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Romeo and Juliet has been kept alive through the many versions movies have portrayed them in. Many movies have actually used the Shakespearean dialogue in their movies. Others have just used the general idea of lovers being separated by outside opposing forces. In the 1996 version of William Shakespeare's Romeo+Juliet directed by Baz Luhrman, the tale was accurately portrayed through the use of Shakespearean dialogue. However, although the movie represented the dialogue accurately, there were things such as weapons, setting and culture, and innuendos of sex and drugs that were included in the movie.

In the violent scenes of brawls between the Montagues and the Capulets, they use guns in the movie instead of swords. The use of guns is somewhat typical in a modern day film because audiences love violence and action in their films. In the play, however, swords were used in fights. Even though the director replaced the swords with guns, he shows the brand name of the gun which he dutifully names "Sword". "Attempting to reconcile Shakespeare's "swords" with the hip world of Verona Beach, Luhrman uses a close-up of the characters' guns to show that their brand name is "Sword" (instead of, one might suppose, "Colt"). (The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, 421) "

In the play, Verona, Italy is described as medieval setting with castles and courts. In the movie, the setting is described as a busy city by the beach. Verona, Italy is portrayed as a very distinguished city where officials of the courts lived. They used horses, lived in castles, and lived by the rule that status was everything. In the movie, the story seemed to be set in modern day California. It was hot and people walked around in open shirts or bikinis. It was called Verona Beach. There were prostitutes in the street and people carrying guns. “*Baz Luhrman’s Romeo+Juliet* brought Shakespeare into the postmodern age” (Courtesy Twentieth Century-Fox).

In contrast to the play, the movie displays certain innuendos of sexuality to capture the modern day audience. For example, during the scene of Romeo and Juliet at the balcony, Romeo uses the dialogue of the play and body language to initiate a sexual confrontation with Juliet. The scene is supposed to portray the true love vows exchanged between Romeo and Juliet on their first night of introduction. In the play, it is expressed as romantic and beautiful as Romeo uses words to win Juliet. However, in the movie, Romeo uses both words and the constant touching of Juliet’s body to show her how much he “cares”.

Another innuendo present in the movie that caters to the modern day era is the use of drugs. In the scene where Mercutio tells the tale of Queen Mab, the movie shows him giving Romeo a small pill which goes by the name of “extacy”. Soon after that scene, the audience witness Romeo “tripping” at the party hosted by the Capulet family. “Violence, murder, lust, love, poison, drugs that mimic death, it’s all there says Luhrman” (Braun 1). This innuendo of drugs only appeals more to the modern day audience.

In conclusion, even though the correct usage of dialogue is presented in the movie version of Romeo and Juliet, there are still some obvious contrasts to the play. Most of the differences are made on purpose to attract the attention of a modern day audience. Things such as violence with guns, sexual innuendos, and drug usage all appeal to the audiences of today.