most of the characters in Romeo and Juliet have personality flaws that contribute to their downfall. These faults are seen in the supporting characters of Tybalt and Mercutio who have false ideals and values. They both have a distorted notion of honor which eventually causes their deaths. The fight between them originates at the ball when Tybalt becomes angry at the fact that Romeo, a Montague, has intruded where he does not belong. This causes Tybalt, because of his idea of honor, to issue a challenge to Romeo. In this respect Tybalt is responsible for the fight. Mercutio should have stayed out of the fight, but his distorted sense of honor would not let him allow the challenge to go unanswered; he feels that Romeo is behaving as a coward. These false ideas cause Romeo's dear friend Mercutio to be killed, and, as a result, Romeo impulsively believes that he should avenge his friend's death. All three characters act impulsively, though not in the same degree, because of what they believe to be right, and, in this respect, they are responsible for their own outcome.⁹

Although Romeus and Iuliet are censured for their immoral behavior in Brooke's introduction, their actions are ultimately blamed on Fortune throughout the poem. Romeus and Iuliet are not developed to the extent that they seem to have any particular character flaws that could cause their tragedy. However, Romeo and Juliet are realistically developed; Shakespeare gives them the qualities of rashness and impetuosity, and thus makes them seem at least partly responsible for the outcome of their actions. These qualities are exhibited in the fact that on the same night they meet, fall in love, and decide that they will soon marry; this is not true in Brooke's poem, where it takes several weeks for these actions to be completed. The characteristics of rashness and impetuosity are emphasized throughout the play in their actions, in their speeches, and in the speeches of other characters. The Friar warns them several times in Act II to take more time. An example of this is found when he gives the following caution: "Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast" (II.iii.95). Juliet is also aware of this fault when she feels that they have made too many important decisions on the first night.

I have no joy of this contract to-night.
 It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
 Ere one can say 'It lightens.'
(II.ii.117-20)

The death of Tybalt proves this quality in both of these characters. As Romeo seeks Tybalt to avenge Mercutio's death, he banishes "respective lenity" to heaven and asks "fire-eyed fury" to be his conductor. Since Mercutio is not involved in this fight according to the poem and no challenge has been issued from Tybalt, the fight there does not

carry the same emotional impact for Romeus: he takes part in this fight only as a matter of self-defense. He does not have the same impetuous and nearly hysterical reaction in this work as he has in the play when he sees that his friend is dead. After Romeo kills Tybalt, this quality reappears. He becomes hysterical and throws himself on the floor of the Friar's cell; this causes the Nurse to say, "stand up, stand up; stand and you be a man" (III.iii.88). Romeo even reaches the point of threatening to kill himself with his own dagger. At this the Friar reprimands him and states that his "wild acts denote the unreasonable fury of a beast" (III.iii.111). Romeus in the poem does not threaten to kill himself; he does exhibit some emotion at this time, but his feelings do not reach this height. Although Juliet doubts Romeo for only a moment when she learns of her cousin's death, the fact remains that she does so with impetuosity. She cries out with the following paradoxical speech:

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
 Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
 Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
 Dove feather'd raven! wolvish-ravens lamb!
 (III.ii.73-76)

This can be considered only an impulsive reaction because Juliet immediately changes her attitude toward Romeo when the Nurse speaks against him. Juliet at this point vehemently defends Romeo to the Nurse:

Blister'd be thy tongue
 For such a wish! he was not born to shame:
 Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit.
 (III.ii.90-92)

Juliet's reaction is much different because she doubts Romeus more

considerably--to the point that she wonders why he has not killed her before this. She immediately believes that he has killed Tybalt for only one reason: to carry on the feud.

But if you did so much/the blood of Capels thyrst,
 Why haue you often spared mine?/mine might haue quenched it first.
 (11.1123-24)

The Nurce does not speak against Romeus in the poem as she does in the play; thus Iuliet does not have the chance to defend Romeus and to appear merely impulsive; the fact that she doubts him for nearly seventy lines also rules out this quality of impetuosity. Shakespeare apparently wants his character of Juliet to appear only to be somewhat rash in her reaction--not to doubt the strength of their love as does Iuliet. The same rashness of course is present in his characterization of Romeo. Shakespeare evidently wanted his characters to seem to be real people who possess character flaws that influence their behavior. He was not satisfied with Brooke's concept of placing the total blame on fortune for his characters' mistakes.

Unlike the Prince in the poem, who is indeed a minor character with little to say in the matter of the feud or anything else, the Prince in the play further extends this concept of rashness by making it clear that he feels that both houses are behaving rashly in their continuance of the feud; they have begun to fight and kill without thinking of the serious consequences. In his first remonstrance to them, he calls them "rebellious subjects" and "enemies to peace." He further unfavorably describes them as "beasts" that have "pernicious rage." He describes their weapons as being "mistempered" and tells them that they are exhibiting "cankered hate." Although the Prince

wants to end the feud in the poem, he never becomes emotionally involved in the situation and is not so important in this work as he is in the play. It is ironic that Brooke dwells to such an extent on the influences of the feud and yet makes so little of the only character in the poem with the power to forcibly control the feud.

In contrast to Brooke's characters, that are quite stereotyped and dry, Shakespeare's characters are surprisingly realistic: they appear to be real people who possess real feelings. When Romeo and Juliet become unhappy, they decide to act for themselves and to take their futures in their own hands. They act in spite of any pressure from their families and actually defy the stars when they marry, when Juliet takes the drug, when Romeo buys the poison, and when they take their own lives. They consult no one if consulting means asking advice. They do confide in the Nurse and the Friar, but it is obvious that these persons could not have changed the lovers' chosen course of action. They act more impulsively and decisively throughout the play than in the poem. Brooke's numerous references to outside forces lead the reader to believe that the actions of his characters are caused more by fortune than by themselves; they have no real choice in their own lives, and they struggle more with fate than do the characters in the play.

iii

Shakespeare compresses the several months of action found in the poem into five days and thus makes the action of his work more meaningful and intense. Immediately after the ball, Romeo goes to the garden from where he can see Juliet on her balcony. After much beautiful

conversation, the two decide that they will be married the next day. However, this action is prolonged in the poem where Romeus passes by her home "a weeke or two in vayne" (1.461), and they finally meet one night in "a garden plot." There are no obstacles presented in the play to their being married the next day after this meeting, but in the poem, the Fryer persuades Romeus to wait "a short day and a night" (1.615). Still another example of Shakespeare's compression is the fact that Romeo and Juliet are able to spend only one night together as man and wife--the night after he kills Tybalt. However, Brooke extends his action further when he states in the Argument that Romeus is able to enjoy "his cheefe delight" for three months. The Fryer again helps to prolong the action when he tells Romeus that he will have to stay in Mantua a year or two, whereas Friar Laurence does not tell Romeo how long he will have to stay there, only that he should stay until he could be brought back in joy. Finally, in the play, the bodies of Romeo and Juliet are discovered the same night that they kill themselves; then the play is quickly brought to an end. The poem is different in this respect because the watch keeps the Fryer "In dongeon depe that night" (1.2807) and does not even tell the Prince until the next day. These examples indicate that Brooke's poem gives a more leisurely account of this story; the author is not concerned about the length of time covered in the poem. For this reason the poem, without any changes, would have been difficult to stage and to account for action that covered several months. Shakespeare is a dramatist who realizes that he must keep the attention of his audience; this would account for his striving for intensity and excitement.

