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PEDRO CAVA

SHAKESPEARE'S "PROCREATION SONNETS" AND OVID'S NARCISSUS

BELO HORIZONTE

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PEDRO CAVA

SHAKESPEARE'S "PROCREATION SONNETS" AND OVID'S NARCISSUS

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Professor Advisor: Luiz Fernando Ferreira Sá

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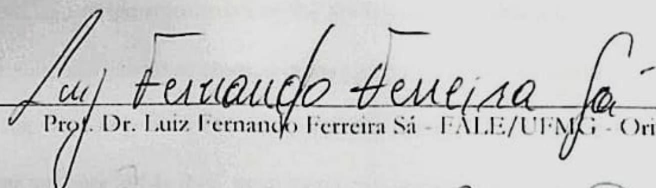

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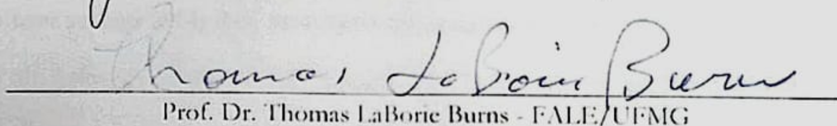

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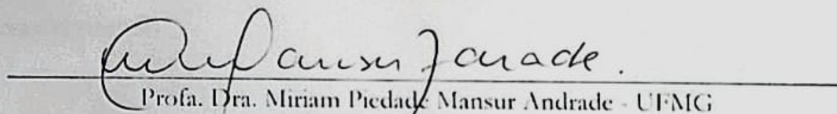

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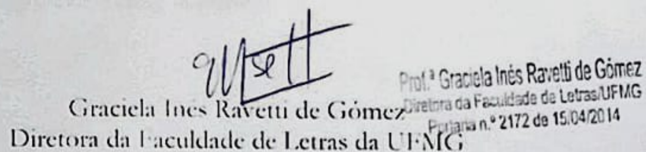

Prof.ª Graciela Inés Ravetti de Gómez
Diretora da Faculdade de Letras/UFMG
Portaria n.º 2172 de 15/04/2014

Graciela Ines Ravetti de Gómez
Diretora da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG

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Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Av. Antônio Carlos, 6.627 - Campus Pampulha - 31270-901 - Belo Horizonte, MG
Telefone (31) 3409-5112 - Fax (31) 3409-5490 - www.letras.ufmg.br/poslit - e-mail: poslit@letras.ufmg.br

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RESUMO

O objetivo principal desta dissertação foi analisar os paralelos entre o mito de Narciso, no Livro III das *Metamorfoses* de Ovídio, na tradução de Arthur Golding de 1567, e os primeiros dezoito poemas dos *Sonetos* de Shakespeare, dos quais os primeiros dezessete são habitualmente conhecidos como "sonetos da procriação". Em meu comentário analítico acerca de cada soneto individual, busquei oferecer interpretações dos poemas e de seus versos e explicações quanto aos dispositivos retóricos, à versificação − nos casos em que é mais relevante para a interpretação −, às imagens, às emoções, ao estilo e ao tom e, evidentemente, às ressonâncias do mito nos sonetos. Inicio com a identificação do jovem interlocutor como criatura mais bela e com sua caracterização como narcisista no Soneto 1; procedo a uma análise das variadas formas pelas quais o eu-lírico expressa o problema narcísico de seu interlocutor nos sonetos de 2 a 14; então investigo a solução alternativa e imaginativa que ele encontra para o problema de seu amado nos sonetos de 15 a 17; e, por fim, trato essa solução, no Soneto 18, como uma metamorfose do jovem interlocutor − argumentando que esse último soneto deve também ser considerado parte dos sonetos da procriação.

Palavras-chave: Shakespeare; Ovídio; *Sonetos*; sonetos da procriação; *Metamorfoses*; o mito de Narciso; narcisismo; imortalidade na poesia.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this thesis has been to analyze the close parallels between the myth of Narcissus in Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in the 1567 translation of Arthur Golding, and the first eighteen poems of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the first seventeen of which are commonly referred to as the "procreation sonnets." In the analytic commentary on each individual sonnet, I have endeavored to give an account of interpretations of the poems and lines, of rhetorical devices, of versification where it is most relevant for interpretation, of imagery, of emotion, of style and tone, and of the resonances of the myth in the sonnets. I begin with the identification of the young man as the fairest creature and his characterization as narcissistic in Sonnet 1, proceed to analyze the multitude of ways in which the speaker expresses his addressee's narcissistic problem over sonnets 2-14, then investigate the imaginative, alternative solution he comes up with to his beloved's problem over sonnets 15-17, and finally address this solution as a metamorphosis of the young man in Sonnet 18−which, as I argue, should be counted as one of the procreation sonnets.

Key-words: Shakespeare; Ovid; the *Sonnets*; the procreation sonnets; the *Metamorphoses*, the myth of Narcissus; narcissism; immortality in poetry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction…………………………………………………………………………..9

Sonnet 1……………………………………………………………………………21

Sonnet 2……………………………………………………………………………32

Sonnet 3……………………………………………………………………………41

Sonnet 4……………………………………………………………………………53

Sonnet 5……………………………………………………………………………61

Sonnet 6……………………………………………………………………………67

Sonnet 7……………………………………………………………………………76

Sonnet 8……………………………………………………………………………83

Sonnet 9……………………………………………………………………………88

Sonnet 10…………………………………………………………………………..96

Sonnet 11…………………………………………………………………………104

Sonnet 12…………………………………………………………………………112

Sonnet 13…………………………………………………………………………119

Sonnet 14…………………………………………………………………………126

Sonnet 15…………………………………………………………………………131

Sonnet 16…………………………………………………………………………142

Sonnet 17…………………………………………………………………………151

Sonnet 18…………………………………………………………………………157

Conclusion………………………………………………………………………..168

Works Cited……………………………………………………………………...186

INTRODUCTION

In the very first line directly addressed to the beautiful young man in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the speaker establishes a clear parallel between the youth and the mythological Narcissus. Let us start therefore with a recollection of the Narcissus tale from Book III of the *Metamorphoses*.[1] Narcissus is a beautiful young man of sixteen who is desired by men, women, and nymphs, and about whom the prophet Tiresias has said that he should live a long life as long as "him self he doe not know" (433). Perhaps because he is desired by many, and perhaps also because of his proud nature, he does not give himself to anyone and has never known love. One of these people whom he has rejected, feeling angry, says a prayer to the goddess Nemesis, asking that Narcissus taste of his own poison, that he should fall in love and not find joy in what he desires, and the goddess hears the prayer. One day, as he is hunting deer in the woods, he comes upon a beautiful meadow and a pristine water spring, untouched both by man and beast. When he lies down near the edge of the water so as to drink and quench his thirst, there on the water he sees his reflection for the first time and falls ardently in love with his own image, believing it to be a different person. He stares intently at it, and it stares back at him; he then tries to hug and kiss and touch the object of his love, which tries to reciprocate, but whenever he touches the spring, the resulting ripples in the water disturb the image. So he is confined to contemplating the object of his passion without ever having his desire for it satisfied, until at length he realizes that object is himself. Desolate, yet unable to give up his love and go back to where he came, he withers away and dies, and his corpse is transformed into a flower–the daffodil or narcissus.

In the second quatrain of Sonnet 1, the speaker says to his addressee: "But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes" (1.5). *Contracted to* means primarily "betrothed to," as

[1] Nims, John Frederick, ed. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*. Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2000. All my line references in relation to the myth throughout the thesis refer to Book III of this edition.

several commentators, such as W. G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath and Stephen Booth,[2] tell us, but the phrase evidently suggests also a sense of "limited to" or "focused on," that is, of looking exclusively at–and so having the "attention restricted to."[3] This phrase is then superficially ambiguous. In its primary sense, the youth is engaged to himself; in the secondary, the youth only has eyes for himself; in either case, the implication is that he is the object of his own love–in other words, that he is like Narcissus.

The next two lines in the poem (1.6 and 1.7) make the parallel even clearer. "But thou … / Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel" echoes two distinct but similar lines from the Narcissus myth in Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as translated by Arthur Golding: "He is the flame that settes on fire, and thing that burneth tooe" (536), and, again, "… I doe both set on fire, / And am the same that swelteth too" (584-85). Shakespeare's line and both of Golding's lines evoke the image of a candle. And line 1.7 ("Making a famine where abundance lies") closely resembles in its concept line 587 from Golding's translation: "… my plentie makes me poore." As Jonathan Bate notes,

> The most frequently cited words of that lovely boy, 'inopem me copia fecit,' 'my plentie makes me poore,' are improvised upon in the very first sonnet … Not only is famine in abundance a version of poverty in plenty, the image of the self-regarding eye is also a sure sign of Narcissus, and the self-consuming flame is based on Ovid's densely packed line, 'uror amore mei: flammas moveoque feroque' (iv. 464 'I burn with love of my own self: I both kindle the flames and suffer them').[4]

Moreover, the candle image is invoked at least twice more by Ovid in the fable: Echo, after seeing Narcissus, "waxed warme" (462), and as she approached him "[t]he hoter ever did she waxe as neerer to hir flame" (474); and Narcissus, apart from being compared to a candle in

[2] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, p. 136; and Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. London: University of London Press Ltd., 1964, p. 6. See also West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. London: Duckworth Overlook, 2007; Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Nashville: Nelson, 1997; Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1971.

[3] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 6.

[4] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 97-98.

the two passages I have mentioned, is also said to be as "lith and supple waxe" that "doth melt against the burning flame" (613). Thus the parallel between the youth and Narcissus is established not only by the speaker's depiction of the youth as a man in love with himself, but also by the speaker's very concepts and words, which combine in paraphrases of Golding's lines about Narcissus.

I argue in my thesis that this parallel between the youth and Narcissus informs the drama of feelings and ideas that makes up the plot of the procreation sonnets, and that this drama has its resolution in Sonnet 18, which should therefore be considered as part of the subsequence. From the youth's first characterization as a Narcissus figure in Sonnet 1 to his artificial metamorphosis into a flower in Sonnet 18, the procreation sonnets play out in lyric mode the central elements of the Narcissus myth as told by Ovid–the unsurpassed beauty of the young man, his infatuation with himself, the self-consumption of his beauty, and his transformation into a flower. And these elements are re-enacted lyrically because the parallel is primarily subjective: the speaker sees the youth as a kind of Narcissus, and his understanding of the myth shapes the way in which he responds to his addressee's situation.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in general, and his myth of Narcissus, in particular, enjoyed great prestige in the Elizabethan Renaissance and were a source for some of the major poets and object of many translations. According to R.W. Malsen, "the first Elizabethan version of an Ovidian myth was an anonymous poem, *The Fable of Ovid treting of Narcissus,*"[5] which was published in 1560, five years before Golding's partial translation appeared and seven years prior to his publication of the completed *Metamorphoses*.[6] The second version of an Ovidian fable published in Elizabethan England was Thomas Peend's *The Pleasant Fable of*

[5] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," in *Shakespeare's Ovid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 19.

[6] Talor, A. B. "Introduction," in *Shakespeare's Ovid*, p. 3.

Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, in 1565.[7] Both versions were accompanied by verse epistles that provided moralizing interpretations of the fables; and, as Maslen remarks, "like the unknown poet [of the *Fable of ... Narcissus*], Peend interprets his fable as an allegory of education neglected."[8] The two fables, then, seem to share a thematic interest in a juvenile belief in self-sufficiency that may be termed 'narcissism.'

In 1576, George Gascoigne published his famous satire *The Steele Glass*, which ridiculed the professional, mercantile, and aristocratic segments of England for their narcissistic self- indulgence. As Maslen puts it, "In *The Steele Glass* England becomes a nation of Narcissi, who have abandoned the humanist quest for self-knowledge in favour of a relentless pursuit of self- interest and flattery."[9] In 1586, the first four books of William Warmer's *Albions England* appeared, in which the kings and queens of England are depicted as the descendants of the gods and goddesses who live in Ovid's myths and whose story is followed by "a commentary in the form of an Ovidian fable."[10] The rulers of England are portrayed as narcissists who care for nothing but their own interests, "who are themselves governed by the ghosts of Narcissus and Echo − allegorized as Pride and Flattery − sent to plague humanity by the vindictive gods of the nether regions."[11] And, in 1598, John Marston published *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalions Image*, retelling the story told by Ovid of the sculptor who falls in love with his own sculpture−a story which, therefore, shares some thematic interest with the myth of Narcissus. The fable of Narcissus and the themes associated with it were attractive to the mind of Elizabethan poets.

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[7] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 22.

[8] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 22.

[9] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 26.

[10] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 27.

[11] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 28.

Other publications of the time provide evidence of the Elizabethans' interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in his other works as well. In 1589, Thomas Lodge published *Scylla's Metamorphosis*; in 1595, George Chapman issued his *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*; in 1602, Francis Beaumont released another version of the Hermaphroditus fable in *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*.[12] In addition, Christopher Marlowe did a translation of Ovid's *Amores* which was published in 1600 but which "perhaps circulated among private friends,"[13] and he was working on his version of another Ovidian myth from the *Heroides*, *Hero and Leander*, when he died in 1593. His incomplete original and Chapman's completion of it were both published in 1598. Finally, as Laurence Lerner has noted, "for the true English imitation of the sweet (or sour) and witty Ovid, we should turn to Donne's *Elegies*,"[14] which had as source and model Ovid's *Amores* and was first published in 1633.

