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# A Hot Mess: Knowing Juliet through Accidental Encounters in Popular Culture

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## A Hot Mess: Knowing Juliet through Accidental Encounters in Popular Culture

Kirk Hendershott-Kraetzer, *Olivet College*

One night, on an episode of the TV series *Supernatural*, Juliet groped Romeo. Or rather, a character situated as Juliet groped a character whom another character mockingly called Romeo. Either way, he wasn't happy about it.

Partly as a research interest, I collect references to and appropriations of *Romeo and Juliet* in popular culture, and this certainly fit the bill. These references fall into two broad categories: those that I have been given or directed to, such as Taylor Swift's "Love Story" (Lidy), and those I encounter by chance (such as while watching a movie or roaming the satellite feed on a sleepless night). After years of slowly building this collection, I began to wonder what someone unfamiliar with the playtext's characters and plot might come to think about *Romeo and Juliet* from accidental encounters such as seeing this Juliet paw her would-be Romeo. Was it possible for a casual TV viewer to learn something about *Romeo and Juliet* without intending to do so and without consulting the playtext? And if so, what might one learn?

### 1. Suddenly Juliet.

Between fall 1997 and summer 2012, I accidentally encountered eight different direct references to *Romeo and Juliet* in episodes of one-hour television dramas. These were more than just appropriations of a plot element or quotations that a professional might recognize but that someone less familiar with the text might miss. These references were specific enough to be immediately recognized by someone unfamiliar with the plot, to say nothing of individual lines in the text: at least one character was specifically designated as Romeo or Juliet.

With the exception of "Upper West Side Story," none of these episodes initially positions itself as an adaptation or appropriation of the Shakespearean plot or Shakespearean characters, and the Shakespearean invocations, when they come, are often incidental: comic moments, teasing wisecracks, or ironic allusions. They also are unexpected:

## TV Juliets

<b>Character<sup>1</sup> (Performer)</b>	<b>Episode (Year)</b>	<b>Show (Network)</b>
Christina Talbert (Mags Chernock)	“Denial” (1997)	<i>Law and Order</i> (NBC)
Cora Kennison (Tina Holmes)	“Starved” (2005)	<i>Law and Order: Special Victims Unit</i> (NBC)
Kelly Morris (Leah Pipes)	“The Boy in the Shroud” (2006)	<i>Bones</i> (Fox)
Anna Gonzales (Danay Garcia)	“Crossing the Threshold” (2009)	<i>The Cleaner</i> (A & E)
Becky Rosen (Emily Perkins)	“Sympathy for the Devil” (2009)	<i>Supernatural</i> (CW)
Marielle Di Napoli (Anna Gunn)	“Love Eternal” (2010)	<i>Law and Order</i> (NBC)
Chloe Woods (Elizabeth Gillies)	“Upper West Side Story” (2012)	<i>White Collar</i> (USA)
Olivia DiFlorio (Meghann Fahy)	“To Swerve and Protect” (2012)	<i>Necessary Roughness</i> (USA)

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characters suddenly become Romeo and Juliet. For example, in “Denial,” Assistant District Attorney Jamie Ross and her supervisor Jack McCoy are discussing their prosecution of two teenage lovers for the murder of their unborn child. Ross comments of the male defendant, Tommy, that “The jury liked his Romeo of the Dairyland routine,” which positions his girlfriend, Christina, as Juliet. Similarly, in “Starved,” the Special Victims Unit detectives are searching for a serial rapist who finds his victims at speed-dating events, using fake names all tied to the same email address, [romeo@forumail.com](mailto:romeo@forumail.com). In the episode’s first act, the

detectives routinely call their quarry Romeo until they find out his real name, Mike Jergens, and discover that he has been living with a woman, Cora Kinneson, for over a year: Cora becomes this episode's Juliet. "The Boy in the Shroud" is replete with references to young love and to young love gone wrong even before the FBI Special Agent in charge of investigating the death of a boy, Dylan, who has been missing for three weeks, hypothesizes that "the perv kill[ed] Romeo and Juliet kill[ed] the pervert." After that, the episode's Shakespearean references include repeated characterizations of Dylan as Romeo and a crucial evidentiary role for "the Romeo and Juliet rose" (the English Alba rose), which Dylan's girlfriend Kelly left in his hand after his accidental death.

In September 2009, *Romeo and Juliet* references in one-hour scripted dramas seemed to become more common: in addition to episodes discussed here, I accidentally encountered three more direct references to the playtext or its characters since first drafting this essay (all, unfortunately, now lost because of a DVR crash that happened before I took the time to note the episodes' and series' titles). "Crossing the Threshold" finds an undercover narcotics cop involved in an illicit relationship with the daughter of the cartel boss he is supposed to be investigating: the cop's lieutenant describes the couple as "Romeo and Juliet." In "Sympathy for the Devil," one of *Supernatural's* main characters, Sam, is fondled by an eager fangirl, Becky; after Becky leaves, Sam's brother teases his uncomfortable and befuddled sibling by calling him Romeo. Sam's Juliet will return to haunt him in future episodes of the series. *Law and Order's* "Love Eternal" features Marielle DiNapoli, described by a friend as "a beautiful forty-year-old woman who dresses like a colorblind twenty-year-old prostitute": after having been accused of murdering her husband and in response to a plea offer of extreme emotional disturbance, Marielle snaps, "We were a happily married couple. Everything was perfect," and walks out of the negotiation. One of the prosecuting attorneys says of Marielle, "She thinks she's Juliet: no way she killed Romeo, even if she did [do it]." "Upper West Side Story," the *White Collar* episode that most aggressively borrows from and tropes on Shakespeare, situates its Romeo and Juliet in the story's B plot. Evan, a scholarship student at a swanky Upper West Side private school, has "a massive crush" on the daughter of the financier in charge of (and who is embezzling from) the school's endowment; that daughter, Chloe, has a

massive obsession with romantic poetry in general and *Romeo and Juliet* in particular (it's her "favorite"), to say nothing of her crush on her substitute English teacher, Neal (who is working undercover for the FBI and who can spout "She Walks In Beauty" with the best of them—the episode makes a hash of literary history, plunking *Romeo and Juliet* into the middle of a discussion of the British Romantics). "Upper West Side Story" repeatedly invokes its Shakespearean source: Mozzie, one of the series regulars, will "play the part of the helpful friar who brings the star-crossed lovers [Chloe and Evan] together," including forging sonnets to Chloe in Evan's hand and packing Chloe's locker with red roses, because Mozzie "want[s] to see the little guy get the girl." Finally, *Necessary Roughness's* "To Swerve and Protect" finds another series regular, Ray Jay, in love with his SAT tutor, Olivia. Forbidden to have sex with Olivia in the family home, Ray Jay argues that his mother's draconian edict be reversed, invoking the Veronese lovers' sad end in support of his claim: "Romeo and Juliet—their parents kept them apart. And look what happened to them. You're fighting biology. Not to mention Shakespeare." Later, when Mom finds out that Ray Jay has pulled the old "I'm staying at a friend's house" ruse on her so he can go and have more sex with Olivia, Mom snarls, "I am going to go get that little Romeo and he is going to wish he drank poison."

