

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

**Fakulta pedagogická**

**Bakalářská práce**

**Proměny lásky v Shakespearovských sonetech**

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Cheb 2014

**University of West Bohemia**

**Faculty of Education**

**Undergraduate Thesis**

**Transformation of Love in Shakespeare's Sonnets**

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Cheb 2014

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

*V Chebu dne 28. května 2014 .....*

Tereza Habartová

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank the supervisor of my undergraduate thesis, PhDr. Magdaléna Potočňáková, Ph.D., for her patience and guidance of my work.

I would like to express the eternal gratitude to my family as well, for their excellent support during my undergraduate education, to my sons, especially, for their patience.

## **ABSTRACT**

Habartová Tereza. University of West Bohemia. April 2014.

Transformation the Love in Shakespeare's Sonnets

Supervisor: PhDr. Magdaléna Potočňáková, Ph.D.

The main task of this undergraduate thesis is to distinguish specific parts of the world famous collection of *The Sonnets* by the renowned poet and playwright William Shakespeare. The main theme is, of course, the priority of pure love, the pursuit of wealth, the importance of love with the counterpart's mistakes and the perception of the cycle of life and nature in relation to the acquisition or perdition of love. Above all themes of the collection, immortality excels primarily.

This thesis is divided into seven parts. The first part is devoted entirely to the unique form and structure of Shakespearean writing of the sonnets and speculation of whether the work is autobiographical. The following chapters of this work focus on addressing the three different characters: The Fair Youth, the Dark Lady and the Rival Poet. The final chapter is focused on the main theme of scepticism, irony and humour of love. The conclusion of this undergraduate thesis summarizes all the mentioned issues and the used references are mentioned in the list of enumerated works.

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## INTRODUCTION

The task of poetry in every time is to please the heart and soul of the reader. The sonnet as a love poem should affect the hearts of a large number of poetically likeminded people. I have a very positive relationship with poetry. I take a pleasure in searching for various indications and ambiguities in poems. In the poetry, I admire that it is possible to speculate about the poems of several different senses.

The Renaissance in England was an era of many great sonneteers and poets, such as Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Philip Sydney, John Donne and Christopher Marlowe.

I have selected the theme of Shakespearean sonnet for its atypical style and its uniqueness. In addition to that, I suppose that it is an important issue under what circumstances and in what context these poems were written. For this reason, I will devote the first part of this thesis to style, structure and context of Shakespearean sonnet.

It is also essential to mention that the sonnets were always dedicated to a specific addressee. In the classical Renaissance sonnet, the love is confessed to a beautiful young lady. In the case of *The Sonnets*, the work probably deals with three different addressees.

When I read the entire collection, I realized that the majority of the collection is dedicated to a young man. From the situation, it is obvious that Shakespeare loved him very much. A fraction of the poems with the subtext of jealousy is dedicated to a poet. Due to the context, it seems that the poet was probably Shakespeare's competitive poet of the Elizabethan Era. The third recipient is a woman. Poems dedicated to this mysterious person are mostly focused on the subtle topic of physical love.

I would like to study various sources, which are written by renowned literary theorists, and I want to discover more details about all of these characters, their possible candidates from Shakespeare's real life, in the chapter Addressees.

William Shakespeare was, in my opinion, a capable master of puns and double entendres. He also describes a wide range of his personal feelings. Thus in consequential chapter, I would like to specialize on the topic of scepticism, irony, and humour in *The Sonnets* and I will direct the attention to the particular instances of the mentioned phenomena.

The main task of the thesis is to focus on the transformation of love in *Sonnets*. These changes obviously gradually occur throughout the collection. In majority of sections, there repeat pure and honest feelings with outbursts of jealousy and physical desire.

I want to compare all sentiments belonging to every addressee and I would like to

consider if all these affections spread through every section. Alternatively, they are specific only for a concrete addressee.

I would like to allow you to see into Shakespeare's mind more deeply.



## THE CHARACTERISTIC AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL THEORY OF SONNETS

It is of course a well-known fact that the first edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* was published in June 1609. It was an unofficial publication of the publisher Thomas Thorpe. Shakespeare did not know this issue, could not make the author's corrections, and could not determine the order of sonnets.

The originality of *Sonnets* consists in the diverse list of emotions described as persuasive. Shakespeare adopted his sonnet as a form, from his equally famous predecessors, the authors of heroic couplets; it was for example, the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.

According to Hilský (2011), in the case of Shakespeare, it was not a literal heroic couplet, rather a kind of gradated wisdom punchlined in a small number of lines of a rhetorically perfect text. Similar to most of his works, the poet designed *Sonnets* for its unique and original way. Though most previous sonnets are mainly gracefully addressed to a beautiful and beloved lady, Shakespeare addresses his poems to a young man, a beautiful and noble addressee, "The Fair Youth". The deep relationship to this young gentleman is described as a renaissance honour of an adored and enchanted human being. Shakespeare resolved to this act, and acquitted his task fearlessly and honestly.

The poet, Hilský (2011) mentions, often uses a semantic duality in this work. *The Sonnets* are not only verbal expressions, but moods, attitudes and emotions.

In these areas, Shakespeare was masterfully knowledgeable. In only one sonnet, the author is able to celebrate his beloved and even to pay compliments him or her. Then in the next moment, he is able to hurt the recipient's honour. *Sonnets* are an especially great book of love. This applies to almost all of the *Sonnets*. The exclusivity and originality of Shakespeare's sonnets consists of enormous reserves of emotion and passion.

Hilský claims that Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is the book of good love but also of painful love. Also harrowing love revealing love erotic love platonic love and true love. In contrast, here is described the selfless, sacrificial love.

