Group Work – Shakespeare Sonnets 71,73, and 130

There is no "trick" to understanding poetry. There are some ways though that we can gain a deeper understanding of a poem by asking ourselves the "right" questions (like we do in our class discussions). Most of all **it is a matter of confidence**: confidence in ourselves, in our abilities and in an inherent belief that the poet wants to be understood; and by more than foddy old English teachers, for that matter. **Give yourselves enough time to answer these – <u>give the same time for each part</u>. <u>Do not forget the final</u> question (after you are done with the first 3 parts – I will read this carefully so give a full, specific, and complete answer).**

Each part of this group work takes a different approach to coming to an understanding of the poem. The first part will **ask some specific questions**, the second part will **ask you to identify some key parts of the poem**, while the third part will have you **look at the poem in a line by line examination**. In all of them, keep focused, record what you learn, and apply what you've learned before and now into your reading of the latest poem. **Timekeepers: <u>be sure to allot the same amount of time for each part.</u> For Part III – <u>Make sure ALL group members uncover one line at a time</u> – or the teacher may give the ENTIRE group a 0 for this assignment. Make it real. ANSWER TOGETHER – Do NOT divide the parts up.**

Part I – Sonnet 71 – TIMEKEEPERS MAKE SURE YOU ALLOT EXACTLY THE SAME TIME FOR EACH OF THESE THREE PARTS

1. What does the poet want the listener to do, or not to do? What has happened or will happen to the poet (persona)?
2. What does he warn her about doing? Consider possible reasons for giving such a warning. Think practically and literally. Notice this warning even applies (but is not limited to) the reading of this poem.
3. When does he expect the reader (his love?) to be reading the poem? What does he expect the reading of the poem will remind her of? Why?
4. Find, and record all the warning he gives her (be sure to include what might bring about the warning, and what he tells her to do).
5. Make sure you understand what compounded with clay means.

6a. Consider question #2 again: If you imagine for a minute, that the poet (persona) and the person that he is speaking to are lovers, what would some reasons be for his warning (look especially at the last two lines).

6b. If she were to rehearse (say over and over) his name while reading the poem what would this reveal to anyone seeing her?

6c. What is *the problem* (see definition of a sonnet) set in the first 12 lines? What is *the resolution*? Hint: Do we know in the first 12 lines why he is warning her? Can't **that** be the problem? Go back to 6b – Why ultimately does he caution her – what would it do to their relationship; what does it say about the present (while he lives) state of their relationship (as far as others knowing)

Part II – Sonnet 73 <u>remember timekeepers – same amount of time as previous part.</u>

Identify from this sonnet (and write down of course) the following:

- **who** is speaking (tell me everything you can about him: especially age – do this for all the parts you identify)?
- **whom** is he speaking to?
- **what** is their relationship?
- **what** is he talking about (explain each sentence – notice I said sentence, not line), why might he be saying this (motivation)?
- **what** is the central metaphor of this poem?
- **what** is *the problem* **of the sonnet**? what is its *resolution*?
- **why are lines 13 & 14 <u>necessarily</u> true**?

Part III – Sonnet 130 - <u>remember timekeepers – same amount of time as previous two parts.</u>

Go over the poem ***line by line*** in a way that resembles what we've done in class. Everyone in the group should cover their poems (except for the line(s) being discussed) with a sheet of paper. As you uncover the lines, discuss, debate, and explain them (along with their relationship to the lines before). Follow Scotese's three rules of understanding poetry. The recorder needs to write fast, and should be less concerned with writing a progressive essay or answer than with recording the groups' comments and the movement of your ideas from line to line. Finally state what *the problem* and *resolution* of the sonnet are.

Finally, when you are done – briefly state which way of examining the poem (Parts I, II, or III) your group found the most useful in coming to an understanding of it and why. Be specific in your answer.

Sonnet 71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sudden bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that write it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,

8 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

9 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire

10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

11 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,

12 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.

13 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

14 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Sonnet l30

1 My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

2 Coral is far more red than her lips' red:

3 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

4 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

5 I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,

6 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

7 And in some perfumes is there more delight

8 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

9 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

10 That music hath a far more pleasing sound.

11 I grant I never saw a goddess go:

12 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

13 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

14 As any she belied with false compare.