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Ms. Smith

Everlasting Beauty Contained Within Youth in "Sonnet 18" ✓

How long does beauty last? For the beloved in William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" it will never end. The poet writes ^{about} of a person of unrivaled beauty. He reveals a love towards someone that knows no restrictions. Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" expresses the theme of eternal beauty and love through the use of personification, metaphors, and imagery. ✓

comma before conjunction

Shakespeare's use of personification emphasizes the fact that beauty and love usually fade away but it will not with the woman he writes about in this sonnet. Initially, he compares the woman to a summer's day but then retracts that and says she is even better than that. Summer is always too short just like a person's youth and the beauty that comes along with it. He describes this by writing, "And summer's lease hath all too short a date," (4) meaning that he could not possibly be so rash as to compare her to something as petty as a day in summer. He believes the beauty he is witnessing at that moment *must* last forever and that it is cardinal to share her youthful beauty with the world. With this sonnet, he is ensuring that not even death can take away her beauty and their love, writing, "Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, /When in eternal lines to time thou growest," (11-12) implying that although death may take her and their physical beings from the world, their love will live on through death. As he assumes his family will live on forever, their love and her beauty will live on through his eternal lines (or generations) and as long as his written word is read. Shakespeare uses personification to emphasize his beloved's eternal beauty and their love while his use of metaphors goes into more

depth and detail about her beauty and how it is so much greater than one would experience normally.

The use of metaphors in “Sonnet 18” helps one to compare their beauty to that of Shakespeare’s beloved. Normally, one’s beauty will get to a certain point of flourishing and then leave as they get older. Shakespeare writes this as, “Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, /And often is his golden complexion dimm’d,”(5-6) whereas he speaks of the eye of heaven; the sun shining too brightly until it becomes dimmed by the clouds. This can be interpreted as someone in their youth acting as the sun, shining their beauty brightly. Age, acting as the clouds, later rolls in and hides the beauty, so that only the people who had been exposed to it previously have a memory of it. Despite this, Shakespeare ensured that his beloved’s beauty will never die, “But thy eternal summer shall not fade,” (9) and through the use of this poem he drags the reader into his plan. As he said, “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, /So long lives this and this gives life to thee,” (13-14) meaning as long as the people who read or hear this poem have a sense of beauty, Shakespeare has accomplished his task, forcefully conveying this woman’s beauty unto the readers. The metaphors used in “Sonnet 18” describe how the woman’s beauty is eternal and the use of imagery allows one to compare the beloved’s beauty to things one would normally witness.

avoid vague words

The poem’s imagery enables one to further imagine this person’s beauty. Seeing one’s body change is much like watching the seasons change; snow is melting or building up, leaves are changing colour, and the temperature rises and falls. When people consider getting older, moving from the “spring” (childhood) into the “summer” (teens/youth) of their lives, it can be a dreaded change, but this woman transitions and holds on to her beauty more smoothly than any passing season. Shakespeare relates this to humans by writing, “Rough winds do shake the

darling buds of May," (3) showing people are shaken by this transition from "spring" into "summer". They are "buds", not yet fully sprouted but fastened onto the "branch", in their young age. Growing up comes as a strong wind, shaking the branch, which causes some of the "buds" to fall off. Shakespeare's beloved's "branch" held firm in the wind and all of her "flowers" bloomed gracefully - a smooth transition between "spring" and "summer." As other people transition into their own "summer", they move into the time where they will be their most beautiful and this time will ultimately end. People will lose their beauty through normal processes, "And every fair from fair sometime declines; /By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd," (7-8) as they will not be remembered like the person Shakespeare is writing about. Nature will not change its course to suit anyone's wants or needs and there are no major things people can do to distort this. Society cannot "trim" nature to fit their standards. Even the poem's subject moved on past their most beautiful stage, but the poet was able to capture the immensity of her beauty at the time in this poem. One can see that what would be considered normal beauty is miniscule compared to the beauty of the nearly perfect specimen the poet writes about.

Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" has revealed a person of ultimate beauty through the use of personification, metaphors, and imagery. It also portrays a never-ending love with further use of personification. As long as the poem continues to be read and interpreted, the person described in this sonnet shall be remembered as a pinnacle of beauty and love whereas other people will always face the problem of their beauty fading away as if covered by clouds. In today's world, technology and social media make it easy for anyone to share their beauty and have it kept on a platform forever. This limits modern people from having the chance to stand out in the same way Shakespeare made his beloved become distinct in our memories in "Sonnet 18."

Great connection!

insightful!

Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. "Sonnet 18." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Ed. M.H. Abrams. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996. 1381. Print.



