

## The Originality of Shakespeare in Creating a Character

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**Annotation:** The article deals with the characters created by W. Shakespeare by the example of the play “Romeo and Juliet”. Thanks to the refined language, the variety of techniques used and the richness of shades and “overtones” of the author's thought created multidimensional and multi-layered artistic canvas, precisely and deeply expresses the inherent ideological charge of the characters, thereby making them special, distinctive and individual. The monologues and dialogues constantly reveal a “second bottom”, and they are imbued with a slight irony. The characters are placed in extreme conditions, in which their personal nature manifests itself in its most prominent and naked form. Time is compressed and the action densely saturated with events, becoming dynamic and explosive. The plot and characters seem to fade into the shadows, which allows the meaning of the play to shine brighter and present it as a hymn to faithful and devoted love.

**Keywords:** originality, creativity, characters, transformation, events, narrative, W. Shakespeare

Shakespeare saturates and dramatizes the story of his characters. He condenses and accelerates events, gives those internal dynamics and “volcanism”, thereby enlivening the lazy and sluggish narrative and giving it an appealing and magical charge, as well as making his characters special. Brook's months are literally compressed into days. In addition, after Tybalt's death, the plot takes on a kaleidoscopic rapidity and an unstoppable urge for denouement.

The lines tend to be compressed, becoming more full and expressive. For example, the fragment from Brook where Juliet describes the feelings and suffering that overwhelm her: “*Her dainty tender parts gan shever all for dared. Her golden hairs did stand upright, upon her childish hed. Then pressed with the fear that she there lived in, A sweat as cold as mountain yse, pears through her slender skin*” [1, p. 178].

Shakespeare halves the length of this phrase, but surpasses it in accuracy and emotional impact: *I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins. That almost freezes up the heat of life* [2, p. 195]. What seemed pretentious and pompous immediately becomes natural and understandable-almost a medical diagnosis of the young lady's condition.

The speech of the characters-even those from whom one would least expect-often reveals a surprising depth. It is accompanied by a slight irony, usually unconscious, as if expressing the paradoxes of life itself. For example, Capulet, who speaks in simple terms, describes his role in choosing a spouse for his daughter in these words: *My will to her consent is but a part; An she agree, within her scope of choice Lies my consent* [2, p. 24].

The old man's phrase appears to be a sophism in the spirit of the ancient dialecticians. The daughter is free in her choice. However, without her father's blessing she cannot make a decision. Moreover, at the same time, the father's will is not independent and is not decisive; it makes sense only because it coincides with the daughter's choice. Nevertheless, upon further reflection it becomes clear that this involuntary play of meanings expresses the inner conflict of a father who wishes her happiness and at the same time seeks to adapt to the conventions of the world in which he must live. In this way, a few lines manage to convey the inherent intractability of the contradictions that entangle a person and the irony of the circumstances that subjugate him.

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However, perhaps Shakespeare's most important move was to rearrange the scene of Tybalt's death. In all previous versions, it takes place much later than the heroes' wedding night and therefore merely interrupts their enjoyment of each other. Juliet, on learning that Romeo has shed Tybalt's blood and is sentenced to banishment, mourns for her cousin and suffers the impending separation from her husband. She is possessed by bitter regret, but she has no heartbreaking passions, and therein lies the peculiarity and individuality of Shakespeare's characters. Thus, the writer inserts this scene between her marriage to Romeo and their wedding night to show the contrast and struggle between love and duty. Therefore, there are whirlwinds through Juliet's heart.

One must accept not just the blood enemy of the family, which Juliet has already come to terms with, but someone who has just taken the life of a loved one. She faces an incredibly difficult choice: on the one hand, a wounded and disgraced family, and on the other, someone who swore her love, but trampled her hopes for reconciliation, and who also condemned himself to banishment, and whom she may never see again. Romeo's situation is not much better. Most recently, he has been trying to impress upon Tybalt that they are much closer than he thought, hoping that the feud would soon end. Now he must go to his wife with his hands stained with the blood of her relative, and as a man with no future, unable even to offer her a life together. What seemed full of hope in the morning has turned out to be a collapse of dreams and expectations. Moreover, he, Romeo, was the culprit.