The overwhelming presence of Ovid in Elizabethan literature is due in part to the fact that the Latin poet's works, especially the *Metamorphoses*, figured prominently in the syllabi of the grammar schools. From early on in their school life, students would have been

> encouraged to decipher mysteries from the tales in the *Metamorphoses*: to dig beneath its layers of fiction in an effort to recover the most precious secrets of the ancient world, whether moral, philosophical, historical, or scientific.[15]

The *Metamorphoses* was frequent in the students' rhetorical training, which was largely based in Erasmus' *De Copia*, and in which Ovid had pride of place as "the most copious of authors";[16] his characterization of Hecuba in Book XIII of the *Metamorphoses*, for instance,

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[12] Cf. Lerner, Laurence. "Ovid and the Elizabethans," in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 121-135.

[13] Lerner, Laurence. "Ovid and the Elizabethans," p. 124.

[14] Lerner, Laurence. "Ovid and the Elizabethans," p. 125.

[15] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 16.

[16] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 20.

was regarded "as the exemplary illustration of the use of extreme 'copia' to create emotion."[17] Furthermore, the boys in grammar schools "were taught to moralize fables from their first introduction to the Latin tongue";[18] in the upper forms, they had to compose "themes,"[19] that is, essays in which they had to discuss the moral content of a fable and which were meant as preparatory exercises for the study of rhetoric, so that their study of composition in the upper forms also relied heavily on Ovid and on the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's other works−the *Heroides*, the *Fasti*, and the *Tristia*−were also a part of the curriculum,[20] but the *Metamorphoses* was a central piece in education, because "for Elizabethan culture, [it] constituted the richest storehouse of [ancient] mythology."[21]

That Shakespeare was familiar with Ovid's poetry can be immediately observed from some of his works. As G. K. Hunter has remarked, "[the] explicit presence of Ovid is most noticeable in Shakespeare's early works."[22] In fact, Ovid is mentioned by name in three of Shakespeare's plays; in *As You Like It*, Touchstone says to Aubrey: "I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths"[23] (III, iii. 4); in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Holofernes states: "for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy … Ovidius Naso was the man"[24] (IV, ii. 122-124); in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Tranio tells Lucentio not to be "[as] Ovid ... an outcast quite abjur'd"[25] (I, i. 32). Moreover, in *Titus*

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[17] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 20.

[18] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 17.

[19] Maslen, R. W. "Myths exploited: the metamorphosis of Ovid in early Elizabethan England," p. 17.

[20] Talor, A. B. "Introduction," p. 2.

[21] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 12.

[22] Hunter, G. K. "Shakespeare's Reading," in *New Companion to Shakespearean Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, p. 58.

[23] Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Ed. W. J. Craig. London: Oxford University Press, 1905.

[24] Shakespeare, William. *Love's Labour's Lost*. Ed. W. J. Craig. London: Oxford University Press, 1905.

[25] Shakespeare, William. *The Taming of the Shrew*. Ed. W. J. Craig. London: Oxford University Press, 1905.

Andronicus, a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is brought on stage and used as part of the plot of the play[26] (IV, i). Finally, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* had as its epigraph a passage taken from Ovid's *Amores,*[27] which was, as Bate has said, "a proclamation of the poem's affiliation."[28]

Ovid's influence on Shakespeare has long been recognized. In 1598−during Shakespeare's own lifetime−Francis Meres stated that, "As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare, witnes his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c."[29] And Ovid was influential to Shakespeare not only in style, in the "facility and copiousness of mellifluous rhetoric and of verbal wit,"[30] but also as precedent and source for some of his works. Book 10 of the *Metamorphoses* is thought to be the direct source for Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*;[31] Ovid's *Fasti*, Bate tells us, "was the principal source for Shakespeare's second narrative poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*;"[32] and, furthermore, "[his] love lyrics, the *Amores*, are among the key precedents for Shakespeare's

[26] Shakespeare, William. *Titus Andronicus*. Ed. W. J. Craig. London: Oxford University Press, 1905.

[27] Ovid. "Amores." *Sacred-texts.com*, n.d. Web. 30 May 2016, I. XV. 35-6.

[28] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 2.

[29] Meres, Francis. *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury, being the Second Part of Wits Common Wealth*. London: Cuthbert Burbie, 1958.

[30] Hunter, G. K. "Shakespeare's Reading," p. 58.

[31] Mowat, Barbara A, and Werstine, Paul, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poems*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2004, p. 357.

[32] Bate, Jonathan. "Shakespeare's Ovid," in *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*, p. xli.

sonnets."[33] Then, for his unmistakable presence in Shakespeare's plays and poems, Ovid is widely regarded as Shakespeare's "favorite classical poet."[34]

There is also considerable evidence that Shakespeare was familiar with Arthur Golding's 1587 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I have already shown how lines 6 and 7 of Sonnet 1 echo Golding's translation of the Narcissus myth. There is a famous passage in *The Tempest* (V, I, 33-57) which is amply regarded as an echo of both the original of the *Metamorphoses* and Arthur Golding's translation; this has been demonstrated by Jonathan Bates in *Shakespeare and Ovid*[35] and by Charles Martindale in *Ovid Renewed,*[36] and, in connection to this passage, G. K. Hunter also affirms that "[Shakespeare] can augment Golding's translation of Ovid by reference to the original."[37] There is moreover an excerpt from *Venus and Adonis*[38] which W. H. D. Rouse[39] has shown to echo Golding's translation. In addition, the very fact that, at least since Rouse's edition of Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*, this translation has been known as *Shakespeare's Ovid*[40] indicates that critics and editors recognize the influence of Golding on Shakespeare's works.

The parallel between the youth and Narcissus in the procreation sonnets, of course, has not escaped the critics and commentators. Gordon Braden, for example, stated that "[in] the

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[33] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. vii.

[34] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*. See also Hunter, G. K. "Shakespeare's Reading," p. 58; and Frye, Northrop. "How True a Twain," in *The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962, p. 35.

[35] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 8.

[36] Martindale, Charles, ed. *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 19-20.

[37] Hunter, G. K. "Shakespeare's Reading," p. 58.

[38] Mowat, Barbara A, and Werstine, Paul, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poems*, 619ff.

[39] W. H. D. Rouse, ed., *Shakespeare's Ovid, Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, London: De La More Press, 1904, p. V. In the introduction, Rouse stated that "[there] is no doubt that Shakespeare used Golding," alluding to the passages from *The Tempest* and *Venus and Adonis* mentioned above.

[40] Cf. Bate, Jonathan. "Shakespeare's Ovid," in *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*.

procreation sonnets, a reference to the myth of Narcissus is clearly intended;"[41] Jane Hedley said that "narcissism is explicit in these poems … as an attribute of the beloved;"[42] and Northrop Frye called the procreation sonnets the "Awakening of Narcissus."[43] Nevertheless, this parallel has never, to my knowledge, been fully explored. The presence of Narcissus in the *Sonnets* in general and in the procreation cycle in particular is usually perceived as restricted to "narcissism … as an attribute of the beloved"−and in Jane Hedley's case, as an attribute also of the speaker−, but not as a matrix for the plot.

Gordon Braden, for instance, claims that "in the second decade [of the procreation sonnets] … [there] is a departure from the Ovidian territory."[44] But why would Shakespeare introduce in the very first sonnet the theme of the youth's narcissism if he never intended for this theme to have any relevance later on in the subsequence? As Helen Vendler has stated,

> There are two distinguishing features in this originating (but perhaps late-composed) sonnet, both of which we might not expect in such a brief poem: the first is the sheer abundance of values, images, and concepts important in the sequence which are called into play, and the second is the number of significant words brought to our attention. Such a wide sweep leads me to think that the sonnet may have been deliberately composed late, as a "preface" to the others. **The sonnet can be seen**, in sum, **as an index to the rest of the sonnets**, or as a diapason of the notes of the sequence.[45]

It is not necessary to accept Vendler's conjecture about a later date of composition for this sonnet in order to acknowledge the truth of her statement about Sonnet 1 as index to the rest of the sequence, and especially, I would add, to the rest of the procreation sonnets. But if the "values, images, and concepts" introduced in this sonnet are recurrent throughout the

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[41] Braden, Gordon. "Ovid, Petrarch, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," in *Shakespeare's Ovid: The Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 103.

[42] Hedley, Jane. "Since First Your Eye I Eyed: Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Poetics of Narcissism." *Style* 28.1 (1994), pp. 1-30.

[43] Frye, Northrop. "How True a Twain," p. 39.

[44] Braden, Gordon. "Ovid, Petrarch, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," p. 103.

[45] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 47.

sequence−and indeed they are, as Vendler has shown−, it is to be expected that the theme of narcissism will be present at least in the procreation sonnets−and indeed it is, as I shall demonstrate in my thesis.

Objections could be raised to my thesis on the ground that the *Sonnets* are supposedly autobiographical. This is an assumption that has often been made since the dawn of *Sonnets* criticism, starting with Wordsworth's assertion that "[in the *Sonnets*] Shakespeare unlocked his heart"[46] and running all the way up to more recent attempts to identify the real characters and story present in the sequence−for example, in Robert Giroux's *The Book Known as Q*,[47] or in Joseph Pequigney's *Such Is My Love*.[48] As Northrop Frye put it,

> Many readers tend to assume that poetry is a record of experience. … First-hand experience in life and second-hand experience derived from books are correlated with good and less good poetry respectively. Poem A is very good; therefore a genuine experience must lie behind it; Poem B is duller, so it must be a "mere literary exercise," … Included in these assumptions, of course, is the view that convention is the opposite of originality, and the mark of inferior writers. It is particularly the lyric that suffers from such notions, as nobody can do much about the fact that every *play* of Shakespeare's tells a story that he got out of a book.[49]

These assumptions, of course, are not necessarily just. To be sure, I do not deny that the *Sonnets* could be autobiographical, but about this matter the only consensus among critics and commentators is that there is no definitive proof that they are. "There is no actual evidence that the situation was not simply a literary creation," Charles Boyce has stated;[50] Edward

[46] Wordsworth, William. "Scorn Not the Sonnet." *Poetry Foundation*, n.d. Web. 30 May 2016.

[47] Giroux, Robert. *The Book Known as Q: A Consideration of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.

[48] Pequigney, Joseph. *Such Is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

[49] Northrop Frye, "How True a Twain," p. 39.

[50] Boyce, Charles. *Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More*. New York: Roundtable Press, Inc., 1990.

Hubler asserted that "[we] do not know … if [the *Sonnets*] are autobiographical at all;"[51] and James Schiffer, in his review of sonnet criticism in *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*, affirmed: "Around the end of the nineteenth century, … it became increasingly clear that not a shred of factual evidence existed to prove or disprove any of the prevailing biographical theories."[52]

However, my point is that, even if the *Sonnets* were indeed autobiographical, this would not preclude a strictly literary analysis of them, or a study of their sources. Conventionality and sincerity are not mutually exclusive; as Hyder Rollins has remarked, "a poet … can be thoroughly sincere … even while he is borrowing nearly all his subject-matter."[53] In this matter I side with John Kerrigan: "The text is neither fictive nor confessional. Shakespeare stands behind the first person of his sequence as Sidney had stood behind Astrophil–sometimes near the poetic 'I,' sometimes farther off, but never without some degree of rhetorical projection."[54] Or, as W. H. Auden observed, "in one sense the poet is always unlocking his heart," but, in another, "he is always dramatic."[55] Thus, while not denying or affirming that the procreation sonnets are autobiographical, I shall argue that they are, nevertheless, dramatized according to the myth of Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

My argument will take the form of analytic commentary on each individual poem in the procreation sonnets. I have opted for this form of organization because it will allow me to treat the poems in greater detail than if I were to proceed with a thematic analysis, and this way the pieces of evidence of narcissism will be set against the full context of each poem–as

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[51] Hubbler, Edward. "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Commentators," in *The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962.

[52] Schiffer, James, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000.

[53] Rollins, Hyder Edward, ed. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Sonnets*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1944.

[54] Kerrigan, John, ed. *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.

[55] Kirsch, Arthur, ed. *W. H. Auden: Lectures on Shakespeare*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

full a context as I can provide an account of, at least. Thus the reader may be better able to judge the relevance of my observations in relation to the whole of the subsequence. The level of detail enabled by this arrangement will also permit me to treat of matters of versification that I consider relevant with the advantage of not having to send the reader to a separate edition of the *Sonnets* so as to appreciate my commentary. My objective in this thesis is not only to convince the reader of the close parallels between the procreation sonnets and the myth of Narcissus as told by Ovid through Golding but also to furnish him or her with a personal reading of these sonnets in light of the myth, a reading whose development can be followed as the commentary progresses, and which I regard as living testament to the speaker's claim of immortality for his addressee in Sonnet 18: "So long as men can breath, or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (18.13-14). If the speaker's verses are powerful enough to enable the youth to live forever in them, that is because we, as readers, have the power to bring that life to actuality with our eyes. Finally, the sonnets that follow each individual commentary have been extracted from Booth's edition of the *Sonnets*.

