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Michelle Almanza Dow Intro to Poetry 9 April 2013 Romantic Love Love can be defined in various ways. Especially in American culture, where love is used to describe the affection or infatuation of many different things or people. There is no real classification of the type of love for things; it is just plain love. But, usually when the word love comes up, most people associate it with romantic love; love that is shared between couples in a relationship. Yet, still there are many different definitions one has to describe this type of love. In an article called "What is Love," Sheryl Paul defines love, "Love is action. Love is tolerance... Love is giving. Love is receiving... Love is recognizing that it is not your partner's job to make you feel alive, fulfilled, or complete." Sheryl Paul uses verbs to describe love and has her own perception of what love is and should be that people can agree or disagree with. While Paul believes love is tolerance and reciprocation, Sheri and Bob Stritof describe love differently. They say, "love is when the chemicals in your brain kick in and you feel an emotional high, exhilaration, passion and elation when you and your lover are together." These are two different explanations for love, but still very similar. Poetry is another means for people to share their ideas through. There are many poems throughout the history of literature that have been written about similar topics. Some are very similar others are completely different, even though they share the same purpose. Two poems in particular that I will be analyzing have the same theme, romantic love. Even though they both offer different perspectives on the theme, they go about explaining it in a similar manner. Anna Bradstreet's "To My Dear and Loving Husband" and Kim Addonizio's "First Poem for You" share the theme of romantic love, and the authors go

about elucidating the theme in similar ways, regardless of their opposing views. Anne Bradstreet's poem, " To My Dear and Loving Husband, " contains imagery and paradoxes to develop her theme, as well as a consistent rhyme scheme and amount of syllables in each line. The purpose of her poem is to describe how much she loves and adores her husband. She is not afraid to praise him and show him off. At the time that this poem was written (late seventeenth century), and as a Puritan woman, these thoughts and ideas were not seen before. At the beginning of her work she begins with a paradox, " If ever two were one, then surely we" (To My Dear and Loving Husband). This is a very bold statement to begin with because she is stating that her affection for her husband is so great that, together, they can be one being instead of two separate ones. So being a puritan woman in the seventeenth century, saying that she was equal to a man was very daring. Bradstreet then says that their love and her joy cannot be compared with any other woman. She continues to describe her love for her husband through great imagery and hyperboles. For example, " I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold, / Or all the riches that the East doth hold" (To My Dear and Loving Husband). This supports the immensity of her love for her husband. In the end, Bradstreet makes a full circle by returning to a paradox at the end when she says, " Then while we live, in love let's so persevere, / That when we live no more, we may live ever. " The paradox is in not living, they will continue to live forever in their love. Another way in which you see her poem circling back to the beginning is in the word ever, which she uses in the first two lines: " If ever two.../If ever man..." (To My Dear and Loving Husband). Another way in which she brings about the theme of romantic love

is by using a consistent rhyme scheme and amount of syllables. Bradstreet uses the rhyme scheme; AA BB CC DD... Although two of the rhymes may be considered as slang rhyme, it is still a rhyme. For example, when she makes rhyme "quench" with "recompense" and "persever" with "ever." Perhaps this slight inconsistency could represent some hardship that has occurred in their love. But the scheme is more consistent than it is inconsistent so as to prove the consistency and resilience of their love. The amount of syllables is another representation of this. All of the lines in this poem contain ten syllables, except for the last three, which have eleven syllables, twelve syllables, and eleven syllables. This too, can be lead to a difficulty in their love, but because there is not proof of failing love in the context of the poem it may very well be a solely stylistic decision on behalf of Bradstreet.

