

FWU – Schule und Unterricht

DVD 46 10604 / VHS 42 10604 2 x 20 min, Farbe



Shakespeare Shorts

Romeo and Juliet

Love and Loyalty

Romeo und Julia

Liebe und Gehorsam

BBC ACTIVE

FWU –
das Medieninstitut
der Länder



Lernziele – nach Lehrplänen und Schulbüchern

Der Einsatz des Films erfolgt in der SII im Kontext mit den jeweiligen Richtlinien der Länder. „Romeo and Juliet“ ist darüber hinaus verpflichtend im Bereich der Zentralabiturthemen für den Leistungskurs Englisch verschiedener Länder. Im Grundkursbereich wird ein taster course Shakespeare empfohlen, so dass die Besprechung dieser ausgewählten Szene exemplarisch erfolgen kann. Dies trifft auch auf die Besprechung in den Klassen 9/10 im Realschulbereich zu. Die Diskussion dieser Kernszene ermöglicht den Schülern unterschiedlicher Schulformen und unterschiedlichen Alters eine erste Auseinandersetzung mit Teilaspekten des broad spectrum of love, with a close look at different views throughout the ages. Die Schüler sollen dabei

- die Problematik der zeitgemäßen Aufführung der Szene erfassen und durch Vergleich mit den älteren Produktionen die hier vorliegende Version in ihrer Einzigartigkeit würdigen,
- ein Verständnis für die unterschiedlichen Probleme und Verhaltensweisen der einzelnen Personen in dieser Situation erwerben,
- die Aufnahmetechniken am Beispiel ausgewählter Einstellungen beschreiben und ihre Bedeutung für die Gesamtaussage erfassen.

Vorkenntnisse

Die Kenntnis der grundlegenden Problematik der beiden Liebenden (doomed love because of the star-crossed relationship, the feud between the families and Tybalt's untimely death by Romeo's hand) ist Voraussetzung für das Verständnis der Szene. Entweder vermittelt der Unterrichtende diese Information (Realschule, Grundkursbereich Gymnasien) oder der Schüler erwirbt diese Kenntnisse durch das Studium von Akt I, II und III im Rahmen einer entsprechenden textanalytischen Erschließung. Vor dem Einsatz der DVD sollten die Schüler der SII die Szene gelesen, sich mit ih-

rem Inhalt und den sprachlichen Mitteln (z.B. Metaphern und Oxymora) bereits auseinander gesetzt haben. Die Realschüler sollten ausgewählte Passagen aus dieser Szene kennen.

Zum Inhalt

Szene 5 in Akt III ist von großer Bedeutung, da sie als *turning point* in der Tragödie angesehen werden kann. Juliet, die wohlbehütete und gehorsame Tochter, wagt den Aufstand gegen ihre Eltern. Im ersten Teil des Films entwickelt eine junge Schauspielerin ihre Auffassung der Szene durch Inszenierungsvergleiche (BBC 1967, BBC 1978, Comicversion BBC 1992 und Zeffirellis Filmadaption 1968) und in eigenen Theaterproben. Im zweiten Teil des Films wird die ganze Szene mit der jungen Schauspielerin in der Titelrolle gespielt (*Caribbean version* BBC 1995).

Da Interpretation und Erarbeitung des Stückes durch Fachlehrer prinzipiell als bekannt vorausgesetzt wird, geht es in den folgenden Ausführungen ausschließlich um die Interpretation der vorliegenden *Caribbean version* im Zusammenhang mit *Shakespeare's play text*.

Zur Verwendung

I Introduction to the Caribbean version

1. Interpretation of the scene by various actors at different times

The story is eternal, but there are various interpretations over the years, regarding the individual characters. Miss Duprey, the actress of the latest production, criticizes the various traditional versions as to their

authenticity for today's audience. The students may understand and relate to Miss Duprey's ideas, as they may have a similar life experience because of their young age. In the play text by Shakespeare, there are a dominant father, a subservient mother and a disobedient daughter. As stereotypes they are timeless and transferable through the centuries. Although the characters of this up-to-date version are the same, they differ in the emotional interpretation. In contrast to the early BBC stagings, this production is more emotive and passionate, thus bringing out qualities of extreme rebellion and despair in Juliet and qualities of warm sympathy, cold indifference and utmost aggression on the adults' side. Each production of this scene was a fair representation of society at the time it was made. Thus the various versions demonstrate the various stages European society has moved through, regarding the acceptance of emotions (Worksheet 1).