By placing his characters in unbearable circumstances, Shakespeare puts them through a cruel experiment. However, it is necessary, for to test their feelings and "measure" love requires laboratory purity. Often even the simple attraction in young people is so strong that it blinds them, causing them to commit insane acts. Nevertheless, true love shows itself brightest when and where, and when the ugly prose of life drowns out passion and people cease to be guided by impulses. If, even under these conditions, the lovers continue to reach out to each other, it means that their feelings are too deep to be cooled by the icy winds of life.

For now, however, it was only a technical matter of the tools and methods of Shakespeare's processing of the source material. However, even more important is the special ideological charge, which not only differs from that inherent in the "original", but also in many ways is even its opposite. As H. Hudson observes, "there is little in the play that is formally original", but it "reverses the relation of things": whereas "before, the characters served as a sort of framework to support the narrative", now "the narrative is used as a framework for depicting the hero and life" [3, p. 199]. The plot and characters recede into the background, revealing the overall meaning of the story, what it is being told for. As a result, Brook's poem, devoted to the tumultuous peripatetic of the private lives of two families and replete with the absurd and amusing excesses so characteristic of the time, becomes a hymn of love that rises above the conditions and circumstances of specific biographies and interprets human nature as such.

Brook's characters and their actions, of course, did not quite fit the line outlined by Shakespeare. In addition, he had to shift the emphasis a little bit and slightly change the relationship between the main characters, which inevitably implied and some adjustment of their characters. It is true no great adjustments were needed. Brook already had everything he needed. All that remained was to sharpen what corresponded to the changed attitudes, and to blur the features that looked unnecessary or even inappropriate in their light. The main thing was to disconnect the characters from their surroundings, to cut them off from the past and thereby create the impression that it was not fate that brought them into each other's arms, but a chance encounter that produced their common destiny. Nevertheless, this implied surgical precision in applying the strokes.

Of course, first of all the hero's image had to be reworked. Brooke's Juliette is a "cunning maiden" who knows how to "mislead her mother". It is not difficult for her facial expression to determine

what she wants. In turn, the mother does not trust her daughter very much. When Juliet “is going to church with a serious and sad look”, she is not only sent with her nurse “to curb her lust”, but also with a trusted house cleaner who must look after both of them [1, p. 106]. The girl knows the signs of falling in love and is able to diagnose her own condition. She is shrewd, calculating, and practical, and it is not without reason that after Romeo’s banishment she does not completely reject Paris’s advances.

Meanwhile, Shakespeare needs an innocent girl, without the plume of a relationship with the world, with purity of thought and feeling. Shakespeare takes away her experience, dexterity, and guile. He attributes the linking of marriage to the appeasement of the warring parties to her brother Lawrence and thus turns her into a fragile creature, relating to the events around her with curiosity, but also with apprehension. This is why Juliet may not yet be fourteen years old [2, p. 24]. Looking at the world with her eyes wide open, she must be capable of wonder and delight in the most innocent things.

This does not mean that Juliet is impossibly naive. She is quite shrewd and inventive when she wants to achieve her goal. In addition, she has a considerable amount of wit that allows her to impress upon her interlocutor what he prefers to think, holding firmly to her line. When Juliet meets Paris in Friar Lawrence’s cell and her fiancé insists on paying attention to her, she neither encourages him nor puts him off, but replies with ambiguous hints that can be seen as “advances” if you wish, but in reality (to a person privy to the reality of things) look like sarcastic taunts: *Paris. Happily met, my lady and my wife! Juliet. That may be, sir, when I may be a wife. Paris. That may be must be, love, on Thursday next. Juliet. What must be shall be. Friar L. That is a certain text. Paris. Come you to make confession to this father? Juliet. To answer that, I should confess to you. Paris. Do not deny to him that you love me. Juliet. I will confess to you that I love him. Paris. So will ye, I am sure, that you love me. Juliet. If I do so, it will be of more price, being spoke behind your back, than to your face* [2, p. 181].