Most of the characters appear only in single episodes, though two—Olivia DiFlorio and Becky Rosen—appear in multi-episode story arcs, Olivia over the course of four episodes in a single season (including an entire episode before she is positioned as Juliet by Ray Jay's mother), and Becky in three episodes spread across two seasons. There is much to be said about these episodes' references to and appropriations of *Romeo and Juliet*, including their constitution of the feud, their take on the lovers' relationship, or their construction of the households' internal dynamics, to say nothing of how they conceptualize their Romeos. However, I am limiting the present analysis to the representations of Juliet alone because she is a character through whom culture has often prescribed (and proscribed) codes of femininity and female behavior. Instead of a "monument to the beauty and innocence of youth" (Weis 38), we find Juliets who have "fallen" from that assumed, idealized state of grace, unruly women who resist and destabilize traditional notions of

Juliet and point our attention to a continuing cultural struggle over our knowledge of the nature of this foundational character.

## 2. Know this.

Current thinking in cognitive psychology makes a distinction between explicit and implicit modes of learning. Explicit learning is “the conscious learning of facts and regularities” (Hulstijn), in which “the learner intends to acquire a specific set of target knowledge and this knowledge is assessed directly (Kirkhart 448). Implicit learning is “our ‘default’ learning system: a fast and effortless associative learning mode that enables us to extract structural regularity from the environment without intention, conscious monitoring, and sometimes even awareness of the learning content/process” or “explicit learning instructions” (Deroost et al. 2).<sup>2</sup> As with learning, there are two broad processes by which we store information: effortful and automatic (Battaglia). The effortful process is deliberate, while automatic acquisition happens “without the conscious intention to commit” a concept “to memory” (Hulstijn). Stored information—knowledge—is housed in knowledge structures, one type of which is a schema, “a person’s knowledge about some aspect of the environment” (Goldstein 219). Schemas form through direct experience—things that we do and things that happen to us—and indirect, mediated experiences, such as watching a television show or a performance of a play. An example of a schema might be “romantic couple.” In this, a person might store information from direct experiences (dates) and from mediated experiences (such as the courtship of Prince William and Kate Middleton). Once information in a schema becomes sufficiently complex, new schemas can form (Battaglia): a Romeo and Juliet schema might bud out of the romantic couple schema, and perhaps, over time, the information about a character might become complex enough that a Juliet schema could develop.

As part of a much more complex process of learning and knowing, then, the following takes place as people travel through culture: they accidentally encounter mediated references to *Romeo and Juliet*; these indirect experiences are learned implicitly, without conscious effort; that information becomes knowledge about *Romeo and Juliet*, or simply the characters themselves, when it is automatically stored in a knowledge

structure called a schema. This brings us back to what knowledge about Juliet might be built into such a schema through these unexpected encounters with characters who have suddenly become Juliet (such as Anna Gonzales, Christina Talbert, or Kelly Morris): she is probably an active sexual agent; she may be sexually transgressive; and she is not an idealized, innocent girl, but rather a complicated individual driven by her passions.

### 3. Juliet is probably sexually active. She is monogamous (probably).

None of the eight Juliets is a sexual innocent and, with only two exceptions, all are shown or reported to be sexually active.

In “To Swerve and Protect,” Olivia DiFlorio is caught having sex with her boyfriend by her boyfriend’s mother, while in “The Boy in the Shroud,” Kelly Morris’s foster mother reports having caught her in the act. Anna Gonzales in “Crossing the Threshold” is shown on screen in a sexual encounter with her Romeo, while in “Denial,” Christina Talbert has conceived a child and given birth before the episode’s teaser begins. On being asked whether her boyfriend has ever asked her “to, you know, do things in the bedroom that you don’t want to do,” Cora Kinneson of “Starved” replies “There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for Mike,” suggesting that there are “things” she has done that her interviewer might be surprised to learn. Marielle Di Napoli, from “Love Eternal,” divorced one man to marry a second and has engaged in S/M fetish play with both.

Neither Becky Rosen, of “Sympathy for the Devil,” nor Chloe Woods of “Upper West Side Story,” is indicated as being sexually active, but they are sexually interested in their Romeos. Becky is “so excited she’s having trouble breathing” (“5.01”) when she meets her Romeo. She feels his chest and gasps, “And you’re so firm,” and later, when she is again feeling up his chest, her embarrassed and uncomfortable Romeo (Sam) asks, “Um, Becky, c– uh, can you... quit touching me?” (“5.01”). Becky’s response? “No.” Similarly, Chloe has “amorous designs” on Neal, her substitute teacher. Her behavior toward him is flirtatious: she leans in and slightly parts her lips as she listens to him recite Byronic verse from memory; she engages him with direct eye contact while touching his forearm in casual conversation; she invites Neal to her apartment for

“home tutoring,” where she tries to engage him on the subject of her “passion.”

Generally, the Juliets are monogamous. Becky is strongly Sam-centric; Anna, Kelly, and Christina have no partners other than their Romeos. While Chloe’s affections are redirected within her episode, she is interested in only one partner at a time (rather like Romeo, in fact). In an episode of *Necessary Roughness* subsequent to “To Swerve and Protect,” Olivia dumps her Romeo for another boy, but there is little suggestion that she was two-timing. Although Marielle “was playing Pin the Tail on the Boyfriend while husband number one was still in the picture,” she is entirely devoted to her second husband, whom she describes as her soulmate, “my soul,” and “my great love.” Perhaps most interestingly, Cora’s devotion to her Romeo is near-absolute. Confronted with proof of his repeated infidelities, his contempt for her, and evidence that he is a serial rapist, Cora refuses to forsake him: she apologizes to him for her role in his arrest, marries him while he is incarcerated, and finally attempts suicide, overwhelmed by the guilt of forsaking him to the police.

#### 4. Juliet may be “naughty.”

Besides representing her as an active sexual agent, “act[ing] according to one’s will in a sexual realm” (Crown and Roberts 386), these eight productions often code Juliet as sexually transgressive in some way.