2. The role of Marcelle Duprey as a moderator

The role of Marcelle Duprey as a moderator is linked to the question of how the actress herself wants to portray Juliet. She tries to compare the various versions to find out what she does not like about the portrayal of Juliet, thus introducing the viewer to a current and updated Juliet that fits into our 21st century. While speaking, she sits on an old-fashioned bed in a Tudor-style room, which could serve as a link between the actress and the previous productions of the scene.

Her outward appearance (dressed in a fancy fur coat with leather boots up to her knees) stands in clear contrast to the environment of times long gone by. Thus, she seems to state that the previous versions

are out-dated, too, and do no longer transfer Shakespeare's message to today's audience. She uses informal language to address the students. By using her Liverpool accent instead of standard English, she manages to establish a close contact with the students, thus creating an atmosphere of familiarity.

The discussion of the old versions leads to the rehearsals of the new production. The actors, including Marcelle Duprey and the director, develop the new scene from the roots. They comment on body language and feelings that should accompany the words from the play text. The function of showing the rehearsals is to make the students realize that nothing is taken for granted (Worksheet 1.)

II Interpretation of Act III,

Scene 5: Caribbean version

1. Juliet, newly wed

First, focus should be laid on Juliet, who has arrived at the turning point of her life. And she is the major person of this scene. "Romeo and Juliet" has been set in various ways. This is the first version using an entire black cast, which brings a completely new and fresh angle to the story. To show the "contrasts" between the two lovers, the director cast a very dark-skinned Romeo, and a comparatively lighter-skinned Juliet, thus highlighting the gap between them. The various shades of blackness in the Caribbean community seem to signify different levels of acceptability in society. The dark Romeo is representative of a lower social class, which would be looked down upon by Juliet's family, and be unacceptable.

To characterise this Caribbean interpretation of Juliet by Marcelle Duprey, focus

should be laid on the most important props of the scene. The question to what extent they help to portray Juliet and her relationships will become clear.

a. The bed

In this latest version, the bed hints at the Caribbean environment by the gauze curtains that are neatly draped over the bed. In this tropical location, the function of these curtains is to keep out the mosquitos, but at the same time it provides the allusion of a love nest for the two lovers at the beginning of the scene.

The bed becomes Juliet's sanctuary, in which she has just trespassed the borderline from childhood to womanhood. In the course of this scene, she seems to use this sanctuary as the centrepiece of her life, defending it against her mother and retreating to it, when standing up to her father. The bed has actually turned into a refuge for Juliet, when she realizes her father's anger and outrage. She even hides in the gauze as a protective cocoon, standing upright to challenge her father.

The role the bed plays in this scene is emphasized by the position and angle of the camera. This scene is shown from the *low and reverse angle shot*, thus showing the overall situation the characters are in (father, mother and nurse standing around the bed). They are threatening Juliet to leave her bed, now symbolizing her standpoint. There is a *full shot*, covering the characters in full length, and the bed as the main object. The *full shot* includes all the adults staffaged around the bed, as if attacking it, with Juliet in the middle, standing upright and wrapped into the seemingly protective gauze curtain. This impressive triangle of adults, surrounding Juliet's refuge, expresses that Juliet "is standing with her back

to the wall".

Finally, when her father kneels at her bedside, Juliet lies down again. While her father is giving her an ultimatum, she is crouched inside the bed. But she will not be able to stay inside her refuge for ever. Leaving her bed at the end of the scene means taking action (Worksheet 2).

b. Romeo's shirt

Romeo's presence in this Caribbean scene is indicated by his shirt (*pars pro toto*) which he left behind in the hurry of his departure. Romeo's and Juliet's love is symbolically represented by this shirt. Romeo's presence in the form of the shirt seems to give Juliet the strength to stand up to her father's demand. (The shirt is not mentioned in Shakespeare's play text.)