Sonnet 1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes, 5
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies–
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring 10
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And tender churl mak'st waste in niggarding.
  Pity the world, or else this glutton be–
  To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

Sonnet 1, in its introductory quality, makes clear the speaker's purpose in the procreation sonnets: to convince the beautiful youth to reproduce so that his beauty will persist in time, beyond his death. This procreation is set as both natural and a duty: it is something that we human beings generally desire, on the one hand, and, on the other, something that we owe to the world–and the youth, on account of his formidable beauty, even more so, as the speaker will argue in some of the later sonnets in the subsequence. The youth, however, is in stark contradiction to this natural principle of life, the principle of preservation of beauty through procreation.

From the first quatrain of the poem to the second, we come down from the speaker's generalized opinion expressed in the first person plural to a direct address accompanied by an adversative conjunction: "But thou." All of the drama of Sonnet 1, and indeed of the procreation sonnets, is anticipated with this phrase in its contrast to the first quatrain. It sets the addressee apart from the whole of humanity in the eyes of the speaker, establishing his condition as abnormal: **we** desire increase, but **thou**–and this contrast is further intensified by the fact that both pronouns, both the *we* of general opinion and the *thou* of direct address,

receive metrical stress. But how exactly is his condition different from that of other human beings?

The youth is "contracted to [his] own bright eyes." *Contracted to* means primarily "betrothed to," as several commentators, such as Ingram & Redpath and Booth,[56] tell us, but the phrase evidently suggests also a sense of "limited to" or "focused on," that is, of looking exclusively at—and so "having the attention restricted to."[57] This phrase is superficially ambiguous. In its primary sense, the youth is engaged to himself; in the secondary, the youth only has eyes for himself; in either case, the implication is that he is the object of his own love; in other words, that he is like Narcissus.

So the very first line directly addressed to the youth in the procreation sonnets clearly establishes him as narcissistic. But the next two lines in the poem (6 and 7) take the association even further: "[thou] Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel" (6) echoes two distinct but similar lines from the Narcissus myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as translated by Golding:[58] "He is the flame that settes on fire, and thing that burneth tooe" (536), the speaker in the *Metamorphoses* says of Narcissus, and, again, "… I doe both set on fire, / And am the same that swelteth too" (584-85), as Narcissus says of himself. In the case of Shakespeare's line and both of Ovid's lines, the image most readily evoked is that of a candle, which feeds its flame with the substance of its own body. And verse 7, "Making a famine where abundance lies," closely resembles in its concept line 587 from Golding's translation:

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[56] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 136, and Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 6. See also West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*; Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1971.

[57] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 6.

[58] Nims, John Frederick, ed. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*.

"… my plentie makes me poore."[59] Thus the parallel between the youth and Narcissus is established not only by the speaker's depiction of the youth as a man in love with himself, but also by the speaker's very concepts and words, which combine in paraphrases of Golding's verses about Narcissus.

This parallel is further strengthened by another possible interpretation of lines 5 and 6. If we read *contracted* in line 5 as "having the attention restricted to," the "light's flame" can be interpreted as the love-struck blaze in the youth's eyes, and the "self-substantial fuel" as the youth's own image, or at least the image of his own eyes. This reading implies that the youth is looking at his eyes in a mirror, or in any case in a mirror-like surface, burning with passion for them. Evidently, the eyes are a synecdoche;[60] it is for his own image that he burns, and not just for the image of his eyes. And the mirror-like surface on which he contemplates his image once again reminds us of Narcissus, who fell in love with himself upon first seeing his own image reflected on the surface of a spring. Line 6 is then, similarly to line 5, superficially ambiguous, for both readings point in the same direction. And both lines draw a clear parallel between the youth and Narcissus.

The youth is his own "foe," too cruel to his own "sweet self." Narcissus' self-love brought about his demise, and perhaps that is what the speaker is hinting at–in his love for himself the youth will cause his own death, and therefore he is his own enemy. Vendler says of the language of the sonnet as a whole that "… the terms of reproach … are preceded, as if involuntarily, by a rhetoric of praise."[61]Accordingly, it is possible to interpret *sweet* as a compliment to the youth on the part of the speaker, in recognition of the addressee's beauty

[59] In addition to that, line 12, with "tender churl" and "waste in niggarding," echoes Ovid's line both in concept and image. This and other financial images will moreover be taken up again in other sonnets in the subcycle, namely, sonnets 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, and 13.

[60] Synecdoche: a type of metonymy in which the whole is substituted for a part or a part for the whole, the general for the specific or the specific for the general. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, pp. 56-58.

[61] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 50.

even in the course of an admonition against him. Yet we can also read it as describing the relationship between the youth and his self–it is *dear* to him. And indeed the words *self* and *sweet* are arranged in the line as such: *self*, *sweet self*, a possible play on words meant to reinforce this reading. The point is that which is so dear to the youth will be his doom–just as it was in Narcissus' case–, an idea that will be developed in later sonnets.

Self-love will not only cause the youth's demise, but also be the source of his unhappiness. "Within thine own bud buriest thy **content**," the speaker tells him; the meter and the rhyme with line 9 move us to read the word as *contént*, meaning happiness, and not as *cóntent*, meaning that which is contained. In procreation lies contentment, but in not reproducing out of narcissistic love the youth denies himself the possibility of joy. That is the speaker's moral here, though we should not forget that Narcissus was deeply unhappy because of the paradoxical nature of his condition, since one cannot be both object and subject of one's own love; therefore self-love entails misery.

The second and third quatrains in the poem are devoted to establishing the youth as a Narcissus figure, which sets him apart from the rest of humanity, represented by the pronoun in the first person plural. But Sonnet 1 begins with a general statement about human beings, "From fairest creatures we desire increase," and the reason for this desire is, according to the speaker, a wish to perpetuate beauty: "[so] That thereby beauty's rose might never die." As Vendler has indicated,[62] this suggests that we have internalized, in aesthetic fashion, the Biblical command to increase and multiply.

But it is not just that we want to procreate with them; the preposition *from* in the first line indicates the starting point of the action of increasing, and therefore places the focus of procreation on the fairest creatures. The alliteration and assonance between creatures and increase, along with the metrical stress of their corresponding syllables, establishes an

[62] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 46.

approximation between the two, and, accordingly, every increase is a creation of a new creature, and only creatures can increase. Furthermore, the word creature is highly evocative of the Bible, which again points to the divine commandment of procreation, the reason for which is the perpetuation of God's creation.

Yet, the fact that we have internalized the divine commandment of procreation in an aesthetic fashion implies that we do not perceive increase in the theological sense. What we desire is not to perpetuate God's creation, but rather to preserve "beauty's rose." This phrase is somewhat enigmatic. Why did the speaker not say, instead, "the rose's beauty?" What is the effect produced by the speaker's hypallage?[63] The phrase "rose's beauty" subjects an abstract concept to a concrete being, i.e., beauty to the rose, whereas "beauty's rose" subjects a concrete being to an abstract concept, i.e., the rose to beauty. The inversion of the expected syntactical order brought about by the figure of speech also entails an inversion of the ordinary ontological order. Here, it is not beauty that belongs to the rose, but rather the rose that belongs to beauty. So what we wish to preserve is not merely the beauty of a particular being, but a particular being who is subjected to beauty. That is why we want increase *from* fairest creatures: what we aim at preserving is the desired creature's concrete participation in universal beauty.

The word *rose*, in Shakespeare's time, aside from denoting the actual flower, could also mean a paragon or prime example of something.[64] If we read it in this sense, the hypallage disappears, but the general meaning of "beauty's rose" remains the same. Beauty is still regarded as a universal, abstract entity to which the desired being is subjected and of which it is an expression. Thus both readings reinforce one another.

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[63] Hypallage: a reversal of order between noun and adjective (anastrophe) in which the reversed elements are not grammatically parallel. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, pp. 42-43.

[64] See Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 135.

We wish to procreate so that, as the desired being gets old and dies, "as the riper should by time decease," his offspring might carry his image forward into the future, "his tender heir might bear his memory." These lines reinforce my reading of lines 1 and 2. Our objective in obtaining procreation from fairest creatures is that their memory, or concrete image of universal beauty, may be conveyed to the future. The internal rhyme between *heir* and *bear* further strengthens the offspring's duty in relation to the beauty of his parent. The foremost reason for procreation, according to the speaker, is the perpetuation of the desired creature's beauty.

The youth, however, is not moved by the same desire that moves others, because he only has eyes for himself. It is with the intent of persuading him of the harmful nature of this immobility that the speaker writes these sonnets. In the first sonnet, the speaker employs a plurality of interpenetrating images combined in catachresis[65] so as to convince him; furthermore, as Vendler has demonstrated,[66] those images engender one another, concurring in a formal reenactment of the procreation which he advocates. This mixing of images establishes a parallel between human being and plants, among which, notably are flowers. This parallel will be important to my argument regarding the conclusion to the procreation sonnets, beginning in Sonnet 15.

The choice of the rose as the prime example of beauty first introduces a botanical image into the subsequence, and while images from the agricultural and botanical realms abound in the procreation sonnets, this particular image–of a flower widely regarded as a prime example of beauty–is especially revealing. Line 2 makes the rose stand for the desired

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[65] Catachresis: metaphor or metonymy which combines mismatching elements from different orders of reality, as in "a blind mouth." Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 55.

[66] See Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 46: "The different rhetorical moments of this sonnet … are permeable to one another's metaphors, so that the *rose* of philosophical refection yields the *bud* of direct address, and the *famine* of address yields the *glutton* who, in epigram, eats the world's due;" and p. 47: "Since [the sonnet's] aesthetic display is intended to evoke profusion, the poem enacts its own reproach to the niggardliness it describes … it displays the same potential for self-replicating increase as natural creatures."

being, and line 3 sustains the botanical imagery. A riper rose will eventually be destroyed by time. But line 4 brings in an image from the human realm, a heraldic metaphor, to bear upon the rose, for strictly speaking plants do not produce heirs. In truth, the pronoun *his* could refer both to the rose[67] and the fairest creature, although the sentence structure favors reading *his* as *its*. In the ambiguity of the pronoun and in this mixing of images from different categories, the identification between the rose and the fairest creature is reinforced, which suggests that, for the speaker, human beings and plants are similar from the standpoint of procreation.

This similarity is heightened by other elements in the poem. As indicated by West,[68] line 4 could be hinting at a paradox, if *bear* is interpreted in the sense of giving birth to the parent's image, and not in the sense of carrying it. But if we take both of these meanings of *bear* into account, the line is fully establishing the offspring's duty to its parent: it is first to carry, as a herald carries a standard, the parent's image into the future on its own being, and secondly through the succession of progeny over the ages.[69] Still, given the botanical context, there is also an echo here of the sense of bearing fruit−further strengthening the identification between human beings and plants. The full significance of this parallel will only be disclosed in sonnet 18, and so ampler discussion of it must be postponed. But for now it would be profitable to keep in mind that Narcissus was ultimately metamorphosed into a flower. It was not merely for a pretty image that the speaker selected the rose to represent the fairest creatures.

"Making a famine where abundance lies"−though this phrase does not directly evoke a botanical image, it perhaps implies one. Since the youth will not procreate, he is depriving the world of the continuation of his beauty, thereby causing an absence of it. Nevertheless, the

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[67] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 18.

[68] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 18.

[69] Compare Sonnet 6.

line could be read in more immediate and material fashion:[70] in not procreating, the youth is failing to disperse his "seeds," which therefore will not grow and bear fruit, will not produce "food" for the world. Despite the fact that the speaker does not use here the word *seed*, which is the traditional designation for "sperm," his language pertains to the realm of nourishment, which in turn can be related to the realm of agriculture, from where comes this traditional designation. Then, taking into account the context of procreation, it is not unjust to infer that this abundance is an abundance of seed. Again we come to the identification between human beings and plants.

The formal reenactment of procreation through catachresis continues in the second quatrain. We have a legal image of a marriage contract or a physical image of eyes reflected in a mirror in line 5; an image of a candle feeding its flame with its own body in line 6; an image of lack in excess from the realm of nourishment or of agriculture, with an implied image pertaining to human reproduction, in line 7; and finally an image related to war and enmity in line 8−all applied to the youth. Note the relationship between "Feeds't" and "famine:" the latter is created by the former, that is, feeding brings about famine. Even the different senses of *feed* are mingled in the sentence.

The third quatrain appears to be simpler and more direct than its predecessors. In it as in the previous stanzas each line presents a different image, but here the combined images depict the young man in a peculiar way. The fresh ornament of the world, the herald to spring−these are qualifications we might justly attribute to a beautiful flower. And, in effect, *bud* in line 11 directly depicts him as such. The youth is a flower that will not disperse its seed from out of its bud−we can clearly hear the echo of *cóntent* in *contént*−and therefore will not procreate, thus wasting its excessive beauty.

