

# A STUDY ON THE CHARACTER OF 'JULIET'

(2)

Lisako Nakayama

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## Decision and Concealment

### (1) Juliet's Decision Through Inward Struggle

I have a strong opposing argument toward what Yushi Odashima described in his book under the title of *Odashima Yushi no Sheikusupia Yuugaku*(1982)... In Romeo and Juliet, there was only, A.C.Bradley called 'outward conflict' of family feud.... (8). As I mentioned in chapter 1, inward struggle exists in Juliet through this play. It is evident that Juliet's feelings had been plotted to the peak of her happiness when she declared her love for Romeo, and asked to throw his name and marry her on the balcony scene, when Juliet was at Friar Lawrence with Romeo, waiting in expectation for their wedding. However quirky destiny did not let her happiness maintain, but let it go straight on to unhappiness later on. Peripeteia came on Act 3 Scene 1, right after Friar Lawrence married Juliet to Romeo. And Romeo was concerned with this matter which decided their destiny to be unhappy, and it happened while Juliet was not on the scene. Tybolt, Juliet's cousin, appeared on the stage again. He had been angry with Romeo vehemently because Romeo stole into the masked ball at the Capulets and incurred the anger of Capulet by contraries. At first he provoked Mercutio, but he of course turned an object to Romeo as he came across. However Romeo was then a husband of Juliet and also relatives to Tybolt. Therefore, he restrained his anger and behaved amicably to Tybolt. On the contrary, Tybolt, who did not know about the marriage of Juliet and Romeo at all, was exasperated at Romeo's behavior. Mercutio, too, misunderstood Romeo's self-control for un-honorable humiliation. Because of that, he appeared a challenge to duel for Romeo.

Unfortunately, he was stabbed with Tybolt's sword which came under the arm of Romeo who tried to arbitrate them. Romeo's words, "I thought all for the best." (3.1.95) for Mercutio's words "A plague o' both your houses." (3.1.92) condenses the

limitations of human and irony of destiny. The death of Mercutio, who was imagined to be a lively man with a lot of wit, frustrated the lover's destiny, and made their tragedy decisive. As a matter of fact, Romeo was aware of 'black fate' (3.1.110) and he was conscious of "O, I am fortune's fool!" after he killed Tybolt. And Mercutio's words remind us of an irony that both Juliet and Romeo die later, and both families lose their inheritors and then fall gradually. Juliet who was informed of what had happened to Romeo from the nurse, realized the peripeteia then. Destiny was expressed in a way of her marriage proposal to Paris as if the destiny afflicted Juliet one after another. Juliet, who had been already weaned from the nurse received a vial to be suspended animation from Friar Lawrence. Juliet stayed in her room alone, as Friar Lawrence told, with holding a vial in her hands. (4.3) Juliet confessed her disquiet and fear against her death.

Juliet. I have a faint cold fear thrill through my veins.  
That almost freeze up the heat of life. (4.3.15-6)

.....  
What if this mixture do not work at all? (21)

.....  
What if it be a poison... (24)

.....  
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
I wake before the time that Romeo  
Come to redeem me? (30-2)

Furthermore, "The horrible conceit of death and night" (37), "a vault" (39), "spirits" (44), "shrieks" (47), "hideous fears" (50), "rage" (53), and "desperate brains" (54). Some critics says that it is quite strange of Juliet to be dreadful of death when she was then about to take a vial to carry out her love. And I do disagree to this opinion. It is natural of Juliet to do so. Certainly many of

us may wonder why Juliet doubted Friar Lawrence and was conscious of the fear for death, though she took the way to be suspended animation to carry out her love, which was sprung with romantic passion fatefully and instantly since she met Romeo at the ball. However, we should not forget the fact that Juliet was getting to be only fourteen. When Juliet took the vial, she actually bade farewell to this world. A fear for a strange world passed her mind ; whether that plan would make it all right or not, whether she might trust Friar Lawrence or not, and what would happen if she really died, and so on. The image of death to Juliet was dreadful to the last and it was really ugly. It is nothing but natural of fourteen years old girl to be afraid of a tomb, spirits, and death when she was on the point of a suspended animation. If Shakespeare had created Juliet's age to be sixteen, which A. Brooke had imagined, how would Shakespeare's Juliet have reacted? As I mentioned before, Juliet was well aware that there would be no one but herself to act the 'suspended animation' and accomplish this love. When Juliet was in her room and was struggling within herself, she cried, "Nurse !" (4.3.18). What was this cry of hers? Juliet cried "Nurse !" only once and never called again. Why didn't Juliet call the nurse to help her out as she used to do when she was in some trouble? Juliet knew that adults themselves were the real difficulties to her, and she was in reality psychologically weaned from the nurse. As the prologue sang her and Romeo's destiny on the stage where they were not on, Juliet called the nurse in her room where the nurse wasn't in. Juliet must have cried "Nurse !" in her mind. Therefore Juliet didn't cry "Nurse !" twice, and the nurse could not hear Juliet cry and did not come to help her out. At this moment Juliet faced a new struggle in her mind. And it is assumed that how much Juliet herself could surmount the fear derived from the vehemence of love for Romeo and the spiritual weakness for death. The image of death and grave then must have spread more concretely and

