Even in a thorough study of *Romeo and Juliet* in the light of the imagery there are two chains of images, those of food and body, which may easily be left out as irrelevant to the play as a whole. These two chains of images are off-shoots of the structural chains of images and are of secondary importance in our understanding and appreciation of the play. Yet they give the play another depth on another plane and are interesting to study and worth the effort. Now let us consider these chains of images and let us take up the food imagery first.

Shakespeare makes ample use of food images in both early and late plays, mainly in connexion with women. This idea is not peculiar to Shakespeare or to his age but goes far back to the classical period. For example we have Ovid saying,

"Quo refugis? remane, nec me, crudelis, amantem
Desere!" clamavit "liceat quod tangere non est,
Aspicere et misero praebere alimenta furori."

We notice that a woman can be compared to food in four different ways. First a real passionate love is indicated as in the case of Ovid and Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Hermia says to Lysander,

...we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

I.I.222

Then any physical relationship between a man and a woman is seen and described in terms of eating. The word "appetite" is the usual metaphor for lust. To give an example or two in this connexion we can quote Hamlet and Enobarbus. Hamlet is thinking of his mother's fondness for his father.

...she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on...

I.II.143

1 Where are you running away to? Stay here. Do not be cruel, do not desert me, who loves you,' he cried. 'May it be lawful to behold what is not possible to touch, and to afford nourishment to an unhappy love,

Metamorphoses book 3 Echo, 477-479
Enobarbus, speaking about Cleopatra, repeats the same idea:

...other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies...

II.II.244

Thirdly Shakespeare expresses his aversion to sex or, rather, to the prostitution of it in terms of cold, uneaten scraps of food. Antony says to Cleopatra:

I found you as a morsel, cold upon
Dead Caesar's trencher...

III.XI.116

Troilus gives vent to his disappointment at the faithlessness of Cressida in these words:

The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
The fragments, scraps, the bits, and greasy relics
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

V.II.155

And lastly, prostitutes are referred to in terms of food. We can mention "hen", "quail," "fish", "hare" and "goose".

In *Romeo and Juliet* we come across various images of and references to food connected with man-woman relationship. We remember Romeo at the beginning of the play complaining because he cannot see his beloved. He says he is

Shut up in prison, kept without my food.

I.V.57

This is the only instance in the play when the food image is used to indicate a romantic love. The other food images deal with the more physical aspects of man-woman relationship. As early as in the first scene of the first act Capulet's servants strike the keynote by using food images which show a preoccupation with the vulgar aspects of sex. First Sampson says speaking of Montague's maids:

Me they shall feel while I am able to stand,
and, 'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.

I.I.32

He is boasting he is a valiant man in the physical sense I. His friend Gregory picks up the joke and expands it by making use of the comparison between "fish" and "flesh", He says:

"Tis well thou art not fish; if thou
hadst, thou hadst been poor John.

11-35

1 Professor Dover Wilson's note. New Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet*
The meaning here is less obvious than his friend's and the joke is more sophisticated just as Gregory is the more sophisticated of the two. He means if Sampson had been a woman he would not have given his lover much pleasure.

The verbal echo of the words "fish" and "flesh" takes us to Mercutio, who has the same preoccupation with sex as Capulet's servants, only in a more refined and clever way. Talking to Benvolio he says about Romeo:

Without his roe, like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, how thou art fishified!

II.IV.40

In these words the main idea lies deep in the food image, which is used to point out the change Romeo has undergone. He was strong and manly before and now he is weak and effeminate. The significance of Mercutio's words will be seen later when Romeo refuses to fight Tybalt because he is Juliet's cousin and Mercutio dies fighting for Romeo. Then Romeo uses a metal image to describe the change in him as well as his decision to kill and revenge.

...O sweet Juliet!
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel!

III.11.119

Going back to Romeo and his friends, we witness a wit duel between Romeo and Mercutio in Act II Scene IV which is of little dramatic value and of even less interest to modern audiences. The young men make word-play and use images of food as seen from the words "sweeting", "sauce" and "goose". The word "broad", which may mean "indecent", used first by Romeo and then Mercutio confirms the bawdy undertones of dialogue.