First Juliet tries to hide the shirt in order to conceal the preceding night's events from her mother. She sits on the shirt, covering it up with her night gown. Later on, the nurse takes on the responsibility of hiding the shirt from Juliet's parents' eyes.

The nurse covers it in her clothing, thus secretly siding with Juliet. At the end of the scene, the shirt is returned to Juliet, but not without criticism of the to-be-husband. The nurse comments on the shirt in a derogatory way, indicating that Romeo is not worth being married to Juliet, because of his lower social status. Here the dark Romeo of this film version is referred to, not the one in Shakespeare's play text, who is of a family equally high in social position. The nurse openly favours the father's suggestion of the union between Paris and Juliet, as Paris will be the better substantial provider for Juliet, which is the reason for her criticism. But Juliet clings onto the shirt to show that her relationship with Romeo is non-negotiable (Worksheet 2).

c. Romeo's ring

The ring that Juliet was given by Romeo is of a similar meaning, although the ring, as the symbol of never-ending love, seems to be of minor importance in this version of the scene. Juliet hides the ring, too, and only wears it after her parents have left. Nevertheless, this eternal symbol of commitment and marriage bond doesn't seem to be too outworn and dated for this modern lifestyle version (Worksheet 2).

d. The mirror

At the end Juliet sits in front of the mirror that reflects the emotions portrayed on her face. She is no longer the child that obeys her father and is loyal to her parents. Her love for Romeo demands a loyalty of a different kind. It compels her to give up her previous life and commit herself to him instead. Her devotion to him is expressed in the features of her face. The reflection of a young woman coping with her plight is augmented by an appropriate *position and angle of the camera*. The *medium shot* shows her upper body and a part of the mirror on the table, the *over-the-shoulder shot* reveals Juliet's tormented reflection in the mirror. The viewers are given the impression that they are involved in the scene, without being able to comfort her. It is the mirror, though, that tells Juliet that her identity has become different now. By means of this image, the audience realizes that Juliet's identity has changed in the course of the scene (Worksheet 2).

2. Capulet, father in turmoil

a. Play text

Capulet could be focused on next. As Juliet's behaviour and attitude are stirred by his decisions and actions, he must be dealt with very diligently: He is the head of the

household and he is the prime decision maker, whose decisions affect the whole family. He has to appear strong and masterful, as he doesn't want people to disobey him. Weakness in any respect will reveal his vulnerability and weaken his position.

b. Socio-cultural background

The father appears to today's young people in a bad light by forcing Juliet to marry Paris against her wishes, whereas "in reality" he was looking out for her best interest by providing her with social and economic security. Here "reality" refers to the reality of 16th century European society as reflected in Shakespeare's play text. For Europeans this does not apply for today, but in other parts of the world, it is an everyday occurrence. Many girls in India, for example, are still given into arranged marriages, both in the higher and lower ranks of Indian society. After all, arranged marriages were a normal practice in Europe from the Middle Ages up to the 18th century.

In Shakespeare's play text, Juliet is expected to accept this tradition that women are regarded as property to benefit the family in this case. Juliet is seen as an object to forge an alliance between the Capulet family and the County's family, possibly upgrading the Capulet's social status in society. Due to the circumstances of Tybalt's death (Juliet's cousin), Juliet's father feels that he has to react to this event swiftly and decisively, thus creating a positive mood within the family.

He feels he is fulfilling his role as father by providing Juliet with an appropriate husband. This is why he feels happy when he enters Juliet's bed chamber in all the versions of Act III, Scene 5, because he can fulfill this function as head of the household. When Juliet refuses his offer, he feels criti-

cized, maybe demeaned, and this makes him angry.

In Shakespeare's play text, it is not clear whether Capulet's motives are true, whether it is Juliet he is concerned about or the pairing with the County Paris. The quickness of his decision to give her into marriage may also be a hint to the fact that the father's decision was not only motivated by Juliet's sorrow regarding Tybalt's death, but also by his own ambition (Worksheet 1).

c. Body language and camera techniques

- The tender father

The current film version with Miss Duprey portrays the father in two different lights, in this scene. First it shows his tender side for Juliet, in both speech (Shakespeare's play text) and body language. Before he is aware of Juliet's refusal ("she says thanks") he cradles her like a baby in his arms, after carefully lifting her from the bed, whereas the versions of the nineteen-sixties and eighties show physical remoteness between father and daughter. Here, Juliet seems to be a baby that needs protection and care.

