

Hate – Love Conflict in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*

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ABSTRACT

Hate and love are two contradictory kinds of human feelings that have been tackled by many literary genres. This is because they play a crucial role in making people drawn apart or together.

This paper deals with hate-love conflict in two plays by two important playwrights. The first is William Shakespeare who is a major station in English literature and the brilliant playwright of the Elizabethan Age. The second is Thomas Otway who is one of the important playwrights in the restoration period.

The paper consists of three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter, the introduction, comes across the important features of the Elizabethan drama and audience. Then the chapter moves to the attributes of the restoration drama and how it is different from its ancestor, the Elizabethan.

The second chapter tackles one of Shakespeare's worldwide plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, and its hate-love-conflict theme.

The third chapter discusses Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* that traces nearly the same outline and theme of *Romeo and Juliet*.

The fourth chapter, the conclusion, summarizes the approaches of the two playwrights showing the main differences between their plays.

The paper ends with the bibliography.

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Elizabethan Drama

The Elizabethan drama had begun as performances for the public in the big halls of institutions such as the Inns of Court. The first public theatre in London was built in 1576 and was simply called the "Theatre". In that theatre, there was a pit in which the orchestra was located. The stage consisted of a large platform that jutted out so that the audience that were called the groundlings stood on three sides of it. The stage was open so there was no stage-lighting because the performances were done during the day.¹

The Elizabethan drama began with tragedies written in a way which copied Seneca.² This Roman playwright had a considerable influence on the Elizabethan dramatists. The first English tragedy owned everything, except the plot, to Seneca. It was called *Gorboduc* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. Norton and Sackville respected the Senecan tradition which was to reserve the horror for the language and never for the visible action. But later dramatists, including Shakespeare, sometimes showed the audience all the horror on the stage.³ The most famous English tragedy was *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd. This tragedy had a great deal of appeal and dramatic vitality even in Shakespeare's life time. It was known for its horrible actions acted on the stage.⁴ Then, an influential group of writers called the University Wits appeared in London in the last twenty years of the 16th century. They were graduates of Oxford or Cambridge so they were educated and talented but with no money. They wrote for the popular theatre. They included Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, John Lyly, George Peele and the most notable playwright Christopher Marlowe.⁵ The contemporary playwright to Marlowe and the major station of the Elizabethan drama was William Shakespeare (1554-1616). At the beginning of his career, he wrote for money so he tried to attract the Elizabethan audience by his horrible scenes, as in *Titus Andronicus*, which were acted on the stage. Shakespeare fed the Elizabethan audience's seek of power and enchanted them with his elevated, musical language. He wrote the history plays which glorified the English nation so they appealed to the English people. In the second period of his life, he wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

Shakespeare's great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* belonged to the third period.⁶ All these tragedies tackled the psychology of man and his internal conflict. In the last period, Shakespeare wrote some philosophical plays such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* which was said to be his biography. In addition to his great language, Shakespeare was able to analyze psychologically his various characters that belonged to different ranks.⁷

Undoubtedly, Shakespeare and his memorable plays had influentially participated in flourishing the Elizabethan drama and making it the best of all ages.

1.2 Restoration Drama

From 1642 up to 1660, the English theatres remained closed. But some performances were done in secrecy by small companies in private houses or in taverns located far from the town. No actor or spectator was safe during the Puritan rule. In 1660, the Stuart dynasty was restored to the English throne. Charles II was in France together with the royalist party so it was natural, upon his return, that French influence was to be felt specially in drama. The king licensed two companies to do their performances. The competition between the two companies made the playwrights and managers extremely responsive to public taste. Because of the French influence and the suppression which the country had passed through during the Puritan era, the restoration audience, unlike the Elizabethan, had narrow dramatic taste i.e. the plays that appealed to them were revolving around smartness, humour, lust, cuckoldry and intrigue.⁸ To satisfy the new public taste, the restoration dramatists began to write what was called comedies of manner. These comedies were chiefly concerned with presenting a society of elegance and stylishness. Their characters were ladies and gentlemen of fashion, social climbers and country idiots. The aim was just to present the follies of the characters in order to entertain the audience. The plays dealt with marital intrigues in which women, as actresses, were presented for the first time.⁹