Christina has been having sex with her boyfriend Tommy on the sly and keeps her pregnancy and the birth of her child hidden from her mother, going so far as to enlist her father in the scheme. Contrastingly, Olivia, unembarrassed about having sex with her boyfriend Ray Jay, wants him to convince his mother that they should be able to have all the sex they want, wherever they want. The episode hints that Olivia is turned on by Ray Jay’s mother’s knowing, and more so, suggests that her kink is getting the son to defy Mom. Kelly, a runaway who is living on the street, has become a sexual cynic, assuming strangers’ worst intentions: on being approached and spoken to by an older male, she immediately categorizes him as a “perv” who is hitting on her (he is not). Chloe is a naughty schoolgirl, scheming to have a sexual liaison with her teacher, a characterization reinforced by two of her three costumes, both of which are informed by common tropes—conventional visuals and/or



situations—in contemporary pornography: Chloe’s prep-school skirt with white shirt and knee socks draws from the “naughty schoolgirl” trope, and her cheerleader’s uniform evokes the constellation of cheerleader porn videos that populate the Web.

Cora is a pliant submissive.<sup>3</sup> The implication of whether she’s been asked “to do things in the bedroom” that she might not “want to do” is that her Romeo is requesting something “wrong” of her, be it sodomy, role-playing, or sadomasochism. Her response, “There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for Mike,” is ambiguous and possibly ambivalent: she smiles, lowers her eyes, adjusts her hair, then looks back up at her questioner. This line and these gestures could be read as embarrassment, as being patient with a dullard, as pride, or as a combination of all. The actor’s tone in her response is similarly ambiguous: repeated listenings suggest no definitive vocal stress on any word or syllable. Becky, on the other hand, is very clear about what she’s interested in: the self-described “number one fan” of the show’s in-universe *Supernatural* novels, Becky’s screen name is samlicker81 and she is “Webmistress at morethanbrothers dot net.” She has “read all about” Sam and his brother Dean, and “written a few” pieces of incestuous homoerotic fan-fiction about them. Although a bit embarrassed when she tells the brothers about this, she is also proud, and she is willing to do more than fantasize: in a subsequent episode in her arc, “Season Seven, Time for a Wedding!,” she drugs Sam, kidnaps him, and puts him under a spell in which he believes that he and Becky are married. She also keeps him tied to their wedding bed... and he isn’t happy about it. The episode delicately hints that the bondage may be for more than just preventing Sam’s egress: Becky has removed Sam’s pants (because, as Becky says, “They’re very constricting”), offers to “help” Sam “tinkle,” and tells the individual who provided her with the love potion that “This isn’t the honeymoon I had in mind. Well, some of it is, but not in this context” (“7.08”).

Almost the opposite of the secretive Christina and a good step beyond the girlishly eager, mildly kinky Becky, the energetic Marielle, riding crop in hand, chases her naked first husband across the sand dunes near their Westhampton, New York home and uses a pair of “cute” pink handcuffs to secure her second husband, naked, inside a dog cage, where she teases him with a sword. Marielle’s habits, which she describes as “a little embarrassing,” are known far and wide: her friends are well aware

of these games, as are the Westhampton cops and, in time, the Manhattan police, courts, and anyone sitting in the gallery during Marielle's cross-examination. Anna has premarital sex with her boyfriend, but that is hardly noteworthy for this group. Unlike Marielle, she is secretive about the relationship, with good reason: her father is a drug lord, and her boyfriend is an undercover narcotics cop (which she knows). Although the episode does not play up this angle, this secrecy and the attendant danger may be part of the allure of the relationship, to say nothing of her intent to deny her father and refuse her name. This tension may also fuel the lovers' heroin use: during their on-screen sexual interludes, crossfades, out-of-focus photography, and cross-cutting suggest that the couple are having drugged sex.

##### 5. Juliet is no dewy innocent.

In fact, she conceals facts and prevaricates. She is manipulative. She schemes. She lies. And while these behaviors may at times be constructed as comic excesses of personality by the episodes, TV-watchers are also provided with clear indications of Juliet's rather significant capacity to wreak havoc on the lives around her.

Aware that some may consider her sexual practices to be outré, Marielle does not initially admit that the sword that killed her husband was part of their sex play when the male detectives ask about that cage and those handcuffs (though she is willing to discuss her activities with the detectives' female lieutenant). It is possible she schemes to stab her husband's suspected killer to death with a steak knife during a sting operation in which she is the bait, though more probably this volatile character, living more or less in the immediacy of her emotions, takes advantage of an opportune moment. Marielle is an adulteress, but the episode gives no indication that she ever directly lies to her first husband about it; she meets with her husband's suspected killer under a pretense, but she doesn't lie to him, either; she does prevaricate quite a bit, but concealing some facts or being cagey with the truth isn't *exactly* lying and is in fact understandable when it comes to talking with strangers about one's sex life.

While Chloe and Becky both have simple desires, their machinations to attain the objects of their desires can be elaborate. Chloe

schemes to get Neal alone in her home for “tutoring.” Although Becky neither lies, prevaricates, nor manipulates in “Sympathy for the Devil,” in a subsequent episode, “The Real Ghostbusters,” she “borrow[s]” a cell phone “from [another man’s] pants” (“5.09”) and uses it to lure Sam and his brother to a hotel, where the first-ever *Supernatural* fan convention is taking place; when this does not work, in “Season Seven, Time for a Wedding!,” Becky doses Sam with that love potion, marries him, then keeps him trussed and gagged on their nuptial bed. For her part, Anna wants three things: to be away from her drug-cartel-running father; to be with her lover, the undercover narc who is investigating Dad; and to get her lover out of the clutches of his crooked lieutenant. Although her desires are greater in number than Becky’s or Chloe’s, Anna’s plan is simpler: run away. However, unlike her sister Juliets, Anna’s story is not in the comic mode. She and her lover, John, have no particular destination in mind, though they are well funded, John having stolen \$12 million worth of drugs from Anna’s father. Specifically, Anna tells another character (William, the “cleaner” of the show’s title) that she “can’t tell” him where she and John were running to. The staging indicates this to be prevarication. A sharp observer of human behavior and an expert on addiction, William isn’t buying Anna’s story and asks whether she and John have “ever spent a sober moment together.” Her response, reinforced by other scenes in the episode, indicates that these star-crossed lovers have not. Beyond that, the skeptical William mocks Anna’s protestations that she loves John, that John is helping her, that “Before I met him, nothing mattered.” Anna’s plotting and hedging is not malevolent. She just wants to be with her Romeo, and if she needs to lie to others (and, possibly, herself) to do it, then that is what she is going to do.

