

Example of essay on neal gaudet

Literature, William Shakespeare



English 352

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Love in Shakespeare

Shakespeare used love as one of his main themes for each play he wrote. Love can be defined in many different ways. As we see in *Romeo and Juliet*, the love between two young characters is built on passion and an everlasting commitment even in death. In *Hamlet* we are shown a different type of love between Hamlet and his father. The audience is shown a son's true love acted out in revenge for his father's death. These plays explore the three different types of love Shakespeare wrote about - romantic love, familial love, and friendship.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, we are shown many forms of love. Shakespeare expresses love between friends, family, and lovers. The primary type of love found in the play is the romantic love between Romeo and Juliet, and how their love for each other defies all expectations from their families. When Romeo is rejected by Rosaline, he falls for Juliet, showing just how meaningless and fleeting his adoration for Rosaline was: " Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night" (I. v. 9-10).

Next, Shakespeare shows us love in the form of friendship. Romeo's friendships with Benvolio and Mercutio can be described as one of true and loyal love for each other. Both gentlemen have been friends with Romeo and have sided with him during this horrible and violent feud between the two

families, as well as after Rosaline's rejection of Romeo; Mercutio cheers him up by saying, " If love be rough with you, be rough with love;/Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down" (I. iv. 4). These two friends will both pay a dear price for per taking in this feud; Mercutio will pay with his life and Benvolio with the loss of his close and dear relative Romeo. These two friendships do show us how love can be loyal between true friends, but these relationships are not the reasons why true love comes to play in the end.

The main expression of love in this play is between Romeo and Juliet. Juliet's over protective parents, and the family feud between the Montagues and the Capulets, put their love in the middle of this conflict, making them " star crossed lovers". It was love at first sight with Romeo and they sealed their new found love with a kiss of promise during their first meeting. The only problem was that Juliet did not know who she had just fallen in love with that night. Even when she found out the truth, Juliet let her love burn even brighter for dear Romeo: " My only love sprung from my only hate! / Too early seen unknown, and known too late! / Prodigious birth of love it is to me / That I must love a loathed enemy"(1. 5. 138-141). Despite the fact that her lover is a member of a rival family, her love persists nonetheless. After being secretly married and spending a night together, in which Juliet loses her virginity - " Lovers can see to do their amorous rites / By their own beauties; or, if love be blind, / It best agrees with night" (III. ii. 8-10), Romeo is banished.

What proceeds then sees Shakespeare showing us the foolishness of young love, as a comedy of errors occurs which culminates in both thinking the

other is dead at various points throughout the play. At the climax, these misunderstandings (namely switching out the poison for sleeping potion) lead them to kill each other because they could not stand to be without each other. In watching this double suicide act out, we see the consequences of their doomed love bear fruit in the reconciliation of the Montagues and the Capulets, demonstrating the inspiring nature of love. In this story love brought together lovers, friends, and family in the end. The love showed by all lead to a tragic end for some, but brought forgiveness and reconciliation for two families that will never feud again.

In the play Hamlet, we see Hamlet as a loving and devoted son. After finding out his father was murdered by his uncle, revenge was his only option. Hamlet used a great quote to describe his powerful and fearing father figure when he was comparing his father and uncle to his mother. “ See what a grace was seated on this brow: / Hyperion’s curls, the front of Jove himself, / An eye like Mars, he threaten and command, / A station like the herald Mercury.” (3. 4. 55-58) He also tells Horatio that he shall never again see someone equal to his father. ““ A was a man, take him for all in all, / I shall not look upon his like again.” (1. 2. 187-188) To show his love and respect to his father Hamlet comes up with a plan to murder Claudius and bring to life publicly that Claudius murdered his father the king. Hamlet seeks his revenge and just like a loyal sons follows his plan to the end although it cost himself his own life in the process. I think Shakespeare’s main point to the audience was that Hamlet’s actions should not been seen as only hatred toward his uncle, but more for the undying love he showed to his father the true king.

Hamlet also carries on a romance with Ophelia, which ends up dooming her to madness and death, a fate par for the course for a tragedy like Hamlet. As Hamlet grows more and more desperate and pushes her away, her character starts to pull apart at the seams. She breaks into tears when Hamlet talks to her in an abrasive and hostile way, devastated at this betrayal of the man she loves: " And I, of ladies most deject and wretched, That sucked the honey of his music vows now see that noble and most sovereign reason out of tune and harsh" (III. i. 13). This, along with the death of her dear father Polonius, causes her to eventually go mad and die. This passion in Ophelia's spirit stems from her love of both of these men, whom she eventually loses in one way or another.

So as we see it in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, love is a recurrent theme in both plays. Shakespeare shows us love in many different forms from friendly love, passionate and sexual love, and even love through hatred. In his stories he shows us how love is never perfect and also brings forth the foils or tragedies love can sometimes cause in life. Love in Shakespeare's tragedies is shown as a force that one should approach with ease or be willing to face the consequences that love can bring in the end. If one is not careful, circumstances like familial conflict, uncertainty, external pressures, and madness can lead one to disaster through love; yet, the concept of love itself is still celebrated by Shakespeare as something well worth the risk.