

Mercurio character study

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Mercutio character study BY alliterative How does Shakespeare portray Mercutio's character in 'Romeo and Juliet'? The classic, poetic tale of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare has touched the hearts of numerous readers across the globe, no matter the time, generation, or age. A forbidden love that blooms between two young, unlikely souls, Romeo and Juliet, whose families both share a mutual loathing towards each other.

However, despite the perpetual grievous quality that surrounds the main characters throughout the entire play, Shakespeare adds a tinge of optimism in the form of the amiable Mercutio, Romeo's dearest friend. Mercutio - who is neither a Capulet nor a Montague - is a jovial character that enjoys to express sexually derogatory jokes, and takes pleasure in mocking Romeo's self-indulgence in love.

Although Mercutio is illustrated and recognized as Romeo's cleverly witty friend who repeatedly jokes and teases - both in sibilance and bitterness - he is not a mere jester or clown. In Romeo and Juliet, Mercutio is also cast under a more serious light, wherein he is portrayed as a cynical yet loyal friend who would sacrifice his own life for naive Romeo.

Shakespeare deliberately utilizes Mercutio's cynical nature to deflate and foreshadow the unlikely possibility of romantic forbidden love and the power of cruel fate that is emphasized throughout the entire play.

Through the use of specifically applied poetic techniques and carefully chosen words, Shakespeare was able to develop a highly memorable character devised of many distinctively complex layers and qualities that

greatly contrasts the other characters in Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare first introduces Mercutio's character in act 1 scene 4 of 'Romeo and Juliet', where he is illustrated as a considerate and kindhearted friend who simply endeavors to rid Romeo of the poignant sadness of his unrequited love for Rosaline.

This is evidently shown when Mercutio attempts to brighten his morose mood through the use of fruitless encouragement and assurance of Romeo's future success in love (with Rosaline), by stating that "you (Romeo) are a lover, borrow Cupid's wings, and soar with them above a common bound", and then later, with the prospect of further enlivening Romeo from his painful heartache, mocks him by saying, "And to think in it should you burden love, too great oppression for a tender thing" (1 in an effort to make Romeo laugh).

Shakespeare specifically applies the intelligently sexual and vulgar pun, "to sink in it", "a tender thing" as well as the feminine connotation of the word "tender" to add a sardonic tone to Mercutio's statement that contrasts the gentle, supportive tone of his previous remark.

The contradicting tones of the two statements highlights Mercutio's undeniable concern for Romeo's pessimistic and despondent frame of mind, suggesting that despite Mercutio's animosity towards Rosaline, he remains to be supportive of Romeo's romantic endeavors, prolonging Romeo's happiness above all else.

Furthermore, Mercutio's mordant tone implies that he attempts to conceal, and is rather reticent regarding how much he cares for Romeo's peace of

mind and well-being, directly contradicting throughout the entire play. In 'Romeo and Juliet', it is blatant that Shakespeare aims to portray Mercutio's personality to be in utter contradiction to that of Romeo's. Whilst Romeo is a somber, helpless romantic who believes love can conquer all, Mercutio is a skeptic full of witty, lascivious humor.

Unlike Romeo, Mercutio has a highly realistic perception of love, and simply views the notion of love as purely nothing but an inconvenience. This is proven in his profoundly crude advice for Romeo's dilemma concerning Rosaline, where Mercutio suggests that he (Romeo) "be rough with love, prick love for pricking" and to "beat love down" (The repetition of the word "prick" - a synonym for the word "to puncture", "to pierce" and "erect", indicating that Mercutio is speaking of the male genitalia - further emphasizes the sexual innuendo behind his simple advice while the use of puns represents his amusingly crude sense of humor.

Mercutio's flippant and mildly disrespectful manner towards love implies that he does not believe or fully comprehend the true value of it, as he immediately assumes that Romeo's melancholy is not due to his unarticulated love for Rosaline, but stemmed from his lack of sexual activity as of late, in which if Romeo was to simply indulge in the act of sex, the inconvenience of infatuation would easily disappear. To Mercutio, the concept of romantic love is a conquest, an exclusively hysterical pursuit where he would not gain any benefits, with the exception of having regular, monotonous sex.

