

Emersons love in retrospect



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Submitted] Emerson's Love in Retrospect "... we see them exchange a glance, or betray a deep emotion, and we are no longer strangers. We understand them, and take the warmest interest in the development of the romance. All mankind love a lover"

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (Essay V, First Series 1841)

Perhaps we are all familiar in the phrase that tells us that love is the "universal language". It is the feeling that everybody is able to relate to and Ralph Waldo Emerson knew about this. Emerson's line of thinking with respect not only to love but to all emotions was that we never apprehend anything "straight" or in-itself, but only under an aspect or mood. He writes in Experience that life is "a train of moods like a string of beads," through which we see only what lies in each bead's focus. He knew that there is no need for us to apply critical thinking so that we may comprehend the meaning of a soulful glance between two persons. Though love cannot be quantified, it can be understood almost naturally because every wants to love and be loved and seeing someone loving generates profound interest and fondness from them. Seeing love induces us to a mood of love and euphoria itself.

Out of all many love stories which I have encountered on different forms of media, it is the story contained in the film Titanic that I have greatly appreciated. Gracing movie theatres in 1997, the film tells the ill-fated love story of Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslett) set against the sinking of the RMS Titanic in her maiden voyage. Rose, unyielding to the fate of having upper class Caledon Hockley as her future husband, falls into a relationship with charming and adventurous but lower class Jack.

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The intensity of their love can be shown in the way they look at each other's eyes. Take for example the still from the film shown. In this picture, we see the melding of the passion and emotions that burns from deep within them. The way they held each other's arms arouses a cornucopia of feelings and thought that I have felt when I experienced love. Even the way they teased each other when Jack made a drawing of Kate nude. When they finally made love inside a car, you could not blame them for basking in each other's arms. You could not blame Kate from throwing away his relationship with Cal and crossing social class boundaries. You could not blame Jack from pursuing Kate in spite of what Cal can do to him. It was love and it was the most wonderful feeling to be felt. I could not help myself but admire, no, even love them and hope for a happy ending of their love story. I fully knew then what Emerson meant when he said that all mankind loves a lover.

But then the denouement occurred. The dreaded collision of the ship and the iceberg happened and we are shown how Kate and Jack tried to stay together in spite of all the obstacles that came their way. Then we suddenly see Jack sinking into the frigid waters with Kate helplessly unable to help. In that moment, we yearn for Jack's survival so that their love story would not end there but after seeing Jack and knowing the sacrifice he made, we cannot help but feel happy for him and for her. We experience a moment of catharsis. We are liberated from the feelings of feeling sorry for them. At least, they were able to experience true love even for just a while. It is this that truly matters.

Reference:

Porte, Joel, and Morris, Sandra (eds.), 1999, *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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