Both Kelly and Cora lie and prevaricate, though neither for reasons as simple as avoiding responsibility for some wrong or trying to get out of a jam. Suspected of involvement in the death of her boyfriend (Dylan, the episode’s Romeo), Kelly lies in an attempt to protect her little brother, who is the real (albeit unintentional) killer, saying it was a “kind of an accident, right? What do you call it? A crime of passion?” This lie is almost immediately exposed, and when pushed on it, she evades: “Well, I’m pretty screwed up, didn’t you hear?” Cora has been “living together” with Mike Jergens for “over a year”; Mike’s online identity is “Romeo,”

and the detectives believe he may be a serial rapist. When asked about Mike's whereabouts at the time of the most recent rape, Cora lies, providing her lover with an alibi. Confronted with Mike's disdain for her, Cora recants, though in a later spasm of emotion she runs to Riker's Island, where Mike is jailed, and marries him. In point of fact, Cora outright lies to someone else only once in the episode, and that lie is (like Marielle's or Kelly's evasions) understandable: confronted with an unbelievable accusation, she fibs to protect her man. More disturbing is the way in which Cora prevaricates and perhaps even lies to *herself*: she tells the lead detective on the case that Mike is "dat[ing] other women" because "I'm not as smart as Mike. I didn't go to college. Sometimes he just needs other people to talk to, but he always comes home. That's what matters." After her jailhouse marriage, Cora again tells the detective, "He loves me. That's why he married me." Challenged with "you know in your heart that he's guilty," Cora responds, "I don't want him to be." Cora knows she's being told the truth, but her desperate need to be with Mike leads her to lie to others and to herself.

Olivia is presented as a tease, getting Ray Jay aroused then withholding further intimacy and mocking his manhood in order to attain her goals. In the first act of "To Swerve and Protect," we find Olivia and Ray Jay in his car, kissing and arguing. Disinclined to "[do] it in a car," Olivia wants to have sex in Ray Jay's house and is contemptuous of what she considers to be the hypocritical, bourgeois morality of his mother, taunting her boyfriend's purported passivity and mocking his manhood until he promises to confront Mom:

OLIVIA

Come on, this is ridiculous. I mean, doing it in a car? It's so high school.

RAY JAY

Yeah, but we're in high school. Okay. Maybe we can go to your house.

OLIVIA

Or, maybe you can tell your mom to stop treating us like children.

RAY JAY mouths “okay,” frustrated.

OLIVIA (CONT)

I mean, c’mon, like she wasn’t doing it when she was our age.

RAY JAY

Oh, no no no no—

OLIVIA laughs.

RAY JAY

—no no no no—

(He puts his fingers in his ears)

—no no no no no no.

OLIVIA

(pulls RAY JAY’s fingers out of his ears)

I will not be banned from my boyfriend’s house, no matter how hot he is.

RAY JAY

Okay, so, what do you want your hot boyfriend to do about it?

OLIVIA

(kissing him)

I want you to stick up for us. I’m not interested in dating a boy, Ray Jay. I’m interested in dating a man.

Described by her family and acquaintances as an honors student, Christina is editor of her high school yearbook, president of the school’s history club, vice president of her student council, and a prize-winning geometry student. In her mother’s words, “She has a very bright future ahead of her”—if only she weren’t a liar, fornicator, thief, and, possibly, murderer. Engaged in a clandestine sexual relationship with her boyfriend Tommy, Christina dresses in “baggy clothes” for months to hide

the fact that “she’s packing some weight under there”; with Tommy, she leaves a frat party to deliver their baby in a hot-sheet hotel, then returns to the party where they slow dance to “Endless Love”... after either strangling the infant or leaving it in a garbage can to die, wrapped in a towel and covered with some newspaper. In itself, this is already a strikingly dark representation of Juliet. However, Christina also steals blank prescription forms from her Ob/Gyn, using one to get a nasal spray composed of synthetic oxytocin, a medication that the medical examiner says is contraindicated for pregnant women. Then she lies to the police, telling them that she miscarried at the hotel after having sex with Tommy and then unknowingly flushed the fetus down the toilet. During her murder trial, Christina sits by while her lawyer savages her mother and pins the crime on her father. It is difficult to read performer Mags Chernock’s expression in this scene: Christina appears to be somewhat sad about what is being done to her mother, but this impression could be a result of the Kuleshov effect.<sup>4</sup> She might even present a faint expression of approval.

It would be unsettling if Christina were just a little sad about what is happening to her parents. So, too, if she were faintly pleased. Worse still would be no emotion at all, and the episode hints at this. Christina seems unaware of the appalling implications of her initial story: after putting her spontaneously aborted fetus in the trash, she and Tommy go dance to their “special song.” She illegally obtains an abortifacient (presumably after doing some research to find a good one). During their arraignment for murder, the judge reprimands Christina and Tommy for holding hands in court, and following a court-ordered psychological examination, the psychiatrist describes her as “a narcissistic bitch. Forget about remorse. To her, that baby was like a peach pit passing through her system.” This Juliet may “sit there [in court] looking all sweet and innocent,” but the cops and the lawyers (and the viewers who trust them) know that she is anything but.<sup>5</sup>

The Juliets are driven to conceal, prevaricate, manipulate, scheme, and lie by their passions. In three instances—Marielle, Chloe, and Becky—their desires have no (lasting) ill effects, and Chloe and Becky may ultimately benefit from their actions. As noted above, these three characters’ episodes or arcs are comic in structure, and their outcomes mirror the overall structures of the TV shows they appear in: *Law and*

*Order* and *White Collar* tend to push toward a restoration of order, though neither without irony and neither always to a complete harmony; *Law and Order* in particular is wont to “let” its criminals get away with their crimes, suggesting that the “order” that is restored is dysfunctional, a disorder that we have come to resignedly accept as the status quo. *Supernatural* positions its protagonists as seeking order, but that order is endlessly delayed—every time that Sam and Dean believe that they have “won,” a plot development reveals yet more disorder that must be set right or eradicated.