In dramatic contrast to the narrative poem that contains little

excitement, the play includes several incidents that give to it the quality of lively and intense action. Shakespeare opens the play with a fight scene between the servants of the two families which eventually draws the attention of the Prince, but Brooke begins his poem with many descriptive lines about the city of Verona and the characters that live there. Another incident that creates intensity is that Shakespeare allows Tybalt to recognize Romeo at the ball. This causes him to become angry--angry enough to fight Romeo there if Lord Capulet had not intervened. Romeo's appearance at the ball infuriates Tybalt so much that he sends a letter of challenge to Romeo which, of course, leads to Tybalt's own death. No mention is made in the poem of Tybalt's recognizing Romeo at the ball or wanting to do anything about it if he had.

That Shakespeare has the ability to transform a meaningless and dry scene from the poem into a powerful work of art becomes apparent when one considers several scenes that both works include. It is a turning point in each work when Romeo (Romeus) duels with Tybalt, since this fight ends in Tybalt's death and in Romeo's (Romeus') banishment; however, this scene is much more climactic in the play. The main reason that Romeo duels with Tybalt is that Tybalt has just slain Mercutio, Romeo's close friend; Romeo has previously tried to avoid fighting with Tybalt since Tybalt is his new kinsman. The intense feeling that Shakespeare creates in having Romeo avenge his friend's death by killing Tybalt and allowing "fire-eyed fury" to be his conductor, differs greatly from the less dramatic poem in which Romeus enters the fight primarily to defend himself. The fight here is a

general slaughter of the two families and the character Mercutio is not mentioned.

Brooke does not indicate how Juliet receives the news of Tybalt's death, but Shakespeare makes the reception of this news a passionate scene in which the Nurse takes part. It is the Nurse who returns to tell Juliet of her cousin Tybalt's death. She bewails the fact for several lines before she ever tells Juliet what has happened:

Ah, well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead.
 We are undone, lady, we are undone.--
 Alack the day!--he's gone, he's killed, he's dead.
(III.ii.36-38)

Shakespeare's idea of having the Nurse act as a messenger on this occasion serves a double purpose. The passage not only adds spice to the plot with her intense reaction to this death, but it also helps to characterize the Nurse as being a talkative and often overly emotional person who can greatly confuse most issues.

Although Juliet depends on the Nurse as a confidante and then loses faith in her in both the play and the poem, her acceptance of this loss is completely different in the two works. Shakespeare has this relationship end in an emotional scene that takes place after the Capulets tell Juliet that she must marry Paris. At this point the Nurse agrees with the parents even though she knows that Juliet is already married to Romeo. Juliet feels that the Nurse is betraying her, and she never regains faith in the Nurse. When the Nurse leaves at the end of Act III, Juliet soliloquizes:

Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend . . .
 Go counsellor;
 • Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.--

I'll to the friar, to know his remedy:
 If all else fail, myself have power to die.
 (III.v.233; 237-40)

Although Juliet also becomes angry with her Nurse when she openly voices her favor of Paris as a husband, she expresses nothing specific against the Nurse: "but ay she hid her wrath, / and seemed well content" (1.2311). Since both characters have lost the only person, besides the Friar, in whom they could trust, it seems only natural that they would show some feeling at this point; thus Juliet's emotional response seems much more normal than that of Juliet who is able to appear to be "well content."

Both authors have Juliet seek the advice of the Friar when she feels that she has no one else to whom she can turn, but Shakespeare adds a dramatic touch that is totally his own when he has Juliet encounter Paris at Friar Laurence's cell. She becomes enraged at the fact that Paris is taking their marriage for granted and even wants her to confess her love for him to the Friar. The climax of the meeting is when Paris leaves and she is allowed to express her emotion to the Friar:

O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so,
 Come weep with me; past hope, past cure, past help!
 (IV.i.44-45)

This intense feeling continues for several lines until the Friar offers her his plan. Paris is the key to this and to the previous scene in the play; it is the proposed marriage to him that forces Juliet to seek a solution from the Friar in the first place; if it were not for Paris, she would not have had to take the drug. It is thus emphatic that she

meets the one person whom she would most like to avoid at the Friar's. The poem contains no such emotionally-harrowing contretemps; this scene, with its abundant and quite emotionless detail about a long-winded confession that Juliet makes to the Friar, is indeed drab in comparison.

In striking contrast to Brooke's mundane description of Romeus' quiet reaction to the news of Juliet's death is the dramatic scene that Shakespeare creates in having Romeo cry out in open defiance of the stars. No such defiant statement is found anywhere in the poem, although the author stresses the complete supremacy of these powers; he could not allow a character to say such a blatant thing against them or Brooke's awesome spell would be broken. It is also significant that Romeo is immediately able to think of how he could defy the stars:

Let's see for means:--O mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary.--

(V.i.35-37)

This distinctly differs from the poem where Romeus is so unsure how he can resolve this issue that he is described as wandering over the town, street by street,

To see if he in any place / may fynde, in all the towne,
A salve meete for his sore, / an oyle fitte for his wounde.
(11.2563-65)

Both Romeus' unemotional response to Juliet's death and his leisurely search for some means to kill himself indicate how boring and uneventful the narrative poem actually is. It has none of the excitement that is found in the play in which Shakespeare allows his characters to

respond deeply to the situations in which they are involved.

The major climax of both works should occur when the lovers take their own lives, but it is especially evident even in this scene that Brooke is determined to burden every passage with abundant detail, while Shakespeare strives for intense action. After Brooke describes how Romeus and Iuliet take their lives, he immediately begins to give a long account of what happens to each character in the work: the Fryer is not punished, and he goes to a hermitage where he lives five years until his death; the Nurce is banished for not revealing the secret marriage to the Capilets; the apothecary is hanged, and, we are told, the hangman is even given his coat; Romeus' servant is allowed to go free because he only obeyed his master's wishes. This detail serves only to detract from the main action. Shakespeare distinctly contrasts with Brooke's last scene by creating a dramatic death scene and then bringing the play quickly to an end. Because of Shakespeare's treatment, the reader or audience still feels the effects of the tragedy long after the play has ended.

iv

Unlike Brooke who apparently developed his action completely apart from his characters and then sought to have these characters fit the mold that he had made for them, Shakespeare seemed able to develop his action and characters nearly simultaneously in that they each accent the other and work together to bring about his desired end. Although Shakespeare borrowed the basic action of his play from Brooke, he was able, through some changes in this plot, to develop his own characteristic matter. In contrast to Brooke's dry, lifeless characters are

Shakespeare's characters that seem real. Their words and actions, mutatis mutandis, seem natural; they are thus able to sustain the plot. Brooke's characters seem plot-ridden compared to those of Shakespeare.