As described prof. Hilský, (2011), the communication model of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* is based on relationship – "I" and "You". This relationship is the basic dramatic situation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and imparts them a timeless, universal meaning.

In Shakespeare's sonnets speaks human to human, and it is not accidental that majority of the sonnets are more or less implicated dialogue. We can understand every Shakespeare's sonnet as an interview or a letter in verse, his entire *Sonnets* as a poetic correspondence (Hilský, 2011, p.166).

*The Sonnets* were, according to many analysts and theorists probably written over several years, it is important to focus on Shakespeare's gradual transformation and development based on the intellectual maturation of the author.

When we focus on the structure of classical and Shakespearean Sonnet, it is to be noted that the Italian sonnet:

also called the Petrarchan sonnet, after the most influential of the Italian sonneteers, comprises an 8-line 'octave' of two quatrains, rhymed *abbaabba*, followed by a 6 line usually rhymed *cdecde or cdcdcd*. The transition from octave to sestet usually coincides with a 'turn' (Italian, *Volta*) in the argument or mood of the poem. In a variant form used by the English poet John Milton, the 'turn' delayed to a later position around the tenth line. Some later poets--notably William Wordsworth--have employed this feature of the 'Miltonic sonnet' while relaxing the rhyme scheme of the octave to *abbaacca*. The Italian pattern has remained the most widely used in English and other languages. (Baldick, 1990)

According to Einstein (1903), the definition of Shakespearean sonnet is represented as fourteen lines of lyric poems, they are traditionally written in iambic pentameter. It is composed of three stanzas of four verses and final stanzas of two verses.

Typical pattern of Shakespearean sonnets is the reflection turnover coming in the final couplet. Classical sonnet form, as mentioned above, became popular during the Italian Renaissance, when Petrarcha published a collection of amorous sonnets addressed to the lady named Laura.

Due the great success of this collection, Einstein (1903) claims, the sonnet spread to England. In many respects Shakespeare's sonnets style formation is far wealthier and more complicated than the original comparatively simple division sonnet form. Shakespeare also abandons the classical and traditional themes of love sonnets.

At fourteen lines, iambic pentameter Shakespeare represents imagery and verbal dynamics known from Shakespeare's dramas. The routine of Shakespearean sonnets is dramatic character and certain unconventionality. This stems, primary, from the form of the English sonnet, the Italian sonnet as opposed to concentrated dramatic turnaround solutions or catharsis not only to nine verse-volts, but also in the final couplet. Secondly, sonnets constantly changing their formulas and text tones testimony. The poet admires them,

blames calls, asks mocks or humorous sophistry expresses love and disappointment of a loved one. (Štollová, 2011, p.1)

The interpretation of the autobiographical theory of *The Sonnets*, according to David Masson (1914), was diametrically opposed. The authorship is in accordance the poets Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hallam, Gervinus and others, absolutely and completely autobiographical. Poems describe Shakespeare's life during his reside in London and they attribute this fact to the historical context, related to The Youth Fair, The Rival Poet, The Dark Lady and their possible candidates.

Another theory, as Masson (1914) claims, that most sonnets are autobiographical, but some poems are impersonal and they are randomly added to this collection, whereas the number of Sonnet is almost not related to a series of others (pp. 2-16).

In contrast, other well-known theories claim, the sonnets are entirely imaginary. Even when he writes a platonic allegory, in which Shakespeare as himself is actually present, he is only hidden behind these stories and manages them using different symbols and hyperboles. Masson (1914) himself, according to his own words, advocates the theory that *The Sonnets* are essentially autobiographical, and all feelings are Shakespeare's own experiences.

It is impossible to say if these all theories are true or not, however they are a work of a genius author with a sophisticated language and unlimited imagination.

This thesis focuses on the transformation of love for different addressees, and the different interpretations of this affection. The following chapter illuminates these candidates more specifically.

## ADDRESSEES

During the Renaissance age, Sonnets were created to celebrate the stunning women and they were dedicated to very wealthy aristocrats. They encouraged the authors of these poems with financial or material donations. Shakespeare dedicated his collection to a Mr. W.H.

According to Rolfe (1905), there was a lot of speculation to the identity of W.H. It is possible it could be Sir William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke. Sir Herbert was the most expected aspirant due the entity of the first official edition of Shakespeare's plays. Another possible candidate is Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. To Henry Wriothesley, is also devoted Shakespeare's epic poem *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. The initials could probably reverse.

Another candidate, claims Rolfe (1905), might be Sir William Harvey, the stepfather of Henry Wriothesley. This theory however, assumes the Sonnets are not autobiographical- it is one of the following issues of this work that the W.H. and the young man of the sonnets are different individuals. The next theory, not very supported, presupposes initials of author, William "Himself". The German academic D. Barnstorffem created this hypothesis. The final, not last variant; the initials belong to the nephew of William Shakespeare and performer, Mr. William Hart.

Nevertheless, contrasting the traditional concept of sonnets, Shakespearean's *Sonnets* in the first part of his collection were addressed to the beautiful young man. Author encourages the young man to marrying and reproduction. Because descendants continue the genetic line of *The Fair Youth*, lyrically told, to retain his potential or maintain his beauty, and consequently immortality for future generations. In Elizabethan England, this completely open confession might cause a wave of annoyance. The author explicitly describes his pure passion and profound emotion for this man.

The young man, whom the majority of *The Sonnets* is devoted to in this collection of poems, he affected William Shakespeare powerfully. Effusions of the author's emotion, their wide range starting with a sort of paternal love, forcing through romantic confession, and ultimately failing to jealousy and sadness with boundless despondency, are breathtaking.

Certain literary critics and theorists (Kerrigan, (1986), Rolfe, (1905)) have speculated about the homosexual orientation of Shakespeare. For example *Sonnet No.20* – herein the author regrets the fact that God did not create this beautiful man, as a female however; he is very similar with a delicate girlish face.