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[70] Of course, the abundance is also of wax and the famine is caused by the candle's body being burned away.

The fact that line 12 closely echoes line 4 advances this characterization. Instead of being a "tender heir" and "bear[ing] the memory" of his parents, the young man is a "tender churl" who "mak[es] waste in niggarding." Not only is *tender* repeated in line 12, but the distribution of syllables in the lines is identical. The "tender heir," in terms of image, was a rose in that context, as the "tender churl" is a flower in this one. Thus line 12 also intensifies the contrast between the youth and a normal "tender heir."

Human beings are compared to plants in the first quatrain and the youth is compared to a flower in the third, yet in the second quatrain the youth is portrayed as a candle. This discrepancy is perhaps intended to put in relief the contrast between the normal human condition as regards procreation and the youth's abnormal attitude to it: in his refusal to increase, he becomes similar to an artificial object, as if he were removed from nature. That is quite appropriate, given that his self-love will bring about the removal of his beautiful image from the world.

And so from the description of the young man's destructive behavior we come to the prophesying couplet. He is to pity the world, that is, procreate, or be the kind of glutton who eats what he himself owes to the world. To pity the world seems like a rather weak enjoinder, and indeed this alternative occupies less than a mere one quarter of the couplet−the speaker is more interested in delivering his prophecy of doom. But it is significant to the speaker's conception of the youth. Strangely, the speaker seems to be censuring the young man less for not desiring a fairest creature than for not being amenable to other creatures' desires of having increase from him. This may indeed be the speaker's ultimate compliment to the youth. He is so beautiful that it is understandable he does not desire others, and indeed nowhere in the procreation sonnets does the speaker appeal to the beauty of a woman so as to persuade his addressee to have children. The youth is the fairest creature.

A feeling that might move the young man to procreate is pity, and by reminding him of his beauty and the duty it entails the speaker possibly hopes to inspire this feeling. Yet he dedicates the largest part of the stanza to the second alternative−sinning, in a way that is similar to that in which a glutton sins. The image of nourishment comes back with explicit moral tones, bearing still the idea of lack in excess first presented in line 7 and repeated in line 12. What is to be eaten is primarily his beauty, but since it can only be dispersed through his seed, which in turn can only be disseminated through sex, we could also say that his seed and consequently his progeny will suffer the same fate. Burying the *cóntent* in one's own bud and eating the world's due are equivalent activities in the poem, and accordingly one of the two manners in which the youth is to perform it, in the speaker's prophetic view, is by the grave, that is, by having his own body interred. Yet, while seeds and plants draw their nourishment from the earth, and while human beings get their energy from food, the youth only derives famine from the type of eating and burying he practices. This famine is his own doing, as we have seen: it is caused by his refusal to procreate. He himself is the second mode of eating the world's due. That is, his narcissism is one of the causes for his sin.

The second cause, evidently, is death. And what normally brings about death is time. The use of the preposition *by* in line 3 is worthy of notice in this respect. The ordinary idiom in English meaning "eventually" is, as it seems to have been even in Shakespeare's age, *in time*;[71] the use of the preposition *by* here entails, then, an idea of instrument or cause. Time is not yet personified in this line, but it already plays an active part in the deceasing of beauty. The preposition foreshadows the personification of time and its role as destructor of beauty

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[71] See Shakespeare, William. *Much Ado About Nothing*. Ed. W. J. Craig. London: Oxford University Press, 1905., A1S3, 262: "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke"; Marlowe, Christopher. *Hero and Leander*. London: A. J. Crocker Bros., 1870, p. 199: "In time it will return us two for one;" and Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol 2, pp. 1229-1231.

that will be presented in other sonnets in the subsequence.[72] It is also telling that the speaker chose the stronger word *decease* instead of *decrease* to counterpoint *increase*; while time may indeed decrease beauty through old age, its final destruction only comes when time brings about death, because then all possibility of increase is denied. And therefore by the grave the youth is to eat the world's due.

The speaker's reproach of the young man is clearly moral in nature. His possession of such astounding beauty makes it his duty to disseminate this beauty in the world, and this duty will be examined in other procreation sonnets, as, for instance, Sonnets 2 and 4. His narcissism, however, stops him from fulfilling this duty. We would be justified in imagining that, had the speaker met the original Narcissus, his reproach of the mythological character would be of the same kind. Yet it is curious that the speaker appeals to the youth's self-love in order to convince him. He should procreate not out of desire to preserve the beauty of some other fair creature, but rather to preserve his own beauty. The speaker seems to recognize that a Narcissus figure cannot be dissuaded from his self-love with arguments, so that, confronted with the task of persuading such a person to increase, he bets on making virtue from vice rather than on trying to cure the vice.

The limited alternatives given here to the young man−to "breed' or 'sin," as Vendler put it−, which render "the close of the sonnet purely conceptual and rhetorical, rather than truly imaginative,"[73] will only be overcome in the course of sonnets 15 to 18. For the next sonnets in the subsequence, those alternatives will be the ones presented to the addressee. He will be bombarded with a multitude of arguments, in the likeness of the ones seen in Sonnet 1, trying to convince him that breeding is living happily ever after and that his narcissistic sin is waste, sadness, and death. But it is precisely through the speaker's exhaustive attempt at persuading the youth that a third alternative−a truly imaginative one−will be revealed.

[72] See for instance Sonnet 12.
[73] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 49.

Sonnet 2

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tottered weed of small worth held.
Then being asked where all thy beauty lies– 5
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days–
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer, "This fair child of mine 10
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse"–
Proving his beauty by succession thine.
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

Sonnet 2 opens with a prophetic view of a hypothetical future situation that, judging from the present conflict described in Sonnet 1, is quite likely to become true. In fact, not only is this conflict implied in Sonnet 2, but the very language of the poem brings back the imagery introduced in the first sonnet, as well as its rhetorical moments and tone–as is evidenced from the beginning by the prophetic view offered in the first quatrain and in the general prophetic tone of the poem. When forty winters go by, or more plausibly, when the addressee is forty, his youthful beauty–of which he is proud and which is the object of frequent attention–will have been destroyed by time. Note that the giver of this attention is unspecified: the gazes could likely come from the people around the youth, but they could also come from the youth himself, as in Sonnet 1 he was said to be "contracted to" his own eyes.

That is the gist of what the first quatrain tells us. But the language the speaker employs to deliver his prophecy makes the message much more vivid. The agent of the destruction of beauty is quite clear: it is winter, or rather forty winters, or rather yet the passage of time from winter to winter over the course of forty years. Again, Time, the enemy of beauty, is not mentioned as a personified entity–and will not be until Sonnet 12–, but it is here symbolized by winter and its destructive aspects. And perhaps the military metaphor put forth in line 1

will lead us to imagine the forty winters that will besiege the youth's brow are the forty soldiers in an army of which Time is the general. Under his command, these soldiers will "dig deep trenches" in the field (turned battlefield) of the youth's beauty, that is, will carve wrinkles on his face and marks on his body, and the alliteration in the phrase may give us a sense of intensified destruction. The effect of the winter army's siege will ultimately turn the addressee's proud uniform of youth–his beauty–into worthless rags, destroying it almost to completion.

I contend that the word *proud* reinforces my supplementary reading of *sweet* in Sonnet 1, line 8. The youth, narcissistic as he is, takes pride in his own beauty and wears it as someone wears an army uniform. He exhibits it to the world, and accordingly the world gazes back at it; at the same time, he himself relishes in it, gazing at it intently in a mirror. But after a siege of forty years, not much will be left of his beloved uniform, and it will be considered of little worth by his former admirers, and perhaps even by himself.

This military metaphor dominates the first quatrain, and yet the stanza also implies a significant botanical image. Used in relation to *livery*, *weed* evidently means "garment;" however, it can also mean "worthless plant," especially in the context of *beauty's field*–so the youth's beauty will be as a valueless plant withered by winter. The depiction of his beauty as a flower was not exclusive to Sonnet 1, but while there it was a fair rose, here it is but a withered weed. Neither was catachresis exclusive to the first poem: here, the battlefield becomes a field in which the youth's beauty is planted, and his war uniform becomes a plant. The interpenetration of images continues in Sonnet 2.

Perhaps this is a rather contrived reading, but there seems to be an unusual play on words between "youth's **live**ry" and "**tot**tered weed." In German, *tot* means "dead," and although it is not etymologically related to *tottered*–as *livery* is not etymologically related to

live[74]−, perhaps its presence is meant to contrast subtly with the *live* in *livery*, suggesting that after forty winters the youth's beauty may not simply have decreased, but in fact be dead−a dead weed. Whether that was intended or just a coincidence, death is a possibility already mentioned in Sonnet 1, and it will require the youth to justify himself to Nature, as will be clearly established in Sonnet 4.

When Time destroys the young man's beauty, he will be asked where all of that beauty went. The subject of asking is not specified, and while we may justly infer the speaker is telling the youth that other people will interrogate him about his former beauty, it also seems reasonable to imagine that the youth himself will ask the question when he looks at his reflection in a mirror and realizes his beauty is gone. Or perhaps it could even be the speaker asking the question. A fourth possibility is that Nature−or God, or whatever supernatural entity is responsible for the principle of preservation of beauty through procreation−will ask him to account for the beauty that was lent him, and indeed that will be the topic of Sonnet 4.[75] But these possibilities are not mutually exclusive: all four of them can be the subjects of *asking* at different times. The question may be asked by people who knew the youth in his "lusty days" when they see him in old age; it may be asked by the youth himself when he sees his withered image; it may be asked by the speaker when he reminisces about his addressee's former beauty; or it may be asked by Nature when he dies.

The object of asking is likewise not specified; we would tend to assume the person "being asked" will be the young man, but it might as well be the speaker himself. We may imagine the speaker will ask himself the question when remembering the addressee's "lusty days" and feel compelled to justify in some way the "use" of his friend's beauty, saying that it

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[74] Harper, Douglas. “totter," "livery” and "live". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 7 Jan. 2017.

[75] See also Sonnet 11.

lies still in his eyes. Perhaps the reason why the speaker presents this hypothetical future situation is that he himself had imagined being in a position in which he would have to account for the fate of this treasure, either to other people or to himself. There is really nothing to warrant such an interpretation here, except for the lack of object–as of Sonnet 2 the speaker and the addressee do not seem to have a close relationship–, but there will be cause to warrant it later in the sequence, since the speaker's feelings for the youth will grow, and he will find himself moved to justify some of the young man's mistakes. A third possibility is that people who knew the addressee in his youth will be asked the question, and, like the speaker, feel obliged to justify his sin. It seems almost as if the speaker were suggesting that anyone who witnessed the youth's beauty would have a debt of gratitude to him.

The "treasure … within … deep-sunken eyes" of line 7 is a buried treasure, and we have already seen, in Sonnet 1, the word *bury* used in a context of destruction, barrenness, and death. The "deep-sunken eyes" may be the eyes of a dead addressee, and not merely those of an old one. To answer the question posed in lines 5 and 6 with "[buried] within [mine] own deep- sunken eyes" would be, according to the speaker, "an all-eating shame," and this further strengthens death's presence in the passage: feeding and eating were also seen as destructive actions, synonymous with burying, in Sonnet 1. Granted, the verb *to bury* is not present in line 7, but it is implied by the use of the noun *treasure* in the preceding verse, as well as by *lies* in line 5 and the general context; similarly, death's presence is not explicit here, but we can feel it lurking behind the words and images in the poem.

The phrases "all-eating shame" and "thriftless praise" are hypallactic constructions: this shame is not all-eating, but shame for the young man's being all-eating, that is, for his eating the world's due by his refusal to procreate; the praise itself is not thriftless, but rather a praise of thriftlessness, that is, of the young man's wasteful lifestyle. This inversion attributes a quality of the cause to the caused–the "all-eating" character of the young man's behavior to

the shame this behavior produces–, and the object of discourse becomes a trait of the mode of discourse in "thriftless praise." These hypallages may intensify our perception of this shame and this praise: the former is so deep that in its corrosiveness to the soul it is all-eating, while the latter, in being a praise of waste, is itself a waste of praise.

However, the subject of the verb *to say* is not specified, and it depends on the object of *being asked* in line 5, since the person who is asked is the one that is going to say "within thine [or his, or mine] own deep-sunken eyes." Of course, the most likely alternative is that the young man will say it in reply to that question, but it is also possible that the speaker and other acquaintances of the youth would say it. This possibility indicates, especially in the company of other instances of similar situations in later sonnets, that great beauty may move people to excuse the fair creature's mistakes. It certainly does move the speaker to do so, as we may realize from the beginning of the sequence through his mixed rhetoric of praise and reproach, and as will be plain in later sonnets.[76]

The third and last quatrain in the poem puts forth the positive hypothetical response for the question posed in line 5, in contrast to the negative answer given in line 7. This response requires the young man to have produced increase, so that he may present his "fair child" as an excuse for his old age. The negative answer had been attributed in indirect speech to the youth, but now the words are put directly in his mouth, and perhaps the speaker intends with this to distance the addressee from the first response and make him identify with the second. The speaker's goal is to persuade the young man, after all. Here he tries to convince him with the appeal of praise from hypothetical future people: were the young man to answer so, he would be proving the hereditary succession of his beauty from him to his fair child, and thus the "use" he made of his beauty would merit far more praise than the wasteful use implied in the first reply.