Although the characters of the Prince, the Capulets, and the Montagues are basically the same in both works, Shakespeare greatly improved the characters of Romeo, Juliet, Benvolio, Mercutio, Tybalt, Friar Laurence, the Nurse, and the minor servants. In considering Shakespeare's changes, it is important to note that Brooke's poem is over three thousand lines in length, one half again as long as Macbeth; thus he had abundant opportunity to develop his characters. Brooke either did not choose to develop them to any extent, or, more probably, he did not have the ability to do so.

Most of the action involving Romeo is similar in both works, but the compressed action of the play causes Romeo to appear more eager and determined than Romeus. Because of the much shorter time involved in the play, it is necessary for Romeo to see Juliet after the ball on the night that they first meet, whereas Romeus does not see Juliet for several days according to the poem. When Shakespeare makes Romeo seem weak and overly emotional, as in his immature love for Rosaline and in his hysterical acceptance of his banishment, he is closely following Brooke's poem.¹⁰ The character of Romeo, in contrast with Romeus, knows what he wants enough to seek Juliet, profess his love, and decide to marry her the first night that he meets her. However, Romeus is presented in the poem as walking by Juliet's home for several days before talking with her. Romeo also takes more decisive action in planning how he would take his life than does Romeus. When Romeo learns

of Juliet's "death," he knows immediately what he is going to do; he defies the stars and decides that he will lie with Juliet that same night. He does not hesitate in planning how he could accomplish this and goes directly to an apothecary's shop that he remembers having seen. Although Romeo also decides that he wants to be with Juliet in death, he is not so clear as to how he will do it and has to search extensively for some means of killing himself. Even if he does consider poison from the beginning, his search for it does not have the same dramatic quality as Romeo's instant recollection of the apothecary shop and his immediately finding it.

Romeo's two romances, with Rosaline and with Juliet, provide main themes in both works; however, it is important that they are handled differently. The two authors contrast in their treatment of Romeo's love for Rosaline. Brooke includes fifty lines in his poem describing this situation in great detail before Romeo discusses it with anyone. However, the first mention of this infatuation in the play occurs when Romeo talks with his friend Benvolio about his state of depression. Since Rosaline does not play an important part in the action of the play, and since it is Romeo's love for Juliet that Shakespeare wants to stress, it seems logical that he dwells only momentarily on this subject. The idea of sustaining the plot and getting into the action at hand is always foremost in the play. Another variation is that Romeo even considers leaving Verona to see "if change of place might change away/his ill bestowed loue" (1.76). This thought never occurs to Romeo, who attends the ball because he knows that Rosaline will be there. He does not consider forgetting Rosaline until he meets Juliet, and thus his strong love for Juliet is contrasted with his former

feeling for Rosaline. This distinction is not made clear in the poem that contains lengthy passages about even the most minor points. Brooke openly disapproves of Romeus' immoral behavior with Iuliet, as is seen in his introduction to the reader; Shakespeare does not disapprove of Romeo and instead presents his love for Juliet with a touch of innocence. This quality is evidenced in his first words to Juliet:

If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine. . . .
(I.v.91-92)

The entire speech stresses his humility in her presence. Their first conversation is in the formality and beauty of a sonnet, and the kiss that ends it is half jest and half sacrament. This ceremony is shy, grave, and sweet; the final tragedy seems even deeper because of the innocence of its beginning.¹¹ There is no comparable passage in the poem that alludes to the innocence of Romeus or of Iuliet, and the only ceremony is merely clasping of hands, with little exchange between them.

Obviously a character's speeches form a chief part of his impression on the mind of the reader; it is because of the marked contrast in the quality of speeches given to Romeo as opposed to those given to Romeus that make Romeo appear a much stronger character than his counterpart in the poem. An example of this contrast is seen when Romeo first sees Juliet at the ball as opposed to the same scene in the poem. When Romeus first enters the room, he decides to examine all the women present. At last he sees Iuliet whom he considers to be of perfect shape:

Which Theseus, or Paris would / haue chose to their rape.
 Whom erst he neuer sawe, / of all she pleasde him most:
 Within himself he said to her, / thou iustly mayst thee boste.
 Of perfit shapes renoune, / and Beauties sounding prayse:
 (11.197-201)

Unlike Romeus' self-contained evaluation of Iuliet, Romeo's speech descriptive of his first impression of Juliet is much more personal and passionate. It is one of his most beautiful speeches:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.
 (I.v.42-45)

Most of Romeo's speeches are completely Shakespeare's invention, and their beauty completely surpasses that of Romeus'. Another instance of this is found in a scene that takes place during the ball, where the situation is also different. Brooke presents a somewhat humorous picture of Iuliet being seated between Mercutio and Romeus. Mercutio seizes one of her hands with his hand, colder than "frosen mountayne yse" (1.261), and Romeus holds her other hand "within his trembling hand" (1.264). Iuliet speaks first in the poem; in fact, it is stated that Romeus "long held his peace" (1.275). Iuliet believes that he probably feels "a vehement love" (1.273) for her only because his face colored "from pale to red, from red to pale" (1.272), not because of anything that he says to her. Finally, after Iuliet remarks to him that she blesses the time of his arrival at her home, Romeus is able to speak his first words to her.

What chauce (q'he) vnaware to me / O lady myne is hapt?
 That geues you worthy cause, / my cumming here to blisse:
 (11.284-85)

This impression of Romeus is indeed weak; it is humorous that Iuliet has to prod him along, and when he does say something, his words have little meaning or value. Shakespeare presents this conversation in a more beautiful and dramatic scene. He makes this moment stand apart from everything else by giving them time alone together, and he gives it charm by having them share a sonnet. Romeo's first words to her are beyond compare:

If I profane with my unworhiest hand
 This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,
 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
 (I.v.91-94)

Another contrast is found in the way the two authors describe the lovers' first meeting after the ball. This event takes place several days later in the poem. When Romeus first sees Iuliet in the garden, it is stated that he "his moorning cloke of mone cast of" (1.472). Brooke pushes Romeus' feelings even more into the background when he describes Iuliet as rejoicing more than he at their meeting since she has been wondering why he has not come sooner. She also speaks first on this occasion when she tells him that he has risked his life in coming. In answer to her, he replies the following:

Fayre lady myne, dame Iuliet, / my lyfe (quod he)
 Euen from my byrth committed was / to fatal sisters three.
 They may in spyte of foes, / draw forth my liuely thread;
 And they also, who so sayth nay, / a sonder may it shreed.
 (11.499-502)

This passage does not have the emotion that is present in the balcony scene in the play that takes place when Romeo finds Juliet

immediately after the ball. When he first sees her, he can hardly control himself:

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 . . .

(II.ii.2-5)

The previous passages represent some of the differences that are found throughout the two works in the characters of Romeus and Romeo. Shakespeare makes Romeo more aggressive and far more compassionate than the character of Romeus that he found in the poem. These qualities are developed to the point that it does not seem unnatural that Romeo can take his own life when he feels that he has lost Juliet, who is the most important person to him. This is not true of Romeus. It seems unbelievable that this unemotional person, who never truly gives vent to his feelings, could feel that deeply about anyone; thus his death seems unrealistic.