According to the general theories, BBC (2003), it is also possible that Shakespeare's deep love for this man stemmed from the losing of his son Hamnet (see below in *Sonnet No.33*). The Fair Youth had apparently the task to adopt Hamnet's place.

Another character appearing in *Sonnets* is The Rival poet. The author sees in this personality, mainly his own rival in the stardom.

As Rolfe (1905), Acheson (1903) and other theorists stated in their works, there are another confessions in the series dedicated to The Rival Poet. They are in *Sonnets No.79-86*. The potential candidates were Christopher Marlowe, George Chapman, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe and more.

George Chapman, however, as argues in his work Arthur Acheson (1903) is in all probability the poet, whom Shakespeare had in his mind. According to Acheson (1903) and other critics, Shakespeare was very critical to Chapman's work because of the great jealousy of his success, fame and popularity by the Earl of Southampton. Reportedly, Shakespeare never cared about any patronage other than Southampton, and it seems, Chapman enjoyed enormous popularity of this aristocrat, as well as Shakespeare's. In these poems focusing on The Rival Poet attacking this person with such bitterness, and "gnawed by jealousy" tone, which is in Shakespeare's work very unusual. Shakespeare's habit is a rather vital, ironic poem. However, in these several sonnets dedicated to The Rival Poet, jealousy and fussiness directly leads to overflowing.

Of course, due to the previously mentioned facts in Shakespeare, there is no specific addressing of the addressee, thus these theories can be never confirmed or denied.

The third figure is no less controversial, The Dark Lady. The context of the poems shows a woman who has charmed the poet very dangerously, and she subsequently completely absorbed his thoughts and his physical aspect. In this phase, it is the contrast to The Fair youth. Shakespeare celebrated him for his beauty and for pure sensitivity to this young man.

However, the love to the Dark lady is only to possess a physical love and according speeches of author, it is probably the low or base love caused only by desire. Who was the woman whom Shakespeare called the devil and fallen angel?

One of the many known theories supposed by literary historians such as G. Massey, A. Dyce or German scholar G.G.Gervinus, that The Dark Lady was Lady Arbella Stuart a highly placed noblewoman, the potential successor of Queen Elisabeth I. British literary theorist Sydney Kent (1980) admits that this theory is more than absurd (pp. 10-11). In addition, it is absurd for another reason. According to Kent (1980), Shakespeare was never presented at

court (p. 30).

The next theory seems more appropriate. It could be Mary Fitton, the maid of honour of Queen Elizabeth, a woman with a very anxious and disorderly personal life. The main proponent of this theory was Irish- American publicist Frank Harris (1909).

According to Harris (1909), Mary Fitton was famous for scandals with Sir William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (from my point of view, according to this theory was Pembroke a possible candidate for The Fair Youth) (pp. 386-388). Mary's relationship with Herbert is the basis for the declaration that Fitton was "The Dark Lady". Shakespeare reportedly admired Mary Fitton very intensely; his passion for her lasted for over twelve years. After beginning a relationship with Sir Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Shakespeare felt cheated by Mary and his vanity was hurt. It is possible only to conclude *Sonnet No. 150* reflects his huge disaster.

Another theory mentioned Dr. Duncan Salkeld, (2012), and in his controversial work: *Shakespeare Among The Courtesans: Prostitution, Literature, And Drama, 1500-1650*. The Dark Lady was probably a dark skinned renowned concubine and keeper of a House of ill repute in London, called Lucy Negro. These assumptions are still unsupported; although Salkeld (2012) claims, there are some obvious indirect evidences.

The text of *The Sonnets* however, explains only one fact, the Lady was a married woman, and the relationship was held in secret. In my opinion, it is also possible; the author called this woman The Dark Lady for a simple reason. The passion and desire, which this Lady arouses in the poet, are in the author's opinion, so low, despicable and "dark", they perhaps offer the name itself. Furthermore, a woman's appearance and manner of dress could cause this name: "... Therefore my mistress' brows are raven black, Games eyes so suited, and they mourners seem ...!" (*Sonnet No.127*).

## **The Fair Youth**

Unless we summarize *The Sonnets* with a general view, they can split approximately as follows. The first seventeen sonnets connected continuously following a simple theme noted above; it is the persuasion The Fair Youth to maintain its beauty and preservation of his immortality through his descendants.

In the other two sonnets, No.18 -19, Shakespeare acclaims the mastery of poetry; only one can surmount and outsmart through its immortality the persistence of the time:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

In the subsequent five sonnets, the author declares his endless love to his lover and he is persistently amazed and admired by the beauty of the Youth. *Sonnet No.20* compares him to an ancient God. Shakespeare also wonders at the vanity and transience of the noble men, and he speculates about the situation that the poet displeases his patron and his fame quickly ceases. At the same time, however, he convinces himself about the poet's strong attachment to his young friend and endures this hearty emotion for him: "Then happy I, That love and am beloved/" (*Sonnet No.25*).

*Sonnet no. 26* seems filled with hopelessness. The hopelessness is the reason for the silence of poet's muse. The author berates himself and despairs over his incompetence to write his verses with magnificence and elegance. These verses show the fact that the *Sonnets No.26 -28* were probably written in the time of distance from Shakespeare and his love.

The following two consequential sonnets are poems of great and longing desire plagued by the author. "...But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer, And night doth nightly make grief's strength seem stronger..../" (*Sonnet No. 28*).