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[76] See, for instance, Sonnet 35.

The word *use* is an important one in the subsequence,[77] and this is its first occurrence in the *Sonnets*. In this context, it refers primarily to investment of capital for profit,[78] in contrast to the thriftlessness evoked in the preceding line. Its appearance had already been foreshadowed by the financial language of Sonnet 1, and it in turn anticipates the coming of the word *usury*−in the form of *usurer*−and its related concept in Sonnet 4. Furthermore, it will be a key word in that sonnet, repeated again and again in polyptoton[79] throughout the poem. However, it also carries a sense of employment for sexual purposes−in fact, as often is the case in the *Sonnets*, the two meanings of the word are superimposed. The word *lusty*, in line 6, carries sexual connotations as well, by association with *lust* and *lustful*. In short, the sexual use of the youth's beauty in his lustful days would deserve more praise if his sexual activity were to bear increase−or, in financial terms, profit.

If that were the case, he himself could answer the question proudly, saying "This fair child of mine / Shall sum my count and make my old excuse." For his child to "sum [his] count" would be to provide a balanced audit of his "beauty's use," showing that what was lent to the young man by Nature has been dutifully employed. For his child to "make [his] old excuse" would be to justify the father's life through his own existence. As Booth argues, "… the context demands that the phrase be understood by synesis, i.e. as meaning what it must mean rather than what its syntax would otherwise indicate ['make my usual excuse']."[80] But we could also read *make* in the sense of "to render," *old* as a noun meaning "old age," or as an adjective modifying the understood noun *age*, and *excuse* as a past participle shortened of its

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[77] See Sonnets 4, 6, and 9.

[78] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2.

[79] Polyptoton: the repetition of the same word or root with different syntactical functions or grammatical forms. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 74.

[80] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

last consonant by apocope,[81] so that the fair child would render excused the old age of his father. Or we could take it in the sense of "to make the fortune of, to enrich"−the child will enrich his father's old excuse, which would be the first excuse mentioned in the poem: "within [thine, or his, or mine] own deep-sunken eyes." In any case, the speaker does not mean that the fair child will repeat his father's usual excuse, but rather that he will make his old age acceptable, so that the fair child is in clear contrast to the possible subjects of the verb *to say* in line 7.

Answering the question thus, as I have shown, would prove the child's beauty was inherited from the father. Yet the syntax and the ambiguity of line 12 allow us to read the verse in the contrary sense: the child's beauty, by line of reverse succession, becomes the father's beauty in old age. The phrase is paradoxical, as in Sonnet 1 "his tender heir might bear his memory"−also referencing inheritance−was paradoxical. The heir gives birth to his parent's memory, and his beauty is thus inherited by his father, in a reversal of roles meant perhaps to make the idea of increase more appealing to the addressee, by showing him the benefits he himself could derive from having a child. Again as in the first sonnet, the speaker seems to recognize that he will not be able to persuade the youth with arguments based on criteria external to him, such as the world's opinion.

Thereby the paradoxical ambiguity of line 12 engenders the concluding couplet of the poem. "This were to be new made when thou art old" is really a paraphrase of line 12 that eliminates the ambiguity in favor of the second reading. The speaker's final argument banks on the youth's narcissism, appealing to his love for his own image. Having a child is being made new in old age, and "seeing [his] blood warm when [he feels] it cold." The youth is contracted to his own eyes; he often gazes at his own proud beauty now; so the possibility of

[81] Apocope: Omission of a letter or letters from the end of a word. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 22.

seeing his blood warm when it has in fact become cold should feed right into his obsession for his image. This obsession is a frequent motif of the procreation sonnets, and it will be explored as well in the next poem in the subsequence. The couplet also brings back the cold of winter from the beginning of the sonnet. By rhyming *cold* and *old*, the speaker furthers the association between time, winter and autumn, old age, barrenness, and death−and this association will be made time and again in the subsequence.[82] Moreover, by opposing *warm* to *cold* in the last line, the speaker furthers the association between beauty, summer and spring, youth, procreation, and life−an association that has been hinted at in sonnets 1 and 2, but which will be the topic of a few of the next poems in the procreation series.[83] Finally, the meter and the arrangement of words in line 13 signal the inversion of the primary meaning of line 12: the *th* and *w* sounds are inverted in "**t**his **w**ere … **w**hen **t**hou," and, if we read the first foot as a trochee, the first and second feet are metrical inversions of each other, in a pattern of strong, weak, weak, strong syllables.

In his notes to Sonnet 2,[84] Both refers us to the parable of the talents from the Bible. In contrasting the waste of buried treasure to investment of treasure for profit, the poem does resemble the parable, and indeed one could argue that the biblical story had already been suggested in Sonnet 1 with its association between "bur[ying] the content" and "mak[ing] waste in niggarding." However, it is important to observe that the youth is not exactly as the "evil" servant in the parable; that servant had received less treasure than the others, but the young man has been given an abundance of treasure. He is worse off than the bad servant, because Nature has lent him more. This will become evident in sonnets 4 and 11.

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[82] See, for instance, Sonnets 5 and 6.

[83] See Sonnets 5, 6, 9, and 18.

[84] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 137-8.

Sonnet 2 is almost entirely lacking in botanical images. The only explicit image of this sort is in the ambiguity of *weed*; what we do have for the most part are suggestions of botanical imagery through echoes of images from Sonnet 1 in *dig*, *so gazed on now*, *lies* [buried], *treasure*, [buried] *within*, *deep-sunken eyes*, *all-eating*, *thriftless*, *use,* and *fair*. In this poem, explicit reference to the botanical realm is abandoned in favor of military, financial, legal, seasonal, thermal, and (implicit) sexual conceits. The images of Sonnet 2 are much more human than those of the first poem, and indeed the next few sonnets in the subsequence will shy away from botanical metaphors, but it should always be in the back of our minds as we read the procreation sonnets that in Sonnet 1 the fairest creatures were identified with flowers. And we will not forget it as long as we keep our ears open to such echoes of the associations established in the opening sonnet between the botanical realm and other sections of reality from which the speaker selects his images.

Sonnet 3

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another,
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose uneared womb 5
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime; 10
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live rememb'red not to be,
Die single and thine image dies with thee.

The word *image* is, I contend, the key word to understanding Sonnet 3. The speaker's appeal to the young man's love for his own beauty, which was only implicit in Sonnet 1−in the general argument of the poem−and Sonnet 2−in the phrase "*see* thy blood warm"−, is now made quite explicitly. Thus the whole argument of Sonnet 3 depends on the youth's narcissism for effect. The speaker, after trying in vain to convince his addressee with arguments aimed at his altruism ("pity the world"), his moral conscience ("or else this glutton be"), his regard for the world's opinion of him ("all-eating shame", "praise"), his duty towards nature ("the world's due", "sum my count"), and even at his desire to preserve his youth ("to be new made"), finally opts to go straight for what the youth values the most, his own image.

The Sonnet opens with two commands from the speaker to the youth: "Look in thy glass" and "tell the face thou viewest." Hence it begins by directing the addressee's attention (and the reader's) to his image, asking him to behold it in a mirror. The first command seems rather ordinary−"look in your mirror"−, but we may expand its meaning if we remember that in Sonnet 1 the youth was "contracted to [his] own bright eyes." In this context, we could interpret *thy glass* not merely as "the mirror you own," but as "that mirror at which you are so

fond of looking." Moreover, the word *glass* could refer to the cornea of the eye,[85] as in Richard II,[86] A1S3, 208, where Richard says "in the glasses of thine eyes I see thy grieved heart," so the speaker could be asking the youth to look at his own eyes in the mirror, as he is in the habit of doing. The word also evokes Time in its possible sense of "hourglass,"[87] and this lurking presence may give the speaker's argument a greater sense of urgency. Finally, *glass* may refer to a vessel or receptacle; though this sense of the word does not seem appropriate here, it will be explored in Sonnets 5 and 6, and in retrospect we could detect traces of this meaning in the line, suggesting perhaps the glass could be a woman who would receive the young man's "content."

Those two imperatives are emphasized by the metrical stress of the verbs *look* and *tell*, and by the trochaic inversion of the first foot. The direct object of *tell* embeds a third command into the second one: the youth is being told to order his face to form another face presently. The trochaic inversion of the first foot of line 2 again emphasizes the directive, but it also highlights the urgency of the command, an urgency which is further underscored in line 3, with the repetition of *now*. The sand is draining into the bottom half of the hourglass. The youth's beauty is slowly fading, and he should seek to preserve it before it is too late. He ought to "renew" the "fresh repair" of his face now, or else he will "beguile the world" and "unbless some mother."

The first quatrain of the poem is full of alliteration, most significantly in *face*, *face*, *form*, *fresh*. The repetition of the *f* sound in stressed, monosyllabic words seems to add force to the speaker's commands, as if telling the youth: "face thy face." Furthermore, the echoes of this and other sounds or letters throughout the poem−such as "*re*pair," "*re*newest;" "rep*air*,"

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[85] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

[86] Mowat, Barbara A., and Werstine, Paul, eds. *Richard II*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

[87] See Sonnet 126.

"*fair*;" "till*age*," "*age*," "im*age*," among others–suggest perhaps reflections or mirror-images. Indeed, according to Vendler, "[t]o the idea of replication-by-breeding this sonnet adds the idea of replication-in-a-mirror, combining the two in a single image of dynastic representation." And, as in Sonnet 1, there is in this sonnet a profusion of self-replicating images in formal reenactment of the procreation it champions, yet here the images engender one another not merely through catachresis, but also by their very sound or spelling, mimicking this replication of reflections.

In addition, all four lines of the first quatrain have feminine endings (granted, *viewest* and *renewest* could be read as *view'st* and *renew'st*, but the context and the fact that lines 2 and 4 have clear feminine endings make this reading less likely). Feminine endings generally soften the end of a line,[88] so here they seem to be at odds with the imperative and prophetic tones of the speaker. However, the added unstressed syllable at the end of the first verse contrasts with the inverted first foot and intensifies the effect of the trochaic inversion in line 2, highlighting *Now* and the command that follows it. It is possible that the extra syllables were meant as well to reinforce the sense of urgency–in that they are, so to speak, "out of compass"–, reminding us of the hourglass with the lapsing quality they confer on the lines and suggesting the fading of the youth's beauty.

There could be another unusual play on a foreign word in *repair*: to re-*père*, or to father again–not in the sense of having more than one child, but rather of becoming a father in a long line of fathers, or repeating the action of fathering performed by one's forefathers. In effect, as Booth observed, "Shakespeare uses *repair* twice more in the sonnets [10.8, 16.9–both times as verb], and in both cases the context suggests a similar punning meaning for *repair*." The context here evidently favors the pun as well, with its focus on the renewal of beauty. It is telling also that the word only appears in the procreation sonnets, but it is dropped

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[88] See for instance Sonnet 87.

altogether when the speaker is no longer concerned with persuading the young man to procreate.

There could also be an inverted first foot in line 4, depending on whether we think the speaker wishes to stress *thou* or *dost*. In my opinion, constructions such as "if now thou not renewest / Thou dost beguile" would normally call for emphasis on *dost*, but the context may suggest stressing *thou* over it. The youth refuses to procreate in the present of the sonnets, so that the sentence "Thou dost beguile the world" can be interpreted not merely as a hypothetical consequence of the youth's future refusal, but as a present reproach of his current attitude. The trochaic foot would then contrast with the feminine ending of the previous line, as I have said before, giving more force to the speaker's reproach. When reading the line out loud we have to make a choice, and perhaps I would prefer to stress *thou* for the reasons given here, but in reading the poem silently we can keep both readings in mind.

The youth's narcissistic attitude "beguile[s] the world," that is, eats the world's due. And because the world's due in this context is children, or the continuation of the addressee's beauty through procreation, beguiling the world is also "unbless[ing] some mother" or failing to make some woman happy with pregnancy. The sentence suggests that bearing child is a blessing, but this and the previous sonnets suggest that being impregnated by the youth would be even more of a blessing. This continues the speaker's practice initiated in the first sonnet of embedding praise into reproach, and indeed *beguile* carries overtones of "charm"[89]–so that if we read the sentence in itself, we may think the speaker is telling his addressee that he does charm the world. As usual, the speaker seems to be so taken with the young man's beauty that he cannot help but imply compliments even in scolding him.