One of the main differences in the character of Juliet is that she is more forward in the poem than in the play. When she first meets Romeus at the ball, she is seated between Romeus and Mercutio holding a hand of each. She makes the first major move when "she with tender hand / his tender palm hath prest" (1.267). Romeus is too shy to speak, and since she desperately wants him to say something, she speaks first:

And her desire of hearing him, / by sylvence dyd encrease.
At last with trembling voyce / and shamefast chere, the made
Vnto her Romeus tournde her selfe, / and thus to him she sayde.
O blessed be the time / of thy arriual here.

(11.277-80)

Juliet is not so forward and waits for Romeo to speak several lines that reveal his interest in her before she speaks to him. When Juliet has to leave the ball, she again proves to be forward. She clasps Romeus' hand so hard that her body shakes, and she speaks first once again:

You are no more your owne / (deare frend) then I am yours
 (My honor saued) prest tobay / your will, while life endures.
 Lo here the lucky lot / that sild true louers finde:
 Eche takes away the others hart, / and leaues the owne behinde.
 (11.313-16)

The physical contact is a kiss in the play, and Juliet does not speak of her emotion afterward. She continues the metaphor of saints and palmers, stating: "Then have my lips the sin that they have took" (I.v.106). When he humorously asks for his sin again, she retorts that he kisses by the book. These are the last words that she speaks in this scene, and she does not reveal her feelings here as the character does in the poem. Juliet appears to be more forward than Juliet once again when she finally meets Romeus several days after the ball. She again initiates the conversation with him:

With whispering voyce, ybroke with sobs / thus is her tale begonne:
 Oh Romeus (of your lyfe) / too lauas sure you are:
 That in this place, and at this tyme / to hasard it you dare.
 What if your dedly foes / my kynsmen, saw you here?
 (11.490-93)

Although Juliet is actually the first to speak freely of her love, she does so in a soliloquy that she does not intend him to hear. She is embarrassed to discover that he has heard her:

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.
 (II.ii.85-87)

The previous passages indicate that Iuliet is much more bold than Juliet. Whereas Iuliet speaks first on several occasions, Juliet usually allows Romeo to take the lead. Since a girl of this age would be allowed to say little in important matters of any kind at this period of history, and since she is described by both authors as often having to yield to her demanding father, Iuliet does not seem so realistic as Juliet. Shakespeare portrays her as a young girl who has fallen in love for the first time and who is not sure how to act; it would not seem logical for a girl who is described by both authors as never having thought of love or marriage to act as boldly as Iuliet does when she considers these things for the first time in her life.

Another contrast in this character seen in the two works is in her different reactions to the fact that Romeo (Romeus) wants to swear his love for her, the fact that Juliet protests Romeo's desire to swear, whereas Iuliet does not, seems to continue the idea that Shakespeare wants Juliet to appear more innocent than Brooke's character of Iuliet. Iuliet does not object to his swearing in the poem; he swears an oath that he will honor, serve, and please her. However, in the play Romeo wants to swear his love by the moon, but Juliet protests because of the moon's inconstancy. When he asks by what he should swear, she further protests:

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.

(II.ii.112-14)

When Romeo begins to swear after this statement, she again stops him and states, "well, do not swear" (II.ii.116). Shakespeare here stresses the innocence and purity of Juliet in having her protest this act and in making her appear afraid to do too much too soon. Brooke, on the other hand, gives no evidence of wanting this quality of innocence to be present in his character of Juliet.

The fact that Juliet is less bold and appears more innocent on occasion than Juliet does not mean that Juliet is portrayed as being unable to express her emotions for Romeo; Shakespeare, on the contrary, is able to impart to the speeches of Juliet a quality of beauty and passion that can be found nowhere in Brooke's character. An example is seen in the balcony scene that is completely Shakespeare's invention. This scene transforms Juliet from a young girl who has never loved a man or thought of marriage into a woman capable of loving deeply. She is able to see beyond an ancient feud and is able to see the man as a real person:

'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.

(II.ii.38-44)

There is no such beauty of trust found in Juliet, who is very doubtful of the fact that Romeo is a Montague. She is unable to sleep the first night because "now she lykes her choyse, / and now her

choyse she blames," (1.371). She doubts him for approximately forty-six lines (11.356-402). She even thinks that perhaps "the poyson'd hooke is hid, / wrapt in the pleasant bayte" (1.388). Although Juliet is shocked at first to learn that Romeo is a Montague, she seems much more mature than Juliet in that she can more quickly see him as a man--not merely as a Montague. Another of Juliet's beautiful passages occurs in this same scene when she professes her love as Romeo is preparing to leave:

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.
(II.ii.133-35)

This scene is important because it has no basis in the poem, and because, through Juliet's speeches, it serves to emphasize the fact that Shakespeare was able to impart to this character far more beauty and depth of character than Brooke seems capable of giving to his character Juliet.

Shakespeare not only changed Juliet's age from sixteen, as he found it in the poem, to fourteen; he more realistically created this character as a young girl with very little experience in love who is more innocent and trusting than the character in the poem. Her speeches more beautifully depict a person with strong emotions who loves without reservation.

Shakespeare expanded and developed the character of Benvolio from the suggestion in the poem of an unidentified friend who talked with Romeus about Rosaline:

But one among the rest, / the trustiest of his feeres.
 Farre more than he with counsel fild, / and ryper of his yeeres.
 Gan sharply him rebuke, / such loue to him he bare:
 That he was felow of his smart, / and partner of his care.
 (11.101-04)

Romeo also talks with a friend who has been identified earlier in the play as Benvolio. This scene is expanded far more than the comparative scene in the poem; the purpose of this is to develop the character as being trusted by nearly everyone. Whereas the nameless character in the poem simply appears at this time, Benvolio has been present since the beginning of the play when he tried to quiet the fight between the servants. He has even had time to be prepared for the discussion with Romeo by Lord Montague, who tells him that Romeo has been downcast for days, and that he will discuss his problems with no one. He then asks Benvolio to try to discover the source of these problems, and Benvolio agrees to do this. It is significant that Romeo is willing to discuss his personal thoughts about Rosaline with this character when he has confided in no one previously; it is also important that Benvolio is able during this conversation to persuade Romeo to attend the Capulet ball, which is to be a turning point in the action.

Although the friend in the poem is not mentioned before or after this point, Benvolio appears frequently in the play and is carefully developed as a trustworthy person; one on whom his family, his friends, and the authorities can depend to act with good sense. Of course the previous passage indicates that Lord Montague and Romeo trust this character implicitly. His uncle, Lord Montague, also had faith in the veracity of Benvolio earlier when he asked him to

describe the fight that had taken place between the servants at the beginning of the play. At his request, Benvolio gives Lord Montague an accurate, detailed description of this fight:

Here were the servants of your adversary
 And yours close fighting ere I did approach:
 I drew to part them: in that instant came
 The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared . . .
 While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,
 Came more and more, and fought on part and part.
 Till the prince came, who parted either part.
 (I.i.99-103; 106-08)

Another instance of Benvolio's trustworthiness as demonstrated through the responses of his friends is seen in the fact that Mercutio asks Benvolio to help him to a house after he has been wounded. It is important that Mercutio would call on this particular person since several of his friends are present--even Romeo, the main character, is present. The authorities also respect Benvolio's judgment. When the Prince arrives and finds both his kinsmen Mercutio and Tybalt slain, it is Benvolio whom he asks to give an account of what has happened. Lady Capulet does not want the Prince to listen to Benvolio, since he is a kinsman to Romeo and "affection makes him false" (III.i.170). She wants him killed immediately, but the Prince, of course, does not listen to her. After Benvolio gives his account of the story, the Prince speaks the following words:

Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;
 Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?
 (III.i.175-76)

Thus, the Prince seems to rely on Benvolio's account of the fight. These various references to the fact that Benvolio is honorable make

a deeper impression upon the reader since they come not only from his friends and family, but also from the authorities: all of this indicates that Shakespeare wanted this quality to be clearly understood.