In the next sequence of three *Sonnets No. 29-30* it is apparent the reason for Shakespeare's despair from the absence. "For precious friends hid in death's dateless night" (*Sonnet No.30*) The Author probably left his beloved Youth to visit the memorial service of an old contemporary friend. In this series again, Shakespeare pursues transience and

mortality. In his mind, however, he attaches to his love, only he can preserve the poet from the abyss of sadness. “.... But if the while I think on thee, dear friend, All losses are restor’d and sorrows end/” (*Sonnet No.30*).

The matter of *Sonnets 31-32* focuses on the Rival Poet. To these sonnets is devoted a separate chapter of this undergraduate thesis, but these poems are very central to other confessions of the Fair youth.

The young man prefers the poetry of the unknown poet who enjoys the warmth of his fame in the Elizabethan age. For this reason, in the sonnets No. 33-35 there is great reversal. It seems that the aforementioned young man sinned with his affection toward The Rival Poet and Shakespeare suffers from cruel jealousy.

These first two poems are full of darkness and estrangement but the author later abates their apparent remorse thanks to the young man’s contrition.

The majority of literary theorists analyses Sonnet No. 33, such an author’s displeasure to the sinful Youth’s acts. Shakespeare supposedly feels betrayed, hurt and undesired. There is also a theory BBC, (2003), that this poem is not devoted to the Fair Youth but to his son Hamnet. This “*Sun*” that shone only a short while, could mean a very short life of Shakespeare’s son:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all triumphant splendor on my brow;  
But out! alack! he was but one hour mine,  
The region cloud hath mask’d him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
Suns of the world may stain when heaven’s sun staineth.



In poem number 36, the author completely changes the character of the subject; conscience or shame probably affects him, and author insists on separation from his lover. He does not want to damage the reputation of a young man and he is trying to protect him.

The subsequent reversal occurs in the thirty-seventh *Sonnet*. Here the theory BBC (2003) also replaces the love to a young man to deceased son Hamnet.

...As a decrepit father takes delight  
To see his active child do deeds of youth,  
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,  
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.  
'For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,  
Or any of these all, or all, or more,  
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit.

*Sonnets No. 38-39* again repeat the theme of admiration and love through confession. In the next few sonnets, the author mentions another young man's transgressions. This time however, it is a transgression with a woman. Although, it seems, Shakespeare does not reproach this act with the young man at all. Even the relationship between a young man and this woman formed at the initiation of Shakespeare for the reason of persuading The Fair Youth to have descendants. "... But here's the joy; my friend and I are one; Sweet flattery! Then she loves but me alone!" (*Sonnet No. 42*).

In a similar mood are alternately saturated *Sonnets No.43-51*, whether it is separation due to travelling away from home and subsequent sadness, reproaches and confessions of love, praise and criticism or incitement to separation and repeated admiration for a lover. *Sonnets No.52-61* still have themes of love, beauty, immortal power of poetry, the transience of beauty and arrogance.

In *Sonnets, 62-63*, there is the main theme, time. Time, a destroying element, is depicted here as an ocean, absorbing everything. This phenomenon is also described as a precious treasure, which should not be wasted. The only salvation is immortality of verses.

Special attention should be given to the *Sonnet No. 66*. It is a poem surrounding all the frustration of the corruption of the world, past and present, and criticizing all according to human society. This confession to the human race deserves the entire citation:

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,  
 "As, to behold desert a beggar born,  
 And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,  
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,  
 And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,  
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,  
 And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,  
 And strength by limping sway disabled,  
 And art made tongue-tied by authority,  
 And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,  
 And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,  
 And captive good attending captain ill:  
     Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,  
     Save that, to die, I leave my love alone".

A very fundamental change occurs from the *Sonnet No. 68* on, where the poet matures to a kind of enlightenment. He does not admire the beauty of the young man; rather he starts to focus on his soul. The author discovers that the young man is not as beautiful inwardly as he is externally. The young man's depravity in the poems is attributed to his corruption by the high society. "To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds: But why thy odor matcheth not thy show, The solving is this, that thou grow quite common" (*Sonnet No.69*).

In sonnet No.71, due to poet's poor health the author begins physically feel the panic, the panic of death and consequently the loss of his beloved. "After my death, - dear love, forget me quite" (*Sonnet No.72*). Shakespeare urges his love to do not confer grief over poem's loss.

These almost identical themes the poet applies until the next suspension on The Rival Poet in poems 78-80 and then also *Sonnets 82-87*, all the *Sonnets* to number 101 - 103.

In these three poems, the author expresses apologies for the deficiency of inspiration. It is a berating Muse for a long time, and it does not let the poet continue in his creation, therefore the author is forced to cease his work. "Where art thou, Muse, That thou forget'st so long, to speak of that which gives thee all thy might? /" (*Sonnet No.100*)

The following verses until *Sonnet No.126* are only minimally different from the previous topics. The recurring themes of the continuation of beauty, the theme of arrogance and the theme of the corruption of society, tell the story of infinity and the indestructibility of

love. These will triumph over the love - over the death. The ridiculing of death, through its urgency and obviousness, finishes the *Sonnet No. 126*: “May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill. Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure; She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure: Her audit, though delay’d, answer’d must be, And her quietus is to render thee./”

## **The Rival Poet**

If we proceed to the detailed investigation of the fraction of the sonnets, we notice in *Sonnets No. 78 and 79*, there is the only the mention to The Rival Poet and the poems are not addressed directly to him. Here is a small indication:

...He robs thee of and pays it thee again.  
He lends thee virtue and he stole that word  
From thy behavior; beauty doth he give  
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford  
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.  
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,  
Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.

The mood of the *Sonnet No.80* radiates pure desperation and the author’s self-esteem and pride seems to be in ruins. Shakespeare compares his patron’s heart to the wide ocean, The Rival Poet to the noble ship and the modest boat to himself. Shakespeare wants to say that he gladly falls (as this modest boat) to the sea bottom. It is an analogy of descend the rankings of the fame and the popularity in the patron’s eyes. It emerges from the poem that the author is able to do anything for regaining the favour of his beloved friend.

