

KEY WORDS

Cognizant, Inamorata, Tangible force, Star-crossed, Pyramus and Thisbe (Ovid), Raison d'être, Trope, Dual nature, Phenomena, Mutually exclusive, Multifaceted, Catalyst.

Romeo Act 5

ROMEO BELIEVES ONLY DEATH CAN HE SURMOUNT FATE (ACT 5 SCENE 1)

COMPARISON

This scene truly demonstrates character development on the part of Romeo. He begged for death in his melancholic ramblings of love for Rosaline, but he is truly willing to die for Juliet. This shows that, at the very least, he has learned how to love someone more than just on a surface level.

COMPARISON

The irony that we believed Romeo to be compromised mentally, at the beginning of the play, when we look retrospectively (look back) from the end of the play. This demonstrates that Romeo, while emotional in the play's outset, still had far to fall.

- What makes Shakespeare's dramatic irony so **compelling** (effective) is that, until their **bitter end** his characters are never fully aware of what their destiny was set out to be, but we as audience members are fully **cognizant** (aware).
- Romeo is still, by act 5, under the impression that fate is trying to keep him and his **inamorata** (love) apart and addresses the stars, exclaiming **"I defy you, stars!"**. He addresses them with the personal pronoun **"you"** as though they might reply. Not only does this paint his mental state to be **disintegrating** but it also shows the **vast** impact the **"stars"** have had on him, to the point where they feel like a **tangible force** (real / physical), to him, that he can address.
- The Elizabethan's were **remarkably superstitious** in regard to the power of **celestial bodies** (stars, moon, planets etc) and while it is it's uncertain if it is correct to attribute these views to Shakespeare himself, he most certainly uses **the trope of star-crossed lovers**. Indeed, Romeo and Juliet is actually a retelling of **Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe**, the original star-crossed lovers.
- And yet Romeo is still sure he is able to **bypass** (avoid) his fate in death, claiming he will **"lie with thee [Juliet] tonight"**. The **verb "lie" connotes** peace and rest which he is sure he will find with Juliet in death.
- But it is **dramatically ironic** that Romeo is completely oblivious to the fact he is sealing his fate.
- Indeed the world without Juliet appears depressing, with Romeo's final **interpersonal** (with another person) interaction with a poor Apothecary who's **"oppression starveth in thine eyes"**. Romeo's view of the world is **bleak** now that he believes his love to be gone and this **imagery** of suffering shows he is more able to **bear witness to the pain and suffering in the world** now he **"raison d'être"** (reason to exist) is gone. Suicide seems the only option for him.
- He even questions the apothecary for his reason to keep living give he is **"so bare a full of wretchedness"**.
- Romeo's belief that he can avoid his fate in death demonstrates faith as impossible force to outsmart, even in while not living and the notion (idea) that he spends his final breaths trying **dramatically ironic and demonstrative of the immense power of celestial bodies, at least in the world of the play**.

TOP TIP



This point can be used in combination with the Act 2 fate point in an essay about fate in Romeo and Juliet. In using both you will be giving examples from multiple points in the play which demonstrates a close reading of the text (AO1).

COMPARISON

Romeo isn't threatened by Paris' love for Juliet as Paris is by him. This shows him to be **confidant in the passion that he has for Juliet**, in that it is superior and deeper than Paris', who's is based on **economic and social gain**, not true love.

COMPARISON

That violence that Tybalt **spurred** (ignited) in him by **slewing** Mercutio, **culminates** (reaches a climax) in this scene in his slewing of Paris. It shows him to have been **irrevocably** (forever) changed from that moment, which shows the significance that trauma has on our later decisions.

COMPARISON

This scene is the **epitome** of the young vs the old theme in that, after the lovers death, their respective parents realise the **detrimental** (fatal) consequences of their generational feud and that in their hatred they have **lost that which they most love**. It shows the lovers suicide to be a **catalyst** (a way to achieve) for peace, which is ironic, in that it took death for peace to come about.

LOVE AND VIOLENCE BECOME INTERMINGLED (ACT 5 SCENE 3)

- When Romeo's sees Paris at the tomb of Juliet, he tries to suppress his violent nature, pleading him to not **"tempt"** his temper and to leave and explain that **"a madman's mercy bid [him] run away"**. His reference to himself in the **third person is hauntingly eerie** and demonstrates the **deterioration of his mental faculties** (sanity).
- And yet Paris refuses and Romeo declares in resignation for him to **"have at thee"**, calling him **"boy"**. The use of the **noun "boy"** makes it sound like Romeo is trying to **taunt** (make fun of) Paris, making him feel **inferior** (not as good) in his love for Juliet.
- After he **slews** (kills) Paris **Romeo's final act of violence he commits is against himself**. He speaks of the **phenomena** of **"lighting before death"** which he feels, and this demonstrates **the final fusion on love and violence**. In order to feel the **"lightning"** he feels at the prospect of being **freed of his burdens** and **united in death** with his lover, he must be on the **verge** of **"death"**.
- One might assume the love and violence are **mutually exclusive** (can't exist together / paradoxical) or would at least **inhibit** each other, but this scene, however, proves otherwise and that Romeo somehow ends up with a combination of both.
- He begins to **"set up [his] everlasting rest"** and the contrast between the idea of death that the **adjective "everlasting"** connotes and the **verb "rest"** is again representative of this **union of love and violence**.
- One of his final words to Juliet represent this union in that he **"seal[s] with a righteous kiss / A dateless bargain to engrossing death"**. The **juxtaposition** (contrast) between the **verb "kiss"** and the **noun "death"** illustrates this final conflict between love and violence.
- The **union of two** seemingly **contradictory terms** in Romeo and Juliet (love and violence), seems to portray **the concept the humans are complex multifaceted** (containing many parts) **creatures whose contradictory natures often overlap**.
- It is also hugely demonstrative of **the fundamental issues inherent in love and courtship of the time**, in that often **it is impossible to possess true love without causing violence because of political and social factors**. Shakespeare shows love to be complex and humans to be as well.



TOPIC SENTENCES

- It is established, by this point, that Romeo's fate is **inescapable**. His one final act of defiance, however, is to end his own life, **for only in death can a man escape his fate**. The irony is though, that is fate is death and in ending his own life he is sealing that fate.
- Romeo has previously been able to separate his **capacity for love and for violence**, with his different sides being shown in different scenes. In the play's final scene, however, his **dual nature** combines, and love and violence become difficult to **differentiate** (distinguish between).