In contrast with Brooke who did not develop the character of the friend to any degree, Shakespeare gave his character the type name of Benvolio that means wish well, and he presented Benvolio as a character who tries to avoid violence. It is he who enters at the beginning of the play and tries to stop the fight between the servants by beating down their weapons and stating:

Part, fools!
Put up your swords; you know not what you do.
(I.i.57-58)

Another example of Benvolio's temperance occurs when he tries to get Mercutio to leave the public place because he senses that a fight could easily take place:

The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,
And, if we meet, we shall not 'scape a brawl;
(III.i.2-3)

The fact that Shakespeare chose to carefully develop this quality of temperance in Benvolio is noteworthy because Brooke did not give this quality to any of his characters and also because Benvolio's temperance adds a distinct contrast to the violence of the fights associated with the feud. Brooke, on the other hand, gives no evidence of wanting anything to detract from the fury of the feud that he stresses constantly.

Benvolio makes no appearance after Act III, scene i, but he

still appears much more frequently here than in the poem where he appears only once. Although Brooke describes him as being only a friend to Romeus, Shakespeare presents Benvolio as Romeo's friend and kinsman. This development makes Benvolio's primary qualities of being trustworthy and temperate even more significant--he was able to remain calm amid the turmoil of his own family's feud with the Capulets. Through this peace-loving character, Shakespeare was able to inject a breath of fresh air into Brooke's stagnant story of the feud.

The witty character of Mercutio is also developed from a mere mention in the poem of a courtier at the ball who sits beside Juliet and holds one of her hands. He is noted as being "coorteous of his speche, / and plesant of devise" (l.256), but there is no development of the character beyond this point. However, in the play "Mercutio is presented as being a perfect embodiment of animal spirits acting in and through the brain."¹² He is considered the prince of wit because he can put unexpected things together in a most appropriate way. He and Romeo are always playing games of wit and trying to see who can outdo the other. One of these games leads into Mercutio's Queen Mab speech that will be discussed.

Unlike the little developed character of Mercutio in the poem who never says anything and whose major action is holding Juliet's hand, the same character in the play is created as having a personality that is uniquely his own. In the play he is definitely mercurial and is true to the humour concealed in the meaning of his type name. Next to the two lovers, he can be considered the most important character; it is from his volatile action in fighting with Tybalt that

his own life and the lives of others are forfeited. He could not change what he was; therefore, it is beyond his control that he becomes the agent of Romeo's banishment that eventually causes the deaths of the lovers. If Shakespeare had not emphasized Mercutio's dominant humour, he would have risked permitting his audience to put the total blame on Mercutio for the tragedy and thereby to draw wrong conclusions about the play. It seems that Shakespeare needed a certain kind of character to give the work a sense of realism and, in so doing, to surpass the ordinary love myth; he developed Mercutio for this purpose. Mercutio is a bawdy realist who can puncture lovers' ideals, and also an intellectual who can challenge Romeo at wordplay and keep the action moving.¹³ His adeptness in the games of wit is made abundantly clear in his purple patch, the Queen Mab speech, that takes place after he and Romeo have been engaged in a match of wits. It can be considered that this speech is merely a counter play in this game because it contains many brilliant rhetorical figures, but its importance seems to go beyond this. In this speech Mercutio alludes to three major themes of the play--love, money, and position. He refers to love through his sensual references--some of which have bawdy overtones:

This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.

(I.iv.92-94)

Mercutio alludes to the theme of money through lawyers who dream of fees and parsons who dream of tith pigs' tails and to the theme of position or place through the ambition of courtiers. The ideas of

money and position further symbolize the outer world of Verona that threatens the love of Romeo and Juliet. The violence associated with the feud is represented in the cutting of foreign throats, "of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades" (I.iv.84); this also suggests dueling--the way that both Mercutio and Tybalt will die.¹⁴ Although the speech is witty on the surface, it contains the major themes of the play. It contrasts the microcosm of the love of Romeo and Juliet with the macrocosm of the outside world, particularly as it is manifested in the forces of the feud that exert pressure on this love. This passage helps to explain Mercutio to the audience and to foreshadow the action that will follow. Mercutio is essential to the outcome of the play because of his death in the fight with Tybalt that causes Romeo to kill Tybalt and to be banished for it, but he is also necessary because of the wit and touches of the workaday world that he adds. It becomes evident that Shakespeare had to kill Mercutio lest Mercutio "upstage" Romeo, who is somewhat dull in comparison with the witty Mercutio. In the poem Mercutio plays no part in the fight with Tybalt, and no mention is made of his death; since he appears only once, and then briefly, he is not a major part of the action.

Shakespeare's ability to create memorable characters is apparent in the character of Mercutio; this fact is even more emphatic since he invented the entire character from an insignificant mention in the poem. There is no way to compare the silent Mercutio of Brooke's poem to the brilliantly rhetorical Mercutio of Shakespeare's play who is a major element in the climax, who adds humor and vitality to the work, and who helps to link the romance of Romeo and

Juliet with an earthy sense of reality.

Tybalt is another character that plays a more important part in the action of the play than of the poem. No mention is made of Tybalt's being among those present at the Capulet ball. This greatly contrasts with the play in that Shakespeare early prepares for the climactic duel between Tybalt and Romeo when he has Tybalt become incensed when discovering Romeo at the ball. As has been mentioned, his overly-punctilious sense of honor would have caused him to challenge Romeo on the spot if Lord Capulet, who was unwilling to let anything interrupt his festivities, had not intervened. Although he must obey his uncle at this point, he is not willing to forget the incident:

Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting
 Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.
 I will withdraw: but this intrusion shall,
 Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall.
(I.v.87-90)

Shakespeare creates even more tension through this character in another event that does not occur in the poem--when Mercutio and Benvolio learn that Tybalt has sent a letter of challenge to Romeo's home. This challenge not only gives Mercutio a reason to fight Tybalt, since he does not want Romeo to appear cowardly, but it also serves to further develop the character of Tybalt when Mercutio and Benvolio discuss Tybalt's fighting ability:

More than the prince of cats, I can tell you. O, he is
 the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you
 sing the prick-song, keeps time, distance and proportion
 . . . the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a
 gentlemen of the very first house, of the first and second
 cause.
(II.ii.18-24)

Although Romeus slays Tybalt out of self-defense after Tybalt strikes at him twice with his sword, Romeo kills Tybalt to avenge his friend Mercutio's death. This fight is much more passionate in the play where Tybalt desperately wants to fight Romeo. He spurs Romeo with terrible insults:

Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford
 No better term than this,--thou art a villain.
 (III.i.55-56)

When Romeo refuses to fight because of the sacramentarian implications in his recent marriage to Juliet, Mercutio intervenes on his behalf and calls Tybalt a "rat-catcher." Thus it is Tybalt's hot temper mixed with Mercutio's sometimes caustic wit that causes the fatal duels in the play, and the climactical action present in this scene far exceeds the vulgar brawl that is described in the poem.