Nevertheless, as soon as Paris crosses the invisible line of claiming Juliet, her tone becomes harsher and her words more bitter. In addition, she makes it quite clear that she takes no joy in his intrusive advances: *Paris. Poor soul, thy face is much abus'd with tears. Juliet. The tears have got small victory by that, For it was bad enough before their spite. Paris. Thou wrong'st it more than tears with that report. Juliet. That is no slander, sir, which is a truth; And what I spake, I spake it to my face. Paris. Thy face is mine, and thou hast sland' red it. Juliet. It may be so, for it is not mine own* [2, p. 181-182].

The last phrase expresses not only an attitude toward Paris, but also a weariness with the human web in which one has to live. It is a sigh of disappointment for a loving soul that wishes to be sincere but doomed to hide its feelings behind a screen of “propriety” established by no one.

The scene of Juliet’s declaration of love, which reveals the character’s entire inner world and accentuates her directness and purity, adds particular charm to the simple-mindedness of Juliet.

In contrast to Shakespeare, in Brooke, as in Boisto, Romeo hints at physical intimacy, saying that he is desperate for her and afraid of losing what he hopes to win and she expresses her willingness to yield to him on the condition of marriage [1, p. 97-98]. Shakespeare’s lover, on the other hand, does not even think about it. To Juliet’s question, “What can satisfy you this night?” – he replies: “Your oath of fidelity in love in exchange for mine”. And Juliet, without any “hindsight”, talks about marriage, which seems to her to be the natural fixation of love. Then: I will throw my fate at your feet and follow you wherever you say [2, p. 85-86].

Like a skilled surgeon, Shakespeare with his artistic scalpel cuts out from the scene a couple or three “unnecessary” remarks and details. Thus, he creates a completely different – not just chaste,

but transparently sincere – image of a young maiden who is not looking for subtext in the confessions of her lover, although he is aware that people sometimes commit low acts. This is the originality of Shakespeare’s characters.

It is wrong to think that Shakespeare’s Juliet is down-to-earth and practical. In addition, it is even more ridiculous to say that unlike the Petrarchan “romantic” Romeo, she “asks pragmatic questions”: Does he agree to marry her? Where and when he be found next morning? [4, p. 75]. It is simply that “honest intentions in love” for her coincide with the desire to enter into a legal relationship, which she sees as a way of sanctifying mutual fidelity and loyalty. This means that the meaning of love is not in the pleasures of the flesh, but in the fusion of souls.

Romeo, too, changes to match his beloved. He becomes more delicate and sensitive, acutely aware of his youth and his alienation from those around him. Speaking to his brother Lawrence, who invites him to discuss the situation after Tybalt’s murder and decision to banish him, Romeo suddenly objects sharply: *Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel. Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love, An hour but married...* [2, p. 150].

However, Shakespeare’s hero rejects consolation. He needs no favors if they offered in exchange for Juliet. He is willing to uproot an entire city and overturn the ruler's fate, if only it would allow him to retain his love.

In doing so, Shakespeare draws an insurmountable line even between the characters and their parents. The young, energetic and impetuous Romeo, on the one hand, and the “old Montague” and the “sickly Lady Montague” on the other. They are distant from their son and do not enjoy his trust. The distance between them is more like a relationship with a grandson.

Nevertheless, the Montague spouses at least somehow care for their son, whereas Juliet's parents, if not indifferent to her, do not show deep feelings for her. The father's only virtue is patriarchal hospitality. When Capulet loses his temper and demands his long sword, his wife not too politely reminds him that a crutch is more appropriate [2, p. 12-13]. He is old-fashionedly impatient and intolerant. As for Lady Capulet herself, she is almost the most repulsive character in the play. Having married an old man – not for love, of course, but to gain a position in society – she does not even express a note of regret at her daughter’s grave, but only laments about herself: *O me! This sight of death is as a bell, That warns my old age to a sepulcher* [2, p. 253].

