

Romeo and juliet- reason and passion

Literature, British Literature



“ Man is more often driven by passion than by reason. ” To what extent is this true in Romeo and Juliet. Firstly, Romeo and Juliet, being a play about romance, has passion very much abundant in the play. For this essay, passion would mean being led by one’s emotions and just reacting without thinking, not understanding the consequences of one’s actions and the situation one is in, referring to being ruled by the heart. As for reason, it would mean being able to be logical and analyse the current situation, understanding both sides of the issue and considering the consequences before acting, referring to being ruled by the mind. Through these definitions, I think that the statement is largely true, as we see that the characters tend to be driven by their passion and emotions rather than reason and logic. This can be seen throughout the play, through the character’s examples and actions. Firstly, we can see how passion overrules reason in Romeo’s decision to go to the Capulet ball. Being a Montague, going to the Capulet ball could mean death if found out, and holds a quality of danger to it. Despite Romeo stating that his mind “ misgives some consequence, ” and that there will be an “ untimely death”, he still decides to go to the ball in order to see Rosaline, who will be at the ball. We see that this clearly shows how Romeo allows his emotions to lead him, ignoring the more logical side of himself. Romeo chooses to see Rosaline, despite there being many dangers involved and already having misgivings as to going to the ball, but he still persists to look at Rosaline. Secondly, another example in the play as to how man tends to be driven more by passion than by reason is in Juliet’s proposal of marriage and Friar Lawrence’s agreement to wed the couple. At the start of Act Two, Scene Two, we see Juliet choosing reason

over passion, being practical by considering their love for each other. She tries to reason out that a Montague "is nor hand nor foot, nor arm nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man", reasoning that Romeo's name does not influence who he is. Using reason, Juliet says that she feels that their love is "too rash, too unadvised, too sudden", showing that she has reservations and is carefully thinking about their relationship, displaying her use of reason and how she is practical. However, after she has sounded out her concerns regarding their love, Juliet puts them aside in favour of her own feelings for Romeo, proposing marriage the next day. The play shows how she asks him to "send [her] word tomorrow", implying that despite her worry that their relationship is going too fast, she still encourages the speed of which it blossoms. We can see, through her marriage proposal, how despite having a logical side, Juliet lets her emotions take control of her actions instead of her mind. Thus, we can conclude that she is driven more by passion than reason. Additionally, Friar Lawrence's hasty agreement to their marriage also shows how he is ruled by his emotions and not his reasoning. We see from the play that the friar does not approve of Romeo marrying so quickly, immediately after he had gotten over Rosaline, and thinks that "upon thy cheek the stain doth sit/ Of an old tear that is not washed off yet." He makes it clear that he disapproves of the rushed marriage that Romeo proposes, citing valid reasons and concerns over the issue. In contrast, after he has voiced out his disapproval and reasoning why Romeo should not rush into the marriage, he still agrees to wed the couple. Claiming that it is to "turn your households' rancor to pure love," he agrees to marry them. However, we see that this simply does not make sense as a

secret marriage would not help in resolving the families' feud as it would be secret. Instead, Friar Lawrence just wants a reason in order to indulge Romeo and give in to his requests due to his love for Romeo. Thus we can see how Friar Lawrence lets passion, his love for Romeo, overrule his reason, allowing the couple to marry despite not fully supporting them. However, we do see that reason sometimes wins over passion, as seen from Old Capulet's behaviour in the Capulet ball. Even though he has to deal with Tybalt and stop him from fighting, he keeps in mind the situation he is in and maintains decorum and the proper behaviour as a host, punctuating his scoldings with " more light, more light, " and " what, cheerly my hearts! " This shows how he can see the situation and acts on his knowledge instead of reacting to Romeo's presence at the ball. Hence, we can tell that despite some situations, reason can also win over passion. In conclusion, I can infer that man is driven more by passion than by reason, as seen by the examples and elaborations I cited above. Doing so means that the choices one makes and the actions one takes are guided mostly by our emotions. The statement is largely true as very often, the characters in the play let their hearts rule over their minds and very few remember to consider their circumstances and the consequences of doing so.