

Ben jonson essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



Ben Jonson was a major dramatist and poet of the seventeenth century. However, very little is known about his early life. Even though his works reflect most of his life, this time period isn't included. It is known, however, that he was born in 1572 in London and his father died shortly before he was born. Jonson got married in 1594 to Anne Lewis, and this is when he began to work as an actor and playwright. During the next several years they had at least two children, but not much else is known about their marriage. His works led him to being one of the well known writers among readers and other playwrights such as William Shakespeare, who played a lead in one of Jonson's plays. I will show and analyze just a few of Ben Jonson's poems in this paper.

The first poem I read by Ben Jonson was "Still to Be Neat". The poem is written as if a man were talking to a woman. It is about their relationship and passion towards each other, as you can see in this poem, it is not put bluntly. There are many figures of speech throughout the poem. One example of this is "feast" in line 2. It is perhaps a metaphor for a place that is not suitable for passion to be shown. Another example of figurative language in this poem is a symbol. In line 7 of the poem, "give me a face" symbolizes her and him becoming one, which also contributes to the poem's meaning. The meaning is the comparison between art and lovers.

Jonson's structure for this poem is very simple. It has 2 stanzas, each consisting of 6 short lines. Each two lines are rhyming lines. The last line in the first stanza, "All is not sweet, all is not sound", is using parallel structure. This is intended for the reader to want to hear the speaker's remarks. Also, the subject of the speaker switches from neatness to passion

and love which also signifies the central theme, the comparison between art and lovers.

This theme is that of human nature. A comparison is created between the secretive, passionate side of human nature and that of “adulteries of art”. Both sides are shown in this poem for the reader in the description of art in lines 5-11.

The next poem is called “On My First Son”. It was written in memory of his son who died on his seventh birthday of a plague in 1603. Even with this sad tone however, the writing is very intriguing.

In the first line he approaches the boy bidding him farewell and seeks meaning for his loss throughout the poem. Jonson blames himself for his son's death saying in a way that he hoped too much for him who was only on loan to him. In line 3, “Seven years though wert lent to me, and I thee pay,” it is symbolizing the meaning that seven years are up and the boy has to be returned. In line 10 it says, “Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry”, I think this symbolizes that his son was what he was most proud of. The poem ends with him saying that he will be more careful with those he loves. I do not think that the writing of this poem is very figurative, it is for the most part straight forward.

The poetic structure of this poem is again short, rhyming verses, but only one stanza long. It is an advantage though that all this emotion and feeling is put into a short poem such as this. I think that the way it is written is like a whole exploration of a father's feelings on the loss of his son put into 12

short lines, which makes it more interesting and less drawn out, and yet another good theme for one of his poems.

The third and final poem that I will explain and analyze is "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes", also known as "To Celia". This poem is unlikely to be read among everyday people because it is not known as "true lyrics", songs meant to be sung, like many of his other poems. This is another poem on love and romance written for a woman he was in love with. It talks about romance and the sentimental that goes along with it, yet not crossing the thin line between. This is one of the reasons that this lyric poem the classic that it is.

This poem does not have a distinct figurative language. It does however, like many other of his poems, focus on a single passion rather than the other traits of the people involved. For example, "Or leave a kiss but in the cup, and I'll not look for wine", it shows that there is romance in the poem, and nothing else is explained but the expansion on that subject, the theme which is passion and romance. A symbol in this poem might be the "drink", because it is not a real drink but a way to show him that she loves him.

This poem, no different from the others, has short verses, although the rhyming patterns are different. Every first, second, and fourth lines rhyme which makes for an interesting poem.

I think that the poems that I have written about are all serious poems about the people he has loved or others have loved. And the way they have been written is extraordinary. Some of the other poems by him however, do have

comical tones that are filled with humor. I think that the poems I have read have all been excellent poems, well written, and worth the time taken to read them. Ben Jonson is a great lyrical poet that should be widely recognized for his accomplishments in writing.