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Ive seen references to the latter in Shakespeare and sme other literature, and the former in more recent texts. What significances do these insults hold? Ive heard it basically means fuck you. Could be wrong, but thats what Im putting my money on. Ahare you referring to Romeo and Juliet?:Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?I do bite my thumb at you. (or something like that, anyway).Basically, Ive been led to understand that this about the same as flicking someone off nowadays. I think it is equivalent to the middle finger . I think its:-Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?-I bite my thumb, but not at you.A quick check at BookRags gives me:Abraham.Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?Sampson.I do bite my thumb, sir.Abraham.Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?Sampson.Is the law of our side if I say ay?Gregory.No.Sampson.No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite mythumb, sir. I dont know about biting the thumb, but I always thought thumbing the nose (touching the tip of your nose with your thumb, palm open and fingers up) meant kiss my ass. Fr. DeBoiser, my HS English teacher who knew everything about English lit, said the meaning was unknown but it was generally considered to be equivalent to the middle finger. Discover the deep meaning behind I do bite my thumb in Shakespeares iconic play. Learn about the historical context, its use as an insult during verbal duels, and how it translates to modern youth culture. Scene and CharactersImagine stepping into a world where love and tragedy intertwine, setting the stage for one of Shakespeares most iconic playsRomeo and Juliet. The play unfolds in Verona, Italy, during the Elizabethan era. But what exactly do we mean by Verona? Its like entering an old-world town with its narrow cobblestone streets, bustling marketplaces, and the looming presence of two powerful familiesthe Montagues and the Capulets. These families enmity serves as a backdrop against which our young protagonists must navigate their love.Verbal Duel ExplanationThe dramatic moments in Romeo and Juliet are not just about romance; they also showcase intense conflicts through verbal duels, particularly between Mercutio and Tybalt. Picture two swords clashing not with steel, but with wit and sarcasm. This is the essence of a verbal duel, where each character uses language to outmaneuver the other. For instance, when Mercutio engages Tybalt in a conversation that quickly spirals into a sword fight, its almost as if their words have turned into weapons. These exchanges are not just about winning an argument but about asserting dominance and proving ones status within the social hierarchy of Verona. Elizabethan Era CustomDuring Shakespeares time in England, the Elizabethan era was a golden age of cultural and artistic expression. The plays we study today werent just performances; they were reflections of daily life and customs that shaped society. How did these customs influence Romeo and Juliet? For instance, consider the concept of courtship during this periodwasnt it much more formal than what you might imagine? Men and women would often meet under strict supervision, and their interactions were governed by societal norms. In Romeo and Juliet, could their clandestine romance be seen as a rebellion against these constraints?Social Interaction GesturesThe Elizabethan era was also characterized by its rich repertoire of hand gestures and body language. These non-verbal cues played a significant role in communication, often conveying emotions or intentions more effectively than words alone. Think about how Juliet might have signaled to Romeo her willingness to elopeperhaps through a certain posture or glance. In contrast, consider the formal bows and curtseys that were common among nobility; such gestures signified respect and hierarchy. How do these social interaction gestures add depth to the characters interactions in Romeo and Juliet?Varley Women's Tybalt Long Rain Parka, Birch, Tan, L `markdownShakespeares LanguageFigurative SpeechImagine stepping into a world where every sentence is a painting, where words are not just meant to be understood but also felt. Thats exactly what we encounter in William Shakespeares plays, particularly in Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare was a master of figurative speech, using metaphors, similes, personification, and other poetic devices to enrich his language.For instance, when Romeo speaks about love, he doesnt just say I love you; instead, he compares love to a celestial phenomenon. In Act 2, Scene 2, he says, But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. This line not only conveys his deep admiration but also paints a vivid picture in our minds, making us see Juliet as radiant and beautiful.Connotation and SarcasmIn Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare also employs a subtle form of communication through connotation and sarcasm. These techniques add layers to the dialogue, making conversations richer and more complex than they might seem on the surface.Consider Mercutios famous Queen Mab speech in Act 1, Scene 4. Here, he uses vivid imagery and rich language to describe Queen Mab as a tiny fairy who visits people during their sleep, bringing them dreams of joy or sorrow. However, his words also carry an underlying tone that suggests the superficiality of such dreams. This is where connotation steps in; the words might be sweet, but they hint at a more cynical view.Mercutio Drew First William Shakespeare Romeo & Juliet T-ShirtSarcasm, on the other hand, is often used to highlight conflicts and tensions. Take Friar Lawrences warning to Romeo: These violent delights have violent ends. This statement carries an ironic undertone, suggesting that their love story will not end well despite their passion. Such nuanced use of language adds depth to the characters interactions and the overall narrative.