In some cases, the Juliets’ passions are treated lightly, as is the case with Marielle, Chloe, and Becky. Marielle and her behaviors are treated as silly (though her toys are used in her husband’s murder); her partners are apparently willing, informed participants; and she does help the police and prosecutors to restore order by the end of the story. Chloe’s attempts to “o’erperch” the barriers that her father has erected around her love life lead to his arrest, but the episode situates this as a good outcome for the young woman: as Neal (having evolved from object of erotic fixation to life coach) puts it, “It won’t be easy. But don’t run away from that. This could be an opportunity, a chance to start over, maybe live the life you really want. I got that chance, and it’s the best thing that ever happened to me.” Being rid of her embezzling, money-laundering dad has long-term benefits, not least of which is a blooming romance with her new Romeo, Evan. And Becky, at the end of her arc, is similarly directed towards a more appropriate object for her affections: despite her claim that her “vibrant sexuality” scares off most men, Becky is revealed to be more “nice” than “naughty,” disinterested in “do[ing] anything weird” and more invested in finding a good old-fashioned soulmate, “someone who loves me for me!” (“7.08”). For his part, Sam suffers no long-term damage from his time with this Juliet—in fact, Becky helps him kill some demons and saves his life—and he and his brother get to enjoy some wacky adventures, more-or-less easy interludes in their otherwise grim lives. The results of all three of these Juliets’ exertions are, at their core, comic in structure, and, in tone, comedic.

In other instances, the Juliets’ passions and the lies that they prompt lead down less condign paths. What Olivia wants is unclear. Is it sex, the security of a relationship, power over an impressionable, even vulnerable younger male, or the power to disrupt others’ lives? “To

Swerve and Protect” is ambiguous as to its Juliet’s motivating desires and fears, though her arc suggests that power is significant to her, be this conscious or not. Although Ray Jay’s feelings are hurt and though his relationship with his mother is altered, the show does not imply that the damage to either is irreparable; Ray Jay may even have matured a little. This ambiguity is consonant with the show’s overall tone: characters might get better but rarely “well,” and that not always happily. Such is not the case with the three remaining Juliets, whose trajectories are distinctly downward. In *Bones*’s “The Boy in the Shroud,” Kelly’s desire to be with Dylan, her Romeo, leads her to plan to run away from her foster home; keeping this a secret leads to her boyfriend’s death, an FBI investigation, her little brother’s arrest, and Kelly’s being bereft of both lover and family. The episode’s tone and structure sort with *Bones*’s characteristic mixing of comic and tragic modes: in a manner similar to *Law and Order*, order is usually restored, though not in a way that leaves the characters happy, particularly so in this instance. This Juliet’s desires lead to the destruction of everything precious in her life.

Much more destructive still, and in keeping with *Law and Order*’s darker aspects, is Christina in “Denial.” She performs an illegal abortion (with possible negative consequences for the physician from whom she stole the prescription forms, as well as for the pharmacist who filled the scrip), illegally disposes of the fetus, feloniously impedes a murder investigation, involves her Romeo and her father in an ongoing criminal conspiracy, and then participates in her lawyer’s mauling of her bewildered, sobbing mother. (What will happen during Christina’s first night home after her acquittal could well be the matter of a Jacobean domestic tragedy.) The wake that Christina leaves is impressive, and the episode’s message is clear: Juliet can be dangerous to those around her. But whatever emotional and relational aftershocks might remain, the damage wrought by Christina’s need to be with Tommy is, by and large, done. This is not the case with Cora Kinneson. Her needs prevent her from seeing Mike as he truly is, thus providing a serial rapist with a lair of sorts and a ready-made alibi to cover up his ongoing predation. Her continued inability or refusal to see Mike as he is leads to her self-inflicted incapacitation. As “Starved” ends, Mike continues to prey on Cora: he uses his position as her husband to have Cora’s feeding tube removed, an act which will almost certainly cause her death, then asks the



detective who has been pursuing him to “expedite the death certificate.” Their conversation concludes the episode:

MIKE

The life insurance company’s gonna need that before they can process my claim.

OLIVIA

I shoulda known. How much you gonna get?

MIKE

A million five. I added Cora to my policy right after we got married.

OLIVIA

You were never gonna kill yourself, but you knew that Cora wouldn’t live without you.

MIKE

That’s a terrible thing to say to a grieving husband.

OLIVIA

Get him the hell out of here.

MIKE

(to lawyer)

Come see me tomorrow. We need to get started on my appeal.

Consistent with the tragedy-inflected “universe” of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, which suggests that the “dedicated detectives” are barely keeping chaos at bay, and although the episode neither says nor shows this, there is no reason for viewers to think that Mike will stop raping women in his guise as “Romeo.” The damage caused by this Juliet’s passions will extend past her incapacitation, perhaps well past her death. Juliet is not simply “no dewy innocent.” At her best, she is not a force for good, and in other cases, she is a destructive agent, a significant complication to the traditional notion of an innocent Juliet.

## 6. Fallen angel?

If cognitive psychology is correct in its hypotheses of learning and of the formation and storage of knowledge, to arrive at a Juliet who is manipulative, indiscrete, lusty, and dangerous, a viewer still would have to see these productions, then store this learning about Juliet, sorting out tensions between *these* Juliets and received notions of an idealized Juliet. I myself am evidence that this can happen: watching Juliet fondle Romeo in “Sympathy for the Devil” started the process of assimilation and analysis that continues here. Even if seeing this combination of eight broadcasts is unique to my experience, the facts that all eight push the Juliet “envelope” in some way and that they are scattered across fifteen years of programming on five networks (and more still in syndication), each having different demographics, suggest that the “fallen Juliet” is not unique on television, nor to my experience. In her study of romance novels’ appropriations of Shakespeare, Laurie Osborne notes that the Romeo and Juliet incarnations in Georgette Heyer’s *Sprig Muslin* are very “far from the star-crossed lovers” (48). The television Juliets are similarly far, fallen from an idealized state that, ironically enough, is often assumed of the character but that is unsupported by the playtext itself. Catherine Belsey argues, “*Romeo and Juliet* is a play about desire” and the “intensity of [female] passion” (65), and these Juliets’ passions are very intense. And if, as Belsey suggests, Shakespeare’s Juliet is little concerned with propriety (67), then these Juliets are even less so. Further, Belsey describes the lovers’ relationship as “necessarily clandestine . . . to be enacted in secret, in total darkness, and in silence” (68). But while Marielle, Chloe, Christina, and Anna might wish to keep their love lives secret, they are unconcerned about cloaking their activities in the dark: given Marielle’s exuberance and Anna’s lack of caution, how much they might wish for secrecy is a question, and since Chloe loops in her friends on her plan to seduce her teacher—one even texts her for an update mid-attempt—secrecy is not much on her mind, either. The other four characters are, to one degree or another, less than silent, and Becky and Olivia are downright open about their desires. If Shakespeare’s Juliet “counters [and even subverts] contemporary [Elizabethan] ideological imperatives for female modesty and submission” (Roberts 53), then these Juliets blow those imperatives apart. And if Shakespeare’s Juliet is

manipulative, then it is startling how far some of the TV Juliets will go in their attempts to manipulate others and the social systems in which they are embedded—to say nothing of the damage they wreak as a result of their choices. Contradictory, unresolved, and unstable, “Juliet,” notes Sasha Roberts, “has repeatedly posed a problem for those seeking to idealize her” (48), despite continued efforts to recuperate the character, and these Juliets participate in resisting that recuperative impulse, presenting Juliet as eight different kinds of a hot mess, disorganized yet fascinating, and disordered on both an individual level and as a group, yet all the more alluring for that.

