

Sonnet 116 literary analysis

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Sonnet 116 is one of the most famous of the sonnets for its stalwart defense of true love. The sonnet has a relatively simple structure with each quatrain attempting to describe what love is (or is not) and the final couplet reaffirming the poet's words by placing his own merit on the line. The opening lines of the sonnet dive the reader into the theme at a rapid pace, accomplished in part by the use of enjambment—the continuation of a syntactic unit from one line of poetry to the next without any form of pause.

In this sonnet, metaphors are reasonably transparent, and the theme is quickly and plainly apparent. The overarching sentiment of true love's timeless and immutable nature is presented. Words such “ Nevershaken,” “ Fixed mark” and “ Height,” give a mood of strength and continuity. Sonnet 116 uses symbolism, imagery and wordplay. First one is the navigation, the poem's central extended metaphor is the comparison of love to a star—specifically the North Star, which doesn't ever change position in the night sky.

The poet uses nautical imagery to construct the mental picture of love as a star leading all of us through life. Next is marriage, the poem doesn't necessarily define marriage the way people typically do, as a religious sacrament or a legal procedure; instead, he emphasizes as more idealistic, transcendent vision of it. Lastly is time/age/death, in the poem, the Reaper(referred to simply as “ Time”) actually loses—it turns out that love is the one thing that can resist the power of death and uses personification to show it and some alliteration and onomatopoeia for more effects. Sonnet 116 has four themes—love, loyalty, mortality and literature and writing. In love, the sonnet offers an optimistic take on it.

In terms on loyalty, it plays a key role in true love—actually, the only significant role. Mortality in the other hand, if not anywhere else, is a non-issue. Though age and decay may affect the beauty of a loved one, Sonnet 116 doesn't ever change position in the night sky. The poet uses nautical imagery to construct the mental picture of love as a star leading all of us through life. Next is marriage, the poem doesn't necessarily define marriage the way people typically do, as a religious sacrament or a legal procedure; instead, he emphasizes as more idealistic, transcendent vision of it. Lastly is time/age/death, in the poem, the Reaper(referred to simply as “ Time”) actually loses—it turns out that love is the one thing that can resist the power of death and uses personification to show it and some alliteration and onomatopoeia for more effects.

Sonnet 116 has four themes—love, loyalty, mortality and literature and writing. In love, the sonnet offers an optimistic take on it. In terms on loyalty, it plays a key role in true love—actually, the only significant role. Mortality in the other hand, if not anywhere else, is a non-issue. Though age and decay may affect the beauty of a loved one, Sonnet 116 claims that real love perseveres in spite of this, and continues to live on until, otherwise known as judgement day.

With Shakespeare's use of the sonnet form in his writing, he introduces the readers to a more comfortable writing scheme. Shakespeare's writing user the iambic pentameter rhyme scheme, which is said to be the closest to regular speech. Ever other word is stressed.