Like most of Brooke's characters, Tybalt is developed for the singular purpose of taking part in the open fight between the two families. He is not mentioned before or after this point and is completely undeveloped as a character. Even Shakespeare's minor characters are expanded to a greater extent than any of Brooke's characters, and Tybalt is no exception. He is presented throughout the play as being an irascible character who likes to fight, especially when he feels that his pride has been bruised.

Fryer Lawrence is another character in the poem who has very few lines of his own; most of characterization is through authorial comment. Shakespeare greatly alters this situation and gives his Friar several beautiful passages that are of major importance to the work. Although both authors include this character's knowledge of herbs and

plants, Shakespeare gives Friar Laurence an incomparable speech about this knowledge:

Within the infant rind of this weak flower
Poison hath residence, and medicine power:
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part,
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
(II.iii.23-26)

These lines emphasize the Friar's familiarity with herbs and foreshadow the fact that he will be able to produce a drug that can make Juliet appear dead for a specified time. The passage also helps lay the ground work for the following lines that illustrate a theme of the play:

Two such opposed kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs,--Grace and rude Will;
And where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.
(II.iii.27-30)

The Friar is able to see emblems of the world in nature. The threads of love and hate run throughout the play, and they are symbolized in the previous speech as the different qualities present in herbs.

Although the Capulets and Montagues detest each other, they also have good characteristics in that they are loyal to their own family and friends. The tragedy of the play is caused by an excess of passion and pride--the canker death does eat the plant. Despite their goodness, several characters lose their lives because of this hate.

In distinct contrast with Shakespeare who does not judge any of his characters is Brooke who, in an introduction to the reader, uses strong language that is blatantly degrading to the characters of the Fryer and the Nurce:

(Romeus and Iuliet) were conferring their principall counsels with dronken gossyppes, and superstitious fryers (the naturally fitte instrumentes of vnchastitie) attempting all aduentures of peryll, for thattaynyng of their wished lust, vsung auriculer confession (the kay of whoredome, and treason) for furtheraunce of theyr purpose, abusyng the honorable name of lawefull mariage, to cloke the shame of stolne contractes, . . .

Brooke's unfavorable attitude toward the Fryer is further stressed in his giving non-religious details about the character. When Romeus goes to the Fryer for refuge after killing Tybalt, it is explained by the author that the Fryer hides him in a secret place that contains a soft and "trimly drest" bed "where he was wont in youth, / his fayre frendes to bestowe" (1.1273). Shakespeare does not allude to any women in the past of his Friar, who is known by everyone to be a holy man. Fryer Lawrence is also presented as being extremely worried about his reputation. Evidence of this is found when Iuliet first goes to him for advice about the marriage to Paris. The Fryer does not want to do anything wrong primarily because he knows that he is near the "brink of his appointed grave" (1.2118), and he wants to keep his account clear:

Now ought I from hence forth / more depely print in mynde
 The judgement of the lord, then when / youthes folly made
 me blynde,
 When loue and fond desyre / were boyling in my brest,
 Whence hope and dred by striuing thoughts/ had banished
 frendly rest.

(11.2121-24)

These lines indicate the Fryer's concern for his own welfare before his considering the needs of others and reveal an unfavorable side of his character. Another instance of his primary interest in himself occurs when Iuliet returns to him in total desperation because the

wedding date has been set. The Fryer's first reaction is to fear that she would do something wrong for which he would be punished, but he finally decides that he will help her. He then gives her the drug in the belief that this will lead to peace between the two families and that he will receive all the credit. Brooke has obviously given these details of the Fryer's secret loves and of his concern for himself for the purpose of shedding an unfavorable light on his character and the religion he represents. There is no example of such an attitude present in Shakespeare's play where the Friar thinks of how he can help Romeo and Juliet without hesitation. Although he also hopes the union will end the feud, he does not help them only to gain glory for himself.

Still another difference in the two works regarding this character is found in the last scene when the two lovers kill themselves. In the poem the watchmen of the town see a light in the Capilet tomb on the tragic night. When they enter the tomb and find the Fryer and Romeus' man, the watchmen immediately suppose them to be murderers, and "they lodged them vnder grounde" (l.2807) over night. They do not consult the Prince about it until the next day. The watchmen either do not recognize the Fryer, who seems to be known by all the other characters, or they do not believe him to be a holy man. Although the Fryer is found to be innocent of any crime, it is significant that Brooke injects this momentary doubt of the Fryer into his work, whereas Shakespeare has his first watchman summon the Prince immediately that night. The Prince does not question the Friar's honor at all and replies that he has always known the Friar to be holy; no one seems to doubt the innocence of Friar Laurence.

Shakespeare does not exhibit the ill-will toward Catholicism that is present in Brooke's account of the Fryer, nor does he lean toward the Catholic doctrine. The Monk is indeed drawn with a delicate touch in the play.¹⁵ "Shakespeare has transformed the Friar of doubtful character whom he found in the poem into a kindly, human, even humorous, and yet truly spiritual counsellor. . . ." ¹⁶

The Nurse is presented in both works as being talkative, but Shakespeare introduces her in a humorous manner that is not found in the poem. The first impression of the Nurse is given when Lady Capulet speaks to Juliet about Paris. It is here made evident that the Nurse is extremely loquacious. While merely trying to compute Juliet's age, she recalls past experiences with Juliet and her own daughter Susan. After a lengthy speech, she is stopped by Lady Capulet: "enough of this; I pray thee hold thy peace" (I.iii.49). However, the Nurse continues to reminisce and repeat until Juliet asks her to stint herself. Instead of stopping, the Nurse persists:

Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace!
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:
An I might live to see thee married once,
I have my wish.

