

Sonnet 116 essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Sonnet 116 is a poem written hundreds of years ago by William Shakespeare. It has been used to present a beautiful and optimistic view of real love. The features of a sonnet include 14 lines consisting of three quatrains and a rhyming couplet. Each quatrain has a rhyme pattern abab, cdcd, efef and gg. The quatrains all discuss the same idea of love being unchanging in different circumstances. Shakespeare uses enjambment throughout his sonnet. Sonnet 116 follows strict rules to keep the ideas focused. The final couplet 'proved' and 'love' are eye rhymes where they look the same but are pronounced differently. Shakespeare uses this final couplet as his assurance that he isn't lying.

The first quatrain Shakespeare is saying that love does not have to be physical. 'Marriage of two minds' suggests that love is idealistic, the use of the word 'true' emphasises that it's faithful. In lines 2 and 3 Shakespeare is arguing that love can overcome any obstacle in its way. 'Love is not love which alters when alteration finds'. This tells us that if it is really true love you shouldn't have to change anything. Metaphorically speaking Shakespeare uses 'impediments' to echo the vows that would be taken in a wedding ceremony. Telling us that love is also about devotion.

The second quatrain he uses seafaring metaphors to further establish the permanence of true love 'ever-fixed mark' this is what was used to help navigators guide their way on a course. He also uses 'star' to every wand'ring bark' This would have been the Pole star which also helped to navigate sailors as it remained in a fixed position. The star height can be measured mathematically from earth but is 'worth is unknown' Shakespeare

suggest that love is an unknown quality that can only be understood by those in love and should be used to guide others.

Quatrain three is where Shakespeare is suggesting that love will never fade even death can't part true lovers. 'Love's not Time's fool, though rose lips and cheeks' The word 'Time' has been given a capital letter to stress how important it is. Love will not be affected by time even though physical beauty may fade. When Shakespeare uses 'bending sickle's compass come', he is talking about the Grim Reaper or Father time will come and cut down our lives symbolizing the end of time but his love will not be cut down 'Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, but bears it out even to the edge of doom' telling us that love is timeless and everlasting.

Shakespeare concludes his sonnet with a rhyming couplet 'if this be error and upon me proved/I never writ, nor no man ever loved' these are bold statements used as Shakespeare as he is confident that he is not wrong about his concept of love. He is challenging the reader to disagree with him which makes him sound confident about his own words.

I am now going to compare the poem 'Hour' by Carol Duffy to sonnet 116. As in sonnet 116 hour is also a sonnet it follows all the same tightly packed structure. The second and fourth have perfect rhymes whereas the first and third are half rhymes; this might be a suggestion that love isn't always perfect but it works all the same. In the final two rhymes 'poor and straw' may be pronounced differently and not rhyme but in certain parts of the U.K. poor is pronounced to rhyme with straw.

Like in sonnet 116 Carol Ann Duffy uses enjambement. Her poem is about two lovers who only have an hour together. The theme of time is also in sonnet 16 when he speaks about love that will last forever but in the case of hour these lovers have only one hour to spend together.