` Modern InterpretationYouth CultureIn todays world, youth culture is like a vast ocean, teeming with waves of creativity and rebellion. How would Romeo and Juliet fit into this dynamic scene? Imagine these two star-crossed lovers as modern-day teenagers, navigating the tumultuous waters of adolescence. Do they still fall in love at first sight, or do they find their connection through social media and digital platforms? The dynamics of young love today might make us wonder: Would they have texted instead of sending roses? Subcultures are like colorful mosaics, each piece adding a unique hue to the broader picture. In modern interpretations, symbols from subcultures can transform Shakespeares characters and story into something entirely new. Think about how hip-hop culture might reinterpret Romeo and Juliet: perhaps they would be rappers, breaking barriers with their rhymes instead of swords. Or consider the goth subculture, where dark imagery and symbolism could shape their tragic tale. How would these symbols change our understanding of the star-crossed lovers? Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. (Click the symbolism infographic to download.)Unless you're fluent in childish Elizabethan gestures (anyone? Bueller?), you might be wondering what the what Sampson's up to when he spots the Montague's servants on the streets and announces, "I will bite my thumb at / them, which is disgrace to them if they bear it" (1.1.43-44).Basically, thumb biting, which involves biting and then flicking one's thumb from behind the upper teeth, is a Shakespearean version of flipping someone the bird and saying "nanny nanny boo boo." It's an insulting gesture that sounds just a wee bit (okay, a lot) immature. Here's how it all goes down in the play:ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?SAMPSON I do bite my thumb, sir.ABRAHAM Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?SAMPSON [aside to Gregory] Is the law of our side, if I say 'Ay'?GREGORY No.SAMPSON No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but Ibite my thumb, sir. (1.1.45-52)Sampson doesn't have a good reason to insult the Montagues' servantshe's basically looking to stir up trouble because his masters (the Capulets) are feuding with the Montagues. The funny thing is, Sampson's too much of a coward to own up to his silly gesture because the "law" won't be on his "side" if his thumb biting causes a big old brawl (he doesn't want to get busted for causing a fracas).Pretty dumb, right? And that seems to be Shakespeare's point. The Capulet/ Montague feud, which has obviously trickled down to involve their servants, is completely absurd. Just like Sampson's thumb biting Romeo and Juliet both check out in the last scene, if that'swhat you mean. Romeo and Juliet, painted by Ford Madox BrownThe Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet (first published 1597) is a play by William Shakespeare concerning the fate of two young star-crossed lovers. Perhaps the most famous of his plays, it is one of his earliest theatrical triumphs and is considered the archetypal love story of the Renaissance. Abraham: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?Sampson: I do bite my thumb, sir.Abraham: Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?Sampson (to Gregory): Is the law of our side if I say ay?Gregory: No.Sampson: No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you sir; but I bite my thumb, sir.Gregory: Do you quarrel, sir?Abraham: Quarrel, sir? No, sir.Sampson: If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.Abraham: No better.Sampson: Well, sir.Gregory: (to Sampson) Say 'better'; here comes one of my master's kinsmen.Sampson: Yes, better, sir.Abraham: You lie.Sampson: Draw, if you be men! Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.(They fight) Benvolio: Part, fools!Put up your swords; you know not what you do.(Tybalt enters)Tybalt: What, art thou drawn among these hartless hinds?Turn thee, Benvolio; look upon thy death.Benvolio: I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword,Or manage it to part these men with me.Tybalt: What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.Have at thee, coward! Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel, Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,That quench the fire of your pernicious rageWith purple fountains issuing from your veins!On pain of torture, from those bloody hands, Throw your distemper weapons to the ground,And hear the sentence of your moved Prince.Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,And made Verona's ancient citizensCast by their grave beseeming ornaments,To wield old partisans, in hands as old,Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate.If ever you disturb our streets again,Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.For this time, all the rest depart away.You, Capulet, shall go along with me And Montague, come you this afternoon To know our further pleasure in this case,To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.Once more, on the pain of death, all men depart. Benvolio: What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?Romeo: Not having that, which, having, makes them short.Benvolio: In love?Romeo: Out-Benvolio: Of love?Romeo: Out of her favour, where I am in love. Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!O anything, of nothing first created;O heavy lightness! serious vanity!Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms! Romeo: Is love a tender thing? it is too rough, Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.Mercutio: If love be rough with you, be rough with love;Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down. Romeo: I dream'd a dream to-night.Mercutio: And so did I.Romeo: Well, what was yours?Mercutio: That dreamers often lie. O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.She is the fairies midwife, and she comesIn shape no bigger than an agate-stoneOn the fore-finger of an alderman,Drawn with a team of little atomiesAthwart mens noses as they lie asleep. Romeo: Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!Thou talkest of nothing.Mercutio: True, I talk of dreams,Which are the children of an idle brain,Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,Which is as thin of substance as the airAnd more inconstant than the wind, who wooesEven now the frozen bosom of the north,And, being angered, puffs away from thence,Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.Benvolio: This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves;Supper is done, and we shall come too late. Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. You kiss by the book. My only love sprung from my only hate!Too early seen unknown, and known too late! What's in a name? That which we call a roseBy any other name would smell as sweet.This cannot anger him: 'twould anger him To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle Of some strange nature, letting it there stand Till she had laid it and conjured it down; That were some spite: my invocation Is fair and honest, and in his mistress' name I conjure only to raise up him. But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?It is the east, and Juliet is the sun! At lovers perjuries,They say, Jove laughs. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?Deny thy father and refuse thy name;Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,And I'll no longer be a Capulet.'Tis but thy name that is my enemy; Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,Nor arm, nor face, nor any other partBelonging to a man. O, be some other name!What's in a name? That which we call a rose,By any other name would smell as sweet;So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,Retain that dear perfection which he owesWithout that title: Romeo, doff thy name;And for thy name, which is no part of thee,Take all myself.Juliet, scene ii, a variant in many published editions reads: What's in a name? That which we call a rose,By any other word would smell as sweet. I take thee at thy word:Call me but love, and I'll be new baptis'd;Henceforth I never will be Romeo. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,That monthly changes in her circled orb,Lest that thy love prove likewise variable. Romeo: O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?Juliet: What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?Romeo: The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.Juliet: I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:And yet I would it were to give again.Romeo: Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?Juliet: But to be frank, and give it thee again.And yet I wish but for the thing I have;My bounty is as boundless as the sea,My love as deep; the more I give to thee,The more I have, for both are infinite. Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books,But love from love, toward school with heavy looks. Good-night, good-night! Parting is such sweet sorrowThat I shall say good-night till it be morrow. The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb.Friar Laurence, scene iii For naught so vile that on the earth doth liveBut to the earth some special good doth give;Nor aught so good but, strain'd from that fair use,Revolts from true birth, stumbling on the abuse:Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;And vice sometimes by action dignified.Friar Laurence, scene iii Then plainly know my heart's dear love is setOn the fair daughter of rich Capulet:As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;And all combin'd, save what thou must combineBy holy marriage: when, and where, and howWe met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,That thou consent to marry us to-day.Romeo to Friar Laurence, scene iii Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,So soon forsaken? Young men's love then liesNot truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.Friar Laurence to Romeo, scene iii Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.Friar Laurence to Romeo, scene iii Benvolio: I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,And, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl;For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.Mercutio: Thou art like one of those fellows that when heenters the confines of a tavern claps me his swordupon the table and says 'God send me no need ofthee!' and by the