In this way, Romeo and Juliet become the embodiment of young love, opposed to a world mired in squalor and petty vanity. They speak freely of the body, but all the time they think of the soul. Instinctively feeling that love is fundamentally bodily in origin, lovers nevertheless understand that it is embodied in spiritual forms, acquiring in them its true meaning, alien to all that is stale, decrepit and superficial. That is why everything that touches them is also ennobled.

In Shakespeare’s predecessors, Paris displays a calculating and selfish attitude that discredits both himself and the object of his love. Shakespeare gives the feelings of Paris a noble tone and thus elevates Juliet herself by creating a special atmosphere around her death. In older versions of the story, Paris appears only after the lovers separated. In Shakespeare, however, he asks for Juliet’s hand and receives her father’s consent before she even meets Romeo [2, p. 24]. This not a man who bases his calculations on the misfortune of another but a knight is ready to die for the honor of his beloved.

Shakespeare contrasts Romeo’s sublime love with the carefree sensuality of Mercutio, who both lives without reference points and dies because of a pointless quarrel he starts without any reason for a trifling cause.



In addition, a special character was Brother Lawrence. In his predecessors he, though not quite ordinary, is still a monk, for whom the chief virtues of man are prudence and patience. Shakespeare, however, adds to his sincerity and nobility, natural wit and genuine wisdom. Like some caring element, Lawrence stands between the lovers, but he is still not powerful enough to save them from misfortune. “Not a saint, but a sage in monk’s garb”, Schlegel observes, “a venerable and meek old man, almost sublime in his dedication to the affairs of lifeless nature and extremely appealing by his equally precise knowledge of the human heart, applied with particular cheerfulness and wit” [5, p. 402]. Shakespeare envelops Lawrence in an atmosphere of mystery, making him believe in the miracles going on around him. He lives in harmony with nature, almost merging with it. In addition, the slight disbelief in what he does is softened by awe at his personality.

To lend credibility to the image of Lawrence, Shakespeare shows him in the garden picking herbs and speculating about their merits. The reasoning of the pious old man is full of deep meaning. Everywhere in nature, he finds symbols of the moral order. The same wisdom with which he sees through it makes him the ruler of human hearts.

Shakespeare in many other works showed much more independence in constructing the plot, choosing characters and revealing their characters. The comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* has no literary “source material” at all; it has an unusual structure, a relaxed style, and an intricacy of ideas, so much so that it seems to some to be even Shakespearean “philosophy in action” [12, p. 19]. However, even in it, as in all cases where the author rejects the work of others and tries to rely solely on his own head, he does not invent material out of nothing. He still has to rely on someone else’s notes and memories or his own impressions and observations, from which the canvas and fabric of the narrative are formed.

Above all, Shakespeare “cut off” the characters from their surroundings. In order to do this, he had to deprive her not just of her love, but also of her social experience. In doing so, she is direct and pure, but not naïve; she avoids head-on confrontations, but shows firmness and determination. Loyalty, devotion, and a fusion of souls are Juliet’s formula for love. Romeo becomes more subtle and sensitive while remaining idealistic and dreamy. He confronts not only the maturity of his parents or Friar Lawrence, but also even other “models” of youth—the lighthearted carelessness of Mercutio and the heavy-handed prudence of Benvolio. Romeo chooses love—not scorching cynicism or calculating wisdom, but passion and the fullness of life. The Nurse, who truly loves Juliet, is unable to understand the impulses of youth. Although she is sensitive and responsive, her rudeness and “roughness” repel the lovers and emphasize the contrast between their feelings, and how those closest and perceive them. Romeo and Juliet are contrasted to this mired in the mundane world as the embodiment of young love.

The characters are placed in extreme conditions in which their personal nature is revealed in its most prominent and naked form. Time is compressed and the action is densely saturated with events, taking on a dynamic and explosive character and this is a feature of W. Shakespeare’s characters.

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