Americium's cynical nature highlights how romantic love simply cannot withstand the contradicting setting of 'Romeo and Juliet'. Throughout the entirety of the play, Shakespeare has continuously developed Americium's character by adding qualities such as a vivid imagination and eloquence while still maintaining his incredulous and disbelieving nature. Americium's renowned 'Queen MBA' speech is a primary example that showcases how these contradicting elements harmonize together to create an individual of such distinction.

The speech begins with Mercuric describing a vibrantly colorful image of "Queen MBA", who is "the fairies midwife" that "comes in shape no bigger than an agate-stone" and rides a "chariot" of "empty hazel-nut, made by the Joiner squirrel or the old grub". However, as the speech progresses, his light tone of voice is suddenly replaced by a bitter, more resentful tone as he begins to speak of the more cynical aspects of Queen MBA.

This is blatantly represented in the lines: "O'er courtiers knees, that dream on reroute's straight, o'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees, o'er ladies lips, who straight on kisses dream," (I, 4, 72-74) and "o'er a soldier's neck" who dreams "of cutting foreign throats". Shakespearean use of repetition of the words "o'er" and "straight" (which connotes to the word immediately) emphasizes Americium's absolute confidence in the generalization and categorization of the different groups of people: of lawyers dreaming of collecting fees, lovers dreaming of lusty encounters and soldiers dreaming of murdering their enemies.

The use of stereotypes in Mercutio's 'Queen's' speech clearly implies that he perceives dreams as nothing more than a mere product of an individual's own selfish desires and personal anxieties in life that is fully dependent on their line of profession and character, in stark contrast to Furthermore, in juxtaposing lawyers, lovers and soldiers together in his imaginative interpretation of Queen's fairy entourage, his eloquent speech was able to portray a number of the plays opposing themes such as love and hate, fantasy and reality, idealism and cynicism.

In addition to Mercutio's indisputably blatant, literary-advanced mind and skeptical nature that is depicted throughout the play 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare illustrates Mercutio as a character of great nonchalance that desires to enjoy life to its greatest extent and cares little for consequences.

Mercutio's carefree persona is accurately presented in act 3 scene 1, when he continuously attempts to provoke Tybalt with belittling words (prior to the duel between the two), of how "I'll (Mercutio) will be hanged, Sir (Tybalt), if he (Romeo) wear your , 51), then later when he is fatally stabbed by Tybalt, claims that his wound is just "a scratch, a scratch" and that if one "ask(s) for me (Mercutio) tomorrow", "you shall find me (Mercutio) a grave man".

Shakespearean application of both, pun ("a grave man") and repetition of the statement "Just a scratch", puts emphasis on Mercutio's unbuttered nature, as it indicates that despite his inevitable death, he manages to make light of the otherwise serious situation through his use of humorous wordplay.

These attributes, in addition to Mercutio's continuous insults directed towards Tybalt, insinuates that not only does he simply not care for the dangerous consequences of his audacious words, but similarly implies that he is not alarmed by the severity of his wound or his impending end in the slightest. In Mercutio's final scene (act 3 scene 1), directly prior to his duel with Tybalt that tragically resulted with his violent death, Shakespeare illustrates Mercutio as a character of admirable loyalty and honor.

This is portrayed excellently when Mercutio challenges Tybalt to a fight by exclaiming: "Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk? "

Shakespeare applies the metaphorical word "rat-catcher" to describe Tybalt in preference to a cat, which often connotes to a manipulative, perfidious or cunning character. The utilization of the intelligently concealed metaphorical insult indicates that Mercutio purposefully encourages Tybalt to fight him instead of Romeo, by attempting to anger and provoke him.

Furthermore this also insinuates that, despite Mercutio's utter disgust at what he perceives to be Romeo's cowardice and naivety when he refuses to fight against Tybalt, Mercutio remains quick to fight to defend and protect Romeo and the Montague name. To summarize, Shakespearean clever development of Mercutio's character in the play Romeo and Juliet through his regular utilization of puns, stereotypes and repetition has made Mercutio a highly memorable and lovable character amongst the readers and audiences.

Mercutio's buoyant charisma, skeptical nature and intelligent mind enable the audience to perceive and compare him to that of a dear friend that would

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advise and support them - or in this case, Romeo - despite their conflicting views on controversial topics such as love and fate, touching the audience's sentiments and therefore, making Mercutio an extremely favorable in 'Romeo and Juliet'.