Even the restoration stage was different from its predecessor, the Elizabethan stage. Unlike the Elizabethan stage which projected into the audience, the stage now got back and the action was done away from the audience. Hence, the previous contact between the actors and the audience got lost.¹⁰ Moreover, the French influence was felt in the language of the plays as well because the restoration comedies sometimes violated the moral standards of the previous age for they used a filthy language which was full of lecherous jokes and immoral words. The women were presented in the play as a source of joy and lust. They were mistresses rather than ideal ladies.¹¹

Because the restoration drama produced little that was important in the tragic field, a tendency to imitate the Elizabethan masterpieces appeared. For instance, finding that his *Conquest of Granada* with its rhymed couplets unwelcome by the critics, John Dryden wrote a blank-verse tragedy *All for Love* which was clearly based on Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*. In the same way, Thomas Otway (1652-85) wrote *Venice Preserv'd* which was close to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.¹²

It is noteworthy that in the restoration period, actors, managers, and also dramatists were good royalists for their new plays or the Elizabethan-based ones had some political hints i.e. the Puritans were satirized, the king and his wishes were flattered and the royal order was supported by the people of the stage.¹³

Chapter Two

William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*

Shakespeare's worldwide play, *Romeo and Juliet*, performed in 1595, belongs to the second period of his life and deals with what is called the courtly love. This kind of love dates back to the medieval period in which the lover idealizes his beloved and submits to her wishes. The idea is that the lover's feelings ennoble him and make him worthier of his ideal lady. Hence, he longs to unite with her in order to get moral excellence. If the union is not achieved in life, the lovers seek death because it represents the only way to fulfill that union.¹⁴

It is noteworthy that in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, love blooms in a field which is full of hate, enmity, and hostility. From the very beginning of the play, bitter enmity is shown between the two main families: the Capulet and the Montague. Sampson and Gregory, two servants of the Capulet, appear

talking contemptuously about the Montague. Sampson says, " A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's"(I, i, 10) .¹⁵ Once they see two servants of the Montague, the Capulet's servants start instigating them. In fact, this hostility begins with the servants to indicate that the hate extends to all the adherents of the families for it is not restricted to the heads only.¹⁶In obedience to previous commands of the Prince of Verona, Sampson and Gregory know that they are forbidden to quarrel and plan not to be held responsible for beginning a fight. Sampson tells his partner, " Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin"(I, i, 34). But with the arrival of the hot-tempered Tybalt, the nephew of Lady Capulet, who is full of enmity towards the Montague, a quarrel happens and the city becomes in disorder. The heads of the two houses and the Prince enter shortly to hold the fight and know the conditions leading to it. The Prince gets fed up of this endless hate so he threatens death to offenders. After the Prince's departure, Montague and his wife are left alone with Benvolio who briefly describes the quarrel and gives the first image of Tybalt who represents the instigator and the source of hate in this situation. Then, Benvolio turns to describe Romeo as a melancholic lover who suffers from the unrequited love of the Capulet's Rosaline. Thus, the first spark of love kindles to lighten the darkness of hate. Soon after his arrival at the scene, Romeo himself reflects upon this hate-love conflict:

.....O me! What fray was here?

Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate. (I, i, 166-69)