The coming of the Nurse causes a lot of indecent remarks as expressed again in food images. First Benvolio says she will invite Romeo to supper, meaning she is a bawd. Then Mercutio takes up the joke and even doubles it by making use of the word "bawd" meaning "hare" in North Midland dialect. We again remember "hare" also meant a prostitute. Thus both the Nurse's rather loose character is emphasized and her mission to Romeo is given an indecent aspect. These jokes also add to the physical relationship between Romeo and Juliet.

The food imagery takes on a grim aspect at the end of the play. The last food image occurs at a very crucial point and joins with the body image and the death image. The beloved is still a "morsel" in Romeo's words when he opens Juliet's tomb.

Thou desestable maw, thou womb of death,
Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,
(opens the tomb)

And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food.

V.III.45

Death here is personified by the tomb, which is its mouth, and by the churchyard, which is its body. We remember, in the play death has been referred to as Juliet's lover and now it claims Juliet's and Romeo's bodies.

The second chain of imagery we are going to consider is of the human body. There are comparatively more body images in *Romeo and Juliet* than in any other Shakespeare play and there must be reasons for this. In discussing the images we will look for these reasons too.

The images of and references to the human body in the play can be considered in seven sections. Now let us take a look at these.

1- Non-sexual body images. Sometimes references to the human body are for no other purpose than showing the speaker's preoccupation with the body and its various details. We can first quote the Nurse remembering how Juliet was weaned. She says:

For I had then laid wormwood to my dug.

and

When it did taste the wormwood on my nipple

Then she goes on describing Juliet's fall when she was very young.
And yet, I warrant, it had upon ist brow
A bump as big as a young cockerel's stone

Mercutio's Queen Mab speech is full of references to the human body. He speaks of "the fore-finger of an alderman" (I.IV.57), "men's noses" (59), "the lazy finger of a maid" (67), "lovers' brains" (72), "courtiers' knees" (73), "lawyers' fingers" (74), "ladies' lips" (75), "a courtier's nose" (78), "a parson's nose" (81), "a soldier's neck" (83), "foreign throats" (84) and maids lying "on their backs" (93). All this shows the physical quality of this poetic and apparently innocent speech.

2- Body images used in a humorous way. In the play the Nurse and Mercutio are the most obscene characters and their talk is full of references to the human body used mainly in a humorous way. When Lady Capulet is speaking about Paris she says Juliet will make herself no less by marrying him. Then the Nurse says:

No less! nay, bigger; women grow by men.

The Nurse sees only the physical side of man-woman relationship and finds the only change in a newly-married woman to be her change of form—not of mind or spirit.

The best example of Mercutio's reference to the human body, and especially the female body, is found in his mock-conjuration of Romeo and needs no comment.
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us.

II.1.17

3- Premonitions connected with the human body. The fate element in the play is made obvious by many premonitions and some of them are connected with the body. We have a good example of this at the end of the chamber scene, when Romeo is about to leave his wife. Juliet looks at Romeo, who is going down the rope ladder and says:

O God! I have an ill-divining soul:
Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb,
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

III.V.54

Romeo answers:

And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.
Dry sorrow drinks our blood...

III.V.58

The lovers are extremely unhappy as they have to part and this unhappiness, together with the premonition they have that they will never meet again, makes them look pale. This paleness is attributed to the approaching death and both the lovers and the audience feel death's presence.

4- The body as a building. In Shakespeare the human body is sometimes compared to a building. Shakespeare does not develop this idea although he makes use of it once or twice in a not very relevant way. For example in Richard II we hear the Queen speaking about the King, who is being taken to the Tower. She says:

Thou map of honour. thou King Richard's tomb,
And not King Richard; thou most beauteous inn,
Why should hard-favour'd grief be lodg'd in thee
When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

V.I.12

In Romeo and Juliet the building—body image sometimes ties up with the business or buying image. Juliet says while waiting for Romeo:

O! I have bought the mansion of a love
But not possess'd it...