Concluding, through all of these strategies, Anne Bradstreet has effectively elucidated the theme of romantic love in her poem "To My Dear and Loving Husband." Kim Addonizio's sonnet, "First Poem for You," uses the tattoos on her lover's body in comparison with the theme of her poem, romantic love. The first couple lines set the tone for the rest of the poem by saying, "I like to touch your tattoos in complete / darkness, when I can't see them. I'm sure of / where they are..." (First Poem for You). The tattoos represent permanence and longevity and the darkness can be interpreted as the relationship between the author (speaker) and her lover. She doubts her lover and is uncertain of whether the love will last forever, like tattoos last forever. Addonizio uses imagery (tactile and visual) so that the reader can really envision the figures of the tattoos. She says, "know by heart the neat / lines of lightening pulsing just above / your nipple... the blue / swirls of

water on your shoulder where a serpent / twists, facing a dragon" (First Poem for You). She then goes on to say, " whatever persists/or turns to pain between us, they will still / be there" (First Poem for You). Unlike the tattoos, the lover can change and his feelings for her may not stay the same.

Ultimately the tattoos signify a lasting love-filled relationship, but even she is unsure of it and terrified. At the very end she circles back to the beginning by repeating, " So I touch them in the dark; but touch them, trying" (First Poem for You). By saying this she ensures her uncertainty of the longevity of the love she shares with her lover. Through Addonizio's use tattoos as an analogy to love and through her use of tactile and visual imagery she brings about the theme of romantic love, that long lasting love is frightening because of its uncertainty. Anne Bradstreet and Kim Addonizio both bring about the theme of romantic love through similar techniques. Both authors use literary devices in their poems. Both authors circle back to the beginning on the last line, and both authors use a consistent rhyme scheme and amount of syllables in their poems. Bradstreet uses paradoxes, hyperboles, and imagery to drive the purpose of her poem, which is to show how much love she has for he husband. Addonizio uses an analogy and imagery to drive the purpose of her poem, which is the uncertainty of love and its permanence. In just the way that Bradstreet circles back to the beginning at the end of her poem by using a paradox and the word ever, Addonizio circles back to the beginning at the end of her poem as well; she repeats the thought, " So I touch them [tattoos] in the dark; but touch them, trying. "

Through theses resemblances you can see how they both go about explaining the theme of romantic love similarly. Both poems also maintain a

consistent rhyme scheme throughout the poem. Bradstreet's scheme is AA BB CC DD... And being a sonnet, Addonizio uses the ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme scheme. This shows the consistency of love/tattoos in the poems. Not only is the rhymes scheme consist in these poems but so are the syllables. For the majority both poems have ten syllables for each line, except for a couple, ultimately displaying how both poems use similar tactics to explain their view on romantic love. Even though Bradstreet and Addonizio use similar strategies to bring about the theme of romantic love, it is obvious that they both have a different view of romantic love, for they both bring about different ideas. Bradstreet explains the love and deep affection she holds for her husband. Addonizio shares her fears about love not lasting, like the tattoos will last on her lover's body. Bradstreet brings a more positive, happy, and joyous tone to her essay, revealing how the love she and her husband have for each other will last even after they perish. Ironically, despite all of the similarities, Addonizio expresses the exact opposite. She worries that the love she and her lover have will not last forever. It will perish in the darkness, yet she still feels the tattoos (love) on his body. But in this way they are similar as well. They share the same theme, romantic love, even though they express it differently. Just like Sheryl Paul and Sheri and Bob Stritof had different definitions of love at the beginning of this essay, so too does Bradstreet and Addonizio have different perceptions of this romantic love in which they share in their poem. In conclusion, regardless of the contrasting views on romantic love of Anne Bradstreet and Kim Addonizio, both authors expound this theme in through similar tactics, such as using literary devices (paradox, hyperbole, imagery, metaphor), relating

back to the beginning when reaching the end of the poem, and maintaining a consistent rhyme scheme and amount of syllables through out the whole essay. Their conflicting views of romantic love also relate to their similarities in that Bradstreet believes her love will last longer than her lifetime and Addonizio laments about having an enduring and loving relationship. They both have a view (even though it is opposing) on the longevity of love. Works Cited Addonizio , Kim. " First Poem for You." Trans. Array Literature for Life . New Jersey : Pearson , 525. Print. Bradstreet , Anne . " To My Dear and Loving Husband." Trans. Array Literature for Life . New Jersey : Pearson , 508-509. Print. Paul, Sheryl. " What is Love?." The Blog. Huff Post Weddings, 05 May 2012. Web. Web. 26 March 2013.