It is noticeable that Romeo is aloof from the enmity even before he meets Juliet. He appears too occupied with passions so he is naturally unwilling to that kind of folly. Romeo's first meeting with Benvolio ends with the latter's keen remark that Romeo should look for another woman's love. This might be a hint that Romeo's love to Rosaline is not the genuine love which would end the hate between the two families.¹⁷When Capulet intends to make a party to introduce Paris to his daughter, Shakespeare wittily creates an excuse for Romeo to join it. The illiterate clown is left to take Capulet's list of invitations to the guests so he resorts to Romeo and Benvolio to read it for him. Once Romeo reads Rosaline's name on the list, he decides to take the risk and join Capulet's party. This represents the seed of love which Romeo tries to plant in Capulet's field of hate. Even the torches which he and his companions carry may represent an attempt to lighten the gloomy atmosphere inside the Capulet's house.¹⁸As Romeo stands aloof in the party, he gets sight of Juliet; in a moment they exchange an eye-contact and are instantly fall in love with each other. Juliet forgets all about her obedient promise to her mother to look at Paris and seems to be fascinated by Romeo. At that moment, the real conflict between hate and love begins. Romeo's words describing Juliet's charming beauty are overheard by the fiery Tybalt who rushes to revenge what he considers an insult to his family. Although Old Capulet rebukes Tybalt and holds him back, Tybalt goes off angry muttering vengeance. In this scene, love achieves the first victory because Romeo goes to Juliet, takes her hand and begins an elaborate compliment for her beauty and purity. But Romeo is awakened to the hateful reality when he knows that he loves a Capulet.¹⁹ The second risk which Romeo's love undergoes is when he returns to Juliet at the same night. He makes his way towards Juliet's balcony from which she appears looking out. Romeo's attempt is really fatal, as Juliet remarks, " And the place death, considering who thou art / If any of my kinsmen find thee here"(II, i, 106-7). To her speech, Romeo replies that it is love that has led him and it can defeat anything in its way. As the two lovers fly away in their world of love and fascination, the Nurse's call coming from the hateful reality awakens them.

But the conflict continues as Romeo goes to Friar Lawrence to arrange his marriage to Juliet. Because the Friar knows only of Romeo's passion for Rosaline, he gets surprised and disturbed to see Romeo's unstable feelings. But the Friar then hopes that Romeo's new love to Juliet may be a chance to end the old hate between the two families, " For this alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancour in pure love"(II, ii, 91-2).²⁰After this episode of love and calmness, a dangerous sign

of hate appears for Tybalt has sent a letter demanding a duel with Romeo. Tybalt then meets Benvolio and Mercutio, asks them about Romeo aggressively, and instigates them into a fight. Even when Romeo appears on the scene and refuses to attack Tybalt out of love to his in-law, Mercutio has been victimized by Tybalt's hate. But after Mercutio's murder, Romeo's love does not prevent him from having revenge upon the murderer so he kills Tybalt.

Even the delicate Juliet suffers from this same hate-love conflict when the Nurse tells her that Romeo has slaughtered Tybalt. Though temporarily, she severely blames Romeo describing him as:

Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical
Dove-feathered raven, wolvish-ravens lamb
Despised substance of divinest show
Just opposite to what thou just seem'st
A damned saint, an honourable villain! (III, ii, 75-9)

But Juliet's absolute love towards Romeo wins at the end because she realizes that Romeo should have had a good reason for his action. Hence, her first and last loyalty should be to him.²¹

After Tybalt's killing, Romeo is banished by the Prince so he prefers to die because banishment from Juliet is worse than death. For him, Juliet is the embodiment of love and everything else is hate. Without hesitation, in the Friar's cell, Romeo draws his dagger to kill himself, but the Nurse snatches it from him. The same suffering is undergone by Juliet when her father forces her to marry Paris. She goes to Friar Lawrence and tells him that unless he finds a solution she will kill herself. For the two lovers, death represents their bed of love if the whole world becomes full of hate.²²

When Juliet takes the drug which will produce all the appearances of death for forty-two hours, she looks afraid and turns over all the horrors of the Friar's plan:

What if it be a poison which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonoured
Because he married me before to Romeo? (IV, iii, 24-27)

She begins to suffer for the hateful image of Tybalt threatening Romeo appears to her. Yet, her endless love to Romeo urges her to swallow the drug while crying, ". . . Stay, Tybalt, stay! / Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee"(IV, iii, 57-8).²³

With the shocking news Romeo receives about Juliet's death, he instantly makes up his mind to join her. He realizes that this hateful world does not have a place for their love. Therefore, after buying poison from an apothecary in Mantua, Romeo intends to take it when he joins Juliet in the tomb in Verona.