.... O, how I faint when I of you do write,  
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,  
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,  
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!.....  
But since your worth, wide as the ocean is,  
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,

My saucy bark inferior far to his  
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.  
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,  
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;  
Or being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,  
He of tall building and of goodly pride:  
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,  
The worst was this; my love was my decay.

In *Sonnet No. 81*, there is again mentioned the topic of immortality which is caused by the power of poetry. "Your monument shall be my gentle verse, Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read, And tongues to be your being shall rehearse, When all the breathers of this world are dead;" The poet expects that his patron will continue to live in the words of the author's poems.

It is worth mentioning the following *Sonnet No.85*. The poet assimilates the affection of his patron (and probably the lover), to The Rival Poet as the infidelity of his own muses. The author is ashamed to write his poetry of love to his patron. He feels overshadowed by the embellished poetry written by The Rival Poet. However, he promotes his opinion that the strong emotion of love is more important than whatever sublime words:

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,  
While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,  
Reserve their character with golden quill,  
And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd.  
I think good thoughts while others write good words,  
And, like unletter'd clerk, still cry 'Amen'  
To every hymn that able spirit affords  
In polish'd form of well-refined pen.  
Hearing you praised, I say "Tis so, 'tis true,"  
And to the most of praise add something more;  
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,  
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.  
Then others for the breath of words respect,  
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

The remaining *Sonnet No. 86* compare the Rival to a demonically based human being: “He, nor that affable familiar ghost Which nightly gulls him with intelligence.../”

The mood of this series is to feel the despair of losing his beloved, and the following rhymes propose humiliation of the author: “For bending all my loving thoughts on thee, The injuries that to myself I do, Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me. Such is my love, to thee I so belong, That for thy right myself will bear all wrong. /” (*Sonnet No.88*)

## **The Dark Lady**

The theme of The Dark Lady is elaborated in *Sonnets No. 127-152*. It is in direct contrast the poems The Fair Youth, where the description of love was predominantly interpreted as imposing and pure feeling and was mainly about the relationship of a sexual nature and longing passion.

*Sonnet no. 127*, as mentioned above, is an admiration of beauty designed. Beauty simple and unadorned (In Elizabethan times it was very fashionable to wear very heavy unnatural make-up and wigs. People also used to wear mostly black clothes).

This woman obviously had a swarthy facial appearance, which was at that time considered unacceptable in higher society, but Shakespeare was very impressed with the woman’s appearance. “Yet so they mourn, Becoming Of Their woe, That every tongue says, beauty should look so ...” (*Sonnet No.127*).

Another poem is a perfectly passionate confession to describe a seemingly ordinary topic, playing a spinet. However, for example, the rhymes: “Making dead wood more Blest Than living lips. Since sauce jacks so happy are in this,” ... (*Sonnet No.128*) do not leave anyone in doubt that even the playing the spinet, prove his poetic genius to capitalize on passionate emotion.

*Sonnet No. 129* is an attack on the author’s own conscience. The text says it at all:

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
Is lust in action; and till action, lust  
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,

Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,  
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had  
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait  
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;  
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;  
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;  
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;  
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.  
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well  
to shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

*Sonnet No. 130-132* is a list of irony and cynicism where Shakespeare praises his mistress and ridicules her. It highlights the mistresses' magic and honesty over hypocrisy and deceptive flattery.

*Sonnets No. 133-134* are probably the reproach the betrayal of this lady and friend of Shakespeare's. "...Him have I lost, thou hast both HIM and me: He pays the whole, and yet am I not free?" (*Sonnet no. 134*). Rhymes from the *Sonnet No.133* are obvious evidence to these two men, Shakespeare and his friend, who were longing for the woman and strongly blinded by this longing: "...is't not enough to torture me alone, But slave to slavery my friend sweet'st must be..." (*Sonnet no. 133*).

In *Sonnets No. 136 – 148*, a change in the love to the Dark Lady is revealed. The passionate feelings with sexual overtones develop a strong sense of the author and he is fully blinded by a sincere love for a woman. This sentiment is again consequently followed by a wave of jealousy. Shakespeare, however, is aware of his advanced age. In comparison with the section of *The Fair Youth*, the jealousy has more peaceful mood. In *Sonnet No. 138*, author's mental maturity is exemplarily indicated:

And wherefore say not I that I am old?  
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,  
And age in love loves not to have years told:  
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,  
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

In these sonnets it is also evident that the poet, apart from The Dark Lady, is strongly enamoured. It seems that The Lady is a very cruel and merciful woman and she considers their relationship as a kind of entertainment. In *Sonnet No. 139*, author attributes to Lady's eyes a power to kill:

O, call not me to justify the wrong  
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;  
Wound me not with thine eye but with thy tongue;  
Use power with power and slay me not by art.  
Tell me thou lovest elsewhere, but in my sight,  
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside:  
What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might  
Is more than my o'er-press'd defense can bide?  
Let me excuse thee: ah! my love well knows  
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies,  
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,  
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:  
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,  
Kill me outright with looks and rid my pain.

The remaining *Sonnets* again list the above-mentioned topics of the lover of Shakespeare and his friend. Infidelity, jealousy of the poet, also attacks the author's own conscience, guilt, anger, pride and hypocrisy.

The final two Sonnets of this collection deal with the immortality of love, entirely unrelated to the theme of The Dark Lady.

