



# Shakespeare in the 21st Century: Relevance and Resonance in 2026

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## Abstract

*William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 and died on April 23, 1616. For his credit he has written 2 longer poems, 154 sonnets and 37 plays. Among these works, the researcher explores through this paper, the enduring relevance of Shakespeare in 2026 by choosing one longer poem Venus and Adonis, two sonnets sonnet no 55 and 116 and two of the plays Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet. The above-mentioned works explores the themes of love, power, jealousy and human conflicts reflects even today. Shakespeare has written and reflected his contemporary society and through the historical plays, he went back to his early ages and classical ages. Even after four centuries, his works are very much relevance and resonance in 2026 in modern education. This paper highlights the theme of love in 2026. The study concludes that Shakespeare is not only a literary figure of the past but also a living presence whose works remain vital in understanding human nature and modern life.*

**Key Words: Shakespeare, Sonnets, Love, Power, Jealousy, contemporary etc...**

## Introduction

William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616. At the time of Shakespeare, there was plague for two years and he remained in his house when he wrote two longer poems, one among them is *Venus and Adonis*. Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre. Choosing sonnet no 55 and sonnet no 116 for analysing the contemporary love and power. Shakespeare's most of the works explores the theme

of true love. This paper tries to show that the love of Shakespeare is still relevance in 2026.

## Universality of Shakespeare's Themes in sonnet 55, 116 and Venus and Adonis

Shakespeare's themes are universally true and famous. The themes such as love, power and jealousy and human conflicts are very popular in Shakespeare's sonnets, poems and plays. Here, the researcher takes two of the sonnets from Shakespeare to connect the theme of love in the 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary society with Shakespeare's.



“Not marble nor the gilded monuments  
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,  
But you shall shine more bright in these contents  
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish  
time.”

In sonnet no 55, Shakespeare describes and appreciates the love and beauty of the lady love. the poet goes on saying that *Not marble nor the gilded monuments/of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme*. The beauty of the lady will not disappear from my verses. It will be there timeless. Today’s love in 21<sup>st</sup> century is not true love like the verses of Shakespeare. Girls are hiding their love and they also betray the boys. Love has become time pass for the young. The beauty and love remain strong in the lines of Shakespeare. Just like that the love of today also has to wait for time.

“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.”

The above lines are taken from sonnet number 116 where he speaks about true love and love should not be shaken for any cause. Shakespeare says that love is like a light house which is permanent and never shaken by any of the natural calamity. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century love has been changed and it is straight opposite to Shakespeare’s definition of love. both love between male and female are not understandable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For them, love is just fun. It is not seriously dealt. Betraying both boys and girls are common.

### **Venus and Adonis**

In the poem Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare reveals that love does not come by compulsion. But it is a natural process. Shakespeare is so much relevance today that love should not happen by compulsion. Venus is much interested in adventure and hunting. Adonis is powerful and goddesses for which he is not able to against her wishes.

“Even as the sun with purple-colour’d face  
Had ta’en his last leave of the weeping morn,  
Rose-cheek’d Adonis tried him to the chase;  
Hunting he lov’d, but love he laugh’d to scorn;”

All his interest was in hunting. She forced him to love her and asks him to come on the next day also. Though he is handsome in nature, he does not love any girl and is not interested in love or girls at all. The poem is very much relevant for today’s love of girls. Men do mistakes because they are forced to do by female.

Today women are able to earn money and they stand on their legs when it comes to money and jobs. So, they choose their life partners with or without their parent’s concern. From the parent’s perspective, some times they choose the right person and most of the time they decide wrongly. Shakespeare explains the theme that the emotions have to be controlled and channelized in the right path.

### **Shakespeare’s Modern Psychology in *Romeo and Juliet***

As the title of this paper suggest that even after four hundred years Shakespeare is relevant for 2026. The theme of love in the play is highlighted by Shakespeare and the death of Romeo and Juliet united the family. It is very much relevant for today’s world. The families do not encourage the love marriages and the true love is not appreciated. Some times the lovers are not matured physically and mentally, the families afraid that their children might take a wrong decision. Whatever happens, it is the duty of the parents to channelize things better.

### **Shakespeare in Modern Society in *Macbeth***

Macbeth is one of the best plays for reflection of power and the consequences of it in the society. People those who are not ambitious also get into the trap like Macbeth. Lady Macbeth did not realise about an ordinary life which was to enjoy and be happy. She should have enjoyed and welcomed Macbeth for his bravery. But the power changes her mind to grab it and spoiled her life. Lady Macbeth is very much relevant for the current society. Shakespeare’s characters are to be enjoyed and reflected to the real-life characters. Shakespeare’s writings are relevant not only today. It is forever.



### Conclusion

Thus, this paper explores that the love of Shakespeare is different from love today. Love is simply considered to be time pass. It is not easy to understand the mind of youth today in 2026. They do commit suicide if there is any love failure. Young are not able to tolerate failures. Thus, Shakespeare is much relevant and resonance even in 2026.

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