In the last touching scene, Romeo stands gazing at Juliet in her tomb and utters his farewell:

A grave? O no, a lantern, slaughtered youth;
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred. (V, iii, 84-87)

Then, he drinks the poison, kisses Juliet, and dies with his arms around his beloved.

After awhile, it is Juliet who must transcend this hateful world to join her lover. At the beginning, as she opens her eyes, all seems well. But when her senses return to her, she sees Romeo's body beside her and hears the sounds of the approaching guards. Friar Lawrence begs her to flee with him but she refuses to leave her love behind. Juliet kisses Romeo hoping that the poison on his lips will kill her. Since the voices come nearer, she plunges Romeo's dagger into her own heart while saying, ". . . O happy dagger! / This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die"(V, iii, 169-170). It is noteworthy that Juliet does not kill herself out of feminine weakness because her way of suicide requires strong will which is intensified by her great love.²⁴ In the final scene, their love is crowned by the reconciliation that happens between the two households. At last, love defeats hate and Capulet addresses Montague, "O brother Montague, give me thy hand / This is my daughter's jointure, for no more can I demand"(V, iii, 296-7).

In return, Montague says that he will make a statue of gold to Juliet to be a symbol of faithful and true love.²⁵ Ultimately, the Prince reflects that although the story of *Romeo and Juliet* is woeful, their love has triumphed over their families' hate:

Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;
For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.(V, iii, 307-310)

Chapter Three

Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*

Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* is an English restoration play first staged in 1682 but it has enjoyed many revivals during the following centuries. The play is described by some critics as Otway's finest work for it is a genuine pathetic play that is close to the Elizabethan drama. As its subtitle suggests, *A Plot Discovered*, the play revolves around a plot against the state of Venice and a plan to murder all the senators.²⁶

It is noticeable that one of the main themes of the play is hate-love conflict which the major characters undergo.²⁷ This conflict is shown early in the opening scene when Jaffeir goes to Senator Priuli, his father-in-law for reconciliation. Priuli shows much hate towards Jaffeir because the latter has got married to Belvidera, Priuli's daughter, without his consent. Priuli bitterly says that he has treated and trusted Jaffeir just like his son but the latter betrays him and drags Belvidera's legs into an unequal marriage:

I treated you, trusted you, and thought you mine;
When in requital of my best endeavours,
You treacherously practiced to undo me,
Seduced the weakness of my age's darling,
My only child, and stole her from my bosom:
O Belvidera!²⁸

Contrastingly, Jaffeir clarifies that he has married Belvidera out of his love and not his greediness of wealth or influence. He tries to win Priuli's sympathy when he narrates to Priuli how he has saved Belvidera's life during the celebration of a wedding in the Adriatic. But unfortunately, Jaffeir illustrates, that after a three-year marriage and because of his poverty, he is unable to maintain a life-style that is suitable to the daughter of the great Priuli.²⁹

Being rejected and humiliated by the cruel-hearted Priuli, Jaffeir is left alone full of hate towards his father-in-law. In this mood of hate, hostility and despair, Jaffeir meets his friend, Pierre who himself expresses his bitterness because of the hateful world he is living in. For Pierre, everything is fake because "Honesty [is] a cheat"(246). He recalls how his beloved, Aquilina, has been usurped by the old, corrupt Senator Antonio. What increases Pierre's hate is that his complaint to the Senate is ". . . censured basely / For violating something they call privilege"(247) for Senator Antonio.³⁰

To increase Jaffeir's hate and bitterness, Pierre narrates a story that touches Jaffeir. He tells Jaffeir that he has seen some guards at his door and that Jaffeir's creditors have been taking all his furniture. Jaffeir breaks down in tears when he is told by Pierre that the "beauteous Belvidera, like a Wretch / That's doom'd to Banishment, came weeping forth '(248-49).

Jaffeir's hate reaches the climax when he swears "By sea and air! by earth, by heaven and hell / I will revenge my Belvidera's tears!" (249). Hence, under the influence of Pierre, Jaffeir agrees to join the conspirators in the Rialto.³¹

After going to the Rialto, Jaffeir appears alone and haunted by desperate thoughts of his midnight meeting with Pierre. Realizing Jaffeir's hesitation, Pierre instigates him by asking him about Belvidera's condition and whether Priuli has relented. Filled with hate, Jaffeir reflects upon these questions with "Oh for a curse to kill with!"(255).