## **SCEPTICISM, IRONY, AND HUMOR OF LOVE**

The irony in Shakespeare's works is widely represented. It is well known from the lexical dictionaries that irony is a simple translation of ambiguity. Ironic expression is one element in the literature, and we are never certain exactly, what is meant by this term; however, the expression can have many interpretations. Obviously, it is also one of the most important functions of the literature. Its function is to attract readers by this contrast and involve him into the matter or the ideas of the text.

Shakespeare was a perfect master of the ambiguity and his ironic interpretation of a deliberate incompleteness inevitably requires absolute concentration. Considering the fact that some of the nuances of the poet's work are almost undetectable, we can say that Shakespeare's readers cannot only be ordinary readers, they must have a sense of detail and the ability to read "between the lines". Alternatively, Shakespeare's readers should also have a "Shakespearean sixth sense".

It is a subconsciously known fact that Shakespeare's works affect the outside world not only for its enthusiasm, positive spirit, and contagious happiness, but also for endless passion, scepticism, and deep sorrow. In addition, these feelings and moods relate to a single magic word - love. Love in several forms, and love in relationships between men and women. In *The Sonnets*, it is possible to say that the author set a pattern or a type of these amorous relationships and it is not important whether it is a passionate love for The Fair Youth or The Dark Lady. Predominantly, at the beginning of each series, it is a strong outburst of emotion, which affects the entire author's being, mind, and heart. It gives the impression that his whole being exploded with sensuality. In my opinion, Shakespeare often dealt with moral.

The case of The Fair Youth encourages marrying because it is correct, despite the fact that he may lose his beloved one. Very ironic is the fact that he loved a person of the same gender, while occasionally described the love as paternal.

In the subsequent point of the scheme of this series, arriving an ironic change, when the author explodes with torn emotions. These are jealousy and despair over the possible loss of his lover. In Shakespeare's poems it is often apparent the conflict between morality and the power of love or passion and desire.

A contradiction between selfishness and altruism can often be seen in the love for this young man. It seems that only in this series dedicated to the love confession in series The Fair



Youth; it is not possible to talk really about irony. It is here only to describe the power of love, love, infinite and immortal. However, in the series dedicated *The Rival Poet*, there are a number of ironic expressions. In *Sonnet No. 84*, there is an illustrious example of this expression.

Who is it that says most? Which can say more  
Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?  
In whose confine immured is the store  
Which should example where your equal grew.  
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell  
That to his subject lends not some small glory;  
But he that writes of you, if he can tell  
That you are you, so dignifies his story,  
Let him but copy what in you is writ,  
Not making worse what nature made so clear,  
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,  
Making his style admired every where.  
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,  
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

Author derides the unnatural praise, written by *The Rival Poet*. He claims that it is necessary to describe the “Gift of Nature” merely slightly embellished. Excessive praise degrades true beauty of the young man; even *The Fair Youth* is definitely pleased by these overstated verses.

It is apparent that further along in the poems Shakespeare suffers a change in mood of scepticism. The author suffers from strong love for the young man, and it literally kills him, being conscious of the love that can never be fulfilled. The more he becomes aware of this inaccessibility, the more self-destructive it is love of his beloved. We can say - this is the love of scepticism, the tragic unfilled love.

On the other hand, personal irony and humour are prevalent in the following series, *The Dark Lady*. It seems in this case the author could not resist the temptation and its moral prejudices, and he is enthused by an illicit love for a married woman. Here the author sees himself in the hell of religious destruction and in the grip of great desire.

In Sonnet No.150, there is the pun combined with irony. Author falls deeper into the affection for The Dark Lady in spite of her sinfulness. The irony consists in the fact, that the reason of this sinfulness is illicit relationship with the poet.

O, from what power hast thou this powerful might  
With insufficiency my heart to sway?  
To make me give the lie to my true sight,  
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?  
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,  
That in the very refuse of thy deeds  
There is such strength and warrantise of skill  
That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?  
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more  
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?  
O, though I love what others do abhor,  
With others thou shouldst not abhor my state;  
If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,  
More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

In view of the use of humorous passages in the collection, it is worth mentioning the controversial and often discussed *Sonnet No.20*.

According to Hilský (2011), the *Sonnet No.20* is a confession of love and the Renaissance praise of adored and cherished beings. It is either a poetic jest or a poetic anecdote which may offend a person who has no sense of humour.

And for a woman wert thou first created;  
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,  
And by addition me of thee defeated,  
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.  
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,  
Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

If we take into account that “The one thing” or “The Treasure” is the most important object that makes a man a true male, precisely, this humorous passage, in my opinion, led to numerous speculations about Shakespeare’s homosexuality.

What did probably say Shakespeare graceful aristocratic patron, when he learned in the twentieth poem that Nature created him originally as a woman? The Nature later decided to change his gender because it wanted make love with him. (Hilský, 2011, p.164)

As Hilský (2011) mentioned in his epilogue, Shakespeare, contrasting the other renaissance Sonneteers, does not use any proper name, and this shows Shakespeare as a timeless author. The only name the poet used in *Sonnets No. 135-136* was a humorous pun with his own name and the theme is the content of the previous two poems.

The sea all water, yet receives rain still  
And in abundance addeth to his store;  
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will  
„One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.  
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;  
Think all but one and me in that one Will.

According to Štollová (2011), Shakespeare pays great attention to the ambiguous puns; they are (as was already mentioned above) closely tied with irony.

This led the poet to maximal tense of language, particularly the use of multiple meanings at once - puns. Erotic ambiguities are characteristic immediately for sonnets dedicated to *The Dark Lady*, and there is no attempt to hide the sexual desire.

Another example of the irony of these puns is the final couplet of sonnet 42. The theme is a love triangle, and poet’s infidelity with The Dark Lady.