distinctly in her mind like the ocean than when Juliet who was caught in a dilemma said to Friar Lawrence as follows,

Juliet. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, (4.1.77)

.....  
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,  
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud-  
Things that, to hear them told, have made me  
tremble-  
And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love. (84-8)

And that Juliet imagined something like the ocean reminds us of the balcony scene, which Juliet showed her love to Romeo under the night sky full of stars.

Here we can also notice that it was Romeo's appearance that drove Juliet to make up her mind to take a vial. On the balcony scene Juliet escaped from the courtly love and asked Romeo to marry her, because she knew that Romeo was listening to her confessions of love without expecting that Romeo would be there. And this time, when Juliet was struggling with fear of death holding the vial in her hands, she saw Romeo appear in front of her. As soon as she saw him, she took the vial saying, "Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, here's drink! I drink to thee!" (4.3.58) Incidentally, "Romeo, Romeo, Romeo," (Q1) is put "Romeo I come." in Q2-4. Anyway we never know whether Juliet saw living Romeo or dead Romeo, and whether she was alive or dead when she took the vial...(9).

In many personal opinions, Juliet must have seen a living Romeo, and she was alive. When Juliet asked Friar Lawrence to give her some help, she had already made up her mind to put up with the fear in order to live, because she had said to him, "To live an unstained wife to my sweet love." (4.1.88) This part of her

line sounds like the line of Hamlet ; “To be, or not to be : that is the question :” (3.1.56)

His theme, “To be, or not to be”, means that it was then impossible for him to choose whether he should to be, or not to be on the way of choice ; he was actually caught in ‘Chaos’. On the other hand, Juliet made a definite decision to be a ‘suspended animation’ through the struggle in her mind. Juliet who took the vial crying “Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, here’s a drink ! I drink to thee !” stood aloof from the fact that she was only fourteen completely. There, we can see Juliet as a lady who tries to accomplish her love. Her decision through the struggle let her change into a lady of the romantic tragedy.

## (2) Juliet’s Concealment

As Juliet made the decision, she had two concealment. One of them was the marriage with Romeo. And the other was the act of suspended animation, deceiving the Capulets and the nurse. We should face this fact because Juliet was driven to tragedy by actions which the other dramatic personae took not knowing Juliet’s concealment. Juliet must have been perfect until the stage of her marriage and her act of suspended animation. However these two concealment in reality drove Juliet to the tragedy positively through their ignorance. Then how these two concealment had influences over those people including Juliet and Romeo ?

‘Secret marriage’ ; it had influenced upon Mercutio and Tybolt, and caused the duel between them. Neither of them knew of Romeo’s marriage, and so Tybolt took Romeo’s calm and friendly behavior for an insult, and Mercutio took it for un-honorable submission of his and had a duel with Tybolt in place of Romeo. However Mercutio was stabbed with Tybolt’s dagger, which came through under Romeo’s arm as Romeo tried to stop them. When Romeo knew that Mercutio, a best friend of his, was

dead, he lost his self-possession and also stabbed Tybolt with a dagger. On the other hand Juliet had her crying for Romeo's exile to Mantua taken for Tybolt's death by the Capulets and she was driven to a wedding with Paris twenty-four hours earlier instead. Juliet, who met a peripeteia on Act 3 Scene 1, plunged herself into tragedy because of their secret marriage.