The second stanza makes evident once again the depth of the young man's narcissism and the contrast between his attitude and that of regular people. There is no reason why he

[89] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 139.

should not procreate: the most beautiful maid would not turn him down, and no man would be made so foolish by self-love so as not to bequeath his own beauty onto posterity. But the speaker knows some men are that foolish. He is familiar with the myth of Narcissus, after all. And the youth already is just that foolish, which is why the speaker is writing these sonnets in the first place: to dissuade the youth from his narcissistic foolishness. This quatrain makes it clear that it is not for lack of potential lovers that the youth does not have children–no fair creature would deny him–, but rather because he is, indeed, "so fond of his self-love." And our perception of the youth's narcissism may be heightened if we notice that derivates of *fond* are used twice in Golding's translation of the Narcissus myth: in line 543, the narrator calls Narcissus "thou fondling," and in 634 he is described as loving himself "fondely."

The mirroring of sounds and letters continues in the second quatrain. *Fair* and *where* reflect *repair* from line 3, and these words are closely associated in meaning within the context of the argument offered here. *Uneared* repeats *unbless*; indeed, an uneared womb is an unblessed one, according to the speaker's morality. This word can be understood as expressing a botanical image–a plant that has not yet developed fruiting spikes–, thereby suggesting a womb that is not yet fruitful; or it can be understood as meaning "to till; to plough," providing for an agricultural image and suggesting a womb that still has not been prepared to be inseminated, with connotation of sexual penetration. Perhaps the context also warrants a play on the word as meaning "unheard," which is appropriate given this fair woman does not exist. *Womb* echoes *tomb*, and in the botanical and agricultural setting established by the sonnets these are the possible destinations for the young man's seed: the "soil" of a woman's womb or a grave in the earth. *Tillage* and *husbandry* do not recall in their form any of the previous words in the poem, but they are associated in sense to the agricultural image raised by *uneared*. The latter of those two may also refer to the management of a house in addition to farming for food–a meaning that will come explicitly

into play later in the subsequence,[90] when the youth's beauty will be compared to a fair house−, and derives from the word *husband*, which is possibly what the young man would be if he impregnated a woman. And the former, as I have mentioned, resonates with *age* and *image*. Finally, the first half of *posterity* is almost an inversion of *stop*, which may highlight their opposition in our eyes.

The words *fond* and *tomb*, depending on how they are pronounced, could have close sounds as well. Since it is the young man's "fondness" that will make him a tomb, the association seems intended. Moreover, we might read a hyperbaton[91] in the sentence, in which case *the tomb* would be separating the adjective *fond* from its complement, *of his self-love,* so the question would read in direct order: "who is he so fond of his self-love will be the tomb?" Given that *fond* may also mean "doting" and "loving" without a complement,[92] there is in any case an implication that the youth will be made a tomb out of his love. And the very fact that *tomb* is positioned graphically between *fond* and *self-love* suggests death is contained in the youth's narcissistic love.

Disdains is also a word that merits attention. To disdain is to judge unworthy or to scorn; evidently the latter meaning is the most immediate one in the line, but the former is appropriate as well, and all the more so if we consider this judgment would likely be of three types: of birth, of character, or of beauty. The verse then implies the young man would not be rejected based on nobility, or personality, or appearance. That he is beautiful has already been established; that he is noble may be inferred from the speaker's dynastic concerns for the young man and from the language of other sonnets;[93] but as for his character, though the

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[90] See Sonnets 10 and 13.

[91] Hyperbaton: any intended deviation in ordinary word order. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p.40.

[92] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

[93] See Sonnet 26, for instance.

speaker has called him "sweet" and will lavish on him many other praises in this regard,[94] we know it is not beyond reproach. After all, the speaker has been censuring him for narcissism from the very beginning. And it is significant perhaps that this is the same verb Golding uses for Narcissus's refusal of his suitors; in line 442, the narrator tells us of him that "to be toucht of man or Mayde he wholy did disdaine."

The third quatrain brings back the word *glass*, but whereas it denoted an actual mirror in the first line of the poem, here its relation to mirrors is but figurative, expressed in metaphor and synecdoche. The youth is to his mother as a glass–or rather the reflection in a glass–is to a person. In short, he is his mother's image. Vendler remarks that

> the young man's face is compared to that of his mother; one might more properly expect a comparison with that of his father: it has been suggested (mistakenly, I think) that the young man's father must be dead …, and that this fact explains the invoking of his mother as his model. It seems more likely that Shakespeare transforms the putative future bride-*mother* of line 4 into the actual *mother* of line 9.[95]

The repetition of the word *mother* is in consonance with the rhetorical strategy and the theme of the poem, and I have referred to another passage from Vendler in order to support this claim. But while her hypothesis here does seem correct, it is also possible that the choice of the mother as a model is linked to the story of Narcissus. The myth tells us little about either his mother or his father, but there is slightly more information on the mother, and she appears to have a closer relationship to their son. "Narcissus did she call his name," the narrator in the *Metamorphoses* informs us at 431–and aside from giving the boy his name, Liriope was the one who inquired the prophet Tiresias about his future. Furthermore, her name in Ancient Greek means "having the face or the eyes like a lily," so both she and her son are related to flowers. Perhaps the choice of the mother rather than the father for model of the youth's

[94] See for example Sonnet 9, where the youth's presence is described as "gracious and fair."

[95] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 58-9.

beauty was meant to reinforce the parallel between the young man and the mythological character.[96]

In her son the addressee's mother "calls back the lovely April of her prime." According to West, "call back' is not cited in *OED* until 1850 to mean 'remember,' [which] means that she can summon her *primavera* … and it will come in the person of her son."[97] Thus she does not simply remember her youthful beauty when she sees her son, but rather her springtime is brought back–or, in the language of Sonnet 2, she is "new made." The word *lovely* may mean "beautiful" or "loveable," so in it is condensed the precept "from fairest creatures we desire increase;" the "lovely April" is then not only the time when his mother was beautiful and young, but also when she was desired. This springtime is heightened by the repetition of sounds and letters in "A*pri*l" and "*pri*me," words that resonate with s*pri*ng and prim*avera.* And just as the youth's mother is rejuvenated in her son, so will the youth himself revert his years when, in old age, he sees his own child.

He will see his heir, the speaker tells him and us, "through windows of [his] age." The *glass* from lines 1 and 9 makes a comeback, but now in a different image. Here, the youth–or his beauty–is a house; his soul–or mind, or self–is a person inside the house; his eyes are the windows of this house, and his corneas–a referent for *glass* of which we had a glimpse in the first verse–are the glasses of these windows. This comparison between beauty and a house will be made directly later in the subsequence, as I have mentioned before, and it will be relevant to the speaker's final solution to the alternatives presented in the couplet of Sonnet 1. Moreover, as Booth points out, "the phrase ['through windows of thine age'] loses its precision if a modern reader forgets that non-distorting, fully transparent window glass is an

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[96] And, as Vendler says, "the analogy with the mother's face is also relevant to the young man's possession of a *woman's face* (sonnet 20)." Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 59.

[97] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 23.

achievement of recent technology."[98] So the image suggests that the youth's sight will have been dimmed by old age—his corneas then will be as foggy glasses. Yet we could read line 11 differently: the windows may be not the young man's eyes, but his child's; in looking at his child's eyes, the addressee will be rejuvenated in old age, as again in Sonnet 2 he will be "new made" when he "see[s] [his] blood warm."

Then he will realize that, even though his beauty has decayed in himself and he now has wrinkles, it lives on in his progeny, the very embodiment of his youthful spring; and that will be his "golden time." The fact that *olden* is embedded in *golden* reinforces this identification between old age and youth through procreation. What is more, the latter word harks back to the "treasure" of Sonnet 2 and indeed to the financial language of the previous sonnets, in which beauty is riches, and all the more so when invested—that is, carried forth into the future—by means of increase. In effect, if it is hoarded rather than invested, that is but "mak[ing] waste in niggarding."

Like Sonnet 2, this poem presents in the third quatrain the hypothetical positive outcome to the young man's narcissistic predicament; whereas that sonnet expresses in its couplet the renewal of beauty through procreation, this one conveys at the end the death of beauty through the refusal of procreation. If the youth lives—as we know he has been living—so as not to be remembered, that will be the end of his beauty. But in both couplets there is an appeal to his narcissistic infatuation with his own image in an attempt to convince him not to "die single."

The word *remembered* is an meaningful one in this poem. It resembles *repair* and *renewest*, as I have noted, and they are evidently associated in meaning. Moreover, Vendler[99] reminds us of the Quarto spelling of the word: remem*bred*; and the embedding of one word

[98] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 139.

[99] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 60.

into another reinforces that association–to repair, to renew, to remember, and to breed are confluent activities in this context. For there is likely a pun in *remembered*: to be "membered" again, given fresh new members, that is, to re-form. And while the object of this re-membrance is evidently the young man, the agent of the action is ambiguous: by increasing, the youth can be re- membered by himself; yet when the people who knew him in his "lusty days" see his child he can be re-membered, or re-formed, as the child in their eyes. It is precisely through this reforming that the primary, literal sense of *remembered* can come into play, since it is the father's shape in the child that will remind people of him. Procreating is then a means for perpetuating the youth's shape through the generations–or, in the language of Sonnet 1, "his tender heir [will] bear his memory." But, as the close of the subsequence will reveal, it is not the only one. Ingram & Redpath gloss the word as "commemorated,"[100] a sense which points forward to the speaker's final means for the continuation of his addressee's beauty.

The word *die*–and the subsequent *dies* of line 12–repeats the initial *d* sound in *disdains* and *despite*, linking death once more to the refusal of procreation (though in meaning *despite* has nothing to do with death and disdain, it does carry the word *spite* in itself). These are the only three words in the sonnet with initial *d* sound, just as *live*, *lovely*, and *love* are the only three words with initial *l* sound. Granted, the verb *to die* appears twice in the couplet, making it four instances of the initial *d* sound, but it is the same verb–its repetition is perhaps due to the fact that the couplet concentrates on death rather than life. Living is the opposite of dying; loving, in this context, is the opposite of disdaining; and while *spite* and *lovely* are not opposites, they certainly clash. In contrast, *single* has no echo whatsoever in the poem, and this isolation reinforces the singleness to which the word refers. Although it generally means "unmarried," its broader senses of "alone" or "being one in number" should not be discarded,

[100] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 10.

as the focus of these sonnets is not on marriage but on increase–or, to use another biblical term, on multiplication. By procreating, the young man would be made multiple, for the father lives on through his children.

The couplet tries to cater to the youth's love for his own image in order to dissuade him from his selfish stance. If he does not shift his attitude, he will "die single." I employ the future tense in my paraphrase for the sake of clarity, yet here the speaker uses the present tense, which is much more forceful and can be read almost as a curse, in concordance with the prophetic tone of these poems. His choice of tense also highlights the fact that the youth's narcissism is a present reality–in a sense, he is already dying single. But the speaker's argument is paradoxical, because, as I have observed, he appeals to the cause for the youth's refusal as means for him to overcome this refusal. The youth disdains other fair creatures out of self-love, but the speaker hopes that this very same feeling will move him to procreate for the sake of his beauty. The speaker's hopes, however, will prove unfounded.

Finally, we come back to the key word *image*. There were glimpses of it in *tillage* and *age*, and these words are thematically connected: the tillage of an uneared womb is a means through which age–or time–can be, in a sense, manipulated, allowing for the preservation of the image of youth over the course of generations. This image may be the actual reflection of the young man's beauty in a mirror or mirror-like surface, or rather the shape responsible for this reflection;[101] or it may be the young man's child, seen as a mirror-image of his beauty, or as a painted or sculpted monument to that beauty, by which it is remembered, or yet as a copy or likeness of him.[102] But whatever it may be, it is something that can only be apprehended by sight. The medium for the youth's narcissistic love is his vision, as we have seen, and by

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[101] Although shape and reflection are discrete things, the youth can only apprehend his shape by its reflection, so they are inextricable to him.

[102] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

expanding the meaning of *image* in the poem the speaker hopes also to enlarge the scope of his addressee's self- love to include his potential progeny.

As the narrator in the *Metamorphoses* says of Narcissus, "through his sight is wrought his bane," just as the young man's doom, it seems, will come through his sense of vision. The couplet moreover resonates with a few other passages from Golding's translation of the myth. From lines 543 to 448, for instance, the narrator addresses Narcissus in apostrophe:

> Thou fondling thou, why doest thou raught the fickle image so?
>
> The thing thou seekest is not there … / It is none other matter
>
> That thou doest see, than of thy selfe the shadow in the water.
>
> The thing is nothing of it selfe: with thee it doth abide,
>
> With thee it would departe if thou withdrew thyself aside.

While in this passage Narcissus' image would merely disappear if he moved away from the spring, in the couplet the youth's image will die alongside him; but in both cases the idea is that the image is dependent on the presence of the body of which it is a reflection, so dying and going away produce roughly the same result. In 582, Narcissus remarks: "It is my selfe I well perceyve, it is mine *Image* sure." And a few other references to the word are made in the myth. *Image* is a key word that this sonnet−and, indeed, the whole of the subsequence−shares with Golding's rendition of Narcissus' story.

Sonnet 4

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thy self thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free.
Then beauteous niggard why dost thou abuse 5
The bounteous lárgess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?
For having traffic with thy self alone,
Thou of thy self thy sweet self dost deceive. 10
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What ácceptable audit canst thou leave?
  Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
  Which, usèd, lives th' executor to be.

