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## Summary: How Themes In Shakespeare's Literature Are Essential To Today's Youth

The tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet" written by William Shakespeare, is about two young, star-crossed lovers whose deaths ultimately reconcile their feuding families and break the old grudge. Their forbidden love primarily leads to misunderstandings and disturbs the peace in Verona's streets. Despite, Shakespeare's archaic form of writing, the themes within his literature are of significant relevance. His stories directly illustrate the problems of his time. Toxic masculinity identified during Elizabethan theatre has shaped society negatively ever since. In this speech the theme of male aggression having negative outcomes and corrupting society within "Romeo and Juliet" will be explored, later being justified as to how it has great relevance to today's youth. In this Shakespearean literature, male dominance is depicted through the characters, exemplifying that "boys will be boys".

William Shakespeare skilfully constructs the characters in "Romeo and Juliet" to convey the theme that toxic masculinity can only have negative outcomes and is corrupting society. Toxic masculinity is a phrase to describe male feelings of entitlement, anger and vulnerability, and the urge to dominate and intimidate, through either obvious or less obvious means. Within "Romeo and Juliet", Sampson, Tybalt, Lord Capulet and Mercutio all demonstrate this theme by feeling more powerful and entitled over the women, however Romeo exhibits qualities of an ideal man. Men dominance is seen when Juliet refuses to marry Paris because Romeo is her true love. Lord Capulet gets enraged that Juliet is disobeying him and furiously exclaims.

Here, Shakespeare is highlighting the fact that Juliet is threatened of being disowned by her father if she does not marry. Since Count Paris is the kinsman of Prince Escalus, he is an advantageous match for Juliet since he would raise the social status and wealth of the Capulet family. In Elizabethan times the daughters were expected to be obedient and were placed into arranged marriages to secure their wealth and have children. Women had no rights and therefore men felt more entitled and powerful. Furthermore, toxic masculinity is also represented through the character of Mercutio. Mercutio mockingly and ruthlessly sings to the Nurse.

By this, Shakespeare is portraying the message that Mercutio is abusing the Nurse through calling her an old, grotesque prostitute and comparing her to stale rabbit meat, which is okay to eat if you can't find anything fresher. In Shakespearean times women were treated as a form of property and were considered the "weaker sex". Sampson, Tybalt, Lord Capulet and Mercutio believe that men are meant to be represented as strong, domineering, the bread winner and aggressive in their behaviour. Within the tale of "Romeo and Juliet", the protagonist, Romeo, demonstrates the alternate meaning of masculinity, being gentle, respectful and submissive. This quote insinuates that Romeo's emotions are 'womanish' and unmanly, challenging the perception of what it means to be masculine. Within this text, Romeo exemplifies the ideal man, whereas Mercutio and Lord Capulet challenge this by illustrating toxic masculinity and how it is corrupting society. They demonstrate the common belief that "boys will be boys".

Within modern society, toxic masculinity is only having negative outcomes and is corrupting the youth. According to a new survey of Australian men aged 18 to 30, it showed that many young

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men remain greatly influenced by societal messages of what it means to be a man. This survey showed that 46% of men thought they had to act strong, 56% believed that they should never say no to sex, 36% shun gay men as friends and 35% supposed that they should use violence in order to gain respect and be classified as masculine. These directly express the perceptions of many men around the world in modern society. Since conformity allows us to feel contented and whole, we as humans subconsciously replicate certain stereotypes because our minds have been wired to resort to conformity in order to feel safe and accepted. This is the primary purpose for male aggression having great negative impacts on today's youth. After the accusations of sexual harassment and assault in 2017 were made public against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, awareness of toxic masculinity increased drastically. Furthermore, gender inequalities have also been central to men's feelings of entitlement. According to the latest government figures, 74% of firms pay higher rates to the male staff. Such acts of discrimination against women have become a topic of huge controversy within modern society. This theme within "Romeo and Juliet" has become a global crisis today, therefore resulting in tv commercials such as the Gillette ad going viral. This advertisement, by engaging with the "MeToo Movement", intends to represent the role models' young boys see in their daily lives. It attacks discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment and inequality. It challenges viewers to question what sort of behaviour defines manliness. Clearly, toxic masculinity is having negative outcomes and corrupting today's youth, wiring their minds to conform to the masculine stereotype and to think that "boys will be boys".

It has become a cliché for men to respond with 'not all men' when women talk about experiencing sexism or feeling unsafe. Society understands that not all men are aggressive in their behaviour, however when women state this, they are realistically attacking patriarchy and those particular men. Due to the toxic masculinity stereotype, men have grown more sensitive towards their reputation and behaviour in society. Women must have the right to speak about our own experiences without worrying about damaging certain people's egos. They are only sharing their experiences of men's aggression in the belief that society will listen and support them. It is selfish to defend oneself in such confronting situations of toxic masculinity that women in modern society experience. If "boys will be boys" our future will be corrupted, and this gender gap will escalate. Is that the type of future we desire?

The themes within Shakespeare's literature are of substantial relevance to today's youth, especially those portrayed within "Romeo and Juliet". Both Lord Capulet and Mercutio show aggressive behaviour while Romeo remains submissive and represents qualities in the ideal man, challenging the definition of being masculine. Within modern society, this theme is prevalent through gender stereotypes, sexual harassment such as the Harvey Weinstein accusations, gender pay gaps, the MeToo Movement and through tv commercial such as the Gillette ad. Toxic masculinity is a growing global crisis and must be prevented because it will otherwise result in catastrophically complicated. "The boys watching today will be the men of tomorrow".