- The aggressive father

Then, in contrast, after Juliet has revealed her displeasure in her father's news, Capulet becomes aggressive and rough both in his words and in his treatment of Juliet, by dragging her out of bed and just stopping short of striking her ("...my fingers itch. "). In this recent version the actor has risen his arm already and is about to slap her, if he had not been interrupted by the nurse and the mother. The decent father has turned into a raging, brutal creature. The actor's body language is convincing for today's theatre, maybe a reflection of violence in today's society, also shown in the media today. Maybe today's audience is

used to images of violence to a higher degree than in the sixties.

By showing his manly chest in a dominant manner, this actor further enforces Capulet's role as head of the family and authority in the room. At the same time sexual tension is displayed, as soon as he sweeps into the room wearing the flowing open robe. This is also representative of how sexuality in the theatre/film has moved on. It has become commonplace and is regarded as normal. Thus the former film versions, especially the 1967 BBC version with a father wrapped up in a morning robe to the chin, has become outdated and out-moded, even ridiculous, when viewed today.

This reversal in temperament is caused by frustration at Juliet's decision and his lack of control over Juliet. On realizing that Juliet is unwilling to comply with his wishes, he puts the blame on his wife. Presuming that she sides with Juliet, he addresses his wife roughly ("I'll not be forsworn").

This Caribbean version is convincing as to the interpretation of the father. Before his exit, Capulet leaves the decision to Juliet. She will have to decide upon her future herself, but if she does not marry Paris on Thursday, she will be out in the street without any protection from him. While presenting this ultimatum for "Thursday next", the actor is kneeling at Juliet's bedside, holding her hand roughly and kissing it. The strong contrast between his severe words ("hang, beg, starve, die in the streets") and actions of seeming subservience, respect and love (his kneeling at her bedside, roughly holding her hand and kissing it) augments the tension in this scene. The actor's way of presentation parallels what Shakespeare does with the help of words. His body language alongside them

expresses a contrast, which Shakespeare used to point at by the stylistic device of oxymoron. Thus the actor incorporates Shakespeare's own strategies of bringing home the idea of a father in turmoil (Worksheet 3).

3. Lady Capulet, prevented from weaving a motherly bond

a. Play text

The interpretations of the roles of the mother and the nurse have been more or less unchanged over the years. Maybe this is due to the fact that the gravity of their words and actions are limited, if compared to the ones of the father. Maybe it is also a hint at the fact that gender specific behaviour and attitude of the sixties and eighties still finds its parallel in the Caribbean society of today. The teacher should focus on these aspects at the beginning: In all the film versions including the latest piece, the motherly bond between Juliet and Lady Capulet is not very strong. She is under her husband's provision, so she must be loyal to his wishes. The loyalty for her husband may not only be nourished by her inward attitude, but also be caused by the fact that she is economically and socially reliant and even dependent on her husband. Thus she becomes a minor character of lower ranking in the family.

b. Body language and camera techniques

By choosing the 20th century upper-class Caribbean family, this latest film version has selected the typical representation of a woman's place in the family in the 16th century Verona.

Lady Capulet is the first to bring the good news to Juliet early in the morning. In this film version she wears a morning gown, too. Casual wear in this morning scene may

suggest that there is more closeness to the daughter than in the preceding film versions, as for example in the 1968 Zeffirelli production (mother dressed in black mourning robe, standing in front of the bed, distanced from her daughter). In the Caribbean version, the mother touches Juliet in a friendly and motherly way in order to comfort her, as she finds her sitting and weeping on a chest in front of her bed. The chest seems to be the barrier Juliet has chosen to put up in order to exclude her mother from reality. Reality is that she has had sexual intercourse with Romeo and is hiding his shirt at this very moment.

