

### Romeo and Edward

I will be exploring the role of sexuality and relationships in Shakespeare's work and how the alteration of certain characteristics would affect the opinions of audiences, and therefore the outlook society holds on certain people and situations.

Some of Shakespeare's work has caused conspiracy over his sexuality, due to the fact that some of his love poems, e.g. 'Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day', are in fact addressed to 'the Fair Lord', relating to a sexual desire between men. Because his sexuality isn't certain, it is possible to explore this, and the reason behind different conspiracies; and more significantly my idea of an alteration in the storyline of 'Romeo and Juliet'.

I believe that all the modern versions of Romeo and Juliet that have been created should have highlighted the possibility of using a homosexual couple in the storyline. This is because it would show a contrast between what was socially acceptable then and now; for example if Shakespeare was bisexual/homosexual, he only admitted so by writing, not by openly telling people. Whereas nowadays, it is getting more and more socially acceptable to do so. This would also create a good modern twist because it would display how a vast amount of society have changed from then and now; more people being homosexual now, and feeling comfortable with themselves and being accepted.

On the other hand, it could be said that changing the storyline now wouldn't have much effect, because, yes it would create an interesting modernised version that would be open to a wider audience nowadays; but it would have been more successful if the change was made shortly after Shakespeare wrote the original Romeo and Juliet. This is because the arising problems that homosexuality faces within society would be lessened, and because it would have been known about for a much longer time, all these modern day problems wouldn't exist and it would be totally acceptable and 'normal' by now.

Owing to the fact that Shakespeare was and still is very popular, it would have been successful to express homosexuality and the emotions/confusion and even the struggle in some cases, that come with it. This is simply because of the well known power that Shakespeare has of being a talented and trusted writer who knows all about emotion. Also, because of the format of Shakespeare's work (writing, script, plays) the story would have become popular (for whatever reason) quickly, and the sentiment could have been expressed in all these formats.

This alteration in the storyline would also create new ideas about the relationship between sexuality and religion; which can vary greatly between time and place. Due to the fact that most traditional religions are generally negative towards homosexuality, if Shakespeare's story of Romeo and Juliet was/could be altered in this way, it might encourage even more people to be open towards the idea of it. This might encourage such ideas, because Shakespeare was able to summarise the wide range of human emotions and problems faced with these feelings, in such a creative yet simple way.

So in actual fact, Shakespeare might have been able to express the emotions and whereabouts of homosexuality in such creative writings, better than anyone nowadays, due to the fact he was a very talented writer and could portray most situations and emotions in his work. Since his sexuality was questionable, this would make my idea even more successful because if this story was altered and written in such a way, the emotion and storyline would have been accurate if it was authored by someone who was actually gay themselves.

As well as this, a modern, homosexual version of Romeo and Juliet would show how the open acceptance of love and its boundaries have changed over the years. This contrast would be functional because it would teach such wide audiences about Shakespeare himself and open the story and its characters to deeper analysis. For example, a key similarity in both stories would be that the characters aren't allowed to marry. Romeo and Juliet because they were from different families and backgrounds that hated each other, and gay people because same sex marriage has only recently become legal (the modernised version could be written during 2013). Therefore a change in the story would also create a comparison with the original, that proves that just because some humans are different in certain ways, they all face the same emotions and problems at some stages in their life.