

# **Student Essay on Fate: Love's Nemesis in "The Definition of Love"**

## **Fate: Love's Nemesis in "The Definition of Love"**

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# Essay

Fate; Love's nemesis

Andrew Marvell's *The Definition of Love* is the epitome of irony. Marvell takes the feelings often associated with love and drowns them in a cool, lucid, dispassionate tone that borders on self-mocking. Marvell writes about unrequited passions, insisting that Fate itself acts against true love. Mentioned first in the third stanza, Marvell introduces the idea of Fate as the reason for his rough history with love:

"And yet I quickly might arrive

Where my extended soul is fixed

But Fate does iron wedges drive,

And always crowds itself betwixt" (lines 9-12)

Taking this into consideration it is not surprising why the hatred that Marvell has for Fate flows into the next two stanzas. In the third stanza, Marvell explains how Fate becomes jealous when she sees two lovers engulfed in one another, and dissolves their relationship in a "tyrannic power depose" (line 16). He goes on to explain the idealistic nature of love:

"As lines (so loves) oblique may well

Themselves in every angle greet:

But ours so truly parallel,

Though infinite, cannot meet" (lines 25-28)

Marvell believes love is something that people think they can possess but it's really an unattainable goal. Instead of Fate matching people up, Marvell believes that fate only tears people apart.

Marvell ends the poem with a small shred of hope:

"Therefore the love which us doth bind.

But Fate so enviously debars,

Is the conjunction of the mind,

And opposition of the stars" (lines 29 - 32)

Though this sounds as if it would be in a typical love poem, the reader must look closely at the final two lines. The word conjunction means to coming together in the same sign of the zodiac, however, stars are diametrically opposed to one another. This last line, though it sounds as if Marvell sees a chance for lovers to remain together, it's clear that he believes Love is a completely unnatural idea.