

11<sup>th</sup> Oct

TOPIC:

SONNET 116:

“LET ME NOT TO THE MARRIAGE OF TRUE MINDS”

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- I. Poets did not give their sonnets titles back in that period; so we have assigned them with numbers to distinguish them from each other.
- II. The sonnet number is 116.
- III. Shakespeare had written around 150 sonnets.
- IV. Shakespeare’s sonnets are divided to two groups according to the themes: the first group is about love and the second is about his friendship.
- V. Back in that period poets would not mention the names of their beloved ones because it could damage their reputation.
- VI. Shakespeare’s sweetheart is referred to as the dark lady of his sonnets, as it’s known that she is not white and also she remains a mystery to us; which is why she got that nickname.

#### 🚩 Poem analysis

➤ First step: find the sentences:

<u>Let me not to the marriage of true minds</u>	<u>#1<sup>st</sup> sentence</u>
<u>Admit impediments. Love is not love</u>	
<u>Which alters when it alteration finds,</u>	<u>#2<sup>nd</sup> sentence</u>
<u>Or bends with the remover to remove.</u>	
<u>O no! it is an ever-fixed mark</u>	
<u>That looks on tempests and is never shaken;</u>	<u>#3<sup>rd</sup> sentence</u>
<u>It is the star to every wand'ring bark,</u>	
<u>Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.</u>	
<u>Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks</u>	
<u>Within his bending sickle's compass come;</u>	<u>#4<sup>th</sup> sentence</u>
<u>Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,</u>	
<u>But bears it out even to the edge of doom.</u>	
<u>If this be error and upon me prov'd,</u>	
<u>I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.</u>	<u>#5<sup>th</sup> sentence</u>

#### NOTES

“O no!” is not considered a full sentence;  
cause a sentence should have a subject and a verb.

➤ Second step: pointing out the sub-sentences:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove.

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

#1<sup>st</sup> sub-sentence

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

#2<sup>nd</sup> sub-sentence

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;

#3<sup>rd</sup> sub-sentence

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

= #4<sup>th</sup> sub-sentence

If this be error and upon me prov'd,

I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

➤ Third step: identifying the literal meaning:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds >>> he changed up the structure of the sentence for the sake of the rhyme (with his poet license)

Admit impediments. >>> Impediments = obstacles admit= accepts >>> do not put an obstacle in the way of true love or try prevent them from getting married

Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds, >>> alters / alteration = change >>> love is not love if it changes due to circumstances.

Or bends with the remover to remove. >>> Bends = change remover = a person who falls out of love or throws it away (archaic word)

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark >>> mark= lighthouse (archaic word) looks = faces tempests = storms

That looks on tempests and is never shaken; >>> he compared love to a lighthouse it never changes or moves but always guides you

It is the star to every wand'ring bark, >>> wand'ring bark = sailing ships he compared love to the stars that guide the sailing ships

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. >>> whose/his = refer to the stars taken = measured

He is saying that although the height of the stars is measurable; their value is still unknown.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks >>> fool = slave compass = range

Within his bending sickle's compass come; >>> he is comparing time to a farmer whose sickle can cut the grass, and although it can cut and change physical beauty it can't change true love.

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, >>> love does not change with time - "His" refers to time.

But bears it out even to the edge of doom. >>> bears out: lasts doom = fate, destiny but he means "death" here.

If this be error and upon me prov'd, >>> error = false - he is saying if his philosophy of love is to be proved wrong, he has never written anything in his life (implying that his writing is useless and meaningless) and no one has ever been in love truly.

I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd. >>> writ = wrote (archaic word).

Next lecture's task: To continue analyzing,  
and compare between the Spenserian and Shakespearian sonnets

**END OF LECTURE**

Renaissance prose and poetry course

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