The spatial exclusion of the mother from what has really happened is verbally expressed by Juliet's lies ("I never shall be satisfied with Romeo, until I behold him - dead"). Instead of entrusting her mother with her true feelings, she states the opposite regarding her feelings for Romeo. The reasons for her attitude and behaviour may be manifold. On the one hand, Juliet is well aware of the long-lasting feud between the Capulets and the Montagues deepened by the fact that Romeo has become Tybalt's murderer, on the other hand Juliet seems to trust her nurse more than her mother. Instead of declaring her true intentions, she takes to lying to her, hoping to rescue her first marriage.

The motherly bond in this film version is bound to break ("I've done with Thee."), when Juliet announces her unwillingness to give in to her father's wishes (Worksheet 4).

4. The Nurse, Juliet's confidante

a. Play text

In Shakespeare's play text, the nurse's function is to protect Juliet. She warns her

of the arrival of her mother, hastening Romeo's exit from the bed chamber. Although she helps Juliet to conceal the truth from her parents, she is also the voice of reason, advising Juliet to marry Paris and to comply with her father's expectation. She tries to show Juliet that she has one choice only, as Romeo's life is in jeopardy due to the Capulet's vengeance on Tybalt's death. The teacher should concentrate on the ambiguity of her role, when doing the text before watching the film.

b. Body language and camera techniques

The fact that the nurse takes the motherly role is underlined in the latest film version by the bodily closeness between the nurse and Juliet. She is the one who hides Romeo's shirt from her parents' eyes and caringly holds Juliet, trying to soothe her at the end of the scene. Here the modern nurse is convincing, as she sympathizes with Juliet's dilemma. She assumes the role of the experienced friend and sees the reality of Juliet's situation. She was supportive of Juliet in the concealment of Romeo's shirt and previously aided the lovers to meet. She acted as a watch for the lovers and was the alarm. But despite all her support, she tries to win Juliet over to her parents' position, which must be looked upon as an expression of loyalty towards the Capulets. The cooing voice of this actress and her caring body language are meant to win Juliet over to her parents' position. This is why Juliet becomes critical of her, and feels betrayed, as the nurse doesn't agree with her marriage to Romeo. The *medium-shot* of Juliet crouched in the nurse's arms shows Juliet's sorrow and despair. The following *close-up* of her face augments the understanding of her feelings in this situation (Worksheet 4).

Weitere Medien

Shakespeare Shorts

46/42 10605 Macbeth - The Witches' Power.

Macbeth - Der Hexen Macht
2 x 21 min, f

46 02465 Macbeth - Power and Corruption.

Polanski's "The Tragedy of Macbeth". 33 min, f

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Shakespeare Shorts

Romeo und Juliet – Love and Loyalty

Romeo und Julia – Liebe und Gehorsam

Im Mittelpunkt des Films steht Akt III, Szene 5: Julia hat ihre erste Nacht mit dem in Ungnade gefallenen Romeo verbracht und erfährt, dass sie einen Freund der Familie heiraten soll. Im ersten Teil entwickelt eine junge Schauspielerin ihre Auffassung dieser Kernszene durch kritischen Vergleich ausgewählter Inszenierungsbeispiele und in ausführlichen Theaterproben. Im zweiten Teil wird die ganze Szene hinreißend gespielt. Spiel und Inszenierung zeigen die atemberaubende Aktualität des Themas. Der Film, in englischer Originalversion und deutscher Bearbeitung der Moderation, bietet eine hervorragende Hinführung zur Interpretation des lehrplanzentralen Stückes, zur Diskussion unterschiedlicher Wahrnehmungen und zur eigenen Umsetzung im Spiel. Die bilinguale DVD bietet im ROM-Teil umfangreiches Text- und Arbeitsmaterial.

Schlagwörter

Shakespeare, Romeo und Julia, Liebe, Gehorsam, Inszenierungsvergleich, Stilmittel, Medienkompetenz

Fremdsprachen

Englisch • Literatur, Spielfilm, Bilingualer Unterricht

Deutsch

Literatur, Dramatik • Darstellendes Spiel, Schultheater

Allgemeinbildende Schule (9 - 13)