The poet, as Štollová (2011) claimed, uses puns to hide his pain by convincing him, that the friend, The Fair Youth, loves Shakespeare’s mistress. The author in the final couplet of *Sonnet No. 42* emphasizes his unity with his friend. In fact, it is a vicarious love affair with the poet, as well as a poet’s friend. The word love is here understood in a spiritual and pure sense: “But here’s the joy: my friend and I are one. Sweet flatt’ry! Then she loves but me alone! /” (*Sonnet No. 4*).

The collection is full of great reversals. The principal topics turn into existential themes with the combination of natural amorous motives. Individual images are based on the

specifically contained reality of the world. The collection is filled with a more pessimistic, sceptical mood. It might be attributed to the author's feeling of the advanced age.

In his work, it is possible to read a more optimistic tone, and it is contained in the themes of love and death, tied together with their inner core. Death is in the form of Shakespearean poems materially included in the meanings, associated with the aiming of the human being:

...The prey of worms, my body being dead,  
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,  
Too base of thee to be rememb'ed.  
The worth of that is that, which it contains,  
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

This meaning in *Sonnet No.74* is the expressions of respect for human life, and the celebration of the victory of love over death. People are obviously heading for extinction. Therefore, physical construction is temporary. It is different however, with the spiritual part of human existence. Its principles, and the spiritual nature of man himself, remain as a heritage, and a residue of human life.

At the same time, they are evidence of its meaning, existence, love, and enthusiasm for life, defiance in resistance to destiny and death. This defiance against the predetermination of human destiny is gaining in Shakespeare enthusiastic form of the celebration of human life and its beauty. This is Shakespearean poetry.

The exciting passion and strong emotion are a manifestation of this rebelliousness, and it is an icon of beauty and immortality of love and poetry. Where these aspects are present, death is no longer threatening for the poet, it is the destruction of the body but not the mind or soul.

Against my love shall be, as I am now,  
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'er-worn;  
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow  
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn  
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night,  
And all those beauties whereof now he's king  
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,

Stealing away the treasure of his spring;  
For such a time do I now fortify  
Against confounding age's cruel knife,  
That he shall never cut from memory  
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:  
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,  
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

As mentioned above in *Sonnet No.63*, love and death are not to be presented as inaccessible unreal values; they could be a substantial part of a human being. *The Sonnets* is a collection of poems based on the suggestions of specific moments of author's life, his feelings in an atmosphere in which his world is enacted. This also leaves space for the reader and his own interpretation of ideas and the use of irony.

The power of love according to Shakespeare never fails at the end of human life, for its existence is strengthened by the desire, as well, as anger and jealousy, for his love is exciting and brusque. Shakespeare's love is also selfish and possessive. The poet agonizes himself with uncertainty, and desperation. His love desires to be heard.

The intensity covers a wide collection of emotions. Fear, despair, pain are combined with passion, desire, and determination. All these emotions are related to the essence of love.

An essential part in Shakespeare's work is human isolation, the absurdity of isolation in a world filled with people. Human life is finite and leads to the conclusion, that Death; it is the fate of all of us. The word Death is often written with capital letter D. The author uses this connection often, and it seems to intensify the urgency of the death: "So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men, And Death once dead, there's no more dying then..." (*Sonnet No.146*).

In the death, every man, is always alone. Shakespeare is affected with a sense of hopelessness, futility, and resignation to his life expectancy. Imaginary spiritual and material values disappear. The resignation is understandable, however it immediately raises the hope and expectation of positive aspects, as can be seen in *Sonnet No.29*:

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone bewEEP my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings  
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

In my opinion, the purpose of Shakespeare's poetry is not to impress, flourish, and ornate the reader's sensibilities, though express his own inner experiences. These experiences are frankly expressed as well as all feelings in the collection. It seems that the poet is not afraid of criticism from the reader; he is entirely freed from it. All of these aspects are then left to the reader's considering.

## CONCLUSION

This collection of poems is analyzed from the perspective of several literary theorists and critics, and parts of this thesis are an analysis of my perspective on this work. In the introduction of this work, I mentioned a list of topics on which it is concentrated.

The subsequent task was to enlighten the readers to the pattern of the atypical Sonnet to complete a picture of the song's structures. Another task was to explain the contents of these unique poems to the reader and to focus on the specific confession of love and other emotions.

In this collection Shakespeare shows us different kinds of love and emotions, whether it is The Fair Youth, the Dark Lady or The Rival Poet. In all series there is a strong variety of views is exchanged. In the first case, it is not important whether the emotions for the young man are homosexual or paternal love. In addition, passionate emotions such as jealousy emerge in the series dedicated to The Rival Poet, and violent sexual desire in the series called The Dark Lady. In comparison to classic sonnets where love is idealized everywhere, Shakespeare's The Sonnets is complicated and even confusing.

It seems when the author is not torn by emotions, the poems have a hint of morals and self-criticism. This is the reality of the series dedicated to The Dark Lady, where the author alternates between the desire for this woman and with explosions of tormented conscience. The collection is therefore very widely alternating the enumeration of emotions. Love changes very frivolously here. Romantic love, pure or sentimental is followed by passionate erotic love. All these feelings are obviously essential for human life.

As it was mentioned before, *The Sonnets* are arranged in particular series. The thematic proximity of every series is determined by their strong focus on the author's own experiences and reflections.

In this way, the author reveals the complete spectrum of existential themes in the poems. The theme of loneliness of man in his own world is alternating with the object of love in various forms supplying them with the true meaning of human life. Likewise, we meet the motif of death and transience of human existence.

Shakespeare tries to contrast his predecessors and contemporaries by demonstrating the transience of human beauty and life to the reader. He declares that true beauty is inside a person, not on the surface. Therefore, he urges his friend to procreate and warns him against falsity and superficiality. Everyone who grows older loses his or her physical beauty and has almost nothing left. Only children consequently retain their beauty for future generations. He

warns him, as well, that his beauty disappears, only his own conscience remains, and friends who honour him in old age are worthy.