People can be unpleasant. They lie, cheat, steal, manipulate, have sex on the sly; sometimes they do worse. So there is little in the behaviors of the eight TV characters that should surprise anyone. And as a matter of fact, there is much for a reader of the Shakespearean playtext to recognize. Juliet hedges and prevaricates in response to parental requests and imperatives, as in her response to her mother’s inquiry about Juliet’s “dispositions to be married”: “It is an honour that I dream not of” (1.3.66, 67). Pressed again to say whether she “can . . . like of Paris’ love,” Juliet waffles impressively: “I’ll look to like, if looking liking move, / But no more deep will I endart mine eye / Than your consent gives strength to make it fly” (1.3.97, 98-100). And two acts later, Juliet answers her father’s question, “Doth she not count her blessed, / Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought / So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?” (3.5.143-45) with an oxymoronic riddle: “Not proud you have, but thankful that you have. / Proud can I never be of what I hate, / But thankful even for hate that is meant love” (3.5.146-48). These responses seem custom-designed to drive a parent batty. Her sexual agency, seen most clearly in “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds” (3.2.1), has been commented on by a variety of critics.<sup>6</sup> The argument that Juliet is not a passive subject is well established. Besides dominating the exchange with Romeo at her balcony in terms of raw number of lines (a 2:1 ratio), Juliet skillfully positions Romeo as the subordinate in their relationship in an attempt “to control her destiny by controlling the man who constitutes her destiny” (Brown 334).<sup>7</sup> Beyond having a will to power, Juliet is volatile—threatening suicide multiple times, shifting emotional registers and allegiances within moments—and may (like her father) incline to

explosive rages. Since all these personality traits inhere in the text, a fair question would be, “What exactly is there for Juliet to fall from?”

7. And we shall know her by her name.

Theatrical and critical practice notwithstanding, the interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet* that have had the most impact on the popular imagination in the past half-century have to be the films by Franco Zeffirelli (1968) and Baz Luhrmann (1996). Certainly they are the most widely known. A Google image search for “Juliet” turns up dozens of stills from these movies, almost all emphasizing her youth, beauty, innocence, or helplessness. The sexuality of the exuberant Olivia Hussey and the more ethereal Claire Danes is more childlike than adult: in Luhrmann, the lovers’ marriage night under billowing white sheets could be a pillow-fight at a sleepover; Zeffirelli’s Juliet, flying out of bed the morning after, indicates none of the complicated emotions that teenaged women can feel about their first sexual experiences. Per the text, their union is post-marital, not pre- or extra-. Whatever dissembling or manipulating they may do is provoked: beset by a mother pressing a suitor on her, a betraying confidante, and a bullying father, the filmic Juliets defend their Romeos, their marriages, themselves; they are *not* telling the truth because the adults bug them or because it is empowering to hoodwink an authority figure; they do *not* manipulate their Romeos; and I see no suggestion of a “predatory dimension” (Weis 197 n.158-59) in either Juliet’s balcony conversation. For all of their late-twentieth-century trappings, the Zeffirelli and Luhrmann Juliets are rather conventional participants in an older tradition of representation, a tradition that appears to have been assimilated broadly in culture.

Comments from students reflect the tension between traditional conceptions of the character and the more contemporary, “unhinged” Juliets.<sup>8</sup> My students often come to the playtext seeming to know the conventional Juliet. In 2012-13, start-of-term surveys prompted iterations of surface-level (sometimes inaccurate) knowledge of the character, knowledge that is in line with the Zeffirelli-Luhrmann tradition: “Daughter to Capulets” and one of the “star-crossed lovers” (Student 4); “Young woman. Loves Romeo. She faked her death, then poisons herself because Romeo died” (Student 2); “13 year old girl who

falls for Romeo” (Student 5, Responses); “a representation of Inamorata . . . the young beauty, and star-crossed lover” (Student 1, Responses).<sup>9</sup> These definitions mirror those in easily-referenced print and online dictionaries. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* describes her as “the heroine of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-95),” a definition modified slightly in *Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary*: “the heroine of Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* who dies for love of Romeo.”<sup>10</sup> Even posts on the discussion boards that accompany *Webster’s Online* sort with tradition: “Always thought it meant ‘youthful’” (Nwankwo). None seems to have moved very far from nineteenth-century sources such as E. Cobham Brewer’s 1898 *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, which describes Juliet as “Daughter of Lady Capulet, and ‘sweet sweetening’ of Romeo, in Shakespeare’s tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. She has become a household word for a lady-love.”<sup>11</sup>

Yet, despite such cultural pressure to maintain this construction of Juliet as “the pillar of beauty and purity . . . the ideal picture of the lovely, dainty feminine dream” (Student 6, “Answers”), one student’s comment indicates some erosion of this idealized pillar: “I find it fishy that she falls for Romeo so quickly” (Student 6, Responses). After close contact with the text, repeated in-class discussions and study of scholarly writings on *Romeo and Juliet*, the students indicated that they had come to be suspicious of assertions of Juliet’s monumental innocence and purity, tending to characterize her in negative terms, as a tantrumy, self-interested schemer: “she has a tacky habit of threatening to harm herself” and “is not pure in her motivations,” which “are fueled by her own desires . . . Her goal, motivations, focus, and ambition are all to obtain what SHE wants” (Student 6, “Answers”); “She plays Romeo like her personal marionette” (Student 5, Message); she is a “sinister” character (Student 4, Message) who “uses those around her, especially those below her station . . . as the means to her end”; “Juliet could have gone along with her father’s plan and lived a life of comparative ease and luxury, yet she chose the impressionable son of her family’s rivals as a means to escape her situation” rather than Paris, because she knows “he can be manipulated in ways the older Paris is unlikely to agree to” (Student 1, “Juliet”). While some of my students accept the notion of Juliet’s sexual purity, this assumption is not sacrosanct: “She may have been considered pure,

mainly because back then that meant she was a virgin in regards to her body—though that didn't last for long, having barely waited for the ring to be on her finger” (Student 5, Message; see also Student 4, Message).<sup>12</sup>

