

Date 11 / 10 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "Sonnet 116"Author / Director / William Shakespeare

## Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I read and examined "Sonnet 116" in Mr O'Connor's English IXL last year for a project when we were being introduced to William Shakespeare.

## Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

"Sonnet 116" is one of Shakespeare's most famous and well known sonnets. The speaker begins by telling the reader what true love, or "the marriage of true minds," actually does not entail, claiming it does not "bend" or "alter." Rather, true love is "an ever-fixed mark," unchanging in the presence of times that it may waver. He or she describes love as a solid, reliable foundation that can never be tarnished and can always be depended upon, like "the star to every wand'ring bark." People who truly love each other will always be there for each other under any circumstance, especially if the circumstances are particularly undesirable. Finally, the speaker declares that only time can be the factor in determining whether true love exists or not, and he or she humorously says that his or her beliefs must be true or "no man has ever loved."

## Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

The meaning of love is quite an ambiguous and undefined concept, much like the meaning of life, and "Sonnet 116" tries to clarify this vagueness through the themes of loyalty and mortality. Shakespeare is trying to claim that the only actual aspect that defines real love is its ability to last forever. Genuine love will forever be constant, despite changing circumstances, influences, and anything of physical nature. In fact, in the first line when the speaker says "the marriage of true minds," he or she suggests that real love is more of a mental concept, an ideal. The precise definition of love may not be definable and even subjective to everyone; however, the only thing that truly matters is its immortal quality.

## Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Sonnet 116" is a sonnet, and so it is written in iambic pentameter. This means that every line of the fourteen lines characteristic of a sonnet contain five two-syllable iambs (or a da-dum). The poem is grouped into stanzas of four lines each with two rhymes per each stanza with the rhyme scheme A-B-A-B throughout all three stanzas. Finally, there is a couplet at the end, which consists of two lines that rhyme with each other. Sonnets are also characteristic of but shifts, which are changes in the attitude and direction of the poem. As for symbolism, Shakespeare compares true love to the North Star as well as death with the grim reaper.

## Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

So far out of all the sonnets of Shakespeare that I have actually read, this is by the far my favorite one because of its relevance and the fact that it is so easy to relate to. This poem particularly reminds me of the long-standing marriages of elderly couples, which have existed through so many obstacles and impediments. It is always inspiring when two older people are so evidently dedicated and in love with each other because their relationship proves the actuality of genuine and unconditional love. Moreover, this poem especially reminds me of the relationship between my grandparents, which persisted all the way until my grandfather's death. Through thick and thin, my grandparents valued their love for each other above everything else, and, despite many changes, such as my grandfather being diagnosed with cancer, they were faithful to each other to the very end. Their relationship is exactly what Shakespeare is trying to display in this sonnet. So many things may change; however, love always remains the same. I do find this poem quite poetic because it realistically solidifies an ambiguous topic into a simple and precise definition. In such an infatuated modern society, this sonnet speaks to the heart of the topic of love and hopefully is able to bring people back to its true meaning and understanding. So many people take love and what they perceive as love for granted, and this poem gives hope that genuine love can be achieved.