(I.iii.59-62)

Throughout the discussion on Paris, she constantly interrupts with her opinions. In this scene, as in the other scenes that involve the Nurse, it is her talkative manner and the reactions of the other characters to her that render this character humorous. The first passage in the poem that characterizes the Nurse appears when Romeus tells her of his wedding plans. In this scene she also tells of her past experiences with Juliet, but the scene is different in that

Brooke includes an unfavorable comment about the Nurse:

But when these Beldams sit / at ease vpon theyr taylor:
 The day and eke the candle light / before theyr talke shall fayle.
 And part they say is true, / and part they do devise:
 Yet boldly do they chat of both / when no man checks theyr lyes.
 (11.663-66)

In contrast with Brooke, Shakespeare makes this character a trusted or at least tolerated member of the family who is allowed to listen to private conversations. Even though Lady Capulet and Juliet try to quiet her, they evidently do not become too annoyed or they would have asked her to leave. Their remonstrances serve only to make her seem more comical. This quality is further stressed when the Nurse returns from speaking with Romeo about his marriage plans. She knows that Juliet has been anxiously awaiting this news; however, instead of coming directly to the point, the Nurse complains extensively of her aches and pains:

I am a-weary; give me leave awhile.
 Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt have I had!
 (II.v.25-26)

Jesu, what haste? can you not stay awhile?
 Do you not see that I am out of breath?
 (II.v.29-30)

Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!
 It beats as if it would fall in twenty pieces.
 My back o' t' other side,--O, my back, my back!
 Beshrew your heart for sending me about,
 To catch my death with jaunting up and down!
 (II.v.47-51)

She continues the levity of the scene by avoiding the subject for several more lines. The similar passage in the poem has no such

touch and is quite dull in comparison:

The chaumber door she shuts, and then / she saith with smyling face,
 Good newes for thee, my gyrle, / good tidings I thee bring:
 Leaue of thy woonted song of care / and now of pleasure sing.
 For thou mayst hold thy selfe / the happiest vnder sonne:
 That in so little while, so well / so worthy a knight hast wonne.
 (11.674-78)

Although both authors present the Nurse as being garrulous, Shakespeare's amusing portrayal of the character adds a quality of animation that is not found in her drab counterpart.

In distinct contrast with Shakespeare who obviously wants to add vitality through the character is Brooke who seems determined to choke all semblance of life from his Nurce and to use her merely as an example of immorality. This is first made evident in his introduction when he labels her as a drunken gossip. Both Romeo and Romeus offer to pay the Nurse for acting as a messenger, but much more is made of her reaction to this offer in the poem. When Romeus offers her six gold crowns, she accepts them without refusal. Brooke uses this payment against the Nurce, and he makes this derogatory attitude clear:

In seven yeres twice tolde / she had not bowed so lowe,
 Her crooked knees, as now they bowe . . .
 If any man be here / whom loue hath clad with care:
 To him I speake, if thou wilt spede, / thy purse thou must not spare
 For glittring gold is woont / by kynde to mooue the hart:
 And often times a slight rewarde / doth cause a more desart.
 Ywritten haue I red, / I wot not in what booke,
 There is no better way to fish than with a golden hooke.
 (11.669-70; 707-12)

After Romeo offers to pay the Nurse, she immediately refuses to take the money: "No, truly, sir; not a penny" (II.iv.66). He again

tries to persuade her, but we are not told if she takes it. Even if she does, it is significant that Shakespeare makes no further reference to the matter. When the Nurse tries to convince Juliet to marry Paris although she knows that Juliet is already married, Brooke again makes a degrading comment:

But greatly did these wicked wordes / the ladies mynde disease;
 But ay she hid her wrath, / and seemed well content
 When dayly did the naughty nurce / new arguments inuent.
 (11.2310-12)

Although Juliet becomes angry with her Nurse for the same reason, Shakespeare includes no personal comment on the issue; he lets his audience draw its own conclusions. One of the most significant examples of Brooke's attitude appears when he has the Prince banish her for concealing the marriage from Juliet's parents; he believes that this secret was the main cause of the tragedy. This point could not have been overlooked by Shakespeare, so it is emphatic that he finds no guilt in his Nurse. His Prince does not even mention the Nurse. Unlike Brooke, who appears to have created the Nurse as an object for ridicule and as another character at whom he could point his omniscient moral finger, Shakespeare gives no evidence of punishing the Nurse with moralisms.

The Nurse is indeed comical, but she is not a one-sided character like the moral-ridden Nurse; Shakespeare develops her as having genuine feelings. It is she who brings Juliet the news of Tybalt's death. Her speech makes it obvious that she loved Tybalt:

O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!
 O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman!

That ever I should live to see thee dead!
(III.ii.61-63)

No such feeling is given to the Nurse in the poem. It is not stated how Juliet learns of Tybalt's death; we learn only that she mourns for him. The Nurse cannot understand why Juliet is grieving to such an extent over the death, and she unemotionally attempts to quiet Juliet:

When stormes of care, / and troubles aryse,
Then is the time for men to know, / the foolish from the wise.
(11.1207-08)

The Nurse again shows little feeling for Tybalt when she states that "his so sodayn death, was in / his rashness and his pryde" (1.1214). This is an unrealistic response from one who has worked for the Capulets for many years; she should feel something at the loss or at least understand Juliet's feelings. The Nurse is more fully developed as a character who considers herself a part of this family and who openly responds to their misfortunes. These feelings are evidenced in her tumultuous reaction to Juliet's death:

Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!
O, well-a-day, that ever I was born!
Some aqua-vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!
(IV.v.13-15)

In contrast, the solemn Nurse unrealistically says nothing when she finds Juliet; she immediately seeks Lady Capulet.

The Nurse is presented as being earthy and somewhat vulgar by both authors, but Shakespeare never portrays her in a distasteful manner. The indelicacy of her actions and speech is usually just a

way of expressing a hearty zest of life. The love that both she and Mercutio understand is of the earth and is contrasted to the spiritual quality inherent in the love of Romeo and Juliet.¹⁷ Shakespeare seems to place Mercutio and the Nurse beside the two lovers to make the overall effect of the play more realistic. While Romeo and Juliet express their love in immortal verse of high aspiration, Mercutio speaks in the bawdy manner of hot-blooded young men, and the Nurse speaks in the style of old peasant women. Thus the beautiful love is rooted in the common soil of human nature.¹⁸

Because Shakespeare uses the character Paris as a source of conflict in the play from its beginning, Paris is much more important in this work than in the poem, where he appears only after Tybalt's death. Because Juliet continues to mourn for her cousin (and Romeo), her father begins to confer "with his frendes / for mariage of his daughter" (1.1877). Lord Capulet feels that a good marriage will cause Juliet to forget her sorrow, but he has no specific man in mind. After searching and comparing men for an entire day, he chooses Paris from the available suitors. This is in contrast with the play where Paris actively seeks Juliet's hand in marriage. He appears early in the play and asks Lord Capulet's permission. Since Lady Capulet approaches Juliet with the idea of marriage to Paris even before Juliet meets Romeo at the ball, the conflict is early established through the character of Paris. When Lord Capulet tries to persuade Juliet to marry Paris after Tybalt's death, the tension is increased since she has already married Romeo. It becomes especially serious for Juliet when the wedding date is set for the next Thursday, and she knows that she can do nothing to change her

parents' minds. This is why she is forced to turn to Friar Laurence for help. Her desperate action of taking the potion seems more realistic in this work than in the poem because the tension for this climax has been building from the beginning of the play.