We can see that what both Juliet and Romeo did actively put themselves under the control of the destiny to the contrary, although they used to act passively being controlled by the destiny before. The other concealment is her act of 'suspended animation'. The former concealment was shared with, of course, Juliet, Romeo, Friar Lawrence, the nurse, and the audience, and latter one was shared only with Juliet, Friar Lawrence, who gave a vial to her, and the audience. On the contrary there are many of those who didn't know the concealment including Romeo, the Capulets, and the nurse. And it was normal that Romeo didn't know the concealment. As I mentioned before, Capulet moved up her wedding with Paris twenty-four hours earlier, because he thought that Juliet had become an obedient child once again after coming back from the Friar Lawrence, and never expected that his child was going to deceive him. A. Brook created that all things had happened within about nine months. However Shakespeare shortened the period to four or five days. Why Shakespeare shortened the period was because Capulet moved up her wedding. It is generally said that Shakespeare shortened the period to make the two lover's destiny of love and instantaneousness much clearer. I'm not going to object the opinion, and in reality Shakespeare must have done this on purpose. However if Capulet had not moved up her wedding, everything must have gone on all right ; Juliet could see living Romeo again and did not have to die. Since *Romeo and Juliet* was a destined story, that Capulet moved up her wedding seems to be one of the causes Shakespeare shortened the period. As a matter of course, Juliet

had to take the vial on Tuesday night, not on Wednesday night as Friar Lawrence ordered, because Capulet changed his mind without knowing the fact of Juliet's marriage. And his action also accelerated the arrival of his own child's death. If Juliet hadn't had to take the vial one day earlier, this story would not have been shortened to four or five days. And if Juliet didn't have any concealment, how would things have gone? As Romeo didn't know the concealment, he came back to Verona to die. As you may see, everything was brought about by Juliet's concealment.

Juliet was getting to be a lady through the outward conflict and inward struggle, and those difficulties made Juliet decide her mind to accomplish the love. Therefore Juliet had to have the concealment. If she told what she was going to do then, everything would have had a different development. In other words, Juliet's concealment to accomplish the love made Romeo decide his mind to die. Her concealment began with the secret wedding and went to the act of suspended animation. Juliet must never have expected that her concealment brought about their unhappiness, because she thought they must lead to a consummation of their love. It seems to me that her concealment had as much significance as a 'love concealment' which can be seen in courtly love....(10) Shakespeare avoided expressing their consummation of love graphically. The reason was that Shakespeare did not think satisfaction of a carnal desires and its direct description were his final goal of love, so he described the concealment, one of the traditions in Western Europe, sexual abstinence which was underlying in a courtly love. Anyway it was an ironical matter that what Juliet chose led her and Romeo to misfortune through her ignorance. We will see the love Juliet solicited in chapter 3.



## Juliet's Love and Death Brought by Happy Dagger

### (1) Death for Juliet

Act 5 Scene 3 is the final stage of this play, and we can see the consummation of Juliet's love. There are a lot of images of 'light vs. darkness' in *Romeo and Juliet*. Among the images we should not miss the most remarkable image, 'love vs. death'. It is directly related to a theme of this play.

Shakespeare must have supposed that Juliet's love and her wedding were connected with 'death' from the beginning. The image that her grave were going to be her wedding bed suggested she would choose death and be united with Death if she could not be united with Romeo. When Juliet found that Romeo was dead, she committed suicide with a dagger without hesitation. Why did Juliet have to die? Juliet wanted to find happiness by dying with Romeo? No, not in the least definitely. The decision made by Juliet to choose to die was her strong will, not a easy one.

Juliet. I will kiss thy lips.

Haply some poison yet doth hang on them

To make me die with a restorative. (5.3.164-6)

Juliet called a poison, which was left on Romeo's lips, a 'restorative', and tried to have the rest of it. We can see the meaning of 'come to life again' in the word 'restorative'. That Juliet died to live is on the line of the extension of the paradoxical idea. Juliet was not only changing to a lady but also changing to a heroine who struggled against the destiny actively. With regard to this, Juliet is totally far from Ophelia in *Hamlet*. She could not become free of her father or brother, so she could deceive her sweet love Hamlet as her father ordered her. (3.1) When Ophelia realized what a damned thing she had done, she had already been mad. We may say that she escaped from her sin by being mad and being dead in the river in terms of her inability to be blamed for

