Real And Unreal Essay, Research Paper

What’s Ideally Real?

What is ideal and what is real? We seem to have this idealized concept of what love is supposed to be like according to the way society has molded us. Perhaps these ideals are more about the self than they are about a relationship between two people. We want to feel loved, and when we get that love from another person we become determined to secure that feeling. By securing these feelings we lean towards controlling that relationship. However, control is merely a way of fabricating and disguising reality. And by manipulating reality in this way we create an ideal relationship stemming mainly from our own selfish vain imaginings.

Literature gives us many examples of these sorts of ideals while at the same time showing us how reality eventually prevails these conceptions. Whether the stories portray an ideal relationship or a realistic one, is dependant on the author. If the author chooses to place his/her characters in an ideal relationship, it must be perfectly ideal. Ideal does not necessarily translate to a positive viewpoint, though. It could mean the perfectly wrong relationship. It just implies that the characters are both dedicated to their relationship not being positive. In a realistic relationship, there are constant factors interfering with the relationship, and opinions of the other change and vary throughout the work.

Claire Kemp, in her short story, “Keeping Company” gives an example of a relationship that is controlled by the male. He suppresses his wife. Perhaps the cause of this is his own insecurity with the relationship. Securing her love for him has taken precedent over him providing love for her. The couple’s current residence is located in a gay community therefore eliminating the possibility of her being disloyal to him. She is handicapped from being who she really is due to her husband’s inadvertent denial of reality. She has been brainwashed not to question him and to be fully obedient. Thus suppressing her from her own reality. “William is building a wall. To make certain he is in his rights, he engages a souvenir to determine the exact boundaries of our land” (Kemp 203)

Looking at love from another perspective, we find the relationship between a father and a son to have the same conflicts between the ideal and real. August Wilson wrote the play “Fences” during the brewing of the civil rights movement in the United States. The main character in the play, Troy, grew up surrounded by poverty and racial prejudice therefore impairing what he believed could have been success in his life. Likewise, his son, Corey, grew up without these prejudices. He tells his son, “The white man ain’t gonna let you get nowhere with that football no way. You go on and get your book learning so you can work yourself up in that A&P . . . get you a trade. That way you have something can’t nobody take away from you.” (Wilson 74) Troy wanted him to succeed in ways he could not, however he was more compelled to protect him from what he believed to be fruitless endeavors for his son. This portrays the difference in realities between two different generations. Due to Troy’s background, his reality instinctively tells him that Corey’s reality can be nothing less than ideal therefore not a reality at all.

In that same perspective there is the love yet unattained in Robert Hayden’s “Those Winter Sundays”. Sometimes, love is shown in manners less direct. This love, though not as obvious at first look, is just as strong as any other. The narrator’s father shows his love by caring for his family. The daily chores and providing for his family are enormously taxing on a man, yet he does not complain. He provides for his family the best he can in keeping them warm and making sure they were well cared for. This real love went without thanks. Never was there a sliver of gratitude uttered to the man that created comfort. The narrator, now aged and seeing 20/20 hindsight, can look back and see how his father truly did love him. “What did I know, what did I know, of love’s austere and lonely offices?” (Hayden 308)

All three works provide an ample look into the world of love. Whether love is ideal or real, can always be argued. The definition lacks rigidity in which one can find comfort. If ideal love were contained in perfection, then where would real love be? It cannot be imperfection can it? If there is not love reciprocated, it cannot be ideal, but it is still not necessarily ideal when it is reciprocated. The answer lies in each individual case. No two lovers, or family members are the same. No couple share feelings with other couples. Therefore love it self, whether real or ideal is dependant upon the situations and persons surrounding it.

Bibliography

Hayden, Robert. “Those Winter Sundays” Reading and Writing from Literature. John E. Schwiebert. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1997. 308

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