III.II.26

The idea that the body is like a mansion is repeated by Romeo himself when he has killed Tybalt and is contemplating suicide. He says:
...O! tell me, Friar, tell me,  
In what vile part of this anatomy  
Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack  
The hateful mansion...  

III.III.104

5- Body images used in a romantic way. In *Romeo and Juliet* the spiritual is mixed with the material because of the double aspect of the love in the play. In the Friar's words Juliet, who is coming to marry Romeo, has become an immaterial being whose feet do not touch the ground. The Friar says:

O! so light a foot  
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.  

II.VI.16

Juliet now is married and full of expectations when she waiting for Romeo to come for their wedding night. Juliet is absorbed only in the physical side of her love for Romeo as can be seen from her imaginative description of Romeo's naked body. She says:

Come, night! come, Romeo! come thou day in night!  
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.  

III.II.17

The image is highly individual and striking in its novelty. It must also be remembered that some critics have found a connexion between this image and Freud's theory that flight in dreams signifies a sexual desire.

6- The human body as connected with religious objects. In a way *Romeo and Juliet* is a glorification of the physical side of love and in this sense it is a pagan play. This idea is confirmed by the many references to classical mythology. Only the dual nature of the play appears again in the fact that as opposed to the pagan aspect of the play it has a Christian element in it. Love in the play is sometimes expressed in terms of Christianity. Thus the balance between the physical and the spiritual aspects of love is maintained. Yet, even when love is compared to religion it finds its strongest expression in a physical way, that is, as connected with the human body. To Romeo Juliet's hand is something sacred. He says:

The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,  
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.  

I.V.54

A little later Romeo shares a sonnet with Juliet which is full of references to the body and to religion. He addresses Juliet like this:

If I profane with my unworthiest hand  
This holy shrine...  

I.V.97
And he goes on to say:

My lips, two blushing pilgrims...

I-V.99

And Juliet answers:

For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

I.V. 103

7- Body images as connected with violence. It is a truism to say that Romeo and Juliet is a eulogy of pure love, yet we cannot help noticing that the play abounds in images of violence and of death, some of which are expressed in terms of wounded bodies or corpses. This aspect of the play reminds us of Coriolanus, a play which is full of fighting and violence as well as references to the human body. In Coriolanus certain scenes reek with blood and we nearly see the wounds the warriors give and take. Even the parable by Menenius is about human organs. The similarity between the two plays confirms our idea that Romeo and Juliet is also a play about violence as well as about love and again shows us the dual nature of the play in a different light. Just to give one or two examples we can first quote the Nurse, who gives a detailed description of the dead Tybalt.

I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,  
God save the mark! here on his manly breast,  
A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;  
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaub'd in blood;  
All in gore blood; I swounded at the sight

III.II.52

The word "pale" will sound ominously in our ears when Juliet will tell Romeo at the end of the chamber scene that he looks pale.

When Juliet is in despair she tells the Friar that in order to avoid the danger of marrying Paris she can go into a tomb and stay there. The description of the tomb fits Juliet's family tomb, into which she will go alive and in which she will die. She also refers to "dead men's rattling bones", IV.I.82 "reeky shanks" (83), and "yellow chapless skulls" (83), Now the parts of the body are those of dead men and this shows the terrible change Juliet has suffered as well as what awaits her in the near future.

When Romeo comes back to Verona to join Juliet in death he sends away his man and threatens him with death if he stays to see what he is doing. Romeo says:

...I will tear thee joint by joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.

V.III.35

The dismembered body image in these lines shifts into a much bigger body, the
body of a monster which is death. The personification is confirmed by the epithet "hungry" and the idea is expanded later, again by Romeo, when he says

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,
Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,

(opens the tomb)

And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food.

V.III.45

Especially by the word "morsel" the food and body images are joined together.

And perhaps the longest and the most detailed of the body images is found in Romeo's description of the supposedly dead Juliet in the tomb. Romeo says:

Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

V.III.92

In Romeo's words Juliet's body is a battle-field on which the armies of life and death are fighting for possession.

To sum it all up in a few words, we can say that the food imagery emphasizes the sexual side of the love in the play. The body imagery does the same thing but it also shows the violence of the society in which Romeo and Juliet meet and love.