her sin because she was not a sane person. Lady Macbeth was also put in the same condition as Ophelia in terms of being mad and escaping from her sin. However Juliet was not regarded as the same as the two ladies. The reason Juliet called the poison 'restorative' was because she thought it would take her to the world where Romeo waited for her. As you may see, Juliet never tried to escape from any difficulties; rather than that, she was constantly trying to struggle against whatever would interrupt her love. So when Juliet kissed Romeo's lips and tried to take the rest of the poison, she had already been prepared to die to live. According to 'a kiss as death' written by Edgar Wind,...To die is to be loved by God, and to have an eternal supreme bliss through God. Ancient times or Christianity admitted and praised this sort of death, and also theologians who regarded symbolism used to call it 'death'...(11) In terms of this, Soji Iwasaki finds out "a power of transfiguration love"...(12); it is a love elevated to an eternal one as a heavenly thing. As the prologue told us 'death-mark'd love', 'love' and 'death' suggest that to love contains to die, and death exactly the peak of consummation of love. Juliet had to die because she loved Romeo, and her love was consummated and accomplished as well as put a full stop by being dead. If the two lovers consider the death as the consummation of love and reversed the worth of death.... 'death-mark'd love' means 'love marking death by itself' as well as 'death-mark'd love', because 'mark' had a meaning of a 'goal' as we can see in 'seamark of my utmost sail' (5.2.268) in Othello...(13) It is no doubt that a destiny made Juliet and Romeo encounter, and their love led them to death, and also death led them to the eternal love. 'A tragic catharsis' does not exist in her death. Juliet was unconcerned about an opinion after her death. She differs in this from Hamlet and Othello. She never expected of her and Romeo's statue in pure gold to be established....(14) Then what did love mean to Juliet in the end?

## (2) Consummation of Love

You may now see why Juliet had to die, that is to say, Why Shakespeare supposed Juliet to commit suicide. Juliet spoke some significant lines when she stabbed herself with a dagger.

Juliet. Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger.  
This is thy sheath. There rust, and let me die. (5.3.  
168-9)

These lines express Juliet's gratification of accomplishing her love by choosing a death of her own volition and by actually dying at the end of this play. As I contemplate this matter, I remember what Friar Lawrence said to Romeo. He somewhat could not but feel worry about their vehemence of passion of sudden love when he heard from Romeo what had happened to Juliet and Romeo, notwithstanding he got to have marry Romeo to Juliet hoping for a reconciliation of both the families. Anyway Friar Lawrence advised Romeo as follows, hearing him try to fight against 'love devouring death'.

Friar L. The violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and power,  
Which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,  
And in the taste confounds the appetite.  
Therefore love moderately ; long love doth so.  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow. (2.6.9-15)

These lines express the strength and danger of love paradoxically. When we remember that 'die' as a verb which has a secret meaning of 'to experience a sexual orgasm' behind the word, it is possible to see the image of 'sexual consummation' in 'in their triumph death' simultaneously even though Friar Lawrence did

not mean it. M.M.Manhood pointed out that the meaning of 'consume' is 'to reach a consummation' as well as 'burn away' (OED, V 2)...(15) According to his suggestions, the image of 'love' and 'death' which Juliet united throughout the play is getting to be stronger and stronger. Furthermore, we can understand that there is other meaning in Juliet's last lines. Returning back to her lines again, ... 'happy' has a meaning of 'successful fortunate in itself' besides 'fortunate to me in being ready to my hand'....(16)

Considering the meaning of 'to experience a sexual orgasm' and its entity of 'happy', we can see the significance of 'the hints of sexual fulfillment' as N. Brook pointed out ; he recognizes the element of 'Liebestod', in German, and element of death and Eros being included in her love. The last lines Juliet uttered in *Romeo and Juliet* written by A. Brook are different from the former. Juliet welcomes death (she quoted) : end of happiness. That are also the beginning of assured happiness. (2773-4) It actually have a meaning of 'Liebestod' but do not contain a sexual connotation in them as was contained in Shakespeare....(17) We surely can see a vision of Liebestod which makes a love an eternal one by being dead on her love scene at a grave. Aries described as follows... At this age (the Elizabethan age), a basic instinct of death and of sex approached each other in the Western culture....(18) A theme of a carcass liking was seen, but no signs of eroticism was shown in 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the later 15<sup>th</sup> century and 16<sup>th</sup> century those theme came to contain a erotic meaning in them. 'Death' and 'Eros' was united in art and literature. Therefore as you may realize, what Juliet uttered and acted lead us to a image of an erotic love when we remember an erotic image of death and secret meaning of death. The happy dagger did not simply mean to Juliet that it was fortunately there near Juliet. Literally it must have been a welcome dagger which would bring her happiness, for it was worthless for her to live without Romeo. Juliet had to come to another world to be united with Romeo, and what would take her

to another world was nothing but a dagger. A dagger was an only tool which would make her love to be accomplished.