Leaving aside for the moment scholarly writing, one must venture more deeply into the realms of popular culture to find Juliets that start to align with my students’ and the TV productions’ skepticism. Raucous, unregulated, often obscene, and sometimes only semi-literate, Urban Dictionary bills itself as “the dictionary **you write**” (“Urban”), with an “anti-authoritarian, no-bullshit” and “rebellious personality” (“jobs”); it is a barometer of sorts of contemporary slang and fluid popular conceptions of what words mean. In mid-July of 2012, the site presented 11 ranked definitions of Juliet.<sup>13</sup> They range from the conventional—“a gentle, sheltered, rich, and lovestruck teenage girl” (Rinoa)—to the misogynistic: “A big bootied amazingly hot whore face slut” (Fattyu). In the most-liked definitions, Juliet is idealized in terms that align with traditional conceptions of the character: “A sweet girl who really likes having fun and laughing... she's never bad, never sad. Perfect in every way” (Fruitloops);

A Juliet is pretty damn chell. She does not care about social status and is very loyal. She's gorgeous and has amazing hair. She doesn't realize how awesome she is and is not a conceited fuck like the rest of them, the guys at her school choose to shun her because of her social status and who she hangs out with but if she went to a different less douchey school she would have a boyfie in seconds.. A Juliet is an amazing person, your time with her is precious so don't take advantage of it. (Iloveyoumorethenkurtcobain)

and

The perfect girl. She will light up your life from the moment you meet her.

She's smart but not nerdy, hot but not slutty. Beautiful body and a gorgeous smile, and always up for a good time. A Juliet will be the best girlfriend/friend you will ever have, she's the girl you will want to make your wife.

Sexy, athletic, intelligent, loving, and knows how to party. She may seem intimidating, but that is only because she knows what she wants, and knows she needs a real man. (allthatreallymatters)

Another definition hyperlinks “Juliet” to “dimepiece” (fo shizzle), which reveals four definitions that feature “perfect” (the x factor; DimePiece),

“perfect 10” (Matt Knows; Azari), “perfection” (Azari), “flawless” (Azari), and “hot” (Matt Knows), always in reference to a woman’s physical beauty but almost as often describing her intellectual, spiritual, and emotional qualities, along with her “great charisma” and sense of humor (the x factor). One writer concludes with “possibly wifey type” (the x factor)—i.e., a woman whom one loves, treats well, respects, and may even find “irreplaceable” (xxBumpLikeThisxX): “A REAL Lady” (Stephen). In this subset of Juliet definitions—according to the fo shizzle’s logic, Juliet is a dimepiece—there is continued idealization, but references to Juliet’s sexuality also begin to emerge, albeit cast in terms that are positive—e.g., “hot but not slutty” (allthatreallymatters) or exciting—“Innocent but not as innocent as you think” (Camerion).

We begin to see our TV Juliets—sexually transgressive, manipulative, indiscrete—in the unpopular Urban Dictionary definitions, definitions in which Juliet’s sexual agency is described as more aggressive or described in more negative terms. Along with the “whore face slut” definition above, one finds “Braggs about sex, orally and physically” (youwillneverknow69) and “A ditzzy lolita, who often falls ‘in love’ and then gets married, just for the sex. Often fakes her own death to get ‘the sex’, then due to a series of misunderstandings, actually does kill herself over lack of sex” (zombie fools). In the same vein, the character’s volatility appears in assertions that Juliet is “An often over-dramatic girl who loves romance. . . . Oh, and if you mention Romeo she’ll yell at you, roll her eyes, or not talk to you for a month” (jennbunnybear=]); “over dramatic and some times. Like if you ask her where her fucking Romeo is she’ll cut you. ...Or tell you she is going to cut you, but most likely, i’m pretty sure she won’t” (Camerion); “loud...very loud, dont mention romeo and juliet or shell bash u” (anonymous); “Often a redhead and a liar. She often looks very young, even if in her lat twenties. She loves attention and will do WHATEVER she can to get it. Does not tell the truth. Ever” (youwillneverknow69). These latter posters, for all of their misogyny (and, it seems, personal hostility towards real-world Juliets), have learned elements of the Shakespearean Juliet’s personality, her temper, willingness to deceive, and sexual agency. And yet Urban Dictionary clearly records site-users’ resistance to that construction: they do not like the “fallen” Juliets.

The eight television incarnations of Juliet do not just fall from the idealized and even dis-empowered “heroines” of the type seen in Zeffirelli and Luhrmann: they fall a good bit past the Shakespearean Juliet, too. In this, they figure forth a cultural tussle over Juliet’s nature, one mirrored by the dictionaries, my students, and professional critics. The complex, contradictory signals about Juliet borne by these various enactments are indicative of the stage in knowledge development in which new schemas form, in this case a Juliet schema distinct from the Romeo and Juliet schema, much as a Romeo schema has already appeared (see, for example, definitions of Romeo in the second edition of the *OED*, the 2005 *New Oxford American Dictionary*, and Partridge; additionally, Urban Dictionary suggests that some real-world Juliets may be working hard to decouple themselves from the Romeo and Juliet schema). In this Juliet schema, we find Juliets in contest: the sweet sweetening and the desperate girl seeking a Romeo who may turn out to be befuddled, reluctant, or even malevolently inclined to his Juliet’s destruction; the fair maiden and the calculating manipulator; the innocent erotic fumbler and the S/M fetishist. The television Juliets continue to participate in resisting the recuperative impulse that Roberts describes, fighting tradition and even Shakespeare himself. At the ends of their stories, seven of the eight Juliets survive and remain unmarried, and of these, five go on to disrupt convention in some other way. Only Becky, Cora, and Chloe end up in something like a recuperated state: Becky is led towards a true love interest by Sam; Cora dies, “punished” for her immoderate love; and we last see Chloe as she heads down the hallway of her school—literally leading her new, age-appropriate Romeo by the hand. In these characters, Juliet lives on, messy, disruptive, disorganized, and alluring, still posing problems—problems about how we learn about her, what we know about her, how well we know her, whether we really know her at all.



## Notes

Thanks to my colleagues Charles Graessle and Dina Battaglia for sharing their expertise in the fields of applied linguistics and cognitive psychology in the early stages of developing this essay. Any errors with regard to those fields are entirely my own. Thank you as well to John Wilterding, John Miller-Purrenhage, and Cea Noyes, who provided feedback on different versions of this paper, and to Hillary Nunn and Kevin Kane, for their patience, thoroughness, and good humor throughout the editorial process.

This essay is dedicated to my brother Keith (1949-2012).