In the series, the author also criticizes the superficiality of the former society. He himself falls in love with a woman who is not very beautiful but her being is passionate and sincere, contrasting the superficial and overly embellished beauty of other women.

In addition to love, another important motive, the time, is illustrated here. Time and its inexorability, the urgency and the damage it could cause. However, the poet believes to facilitate the immortality of poetry as a kind of art that can overcome and conquer. Because the beauty is imprinted into poems, they survive the ages.

Another issue mentioned in this collection is selfishness and jealousy. These properties are superimposed through all sets. Although, a wide range of lofty words full of love, represents the series dedicated to a young friend, tenderness and beauty. Sometimes to the poems appears to have a spine of jealousy, especially in relation to a young man with a foreign woman, or in the rapprochement with The Rival Poet. Shakespeare, through his deep emotion, he cannot help these selfish, very often hysterically jealous reactions.

Afterwards, the author searches his own conscience, he is aware of such a low sense; he berates himself for this sense. Immediately, however, in the next few poems, he cannot help himself and again he outpours a tumultuous bout of bitterness about the beloved friend or mistress and their infidelity. In the case of The Dark Lady the poet himself transgresses, hence there is a paradox. The author, though unfaithful himself, is jealous of the infidelity of his mistress.

This theme is logically followed with the emotion of self-mutilation, related to the question of the merits of the young man's attention and love. The poet feels inferior quality, especially in the matter of his verses, he feels too old and unattractive. It is ironic with the purpose of such an enormous bard, that Shakespeare is undoubtedly, could descend with such scepticism.

One of the main issues in the chapter of Addressees was the analysis of the potential candidates for The Youth Fair, The Rival Poet and The Dark Lady.

The Fair Youth could possibly be The Earl of Southampton or the Earl of Pembroke, whereas the candidates for The Rival Poet are well known names. They are Christopher Marlowe, George Chapman and the most controversial The Dark Lady who could most likely be the maid of honour of Queen Elizabeth, Madam Mary Fitton. Here, of course, it is mere conjecture.



In the following chapter, several aspects of Shakespearean poetry are analyzed, especially irony and the reality of life. Another important part of the author's work is of course scepticism, but also the optimistic and humorous outlook on the world and on life.

...To this day, no one knows exactly when, and under what circumstances, Shakespeare wrote sonnets. Undeniable is the fact that the book, which was entitled Shakespeare's Sonnets, was first published in June 1609. Equally, it is certain, that it was a pirate edition of publisher Thomas Thorpe, and that the issue of Shakespeare's sonnets did not know, did not carry the author's corrections and that determined the order of sonnets. No other work of Shakespeare, perhaps with the exception of Hamlet, arouses as many comments, conjecture and speculation as the sonnet. The only indisputable certainty is simple, but extremely important fact that the sonnets are. (Hilský, 2011, p.165)

To sum up the main task of the thesis was the transformation of love in *The Sonnets*. These kinds of love evidently transform from beginning to the end of the entire collection. In all series, pure and honest emotions alternate. I compared all sentiments falling to each addressee.

In the section of Sonnets devoted to The Fair Youth, it is paternal and amicable love when author confers advices to the young man. In this series, Platonic love predominantly appears in this series. The author declares his admiration for The Fair Youth.

The jealous or possessive love pervade sequences dedicated both men – The Fair Youth and The Rival poet. Sceptic love extends throughout the whole collection and it engages in question of death.

The sexual or even vulgar love and consequently guilty love is an exclusive matter of the series devoted to The Dark Lady where the author declares his indomitable passion for this woman. However, over the time, the author's ardour turns into the colossal amorousness which later borders on the obsession. The more is the poet in love with this woman, the more is The Dark Lady cruel.

The Sonnets, written by William Shakespeare, is a reflection of his originality, which the language is able to illustrate in its internal interaction as well as external humanity.

The simple reality is that does not matter if our life is tragicomic, however, miserable or successful, the one sense it gives is only love. Love, the painful and joyful, intoxicating or unfulfilled, love so violent it is also melancholic.

Love, natural, physical, erotic or platonic, love as the value of spiritual virtues. This all-including emotion is the incentive force of all humanity.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Hlavním úkolem této bakalářské práce je rozlišit konkrétní části sbírky světoznámých sonetů básníka a dramatika Williama Shakespeara, jejichž hlavním tématem je nadřazenost čisté lásky nad honbou za bohatstvím, důležitost milovat protějšek i s jeho chybami, vnímání koloběhu života a přírody ve vztahu k ztracení nebo získání lásky. Nad všemi těmito tématy však stojí jediné stěžejní téma celé sbírky. Jedná se o téma nesmrtelnosti. Vzhledem k tomu že byly sonety podle teoretiků a analytiků Shakespearova díla pravděpodobně psány v průběhu několika let, je důležité zaměřením na jejich postupnou transformaci a vývoj založených na duševním zrání autora.

Práce je rozdělena do sedmi částí. První část je věnována naprosto unikátní Shakespearovské formě a struktuře psaní sonetů a spekulacím o jejich autobiografii. Následující kapitoly této práce se zabývají zaměřením na rozdělení této básnické sbírky. Určité části tohoto díla jsou adresovány třem rozdílným charakterům: „The Fair Youth, the Dark Lady a Rival Poet”. V závěrečné kapitole je hlavním tématem skepticismus, ironie a humor lásky. Shrnutí sumarizuje všechny zmíněné otázky. Závěrem této práce je výčet děl, z kterých bylo v práci čerpáno.