The fourth poem in the procreation sonnets plays on the proverbial idea of "paying one's debt to nature." This idea had already been suggested in Sonnet 1 by the phrase "world's due", in Sonnet 2 by "This fair child of mine / Shall sum my count and make my old excuse", and in Sonnet 3 by "beguile the world." But whereas it was implicit in the previous sonnets, now it comes to the forefront of the argument, and it will remain a central motif in the rest of the subsequence, reappearing explicitly in Sonnets 6, 11, and 13. In fact, the conclusion to the procreation sonnets will come as the speaker's solution to the young man's need of paying his debt to nature.

As the concept of debt is eminently related to finance, so is Sonnet 4 dominated by financial language. The youth's beauty is not his own–it was lent to him by Nature. The speaker explains as much to his addressee in the first stanza, in order perhaps to justify the question raised in the first two lines of the poem. Moreover, as he makes evident in lines 11 and 12, Nature will require the young man to account for his use of such beauty when he dies.

The poem opens with a vocative that qualifies the addressee: "Unthrifty loveliness." The use of an abstract noun, *loveliness*, to designate a concrete person implies that the young man is the embodiment of the quality that noun names, an implication that had already been

suggested of fairest creatures in general in Sonnet 1, with the hypallactic construction "beauty's rose." The adjective ascribed to this noun, *unthrifty*, harks back to the financial images of previous sonnets and, more specifically, to the "thriftless praise" of Sonnet 2, and sets the rhetoric for this poem. The youth is a wasteful beauty.

He is "unthrifty" because he "spend[s] / Upon [him]self [his] beauty's legacy"—that is, in not procreating, he wastes this legacy solely on himself. The beauty he now possesses is an inheritance from his parents—or at least from his mother, as Sonnet 3 lets us know—, and it is a legacy for his potential children. Yet we can also think of beauty as an abstract, universal entity that bequeathed this legacy to the young man, for as Booth remarks, "*beauty* is grammatically the possessor and logically also the thing possessed."[103] In this sense, universal beauty would be responsible for giving—or, more appropriately according to the following lines (3 and 4), loaning—concrete beauty to concrete creatures. Lastly, in *spend*, as Katherine Duncan-Jones points out, "there is subsidiary allusion to masturbation"[104]—through it, the addressee wastes his seed on himself. In this sonnet, financial language has clear sexual connotations, as in "beauty's *use*" in Sonnet 2.

In line 3, it becomes evident that the person or entity responsible for the young man's inheritance of beauty, for the purposes of the argument of this poem, is not the addressee's mother or universal beauty, but "Nature." A bequest is a legacy or a disposition in a will; Nature is then who determines what is to be legated and under what conditions. And, says the speaker, it "gives nothing, but doth lend." The idea here is that beauty is lent to creatures by Nature with a certain provision: it must be shared, or multiplied, for "being frank, she lends to those are free." Furthermore, the alliteration between *frank* and *free* reinforces the connection between the generosity of nature and the generosity of those to whom she loans beauty. This

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[103] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 140.

[104] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 118.

type of similarity between words for the sake of comparison–or contrast–, according to West, "is a favourite Shakespearean trick,"[105] which he calls similation.[106]

The explanation of the workings of Nature's bequest entails the second question in the poem, in the second quatrain. If it is so, the speaker asks, "Then … why do[es] [the youth] abuse / The bounteous largess given [him] to give?" As we have seen in the previous verses and sonnets, the young man is not generous with his beauty, so how come he received Nature's legacy? Either Nature made a mistake in bequeathing to the youth, or he is bound to eventually become "free." In any case, it is to this discrepancy between Nature's provision and the youth's narcissism that the speaker appeals here in order to convince his addressee to increase; his argument is: Nature lends beauty to people who will share it; she lent it to you, therefore you must share it too.

The second quatrain is ushered in by a second vocative, similar to the first one in the qualification it makes of the young man; yet here the order of the noun and the adjective is reversed from the first vocative–the noun is negative and the adjective is positive, whereas the converse was true in the first instance–, allowing for a chiasmic structure: "unthrifty loveliness … beauteous niggard." The young man is a wasteful beauty, and a beautiful miser; in this chiasmus the seemingly paradoxical ideas of wasting and niggarding are conflated–he is a wasteful miser–, as they had been in Sonnet 1, for example, in the phrase "tender churl."

The word *abuse* in line 5 is the first instance of a figure of speech prominent in Sonnet 4: the polyptoton, in which the same root word–in this case, the verb *to use*–is employed in multiple derivate forms or in the same form employed as multiple parts of speech. This polyptoton comes from the noun *use* in Sonnet 2, and through this figure the meanings suggested in that poem will here be expanded and developed. To abuse is, etymologically

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[105] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 25.

[106] "When [Shakespeare] wishes to put two things together he often highlights the resemblance or the difference by words which sound similar." West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 6.

speaking,[107] to use away, that is, to use up or consume, or alternatively, depending on how the *ab-* prefix is interpreted, to misuse. While the primary idea here is of misuse of the capital of beauty, both senses are pertinent in the context; the word *consume* itself will be employed to describe the young man's narcissistic stance in Sonnet 9, and it had been described as gluttonous in Sonnet 1. In the very etymology of the word, then, are fused the ideas of wasting money and gluttony, which had been fused as well in the opening sonnet. Furthermore, *abuse* in English originally referred to erratic[108] sexual practices, such as incest, prostitution, and masturbation, and this latter meaning is intended here, as "spend" in line 1 would indicate. Finally, the word also carries connotations of sexual violence–to the extent that the youth is perverting that "bounteous largess" from its purposed destination, corrupting it, defiling it, we could say that, metaphorically, it is being raped.

Similation can once again be observed between *beauteous* and *bounteous*. The latter word comes ultimately from the Latin *bonitas*–"goodness"–, so a conflation between beauty and goodness may have been intended here, though only abstractly, since concretely the beauteous addressee was supposed to be bounteous as well, but is not. The similation may then highlight a split of two qualities that are traditionally united, as the youth lacks the latter. In effect, this discrepancy between beauty and goodness–between appearance and reality, we might say–, will be a focal point of later sonnets.[109] We could say the words *niggard* and *largess* are also in a relationship of similation, not in spelling and alliteration as the adjectives that modify them, but in their position in their respective lines and in the metrical pattern–both nouns straddle the second and third feet in their verses, having their first syllable

[107] Harper, Douglas. “abuse". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.

[108] By "erratic" I mean simply that those practices were considered then as outside the norm.

[109] See, for instance, Sonnet 35.

stressed and the second unstressed; moreover, they are near opposite in meaning: a niggard is not a person who is prone to largess.

The third question in the poem is introduced by a third vocative. However, unlike the previous ones, "Profitless usurer" seems to be entirely negative. In Christian theology, usury is a sin; moreover, a usurer lends money precisely with the intent of deriving profit through interest–so the phrase is oxymoronic. But the youth, in investing his capital in himself, obtains no profit at all, and it is thus wastefully spent. He *uses* his capital badly; though he possesses "so great a sum of sums"–or beauty of beauties–, he cannot live adequately or get by with his bad investment. Yet the context of the procreation sonnets warrants other interpretations of lines 7 and 8. As Booth remarks,

> In the context of *usurer*, *use* ought to mean "invest for profit"; the preceding lines cause the reader to understand the exactly opposite meaning–"expend," "use up." In the financial metaphor *live* means "support yourself," but, in the larger context of the topic of the poem, *live* must be understood as "have physical immortality in a child."[110]

Because verses 1 and 2 hinge on *spend*, we may be led to interpret *use* as "consume" and not in the financial sense it is primarily intended, but this interpretation is perfectly justified given the youth's wasteful investment of his beauty. Indeed, these inverse readings echo "tender churl," the oxymoronic epithet from Sonnet 1. Furthermore, as in Sonnet 2, *use* also carries sexual overtones.

The third quatrain explains the questions raised in the previous stanzas. The youth spends his beauty's legacy on himself, abuses that bounteous largess, and uses in vain that sum of sums because he "[has] traffic with [him]self alone." In the financial language of the sonnet, this means that he only has commerce with himself; in the theme of procreation, it means that he refuses to have sexual intercourse with other creatures. Then, if we read *traffic*

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[110] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 140.

as referring to sex, there is again a suggestion of masturbation. And through his physical and mental self-love, the young man cheats himself of his sweet self, that is, he both deprives himself of living the life he is supposed to live by increasing and is bereft of the renewal of his beauty through his potential children. Once again, the words *self* and *sweet* are ordered in the sentence as "self, sweet self." And the word *deceive*, the only one in this poem with the initial *d* sound apart from the different forms of the auxiliary verb *to do*, resonates with *disdains*, *despite*, and *die* from the previous sonnet.

Then the speaker poses in the third stanza a fourth question. However, in contrast to the three previous ones, this question is not introduced by a vocative, and while the former had the same basic question structure–"why dost thou … ?"–, the latter begins with "how." This word reads more like an interjection than an interrogative pronoun. Indeed, some commentators have interpreted the changes in the fourth question as a sign of impatience on the part of the speaker; for instance, West called this passage an "exasperated climax";[111] Vendler notes that the speaker "turns impatiently in the fourth question … to a different form"; and Duncan-Jones points out that "the word [*how*] seems redundant, but underlines the searching nature of the question."[112]

"[W]hen nature calls thee to be gone," the speaker asks, "What acceptable audit canst thou leave?" That is, when the young man dies, given he only has "traffic" with himself, how will he be able to provide an adequate account of the use he made of "beauty's legacy"? The question echoes the hypothetical answer offered in the third stanza of Sonnet 2, in which the addressee's "fair child … / Shall sum [his] count." The acceptable audit, in the context of procreation, would be the addressee's children. This idea will be reinforced in Sonnet 6–a poem that repeats the financial language of Sonnet 4–, where, if the young man had a child,

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[111] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 26.

[112] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 118.

he would be "Leaving [himself] living in posterity." As Duncan-Jones tells us, "An audit … would normally be something to 'give' rather than to *leave*,"[113] and I contend that this gives more credibility to the interpretation of *audit* as referring to the child itself. Finally, as she also notes, the verb *to leave* may suggest dying, or leaving this world, though this sense does not fit the sentence, so it is but a suggestion prompted by the context.

The couplet is, in some measure, similar to the couplet from Sonnet 3: "thine image dies with thee" and "thy … beauty must be tombed with thee" convey roughly the same idea, with different connotations. The "unused beauty" of line 13 is beauty not employed for profit, since, as we have seen, the youth does use his beauty, just not as it was intended by Nature to be used–or, rather, as line 5 tells us, he abuses it. In the final verse, this beauty, *if* used–that is, invested for profit–, would "[live] th'executor to be"; in other words, that profit–children–would live to execute the father's will, i.e., to preserve with its existence the beauty bequeathed by the father, and to some extent the very life of the father–and to further legate this beauty onto posterity.

However, we could read *used* in line 4 not as "if used for profit," but rather as "used so; used in the way you have been using it." In this sense, it would live to execute itself, that is, to kill itself or, in the language of Sonnet 3, to "stop posterity." The youth's beauty, as the object of his own love and therefore the reason for his refusal to procreate, would be the cause of its own demise. As Sonnet 1 so unequivocally informs us, the young man is his own foe; his beauty should be given to his children, in the language of Sonnet 6, "before it be self-killed." Narcissistic love, in the context of the procreation sonnets, amounts to suicide.

Finally, the financial language of this and other sonnets in the subsequence harks back to the Narcissus myth in the *Metamorphoses.* In line 551, the narrator describes Narcissus, in his passion for himself, as having "greedie eyes"; at 587, Narcissus says of himself: "my

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[113] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 118.

plentie makes me poore"; and, at the end of the story (615-16), the protagonist is said to have been "spent and wasted through desire." The speaker in the procreation sonnets appears to have read the myth, and his understanding of his addressee's situation seems to be informed by the concepts and words of the story.

Sonnet 5

Those hours that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell
Will play the tyrants to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:
For never-resting time leads summer on 5
To hideous winter, and confounds him there,
Sap checked with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness everywhere:
Then were not summer's distillation left
A liquid pris'ner pent in walls of glass, 10
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was.
  But flow'rs distilled, though they with winter meet,
  Leese but their show, their substance still lives sweet.

Sonnet 5 is peculiar in relation to the previous poems in the subsequence: it is the first sonnet with no direct address, the first impersonal sonnet. This does not mean, however, that the poem is not addressed to the young man. It is presented as a reflection on the part of the speaker, but its hortatory function is delayed to the complementary Sonnet 6. Thus, when the speaker references a "lovely gaze" in the second verse of the poem, it is evident that gaze is the youth's: because of his astounding beauty, "every eye doth dwell" on his gaze. And, as in Sonnet 2, where the youth's beauty is "so gazed on now," the eyes that dwell on his beauty are not only those of people around him, but also his own eyes−recall "contracted to thine own bright eyes" from Sonnet 1.