This pendulous movement between hate and love represents the conflict that takes place inside Jaffier. His love to Belvidera drives him back away from the plot because he cannot kill her father whereas his hate towards the senate specially Priuli pushes him forward.³²

It is worth mentioning that hate is the main trigger to the plotters who want to kill all the Venetians, not the senators only. Since their cause is based on hate, the plotters themselves are full of mistrust, hostility and disloyalty. This is shown when Jaffier is presented to the plotters who show doubt and mistrust. But Pierre assures them of Jaffier's faithfulness so Bedamar, one of the plotters, embraces Jaffier. For this action, Renault, the French leader of the plotters, reflects his inner hate, "I never lov'd these huggers"(260).³³

Ironically, to win Renault's trust and join the plot, Jaffier sacrifices his love to Belvidera. He hands his beloved over to the plotters as a hostage to secure his faithful behaviour to them. Here, hate triumphs over love in Jaffier's conflict because he intends to join the plotters and kill the senators including Priuli.

But shortly afterwards, when Jaffier meets his wife again, his love to her drives him away from the plotters. She blames him for trying to kill her father, the one who has been the cause of her being. Moreover, Belvidera tells Jaffier how Renault has tried to rape her. Outraged for his dignity, Jaffier turns his hate to the plotters rather than the senators.

Because Jaffier's hate to the plotters, specially Renault, is now too much to hide, he implicitly threatens Renault with words that reveal veiled hate; Once Jaffier sees Renault, he says:

..... was it not boldly done
Even at first sight to trust the thing I loved
(A tempting treasure too!) with youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine? but thou art honest (272)

When the conspirators gather, Jaffier slips away from the assembly. His departure arouses the suspicions of the conspirators, specially Renault who has guessed Jaffier's intention. Here, Pierre's love to Jaffier mounts over the conspirators' hate. He succeeds in cooling the conspirators' rage down and assures them that his friend, Jaffier is trustworthy.³⁴

But Pierre's devoted love and trust in his friend, Jaffier are contradicted in the following scene when Jaffier, led by Belvidera, is on his way to the senate where he will give a full account of the conspiracy. Before revealing the details of the plot, Jaffier makes one condition that is to spare his life along with the lives of some conspirators. However, once he reveals the plot, he begins to regret it.³⁵

It is clear that the two sides of the conflict are swaying inside him. His love and fidelity to his friend, Pierre make him feel guilty. Jaffier's conflict reaches the climax when he is led to confront Pierre. Pierre mistakenly thinks that Jaffier is still his supporter in the plot. As he learns that Jaffier has betrayed him, his love to Jaffier turns into hate and contempt:

Thou Jaffier! Thou my once loved valued friend?
Noble in mind, and in his person lovely,
Dear to my eyes and tender to my heart
But thou a wretched, base, false, worthless coward,
Poor even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect (285)

He strikes Jaffier on the face and throws down the dagger with which he has defended Jaffier against Renault. Pierre does not even plead for forgiveness because he prefers death to life which is full of hate, betrayal and mistrust. Pierre reflects this idea when he addresses Jaffier "No, this vile world and I have long been jangling / When only men like thee are fit to live in 't"(285)³⁶

Jaffier's guilt now becomes so great that it changes his love to Belvidera into hate because he considers her the cause of his betrayal. When Belvidera appears, he describes to her his pitiful interview with Pierre and attributes his unfaithfulness to her " Oh! Hark thee, traitress, thou hast done this / Thanks to thy tears and false persuading love"(289). In the course of a long conversation with Belvidera, he makes three attempts to stab her. But again his love to her triumphs over his hate so he withdraws. In return, Jaffier asks her to go swiftly to her father and try to change his hate to Pierre. Jaffier tells

Belvidera "Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears / Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him"(290).³⁷

When Belvidera tells him that her father has failed in gaining forgiveness for Pierre, Jaffeir curses her and calls her "[His] plague"(296).

