

## THESIS ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to explore the film adaptations of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and to compare their thematic shifts of the adapted text. Primary focus will be put on Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), and Carlo Carlei's *Romeo & Juliet* (2013). This choice does not entirely exclude other adaptations, as they will be alluded to whenever some of their features become relevant to the discussion at hand.

The thesis is based on my reading of this tragedy and supplemented by secondary sources. It analyses three themes of the play, and subsequent adaptation issues, in order to introduce and compare the individual directors' readings of these particular instances and their overall narrative strategies applied in the films. The impact of the various renditions of the themes will be compared and examined in terms of its influence on the audience's perception of the plot. Currently, many people experience Shakespeare's plays through film and it is productive to examine what perceptions of the plays they form when encountering the playwright in this re-created manner.

Some of the questions that this analysis will address are: What visual means do the directors employ to establish new dimension to the adapted text? What is transmitted through the individual portrayals of the characters and their relationships? How can details in the individual films' renditions of central events impact the ultimate impression made on the audience?

The first chapter introduces the context of the respective film adaptations, and the methodology employed in studying them. The following focal section of the thesis is set to specifically examine the three themes as depicted on screen, specifically parental relationships, death, and final reconciliation. The themes are first considered within the

composition of the tragedy and then separately introduced in subchapters. The second chapter on parental relationships focuses on the formative relationships between the protagonists and their parental figures. The third chapter analyses the depictions of the theme of death and is divided into three distinct categories: death by combat, suicide, and the omitted deaths. The fourth chapter on the final reconciliation theme then follows from the previous analyses in order to determine how their renditions influence the catharsis of the films and the final impression made on the audience. The thesis concludes with a discussion on the possible cultural impact of *Romeo and Juliet* on screen and on the contemporary trends in adapting Shakespeare.