1. In the analysis that follows, I refer to the Juliets by character name, rather than by the performer name.

2. In applied linguistics, two widely-discussed, similar modes are incidental and intentional learning (see Clapper; Hale and Piper; Hulstijn; Wattenmaker, “Incidental”; and Wattenmaker, “Learning”). Although they refer “to different constructs in different domains of inquiry,” the incidental, implicit, intentional, and explicit modes can “overlap” (Hulstijn). In fact, the terms appear at times to be interchangeable: incidental can be used to describe processes that others refer to as implicit. Actually, in the “(neuro)cognitive domain of scientific inquiry, implicit and explicit learning are sometimes said to take place incidentally and intentionally,” even though “the latter two labels do not play a crucial role in theoretical accounts of learning, simply because the behaviorist learning theories of the previous century have lost their prominent role” (Hulstijn).

3. At least as she sees it. The episode positions her as the victim of a sexual and emotional predator.

4. Initially described by Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, the Kuleshov effect results from editing together two shots in a sequence in a movie. Kuleshov found that viewers will see a relationship between shots shown in sequence, even when there is no relationship in the world external to the film. Kuleshov cut together a shot of a male actor looking into the camera with a neutral expression, a shot of a bowl of soup, and another shot of the actor. Viewers asserted that the man was hungry. In another sequence, Kuleshov juxtaposed the same shots of the actor with a shot of a girl in a coffin; viewers said the man looked sad. In the instance of “Denial,” juxtapositions of Christina’s weeping mother with shots of Christina herself may be leading me to think Christina looks sad when what is really happening is that I *expect* her to be sad in these particular circumstances.

For more on Kuleshov and the Kuleshov effect, see Monahan, *passim*, and Barsam and Monahan 340-42, 345, and 347.

5. For an interesting take on the *Law and Order* universe’s ethos, see Fish.

6. See Belsey 65-68; Roberts 48-53; Jackson 18-19, 130-31, 142-44, 150-53, and 158-61; and Weis 13-14.

7. Twelve years later, Mansour essentially replicates Brown's argument in "The Taming of Romeo in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*." For a separate take on Juliet's desire to control her destiny, see Duncan-Jones.

8. My thanks to Kevin Kane for suggesting this adjective.

9. My 2012-13 Shakespeare cohort was composed of students from two courses. The first, titled "Studies in Literary Topics: Shakespeare, Revisitations, and Revisions," was a senior-level capstone course stressing critical thinking, the research process, effective use of scholarly sources in the context of an argument, and the writing of long-form essays. The course texts were *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Hamlet*, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and Anne-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*. The students were all upper-division students of both genders, with both traditional and non-traditional students represented; their majors included English, History, Writing, Special Education, and English Language Arts; one was a double major in English and Special Education, one a double major in Mathematics and English. The second course, "Shakespeare through Performance," was an introductory-level performance-centered course that could be used to satisfy a liberal core requirement ("Creative Experience") and that could be substituted for an elementary education major requirement (Oral Interpretation of Literature or Acting). All of the students were traditional college students, the majority female, and over half were majoring in English or English Language Arts, or were minoring in English. All of the students in both courses were white. Two students had never read the playtext: one was an English Elementary Education major, and the other, a non-major taking the course for liberal core credit, had never encountered *Romeo and Juliet* in any form that she could recall—print, film, television, or onstage.

10. Wiktionary, companion to the much-reviled Wikipedia, provides the most complete set of definitions of any source and avoids much of the ideological freighting and sexism demonstrated by some of the traditional dictionaries:

1. *A female given name.*
2. One of the main characters of William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*.
3. A woman who is or is with a great lover.
4. By analogy with the Shakespearean character, a woman who is in love with a man from a family, party, or country opposing that of her own.
5. The sixth moon of the planet Uranus.
6. The letter *J* in the ICAO spelling alphabet.

The loaded "heroine" is removed and Juliet is placed on a par with Romeo in terms of her role in the playtext, as "One of the main characters." Further, Wiktionary is the first of the dictionaries to acknowledge Juliet's sexual agency: she not only can be with a "great lover" but can be one herself—whatever "great" means in this context. (The definition's "or" portends some frustration in Juliet's future. She can be or be with a great lover but cannot be both.)

11. The 1971 *Compact OED* does not define "Juliet" at all, though the 1976 *Supplement*, the 1991 second edition, and the 2013 online version of the full *Oxford English Dictionary* do: as a "Female personal name" and a "small, round cap of wide, open mesh, usually decorated

with pearls or other jewels, similar to that worn on the stage by Shakespeare's Juliet. Worn chiefly for evening." (The *OED*'s Juliet "entry has not yet been fully updated," although the definition for Romeo was updated as recently as 2010.) In fact, the *OED* does not mention Shakespeare at all in its Juliet definition. Similarly, the 1991 *New Oxford American Dictionary* ignores Shakespeare: Juliet is a code word, as in Alpha Bravo Juliet, and that is it. Like the '71 *OED*, neither Robert Hendrickson's *The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*, nor *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, nor the eighth edition of Partridge's *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* defines "Juliet."

12. The majority of these documented responses come from students in a traditional, text-centered course. In a separate course in which they had to think of the playtexts and the characters as performers and directors, students initially struggled to think of characters from the inside: their comments reflected what they thought about Juliet, rather than what Juliet might think about herself. As the semester developed, and particularly near the end of the term, students tended to express more empathy for Juliet's situation, though they remained skeptical of constructions of the character that were built on assumptions of her naïveté.

13. Definitions on Urban Dictionary are provided by users, seem to be unedited by Urban Dictionary employees, and are often casual in their adherence to the conventions of written English. All quotations are accurate, including misspellings, odd punctuation, and the occasional grammatical horror show. I have not included traditional indications of such errors ([sic]) because the quotations became so littered with emendations that they were unreadable.

The site ranks definitions according to user approval: the first definition is the one with the most "up" votes, while the last definition has the fewest. The number of "down" votes appears to have little bearing on ranking: a first definition could have more downs than ups (for example, 12 ups and 23 downs), simply because it has more ups than any other definition for that word (such as 11-456). Definitions with greater numbers of down votes can rank higher than others simply because they have more ups, and for the same reason, a definition with a greater ratio of up to down votes can rank below definitions with lower ratios.

In early November, 2013, the number of Juliet definitions and their rankings relative to each other had not changed from those in July, 2013, though the numbers of up and down votes for each definition had. In early December, 2013, the number of definitions for dimepiece had expanded substantially, and the rankings of the four definitions available in July, 2013, had changed as a result. All dimepiece references are to the July results.

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