As the bell is tolling for the execution of Pierre, Jaffeir rushes out to find his friend on the scaffold. Jaffeir begs Pierre to forgive him and regain his previous love. Now, Pierre's love to Jaffeir resurfaces and sweeps hate away; he addresses Jaffeir:

Dear to my arms, though thou'st undone my fame,
I cannot forget to love thee; prithee, Jaffeir,
I'm now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey. (301)

The two friends are reconciled and Pierre requests one last favour of Jaffier. Being a soldier, Pierre asks Jaffeir to atone for his treachery by saving Pierre from a disgraceful death on the scaffold. To fulfill his friend's wish, Jaffeir stabs Pierre to the heart with the same dagger which has been the symbol of Jaffeir's broken faith. Then, he stabs himself and the two friends fall dead on the scaffold.³⁸

Because Belvidera cannot tolerate that Jaffeir has died and his heart is full of hate towards her, she gets mad. Before Belvidera's touching death, she even begins to see Jaffeir's ghost flying away from her:

Why do you fly me? are you angry still, then?
Jaffier! where art thou? Father, why do you do thus?
Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here somewhere.(303)

The play ends with Priuli looking at the dead bodies of Jaffeir, Pierre and Belvidera and lamenting that he has lost his lovely daughter because of his cruelty and hate. He addresses the audience " Sparing no tears when you this tale relate / But bid all cruel fathers dread my fate"(304).

Chapter Four

Conclusion

It is undeniable that one of the most popular plays in English literature is Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It has entertained readers and spectators for hundreds of years since its writing. What has appealed to the audience may be the central touching theme of the play that is the ill-fated love opposed by a world of hate and violence. This hate is represented by the unending feud between the Montagues and Capulets that threatens the entire society of Verona because it extends to their servants, relatives, friends and the town citizens as well. Shakespeare plants the seed of *Romeo and Juliet's* love in this hateful field. The playwright keenly highlights this ideal love when he contrasts it with another kind of love. At the beginning of the play, he introduces the melancholic Romeo suffering from the unrequited love. But when Romeo sees Juliet and falls deeply in love with her, it becomes clear to the audience that Romeo's previous feelings towards Rosaline have been no more than infatuation.

Moreover, Shakespeare tries to reveal the effect of the ideal love on developing the personalities of the two lovers. At the beginning of the play, Juliet appears rather submissive to her mother when Juliet tells her that her eyes cannot see unless her mother permits them. But at the end, she becomes a strong woman addressing the dagger to be sheathed in her heart. It is worth mentioning that this powerful image of Juliet runs suitably with the powerful age, the Elizabethan, that is ruled by a powerful woman, Queen Elizabeth.³⁹ Romeo, on the other hand, first appears rather flighty. But he gradually gains strength and becomes a dedicated lover who is ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of his beloved. It is this kind of love that works throughout the play and thus extinguishes the fire of hate that has been about to burn the society. It is worth mentioning that in the restoration period, there has been a tendency to reproduce the masterpieces of the Elizabethan age. Therefore, Thomas Otway tries to follow nearly the same outline frame of *Romeo and Juliet* that is love which comes out of hate. In *Venice Preserv'd*, there is an enmity between Jaffeir and his father-in-law, Priuli, which continues up to the end of the play. But since the restoration audience has been composed of upper classes and courtiers, Otway adds a political

flavour to his play. It is claimed that the play's immediate appeal to the restoration audience might be related to its political references. Otway refers to an impending plot at his time against Charles II. Moreover, there is the funny image of Antonio who stands for Earl of Shaftsbury.

