**Love in Romeo and Juliet – Live Model done with class**

The Question:

‘The theme of love is extremely important in the play.’ Show how different types of love could be described as important to the play as a whole.

Love is presented in many different ways in Romeo and Juliet. One of the first ways we see love is when Romeo is in Act 1:1 pining for Rosalind. Secondly, we are introduced to the family love with Juliet and her mother and the nurse. Finally, love at first sight is introduced by the main protagonists: Romeo and Juliet.

In Act 1:1 Romeo is seen to be wandering overnight and shutting himself up by the day. His friends and family are worried as he is showing signs of melancholy. Rosalind does not love him, which is unrequited love and suggests he is very emotional. His father Lord Montague says “his tears augmenting the morning dew.” Showing through the use of adjectives, he is tearful and very sad. Perhaps, Shakespeare is using Rosalind to emphasise how quickly Romeo falls in love. However, we understand that at this point he is young and doesn’t really understand how to cope with the feelings of rejection.

Moving on, the main type of love shown in R&J is love at first sight. This is foreshadowed in the prologue with “two star cross’d lovers”, which hints that the fate of R&J is, to meet. At the ball Romeo meets Juliet by looking across the crowded room and using light and celestial imagery to show how rapidly he falls for her. “She doth teach the candles to burn bright” and “Dear Saint” infer that she has been sent from heaven for Romeo’s eyes only. He rejects Rosalind with “arise fair sun and kill the envious moon” which is a metaphor to suggest he has completely disregarded Rosalind in favour of Juliet. They kiss with Juliet saying “you kiss by the book” suggesting she is smitten with him too. Both at this point are unaware that they are enemies. However, when they meet in the balcony scene (A2:2) we see Romeo take risks for the love of her. He “oer’perched the wall” to trespass in his arch enemies garden. If caught he would be sentenced to death; here we are reminded of how reckless he is. At this point was impulsive in his desire to see Juliet and doesn’t care for the dangers. During this scene he agrees to meet and arranges to marry Juliet with lots of references to her beauty using flattery and references to angels. “O, Bright Angel” and other references show his over the top way of addressing her. This is showing how quickly the action happens in the play, perhaps to highlight how young people felt they had little choice over their own fate. By choosing Romeo over Paris; Juliet is rejecting her family.

Finally, we see family love in Juliet when she is upset by the death of Tybalt. However, she is still so in love with Romeo that she decides to marry him in secret against the wishes of her family. When she rejects her father’s wishes he calls her “baggage” and orders her to “get thee to the church on Thursday”, which shows he loves her and wants the best for her, as marrying Paris is the best option. Paris is from a wealthy family and at this time we know that wealth and marrying to a good family was important. Perhaps, Shakespeare is showing us that women don’t have as many rights as men and that this is unfair. Love here is shown as firm but painful.

As you can see love plays many important roles in Romeo and Juliet and unfortunately romantic love, in this case leads to tragedy. This may have been the intention of Shakespeare as it paints a more realistic view of how ordinary people would have felt about love. Other love is important too but the play is a tragedy as a result of love leading to death.