Paris appears more frequently in the play and is more a part of the action of this work. He is at the Friar's cell when Juliet goes there for advice. This scene is ironic because Paris thinks that she is anticipating her marriage to him when she is really trying to find a way out of the situation, and because he thinks that she should love him when she actually loves Romeo. The irony of misunderstanding is evident in this scene:

Par.: Happily met, my lady and my wife!
 Jul.: That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.
 Par.: That may be must be, love, on Thursday next.
 Jul.: What must be shall be. . . .
 Par.: Do not deny to him that you love me.
 Jul.: I will confess to you that I love him.
 (IV.i.18-21; 24-25)

Paris is also present when the family discovers Juliet's "death." This appearance more fully develops Paris; in considering the following speech, it becomes evident that he loved Juliet:

Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
 Most detestable death, by thee beguiled,
 By cruel, cruel thee quiet overthrown!
 O love! O life! not life, but love in death!
 (IV.v.55-58)

In the poem Paris is not at the Fryer's cell when Juliet goes there, nor is he present when they discover her supposed death. Brooke never gives any depth of character to Paris; his first and only appearance is when he and Lord Capulet discuss his future marriage to

Juliet--no further mention is made of him. However, Shakespeare also makes Paris an important part of the last act where Paris goes to the Capulet tomb with flowers for Juliet and there encounters Romeo.

This scene intensifies the action in that the two men fight and Paris is slain as a result. His last statement is a request to be lain in the tomb with Juliet. This scene adds a dramatic quality to the play that is unmatched in the poem.

In comparison with the well-developed character of Paris in the play, the same character is indeed weak in the poem where his only lines occur when he asks Lord Capulet not to spend too much money on the wedding. Brooke evidently created this character for the sole purpose of supplying Juliet with a marriage partner. Although Paris is a relatively minor character in the play, he is given several lines of his own and is realistically developed as one who is willing to go through the accepted channels for a proper marriage at this time in history. He appears often and is the source of much of the conflict from his first appearance to his dramatic death.

Minor servants are rarely mentioned in the poem, but they appear frequently in the play and fulfill various dramatic functions therein. The first characters to appear are Sampson and Gregory (servants of the Capulets) and Abraham and Balthasar (servants of the Montagues) who open the play with a dramatic fight that is important because it immediately catches the attention of the audience and also because it acquaints them with the importance of the feud. A Capulet servant who cannot read also plays an important part in the work because it is from him that Romeo learns of the important ball. In at least two instances, the Capulet servants help to provide transition from

one scene to the next as when a servingman appears at the end of Act I, Scene iii. This entrance ends the discussion between Lady Capulet and Juliet about Paris and leads into the next scene that takes place in the street with Romeo and his friends. The next example occurs immediately after this scene when the servants again appear and thus provide a transition into the scene at the ball. These passages help to give the play a sense of continuing action and serve the practical purpose of giving the main characters time to move to another area of the stage. Shakespeare also uses his servants as a form of comic relief. When Juliet's "death" is discovered on the morning of her wedding, her parents, the Nurse, and Paris grieve intensely. This emotional passage immediately gives way to an argument between some servants. Shakespeare evidently intends this comical argument to relieve the tension of the previous tragic scene. He is able to develop his minor servants in such an artistic manner that they help to sustain the action of the play while still appearing very realistic in their loyalty to their employers.

Shakespeare was able, much more than Brooke, to make all of his characters seem to come to life on the stage. While he developed Mercutio, Tybalt, and Paris from slight mentions in the poem, the character of Benvolio and the servants are almost entirely of his invention. Although the characters of Romeo, Juliet, Friar Lawrence and the Nurse are mentioned frequently in the poem, Shakespeare changed their words and some of their actions and made them completely surpass their counterparts in the poem. The actions of Brooke's characters seem to have no ground or reason in anything they are; their actions proceed only because the author chose to have it so,

whereas Shakespeare's characters seem incredibly real.

Shakespeare changed a poem of approximately three thousand lines written in the tiresome meter called "poulter's measure" into a lively five-act play written mainly in blank verse with enough rhyme to give it a special lyrical quality. Prose is used by the minor characters and occasionally by the principal characters, as when Romeo and Mercutio jest together. This variety of meters allowed Shakespeare to develop his characters and action more freely and realistically than could Brooke in his monotonous poem.

Although Shakespeare borrowed the story of the play from Brooke, he made several significant changes in this work. The two works are similar in some basic ways, but the liveliness of action, the complete development of characters, and the beauty of the poetry belong to Shakespeare alone.

Summary

The acknowledged source for Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet is Arthur Brooke's narrative poem The Tragical History of Romeus and Iuliet. Although several critical works mention the similarities in the play and its source, very few works mention any differences between the two. An analysis of Shakespeare's play and Brooke's poem indicates that there are significant differences between them. The major differences are as follows: Shakespeare does not include the moral tone that is present in the poem, nor does he openly disapprove of his characters as does Brooke; Shakespeare makes fewer references to outside forces than Brooke and gives less emphasis to the forces of the feud; Shakespeare intensifies the action of the play by

compressing several months of action found in the poem into five days and by adding several fight scenes; Shakespeare develops his characters to the extent that they seem more realistic than those in the poem and at least partially responsible for the outcome of their actions. He adds characters not found in the poem, expands others from minor mentions made therein, and develops all of his characters more fully than does Brooke.

ENDNOTES

¹Alice Griffin, ed., The Sources of Ten Shakespearean Plays (New York: Crowell, 1966), p. 3.

²Arthur Brooke, The Tragicall History of Romeus and Iuliet, rpt. in Originals and Analogues, ed. P. A. Daniel, 3rd ser. no. 71 (London: Trubner, 1957), pp. 3-4. This reference and all subsequent references to the poem will be taken from this source.

³H. B. Charlton, Shakespearian Tragedy (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1948), p. 54.

⁴William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, ed. H. H. Furness, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare (New York: Dover, 1963), p. 67. This reference and all subsequent references to the play will be taken from this source.

⁵Charlton, p. 61.

⁶John Dover Wilson, ed., Romeo and Juliet (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1961), p. xxix.

⁷Wilson, p. xxviii.

⁸Donald A. Stauffer, Shakespeare's World of Images (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), p. 30.

⁹Wilson, p. xviii.

¹⁰Henry Norman Hudson as quoted in Romeo and Juliet with the Temple Notes (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, n.d.), p. xxxi.

¹¹Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces To Shakespeare, 2nd ed. (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1935), p. 8.

¹²Hudson, p. xxxvii.

¹³Robert O. Evans, The Osier Cage (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1966), pp. 82-83.

¹⁴Evans, p. 79.

¹⁵Georg Brandes, William Shakespeare (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1898), p. 98.

¹⁶Ralph E. C. Houghton, ed., Romeo and Juliet (Oxford, Clarendon, 1947), p. 186.

¹⁷Wilson, p. xxxvi.

¹⁸Ebenezer Charlton Black, ed., Romeo and Juliet (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1916), p. xviii.

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VITA

Betty Rae Slamans

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY ROMEO AND JULIET AND ITS SOURCE, ARTHUR BROOKE'S POEM THE TRAGICALL HISTORY OF ROMEUS AND IULIET

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Hominy, Oklahoma, April 24, 1949, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Slamans.

Education: Graduate from Hominy High School, Hominy, Oklahoma, in May, 1967; received the Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Oklahoma State University in 1971; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1976.

Professional Experience: Teacher of English and French, Hominy Public Schools, 1971 to present.