

# Shakespeare and impact on humanity assignment

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

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“ We need to exert ourselves and read Shakespeare as strenuously as we can, while knowing the plays will read us more energetically still. They read us definitively. ” I have been asked to analyze, discuss the meanings, and the connections between Shakespeare and this quote. I feel that this quote is saying that even though we are mentally reading Shakespeare, Shakespeare is actually reading us. What I mean is Shakespeare wrote these plays with his vision of how humans act and interact.

His vision was so accurate that as we read the plays we have a huge connection with the characters and this is why his plays have survived and thrived in every single era. This supports the part of the quote that states “ They read us definitively” because Shakespeare has defined human nature. The same human nature that will always be inside of us and the same human nature that has not changed since the beginning of time. Analyzing the two plays that we have read there are many conflicts, emotions, and instances that occur in the modern day world. These plays have further educated me on many different human emotions and actions.

First I will look at the play Cymbeline and analyze all of the things that further support the quote. From the opening act, I was already making connections to my own life. Imogen went against her father Cymbeline, who is the King of Britain, and married Posthemus who was not born of royalty. The defiance that Imogen shows rings true to many teenagers today. I feel that many teenagers look to defy their parents; some do it just to feel empowered. This is not the case with Imogen because she marries

Posthemus for love. You could tell through Shakespeare's writing that Imogen and Posthemus truly love each other.

I know people who have gone against their parents will for true love and I am sure that this has happened many times throughout history. It is often the plot in Hollywood pictures and novels. Shakespeare simply defined this in Cymbeline and some of his other plays such as Romeo and Juliet. I feel like forbidden love only fuels the fire of desire and Shakespeare delves into this notion. In Cymbeline family is also brought into the picture. Throughout the play there are family issues that occur such as insecurity between spouses. The insecurity between spouses occurs when Iachimo tells Posthemus that he had slept with Imogen.

Posthemus was so quick to believe him and would not listen to anything else. He had his mind made up that Imogen had cheated and ordered Pisanio to kill her. This occurs even today because there are marriage investigators who are paid to go out of their way to spy on husbands or wives. This shows me that there have always been marriage problems in humanity and that people have always had trust issues. So many people are insecure with themselves, me being one of them, and Shakespeare displays this fact perfectly in Cymbeline. Another issue that arises is that Posthemus is not royalty and Imogen marries him anyways.

I feel that it was definitely a bigger deal in that day in age but there are still traces of this today. Many parents force their beliefs on their children, whether their beliefs are religion, culture, or class. In Shakespeare's time parents were probably much harsher. However, to some parents they will

ground their children to prevent them from seeing someone who is not of the Catholic religion. I went to a Catholic high school and I saw this occur many times. Another thing that I saw in a private high school was parents trying to sway their children away from the “ poor”.

My family does not have a lot of money and I was actually one time made fun of by my girlfriend’s parents for not having money and for how small my house was. So I feel a connection to Posthemus because he is banished because he is not royalty and married a Kings daughter. The other play that we read was The Merchant of Venice. As support for this quotation this play reads us from the beginning when Antonio begins talking about how he is depressed and he does not know why. He is telling this to his best friend Bassanio and Bassanio does his best to comfort him.

This truly hits home with me because I was recently diagnosed with depression. I only wanted to talk to my parents and three other kids; these three other kids being my best friends since high school. So this play from the very beginning grabbed my attention and made a connection with me. In my opinion an occurring theme in this play is friendship. The friendship between Bassanio and Antonio I feel is the strongest. I understand you say that you think that there may be some homosexuality between them but I feel that they are just really good friends and they would do anything for one another.

I personally have a friend like that and I feel that Antonio and Bassanio feel the same way that my friend and I do. I don’t feel any feelings of love towards him except brotherly love. Antonio took out a debt in his name for

Bassanio even though he knew that there was a risk that he would not be able to pay Shylock back. He even risked his own life so that Bassanio could find happiness with Portia. The Merchant of Venice also arises many race and stereotype issues; these issues that occur today and have been occurring since the beginning of time. Racism in my opinion stems from misunderstanding and trying to feel superior.

Man many times does not welcome change or differences so clearly the color of one's skin or their religious beliefs will be persecuted. This is clearly evident in Shakespeare's writing because there are many instances where Shylock is harassed and persecuted for being a Jew. Even though Shylock does do things that will make him a hated character, at the end I almost understood why he was seeking such revenge and felt sorry for him. I feel that Shakespeare did this on purpose because he almost wanted to open people's eyes to their possible wrongdoing.

This is evident during Shylocks speech of " If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. " I feel this to be one of the strongest quotes in the play and it truly displays a message.

As in Cymbeline, tests of faith are evident between couples; the most important ones being between Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, and Narissa. This

occurs when Portia is able to convince the Duke of Venice to force Shylock to spare Antonio's life. Portia and Narissa disguised themselves as law officials so Bassanio and Gratiano did not recognize them. Portia and Narissa heckled the two men until they broke. They preyed on Bassanio's emotions and the love for his friend Antonio in order to obtain the ring. He was reluctant to give up the ring at first but he finally did.

This just goes to show that many people are insecure in relationships and need certain things to feel better about them. Narissa and Portia took this too a whole other level with the rings. However, I feel that they realized that they were at fault and everyone lived happily ever after. So in conclusion do Shakespeare's plays actually read us more than we read them? Absolutely they do. The two plays we read are perfect examples of human nature and emotion. As I stated earlier in this essay, this was the reason why Shakespeare is the most celebrated and read play writer of all time.

He understood human emotion and nature better than many psychologists and translated this into his plays. In the end I feel that we are nothing but animals with the ability to reason and feel emotions. Animals have their animal instincts and we have almost the same thing with our emotions and nature. The connection between animal instincts and our emotional nature is that animals and human beings have never changed our instincts since the beginning of time. Shakespeare was an expert on these instincts which is why his plays will always live on. His plays are truly perfect in every sense and will be around till the end of time.