operation of the second cup drawsit on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.Benvolio: Am I like such a fellow?Mercutio: Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood asany in Italy, and as soon moved to be moody, and assoon moody to be moved. Romeo, the hate I bear thee can affordNo better term than this: thou art a villain. Mercutio: O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!"Alla stoccata" carries it away. (draws his sword)Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?Tybalt: What wouldst thou have with me?Mercutio: Good king of cats, nothing but one of your ninelives; that I mean to make bold withal, and as youshall use me hereafter, drybeat the rest of theeight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pitcherby the ears? make haste, lest mine be about yourears ere it be out. I am hurt; A plague o' both the houses! I am sped. Is he gone, and hath nothing? Romeo: Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.Mercutio: No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as achurch-door; but 'tis enough,'twill serve: ask forme to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. Iam peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o'both your houses! Mercutio: Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.Romeo: I thought all for the best.Mercutio: Help me into some house, Benvolio,Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses!They have made worm's meat of me.I have it, and soundly too: A plague o' both your houses! Benvolio: Romeo, away, be gone!The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain: Stand not amaz'd: the Prince will doom thee death,If thou are taken: hence! be gone! away!Romeo: O, I am fortune's fool!Benvolio: Why dost thou stay? Lady Capulet: I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give;Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.Prince: Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?Montague: Not Romeo, Prince, he was Mercutio's friend;His fault concludes but what the law should end,The life of Tybalt.Prince: And for that offenceImmediately we do exile him hence:I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;But I'll amerce you with so strong a fineThat you shall all repent the loss of mine:I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:Therefore use none: let Romeo hence in haste,Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.Bear hence this body and attend our will:Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill. Come, gentle night, come, loving black brow'd night,Give me my Romeo; and when he shall die,Take him and cut him out in little stars,And he will make the face of Heaven so fineThat all the world will be in love with night,And pay no worship to the garish sun. There's no trust,No faith, no honesty in men; all are perjur'dAll foresworn, all naught, all dissemblers.O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!Friar Laurence, scene iii, line 24Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day.It was the nightingale, and not the lark,That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree.Believe me love, it was the nightingale. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,Do thou but call my resolution wise,And with this knife I'll help it presently.God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,Shall be the label to another deed,Or my true heart with treacherous revoltTurn to another, this shall slay them both:Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,Give me some present counsel; or behold,'Twixt my extremes and me, this bloody knifeShall play the umpire; arbitrating thatWhich the commission of thy years and artCould to no issue of true honour bring.Be not so long to speak; I long to die,If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy. Or bid me go into a new-made grave,And hide me with a dead man in his shroud Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble And I will do it without fear or doubt,To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love. O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!Most lamentable day! Most woeful dayThat ever, ever I did yet behold!O day, O day, O day! O hateful day!Never was seen so black a day as this.O woeful day! O woeful day! A beggerly account of emptie boxes,Greene earthen pots, Bladders, and mustie seedes,Remnants of packthred, and old cakes of RosesWere thinly scattered, to make vp a shew.Romeo, scene i, edition of 1623There is thy gold; worse poison to men's souls,Doing more murder in this loathsome worldThan these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell. Shall I believeThat unsubstantial death is amorous,And that the lean abhorred monster keepsThee here in the dark to be his paramour? O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. Yea, noise? then I'll be brief.O, happy dagger!This is thy sheath; there rest, and let me die. Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!And I, for winking at your discords too,Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punish'd. A glooming peace this morning with it brings;The sun for sorrow will not show his head.Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:For never was a story of more woeThan this of Juliet and her Romeo.WikipediaWikipedia has an article about: WikisourceWikisource has original text related to: CommonsWikimedia Commons has media related to:

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