

‘valentine’ are nothing
like the sun’ and
‘sonnet essay



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I have chosen to come the three poems ' Valentine' by Carol Anne Duffy and the two Shakespearean poems ' My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun' and ' Sonnet XVIII,' as I feel they are three poems that can be compared well together. There are a multitude of similarities and differences shared between the three poems. The main similarity that is shared is the theme of love, although it is expressed in very different ways.

The poem ' Valentine' written by Carol Anne Duffy, unusually compares the feelings of love to that of an onion. This is done by comparing the various aspects of love, for example a wedding ring, which is compared to the ' platinum loops' of an onion. The Shakespearean poem ' Sonnet XVIII' is written in sonnet format, typical of Shakespeare's style. As with the poem ' Valentine' love is compared to something else. In this case it is compared to something more that one would expect, this being a fine summers day. ' My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun' another poem written by Shakespeare again takes the format of a sonnet.

This poem however has a different style to the other poems, giving false comparisons of someone Shakespeare is writing the poem to. The main similarity of the three poems is that they share the theme of love. There is also an array of other similarities shared between them. The two poems ' Valentine,' and ' Sonnet XVIII' are similar, in that they both compare the aspect of love to something else.

' Valentine' compares love to an onion, and ' Sonnet XVIII' compares love to various features of a summer's day. The comparisons of love to something else in these two poems, become clear in the opening two lines. The poem '

'Valentine' opens with the line, ' Not a red rose or a satin heart, I give you an onion. ' Here Duffy mentions two items that one would suspect someone to give to a valentine, however goes on instead to say ' I give you an onion.

' The remainder of the poem then follows on, describing how an onion is an appropriate gift to give a valentine. Duffy does this by comparing the features of an onion to the various aspects of love. An example of Duffy doing this is shown on line 7 where she writes how ' It will blind you with tears like a lover. ' The ' It' here is the onion, which is being compared to a lover. Similarly ' Sonnet XVIII' opens with the line ' Shall I compare thee to a summers day? ' Clearly here Shakespeare is comparing an anonymous lover, to the various features of a summers day.

Furthermore ' My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun' uses the same method of comparison, although this contrasts with the other two poems, as Shakespeare uses false comparisons to explain his love. However it is not clear that Shakespeare is using false comparisons, until the last two lines of the sonnet which read, ' And yet, by heaven, I think my loves as rare, as any she belied with false compare. ' Here Shakespeare explains how he falsely compared his lover; therefore the poem can be taken in a different sense. The two poems written by Shakespeare share the same format of a sonnet, common to the majority of Shakespeare's poems. Both sonnets use ABAB rhyme, meaning that the first line rhymes with the third, whilst the second line rhymes with the fourth, etc. The two poems written by Shakespeare are both very similar in style.

The poems both express love and eternity, although the poems are written as if they are meant for one person's eyes' only. 'Sonnet XVIII,' differs slightly as it seems that the poem was written for one person only until the last lines where Shakespeare says 'So long as men can breath or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.' Therefore Shakespeare is expressing how his poem will give life to the woman he loves, through people reading his work. Valentine' differs from the style of the other two poems, as it is not written to someone. It is written on the topic of Valentines, and as with 'Sonnet XVIII,' uses personification to compare aspects of love to something else. The two Shakespeare poems start off in very different tones.

Beginning a poem with 'Shall I...' sounds more flattering and complimentary than 'My mistress...

'because by saying 'shall I' you are almost saying dare I compare the wonderful likes of you with an ordinary summers' day. 'My mistress...' just sounds uncomplimentary. At first, it seems as if Shakespeare is talking about someone he definitely does not love, with all the negative comparisons.

Again, the theme of this poem is love, but it looks at it from a different angle. We do know by the end, that the writer is in love with his "mistress," but it is not quite the flowery language of 'Sonnet XVIII.' The tone that Carol Anne Duffy writes in is evidently different. She writes from a drastically different perspective.

'Valentine,' is from the point of view of a woman who is very disillusioned with the commercialisation of love and compares love to something natural
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being an onion. The two Shakespeare poems share a similar layout being the sonnet format traditional to Shakespeare's poems. However 'Valentine' has a very different format. It comprises of five main verses and three lines which stand on their own. These lines are left on their own, to make the reader think about what has been said. The first of the three lines being 'Not a red rose or a satin heart,' which is the opening sentence.

Here Duffy makes it obvious that the Valentine present she is giving, is not what one would expect being traditional to something given on Valentines day. The following two secluded lines come one after the other, these two read 'I am trying to be truthful....

Not a cute card or a kissogram. ' Similar to the other secluded line, they compare the commercialised side of Valentines day, to something more genuine and thoughtful. In conclusion it is clear to say that there are a number of similarities and differences shared between these three poems. The main similarity being the topic of love which is clear throughout the poems. The differences range through the poems in the style, format and language that they consist of.