However a dagger made Romeo stab Tybolt, and Juliet and Romeo approached peripeteia because of this execution. This dagger which would be used both to make a love consummated and to destroy had appeared from the beginning of this play, as you see in the conversation between Sampson and Gregory of the Capulets. Sam. I will take the wall of my any man or maid of Montague's (1.1.10-1) / when I have fought with the men I will be civil with the maids, I will cut off their heads. (1.1.20-2) Shakespeare must have meant 'heads' as 'maiden heads' on this line. As Gregory said, "Draw thy tool." (1.1.30), Sampson replied, "My naked weapon is out." (1.1.32) It is obvious that this 'tool' meant a dagger as tool to murder, and 'weapon' meant a penis which would avoid a virgin. 'Naked weapon' is a sexual pun in this play. ...The macho jokes...are the right way to introduce the theme that dominates this play: the theme of love bound up with violent death. Weapons and fighting suggest sex as well as death, and are still doing so later in the play, when the imagery shifts to gunpowder.....(19) Shakespeare tried to show a violent sex in which a man manipulate a woman unilaterally. 'Wedding bed' is united with a violent hint of death which aimed at Juliet's maiden heads. A dagger is not only a hatred tool but also a tool of satisfying a desire. It is surely clear for us to recognize a symbol of the scene when the dagger was fit into Juliet's sheath.

Juliet could once be separated from Death which was imagined to be her bridegroom or her lover as soon as she awoke from a sleep of suspended animation, but she plunged into death which took away her husband Romeo, having hoped to be united with Romeo. Namely, 'eros' and 'death' was united completely by Juliet's symbolic suicide. It is an absolute fact that an image of dagger have extended over the two fields of a sexual love and death. A poison and a dagger were tool to make her love to be

consummated, so she could call the poison 'restorative' and dagger 'happy dagger'. Juliet of fourteen-year-old finally experienced a sexual orgasm by stabbing the dagger, and her love attained the acme of consummation as well as happiness.

### Conclusion

Men who consider themselves to be a educated man or pretended to be one interrupt a love and a woman with an abstract idea. Shakespeare had a concept that those who were controlled with the idea, generally would think of some matter in a complicated way and describe a matter in abstract terms, and what they said did not have an identity ; on the contrary those who were controlled with a basic instinct, consider some matter simply, and what they said was substantial and decisive. However it did not matter which was good or bad to Shakespeare, for both of them had an infinite difference of level, and different people have different characters. Shakespeare depicted women who acted basically instinctively such as a city-woman, a noble one and one who rush about free and uninhibited all over the world, and a man who controlled by the woman. His idea was based on a nature of woman's basic instinct. When we consider the basic instinct on Juliet, that she was getting to be fourteen years old is the most remarkable point. Juliet is totally different from Ophelia and Lady Macbeth on the point that she was not conscious of herself and did not act worrying about the future when she loved a man. Family, status, and position did not matter to Juliet, for she could not help acting as her basic instinct drove her to do under the destiny. Nevertheless, she was too young to be aware of her destiny seriously, so she was trapped in a destiny. However she did not live as the destiny led her. On the contrary, the girl struggled against it with all her faculty. Juliet had acted as Friar Lawrence told her to do till she found Romeo to be dead. When

she found out his death, she decided what she had to do on her own will and chose to die to accomplish her love without hesitation. Suppose that Juliet had acted to the last as Friar Lawrence advised, she would not have been a heroine of tragedy, and she might have been considered to be nothing but a sort of lady like Ophelia. It is needless to say that we can see her mental development through this play. With the development, her will to accomplish the love was getting to be a firm resolution. However it seemed to be impossible to accomplish her love when she reacted peripeteia because of having some secrets. After all, what she did (she decided to be a suspended animation, called a poison 'restorative', and finally stabbed herself with a dagger) were for the purpose of living with Romeo. Anyway Juliet now stabbed herself with a dagger and then experienced 'Eros' with death. Nevertheless, Shakespeare avoided expressing the 'Eros' graphically placing a great emphasis on the fresh. He expressed her 'Eros' with death. The love of Juliet of fourteen-year-old reached to 'Eros', and she changed into what we call a 'lady' by stabbing herself with a dagger. I feel that Shakespeare created Juliet as a real person in reality as I remember these words... "Romeo is nothing but Shakespeare himself as a lover of Juliet" ....(20)

## NOTES

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20. Takaharu Yamauchi, *Sheikusupia Shiron*, (Hokuseido Shoten, 1938), p. 30.



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