FROM SONNETS TO SNAPCHATS Mia Collins

Have you ever thought about the way in which we express our love for each other nowadays compared to, say Shakespeare's time? Could it be said that the way in which it is expressed or shown, especially with younger people may not be so poetic and charming, or are there some connections with modern love which we may not realise? Shakespeare's love sonnets are undoubtedly intense, comprehensive and deep. They deal with the intimacy of love and the depths of language. His form of love is shown as invincible; it is given an identity and is seen as something which can defy time: 'Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks/Within his bending sickle's compass come' (Sonnet 116.) It is questionable whether we experience this same sense of passion or devotion for love today, especially when looking at the language of love ...

Over time, expressions of love have drastically changed along with the traditional perspective of a romantic relationship. Whether it be tinder, snapchat or even through a simple word, it is perhaps clear to see how the way in which we show love has become less Shakespearean and more superficial. Relationships were built up on the roots of ancient courtship, chivalry even, which leads to the question: is chivalry dead? It is not uncommon that younger generations now are subject to, and I say this very loosely, expressions of love over social media. Dating sites are now very prevalent, for example and it could be said that people are more commonly connecting over social media; from love expressed in sonnets to love expressed on the internet, it naturally carries new dimensions and is not as deep or personal.

More interestingly, looking at Shakespeare's sonnets, the language in which love is shown may have changed in today's society- certain factors of love and relationships are very much the same. Taboos are arguably more common and discussed now; disloyalty and cheating, jealousy, even the dreaded STI.





Some of which are found more than others in contemporary relationships. Towards the end of his series there are 28 sonnets addressed to a woman called the 'Dark Lady'. Far from idealising a perfect woman, they feature a female lover accused of making the poet sexually obsessed, furiously jealous of cheating on him, stealing away his boyfriend, and giving him a dose of the clap (romantic, isn't it?). In Sonnet 131 the poet sees the dark lady with another man and his jealousy boils to the surface, saying 'Thy black is fairest in my judgement's place. In nothing art, thou black save in thy deeds, and thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.' We can make relations to Shakespeare's use of blazon and talking about the male gaze with the representation of women today. take Instagram for example, there is a familiarity with or the need to filter pictures to 'look better.' Insecurities, especially for women, are heightened using social media with the expectation to look like the idealised woman. We can also think about the traditional idea of masculinity and stereotypes of 'maleness' in society today in which this male gaze is prevalent.

All in all, devotions of love are certainly not expressed the same way as we see in Shakespeare's Sonnets despite these subtle connections with expectations and the male gaze. It seems that more conventionally our generation displays affections in less poetic means. No one can deny the permanence of Shakespeare's sonnets, snapchats fade.



As already mentioned, with the vast influence of social media in the modern world, it is easy to see how people would be concerned with the way they come across on such platforms;

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