

KEY WORDS

Forgo, Lineage, Celestial bodies, Impulsive, Fervid, Virginity, Goddess Diana, Sexuality, Folly of youth, Foreshadowing, Determinism

Juliet Act 2

COMPARISON

Juliet and Romeo along with most of the other young characters in the play (Tybalt, Mercutio, Benvolio etc.) are shown to be **impulsive** in comparison to the older characters who are more **logical**. This demonstrates that it is not simply Juliet but all **youth** in the world of Shakespeare's play that **possess** (have) this folly.

COMPARISON

Juliet, however, does seem to be more **apprehensive** (nervous) than Romeo. Perhaps this is a comment, on Shakespeare's part, on women being more **logical and thoughtful** than men who tend to be **stereotypically decisive and determined**.

COMPARISON

Romeo also lacks **paternal support** (fatherly support) and seeks it in Friar Lawrence who also leads him to his **fated doom**. Perhaps this is Shakespeare commenting on the importance of **nurturing** and loving **parental relationships**.

COMPARISON

It is interesting that Juliet receives advice about Romeo from her Nurse and Romeo receives advice from the friar. This shows men and women to be **segregated by gender** in society which was very much true at the time. Women did not spend time alone with men who weren't their husbands or their fathers. This shows society at the time to be very **constricting and binary**.

COMPARISON

Juliet is calm and composed compared to the nurse who is **dramatic and theatrical**. Perhaps, this is a comment on the differing classes of the two women, showing women of a **lower status to be more frivolous and sillier** while women of a higher class were more self-possessed and temperate.

JULIET EXEMPLIFIES THE FOLLY OF YOUTH, WHICH IS OFTEN THAT THEY ARE TOO RASH IN LOVE (ACT 2 SCENE 2):

- Juliet's first lines in the play, at the beginning of the scene, is passionate in her **expression** (declaration) of love for Romeo, in his **absence** (he is not there). She exclaims that she will **"no longer be a Capulet"**, showing that she is willing to **forgo** (renounce) her **lineage** (family) for this man she has just met.
- This **declaration** exemplifies her to be rather **impulsive** and **fervid** (passionate) in the way that she loves which is, again, characteristic of the sign that she is born under, **Leo**. The Elizabethans believed **celestial bodies** (stars, moon etc) to have an enormous influence over a person's disposition (nature) which explains why Juliet is so **akin** (similar) to those traits of her star sign.
- Romeo compares her to the moon and her response is that he should **"swear not by the moon, th'inconstant moon"**. She implies the moon to be **inconsistent** and not something she would want love to be synonymous (similar) with.
- The moon also typically represents **virginity**, as it is associated with the **Goddess Diana** which is **contradictory to the idea of love and sexuality** (capacity for sex).
- However, this passion does not entirely consume her, she seems to be aware that her **professions** (expressions) of **desire** are far too **hasty** (quick), as she claims that **"it is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden"**. Her listing of reasons why they should not be together at shows a **fraction of doubt** in her mind.
- But ultimately her doubt is not enough to overcome her folly and she **parts** (leaves) with **"all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay"**. The **noun "fortune"** connotes (brings about) ideas of **fate and determinism** (she has no free will) which is **foreshadowing** for the play's **grim** end.
- Through Juliet, Shakespeare demonstrates the **folly of youth**, which is that they are too hasty in love and shows it to contribute to her inevitable downfall.

TOP TIP



Being critical of the characters in Shakespeare plays is a great way to maintain a critical style (AO1) in your writing. This is important as it shows you are thinking about the text in a deeper way than simply surface level.

LIKE ROMEO AND THE FRIAR, JULIET LACKS MATERNAL LOVE WHICH SHE SEEKS IN THE NURSE RATHER THAN HER OWN MOTHER (ACT 2 SCENE 5)

- The Nurse appears to shower Juliet with far more **maternal love** than she receives from her mother. They **bicker** (fight) playfully at the beginning of the scene with Juliet claiming, "How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath / To say to me that thou art out of breath".
- The **repetition** she uses sounds **light-hearted** and she is **indignant**, a tone that she would not use with her mother. She is clearly close with her nurse.
- She calls her "sweet, sweet, nurse" using repetition again paired with an endearing tone. She also uses **enjambement** which is symbolic of the extent of the love she has for the nurse, in comparison to the short, **clipped** answers she gives her mother.
- In **Elizabethan society**, children were expected to treat their parents with the **upmost** respect, as we saw in earlier scenes with Juliet and her mother. As a result, however, there tended to be a **lack of emotional support** in parental relationships and Juliet seems to **acquire** (get) the maternal love she lacks from her nurse, **with whom** she may be more **informal** and **jocular** (joking).
- Also it is worth noting that Juliet would've been breastfed and practically raised by her nurse, as were many aristocratic children, so it makes sense that she might be close with her.
- But the nurse, **parallel** to Friar Lawrence, encourages Juliet to marry Romeo, not for any political reasons, but rather, it seems, because she is a little senseless. The nurse has been shown to be **comical** (funny) in previous scenes because of her **foolish, dramatic nature**, and thus it would not be wrong to assume that she might not be the best influence for Juliet.
- Juliet obviously has a close, **maternal-like** relationships with the nurse. She is sweet to her, expressing that she is "sorry [that she] art not well". In fact, the words she uses to address her "sweet", "sorry", "good", create a **semantic field of endearment**.
- But it is proven by the end of the scene that the nurse is not a good influence on Juliet, despite the emotional and **maternal love** she **bestows** (gives) her with. Juliet ends the scene with the line "hie to high fortune". She is under the impression she is "hie[ing]" to her good "fortune" and yet the **prologue** tells us that her fortune will not be **rewarding** (dramatic irony).
- Shakespeare show's Juliet, like Romeo, to lack **maternal support** and in seeking it elsewhere she is led to her doom.

TOPIC SENTENCES

- Juliet is a character who demonstrates Shakespeare's criticism of the folly of youth, in that they are too hasty in love and her folly ultimately leads to her **downfall**.
- Juliet is led astray by the **prospect** (idea) of maternal love that she lacks from her own mother and as a result, takes advice from her nurse who is, at times **silly and thoughtless**.