

I have chosen the genre of love to study and make connections on. Love can be portrayed in several ways to give you different perspectives on finding true love. The texts that helped to make these connections were 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind', a film directed by Michael Gondry, 'Pride & Prejudice', an extended novel by Jane Austen, 'Antigone', a play by Sophocles and 'Sonnet 130', by William Shakespeare. The significant two connections that I made using these texts were the idea that true love will always prevail and the use of characters who displayed headstrong characteristics in the pursuit of true love.

A significant connection that I have made between some of my chosen texts is the fact that the main female characters have similar characteristics of being strong-willed, headstrong, opinionated and stubborn. This is common in the texts because these characteristics in a main character show us things about this particular genre, such as finding true love is not always simple. For example, in 'Pride & Prejudice', by Jane Austen, Elizabeth Bennet is the character that displays her strong opinions when it comes to love. In the time and place where this novel was set, marriages were not for love but mainly for fortune and property inheritance. However, Elizabeth refuses to get married for any reason other than truly being in love with the man she weds and turns down a proposal from her fairly well to do cousin, Mr Collins for this very reason. Here she proves her strong-willed nature by saying, "I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make you so." This was a shock to everyone around Elizabeth at the time as it was not custom to reject a marriage proposal from a man who would provide everything you needed in life, even if you were not in love with him. However, this also proves to the readers that having these bold characteristics can be a good thing, as by rejecting Mr. Collins Elizabeth later ended up in a happy marriage with a man who, on the contrary, she was in love with – Mr. Darcy.

We see similar characteristics in Clementine from 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind'. Clementine is an extremely bold and opinionated character who is not afraid of sharing her thoughts and is not someone who follows the crowd. We can see this mainly through costume – she always has a different colour of hair which is bright and unnatural, such as blue or tangerine, therefore showing her independence and willingness to be different. She falls into a rather unconventional love with Joel, a shy and quiet person who could not be more opposite to her. Clementine is definitely the more erratic of the two and has a very straightforward approach to love. I think that Gondry's purpose here in using the audacious character of Clementine was to make the audience really think about their current views on love and emphasise the idea that love is not always conventional.

The characterisation of Antigone in the play 'Antigone' by Sophocles has many similarities to that of Elizabeth and Clementine, even though they are completely different in terms of place and time. They share characteristics that we see so often within the love genre. Antigone is yet again forthright and extremely stubborn concerning love – she believes that she is truly in love with Haemon and is a recalcitrant character when it comes to voicing her opinions on him. The King, Creon tries to convince Antigone that she does not truly love him but she replies

saying, "Haemon is good and Haemon is true and I love him with all my heart. His eyes..." and goes on to describe his appearance. This proves to the readers of Antigone's strong character, as a man who has more authority and power than her is attempting to tell her what she should think, which would scare most young women into conformity during this time but Antigone refuses.

- 5 The characteristics between the main female characters is interesting because it is certainly not what we would consider to be cliché – the women are all headstrong and opinionated rather than being submissive and timid. It reflects a change in women in society throughout time – Antigone was written first out of these examples and at the time it was shocking to have such a **forthright female character** in a play. When *Pride & Prejudice* was written and set, women were still of course considered inferior to men and Elizabeth's attitude towards love was not at all ordinary. However, the more modern 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind' reflects more the society we have currently where women have equal rights and we are taught to stand up for ourselves and be 'different' – the kind of character Clementine is in this film. I think overall **the link between strong characteristics within the lead female and love is an interesting one to make because it does reflect where our society is right now and it teaches us the value of the characteristics that Elizabeth, Clementine and Antigone constantly demonstrate.**
- 6 Another connection I have been able to make between my texts concerning finding love was the idea that true love always prevails. It is an idea that is quite clichéd but does arise in many texts both modern and old. I saw this idea predominantly in 'Pride & Prejudice' by Jane Austen and 'Sonnet 130' by William Shakespeare.
- 7 'Pride & Prejudice' in fact uses the idea that true love will prevail as one of its main themes - although both of the main characters, Elizabeth and Darcy, go through several struggles and bumps along the road the true love that they have for each other does end up prevailing and they end up happily married at the end of the novel. Despite the prejudices and hesitance Darcy has against marrying someone with a lower wealth and less family connections than him, he overcomes this by eventually declaring his love for her. "In vain I have struggled," he says. "It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. **You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.**" This shows the readers that Darcy believes his previous battles against his feelings towards Elizabeth were for nothing and that true love was **more important than the grievances he once had towards her.**
- 8 I think that we see a very clear similarity here between the love Elizabeth and Darcy share and the love described in Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 130'. The man constantly compares his mistress to things with attractive and beautiful connotations, emphasising how ugly she is in comparison to them. He says, "If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head," showing the readers how wiry and unalluring his mistress' hair is. We are continually reminded of her unattractiveness and this is reinforced through emotive language - he says, "and in some perfumes there is more delight than the breath that from my mistress reeks." The word reeks is strong emotive language, causing us as the readers to feel repulsed and disgusted by his lover. However, we see the idea that true love will prevail come through at the end when the sonnet finishes with, "And yet, by heaven, **I think my love as rare, as any**

she belied with false compare." Here the author is showing us that despite all her aesthetic faults, he still loves her and that is what is important.

- 9 These two texts are both really trying to speak out to society about love and the struggles that come with it. I think the main message that Austen and Shakespeare are attempting to get across here is that in love, nothing matters except the fact that you are in love with them and all other obstacles must be overcome in order to achieve this.
- 10 In conclusion, I made two significant connections between four texts about finding love: the use of a headstrong, opinionated main female character and the idea that true love always prevails. I think that in all of these texts the authors and director were definitely trying to connect to the wider world - whether it be reflecting where our society is currently or sending a message out to our society about the importance of true love.