

SONNET 116

Has the traditional Sonnet form... 14 lines with an A,B,A,B,C,D,C,D,E,F,E,F,G,G Structure

The last couplet follows the conventional structure... it asserts a revelation and conclusion...

The Sonnet explores WHAT IS MEANT BY LOVE? Suggests that true love is CONSTANT... it doesn't change with time or circumstance

METAPHORS are based on nature: love "looks on tempests and is never shaken" and is the star to every wand'ring bark". These show love to be an essential part of our natural world.

Perhaps the metaphor of the star is the most crucial... it is TIMELESS, GLOBAL and can GUIDE us all when we are lost.

The poem ends with Shakespeare challenging us... "If this be error and / upon me proved, / I never writ, nor no man ever loved."... if he's wrong then he has never written (which he has!) and no man has ever loved.

This sonnet could be contrasted with many poems... "Hour"-where time is an obstacle to love; "To His coy Mistress" we should grab opportunities for love, because time's running out; "In Paris with You"... Love does end...

Shakespeare explores the whole CONCEPT of love... not just one couple's experience

The poem's opening lines refer to Christian marriage ceremonies. Love is "the marriage of true minds" and should be without "impediments".

Love is ENDURING... it is "never shaken" and an "ever-fixed mark". "Love alters not"... it never changes. Shakespeare suggests Love can conquer every extreme... it "bears it out even to the edge of doom." LOVE'S A POSITIVE FORCE!

The poem uses repeated pairs of words: "love is not love", "alters when it alteration finds", "remover to remove". Reflects the Symbiosis of a loving couple.

Shakespeare also uses opposites and negatives ("Love's not Time's fool") to show what true love isn't...

Shakespeare explores the traditional idea of LOVE and TIME being enemies. But his attitude is positive... even if "rosy lips and cheeks" are challenged by time's "sickle", love will remain. Love and time are PERSONIFIED here.