It is noticeable that, unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, *Venice Preserv'd* portrays meek images for its female characters represented by Belvidera and Aquillina. The former, for instance, is reduced when she is left as a hostage in the hands of men her husband barely knows. At the end of the play, Jaffeir and Pierre are dignified when they die honourably on the scaffold whereas Belvidera is left to madness. Aquillina, on the other hand, is shown little regard by the men in the play. Her lover, Pierre, refuses to reveal the plot against the Senate to her reflecting that women shouldn't talk out of bed. Antonio takes Aquillina as his courtesan and never calls her by her name. These humiliated images of the female characters in *Venice Preserv'd* are frequently seen in the restoration plays; the woman has been presented as a source of joy, fun and lust.⁴⁰ Unlike *Romeo and Juliet* in which love is celebrated by the playwright because it triumphs over hate for the two lovers' death ends the feud of the families, love in *Venice Preserv'd* is unproductive. It is true that the conspiracy is crushed, yet the city is left to the corrupt senators and their oppression and aberration.

NOTES

¹ A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, *The Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol. V: The Drama to 1642*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 168.

² Lucus Annaeus Seneca (d. A.D. 65): He was the Roman philosopher and advisor to Nero. He was accused of participating in a conspiracy and was ordered to take his own life. His tragedies had greatly influenced the Italian, French and English playwrights. The Senecan tragedies were divided into five acts with choruses. Besides, there was an elaborate recounting of horror and violence which were usually acted off the stage.

Dorothy Eagle, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 519-520.

³ John Burgess Wilson, *English Literature*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1970), 79-81.

⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁵ J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1979), 732.

⁶ Wilson, 89-90

⁷ Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare*, (London: A Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), 20-24.

⁸ Richard W. Bevis, *English Drama: Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, (London: Longman Group, 1988), 31-34.

⁹ Allardyce Nicoll, *British Drama*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1965), 215-217.

¹⁰ Ibid., 220.

¹¹ Wilson, 173-175

¹² Ibid., 176.

¹³ <URL.<http://drama.pepperdine.edu/restoration/rj/jason/.htm>> (Accessed on 4.8.2011)

¹⁴ Leonora Leet Brodwin, *Elizabethan Love Tragedy: 1587-1625*, (London: University of London Press Ltd, 1972), 6-8.

¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by John Ingledew, (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1965), 3.

All the subsequent references to the text will be taken from this edition and the Act, Scene, and Line numbers will parenthetically be cited.

¹⁶ G. B. Harrison, *Shakespeare's tragedies*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1961), 50.

¹⁷ Doren, 52.

¹⁸ Harrison, 51-52.

¹⁹ Mehdi Zia'ee, *A Critical Guide to Great Plays*, (Tahran: Omid Mehr, 2005), 308-309.

²⁰ Ibid., 313-314.

²¹ Praveen Bhatia, *William Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*, (New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors, 2008), 112-114.

²² Harrison, 58.

²³ Ibid., 62.

²⁴ Bhatia, 128-129.

²⁵ Harrison, 64.

²⁶ Wilson, 176-77.

²⁷ John E. Cunningham, *Restoration Drama*, (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1966), 109.

²⁸ Thomas Otway, *Venice Preserv'd*, ed, by Edmund Gosse, (London: J. M. Dent and Sons LTD, 1966), 243.

All the subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition and the pages will parenthetically be cited.

²⁹ Aline Mackenzie Taylor, "*Venice Preserv'd*", *Restoration Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. by John Loftis, (New York: Oxford university press, 1966), 201.

³⁰ Nicoll, 234.

³¹ Ibid., 235-6.

³² Taylor, 216.

³³ Ibid., 215.

³⁴ Bevis, 32-33.

³⁵ Ibid., 35.

³⁶ Taylor, 217.

³⁷ Ibid., 218.

³⁸ Some critics believe that the plot in the play stands for a conspiracy which was about to be made against the king, Charles II. The epilogue clearly states "Though the conspiracy's prevented here / Methinks I see another hatching there"(305). Moreover, the character of Senator Antonio represents a wicked portrait of Lord Shaftsbury who attempted to make an upheaval against the Duke of York; Otway states in the prologue:

Next is a senator that keeps a whore
In Venice none a higher office bore
To lewdness every night the lecher ran
Show me, all London, such another man. (241)

Cunningham, 98.

³⁹ Bhatia, 123.

⁴⁰ Cunningham, 109.

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