Another peculiar feature of this sonnet is that it shows in the first quatrain that time may have a positive facet, in contrast to its presentation as destructor of beauty in Sonnet 2, in the following verses of this poem, and in the rest of the subsequence, most notably perhaps in Sonnet 12. Here, in the first and second lines, time is responsible for shaping the youth's beauty, represented in synecdoche by his "lovely gaze." But time is quickly reverted back to its destructive function: in line 3, the hours, which were "gentle" just two verses above, "will play the tyrants to the very same" lovely gaze, "unfair[ing]" that which excels fairly−that is,

disfiguring, at the same time being unfair to, that which excels in beauty (with overtones of "excels adequately, or completely"). The polyptoton in *unfair* and *fairly* heightens the contrast between the two actions of defacing and excelling.

As Vendler remarks,[114] the first quatrain is mostly neutral and objective in its reference to time as tyrant; its meter is regular and its rhythm is slow-paced and balanced, perhaps to enact the initial characterization of time as gentle, that is, kind and refined. In contrast, the second quatrain is more emotionally involved, and its meter and rhythm reflect that. There is an abrupt enjambment from line 5 to 6, which is likely to speed up our reading; line 7 begins with a near-spondaic trochaic inversion,[115] and concludes with a near-spondaic iamb; and line 8 begins with a regular trochaic inversion.

The wintry seasonal metaphor from Sonnet 2 is brought back in this sonnet. As opposed to the gentle hours that framed the youth's beauty in the first stanza, "never-resting time leads summer on / To hideous winter." The use of the present tense in this line heavily contrasts with the past tense in the opening line of the poem and the future tense employed in the preceding verses: time's destructive agency is an ever present, "never-resting" reality. The word *leads* means primarily "guide," but it also has connotations of "lure." In any case, time brings summer to winter and there "confounds" it−mixes it with winter, perplexes it, destroys it,[116] or, we might say, traps[117] it there. The simple idea is that time is responsible for the passage from one season to the other, but the word *confounds* suggests a human image:

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[114] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 67-8.

[115] I believe true spondees and pyrrhics are virtually impossible in English. For a discussion on the subject, see Steele, Timothy. *All the Fun's in How You Say a Thing: an explanation of meter and versification.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999, chapter 2.

[116] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

[117] According to Booth's suggestion, "Shakespeare may have been drawn to ['confounds'] because he heard a punning relationship between it and 'to confine," which would resonate with *pent* and *prisoner* from verse 10. Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 141.

summer is as a person who is lured by time into the realm of winter and is left there, lost and amazed, or, even worse, is there imprisoned or murdered.

In line 7, however, seasonal, human, and botanical images are "confounded" in catachresis: summer has its "Sap checked with frost" and its "lusty leaves [are] quite gone." This requires us to understand *summer* in synecdoche as representing the plants of summer, which are turned into naked and withered plants by time in winter. The nominative absolutes of lines 7 and 8—"Sap checked with frost," "lusty leaves quite gone," "beauty o'er-snowed," "bareness everywhere"—, by their syntactical disconnection to the rest of the sentence, emulate the "confoundedness" and bareness described in the stanza. Moreover, the first three nouns in the series are accompanied by participial adjectives, but by the end of the quatrain the adjectives are "quite gone," and all that remains is "bareness *everywhere*."

The word *hideous* refers here primarily to the ugly appearance of plants in the winter, but it also carries moral overtones that are related to the barrenness to which winter is associated in the procreation sonnets. By virtue of the human image evoked in lines 5-6, *Sap* may suggest human humors that congeal in old age. *Lusty*, as in previous sonnets, means primarily "vigorous," but it resonates with *lust*, connoting sexual import. The alliteration in "*l*usty *l*eaves" and the near-alliteration in "quite gone" make the end of the line rather jagged and heavy, and the alliteration between "*B*eauty" and "*b*areness" reinforces the contrast between one and the other—a similation, to use West's term. Finally, *o'er-snowed* suggests primarily a green field covered in snow, but it also evokes again an image from the human realm—the grey hair of old age, or, in the language of Sonnet 12, "sable curls all silvered o'er with white."

Sonnet 5 is peculiar also in another respect. In previous poems, words with the initial *d* sound had all been negative, and had all been associated with the death of beauty: *die*, *dig*, *disdains*, among others. Yet here the defense against the destructiveness of time comes in a

word with such an initial sound: *distillation*. To the destructiveness of winter, the third quatrain opposes "summer's distillation." Once more, we must understand *summer* as representing in synecdoche the plants of summer. To distill is primarily "to extract the finest and purest parts from"[118] something; more specifically, in this case, a flower, in order to extract its perfume. And, if we recall that the beauty of the fairest creatures in general and of the young man in particular was identified as roses in the first sonnet, we can interpret *distillation* even more specifically as rose-water. Duncan-Jones and West have therefore seen in the passage a reference to an excerpt from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*,[119] in which marriage is compared to "a pure rose-water kept in a crystal glass." Yet the context here is not properly that of marriage, but rather that of reproduction. Distillation is a means by which "Beauty's effect," if not beauty itself, may be preserved, and thus it is an allegory for procreation. Furthermore, as *to distill* can also mean more generally "to extract the essence" of something, it seems reasonable to interpret *distillation* as the act of dispersing that which contains the youth's essence, that is, his seed.

If distillation were not left "a liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass," neither beauty nor its effect–in the concrete image of the stanza, the aroma of the rose–would survive. Again we see interpenetration of images in catachresis, for the speaker employs a botanical image to describe something from the human realm and, in turn, uses an image from the human realm to qualify the botanical image. But in the last two lines of the stanza, the metaphors disappear just as beauty would: "Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft." Once more similation reinforces the contrast between antagonistic terms: "*b*eauty" / "*b*ereft," and "eff*ect*" / "ber*eft*," and the disconnection of the last verse from the rest of the sentence heightens the absence of beauty–and of the very memory or reminder of beauty–to which it refers. Lastly, the word

[118] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

[119] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 120, and West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 29.

remembrance resonates with *remembered* from the couplet of Sonnet 3. And, as in that poem, we may think of *remembrance* here not only as meaning "memory," but also as suggesting "reshaping." The context warrants such a reading. If not for distillation, there would be no reshaping of the youth's beauty in the form of progeny, therefore no reminder of that beauty, and consequently all memory of it would be gone.

The couplet, as Booth informs us, plays on the proverbial expression "more show than substance," and indeed the opposition between show and substance, between appearance and reality, is a central theme of the *Sonnets*.[120] Distillation allows for the permanence of the substance of flowers that are destroyed by winter−in a sense, it inverts the proverb. These flowers lose their appearance, but their reality lives on: they have more substance than meets the eye. *Leese* is, according to Duncan-Jones, an "archaic form of 'lose,' perhaps adopted here to assonate with meet and sweet."[121] Her hypothesis is made even more compelling when we consider that this form occurs only here in all the *Sonnets*. It was chosen for the sake of similation. The word *still* means primarily "notwithstanding" or "even afterward," but it may also be read in the sense of "always; forever," which in the general argument of the procreation sonnets is the most adequate interpretation. Furthermore, it echoes *distilled* and *distillation*, and is in fact contained therein−implying that, by means of distillation, beauty can be everlasting.

Leese also resonates with *lease*, a word that, while appearing only in sonnets 13 and 18 in the subsequence, is a key word in the procreation sonnets−for, as it is said in the former, beauty is something the youth "hold[s] in lease." Sonnet 4 had already established that beauty is not given, but loaned by Nature, and Sonnet 13 will employ this legal image to define roughly the same thing. The two words are therefore contrasted in similation; should the

[120] See for instance Sonnet 53.

[121] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 120.

youth's beauty not be distilled, he would "leese" the lease of his beauty. That is to say, the young man has two options: to "leese" his beauty by the grave and himself, or to lease it to his progeny. Sonnet 6, the companion to Sonnet 5, will continue the exploration of these alternatives, while returning to the financial language of Sonnet 4.

Sonnet 6

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
That use is not forbidden usury, 5
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee: 10
Then what could Death do, if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair,
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

Then, the first word in Sonnet 6, clearly signals that this poem continues the argument of Sonnet 5. From the reflection presented in the latter poem about the destructiveness of winter and the means of defense against it–distillation–, the speaker extracts a lesson for the young man: "let not winter's ragged hand deface / In thee thy summer, ere thou be distilled: / Make sweet some vial." In other words, the young man, as a flower that through distillation loses its appearance but not its substance, ought to make rose-water from his own essence, thereby preserving "beauty's rose." The implication is clear: the addressee is a rose.

The word *ragged* here means primarily "rough," so that the ragged hand of winter is contrasted to those hours that, in the previous sonnet, framed the youth's beauty with gentle work, which suggests they did so with gentle hands. Yet, according to Schmidt,[122] this sense of the word is metaphorical and comes from its literal sense of "rugged, uneven," so it may evoke the rugged bough of a tree withered by winter, with its "lusty leaves quite gone." Moreover, the word can also mean "worn into tatters" and "wearing tattered clothes," and thus it hints at a personification of winter as wearing a worn-out costume, resonating with the "tottered weed" of Sonnet 2 and implying the military image explicit in that poem (winter,

[122] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2.

similarly to the young man in that poem, wears a military uniform tottered by long years of siege). Finally, by virtue of winter's role as destroyer of beauty, we may read the word as meaning "making ragged."

Winter's hand will "deface" the young man's "summer," that is, it will, in the general sense of the word, erase his beauty from the world–and all memory of it–, and, in the specific, disfigure his face–winter will both decrease the young man's beauty in old age, "dig[ging] deep trenches" in it, and obliterate any trace of it from the world when he dies "single," childless. Note, once again, the initial *d* sound in a word related to destruction and death. Yet, as I mentioned in my analysis of the preceding sonnet, *distillation* was introduced as a positive alternative for this sound. It is not fortuitous, therefore, that *distilled* is placed in line 2 in the same exact metrical position that *deface* occupies in the first line: the metrical parallelism is meant to highlight the contrast between the two words with initial *d*.

To distill is, in the language of the poem, to "make sweet some vial." The concrete image is that of a recipient with "walls of glass" being filled with rose-water, which is sweet. This vial had been anticipated by the word *glass* in the third sonnet, and, in the context of procreation, it is evident it refers to a woman's womb. To "make sweet some vial" is then to impregnate a woman, thereby rendering her womb pleasing to sight, lovely, gentle, and dear, fusing all the meanings of the adjective *sweet* in one phrase.[123] Furthermore, as Booth has observed, the passage "can also carry suggestions of 'make some sweet vial,' 'create a child to contain and preserve your essence,'[124] and, I would add, it hints at a neologism if we hear it as "make [a] *sweetsome* vial," i.e., a child full of sweetness.

Midway through the first quatrain, however, the speaker abandons the rose-water metaphor from the previous sonnet and goes back to the financial language of Sonnets 2 and

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[123] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2.

[124] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 141.

4. Vendler has seen this as a "strange move" from the organic to the inorganic,[125] but I would argue that, while distillation does produce an organic substance, it is nevertheless an artificial process. As such, it is transitional between the natural and the human realms, much as the technique of grafting that will be so important at the close of the subsequence−and in effect both distillation and grafting will be linked to the speaker's verse later on in the *Sonnets*. Moreover, organic procreation, artificial reproduction, and inorganic multiplication are all unified in the procreation sonnets through catachresis. Therefore, to "make sweet some vial" is in this context to "treasure … some place / with beauty's treasure."

Evidently, then, to "treasure … some place" is, metaphorically, to impregnate some woman. Yet in *Othello*, 4.3.89, Emilia tells Desdemona that husbands "pour our treasures into foreign laps," so there may be at least a suggestion here that *to treasure* can be read concretely as "to discharge semen." In any case, the primary, concrete meaning of the verb in the line is "to enrich," though, as Booth has observed, "*treasure* can seem to mean 'value highly" until we reach *with* in the following line.[126] While this sense of the word does not fit the sentence, it is appropriate in the context, and the first part of the verse, "make sweet," also carries overtones of "make dear" and thus of "value highly." The noun *place* refers primarily to a residence, and in this it evokes the notion of husbandry−as management of the house−from Sonnet 3, although it could also be understood in the general sense of "space." To "treasure … some place with beauty's treasure" is then, concretely, to bring fortune to a house.

It is telling that the speaker advises the youth to make sweet *some* vial and treasure *some* place with beauty's treasure: the exact vial, or the exact place, or rather the exact woman does not matter. Any woman will do so long as she bears the young man a child. The youth is the fairest creature, and thus he will not desire increase from others, but increase will be

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[125] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 72.

[126] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 141.

desired from him. In addition, as I have shown, the speaker seems to acknowledge that his addressee will not be dissuaded from his self-love, therefore it would be pointless to appeal to a woman's beauty in order to convince him to procreate. The only solution is catering to his love for his own beauty: he might be persuaded to reproduce in order to preserve that which he loves the most.

"Beauty's treasure" also warrants a closer look. It is, of course, beauty itself: the young man ought to loan beauty to a child through impregnating a woman. But it also carries sexual implications; as mentioned above, the word *treasure* could refer to semen, so that to treasure some place with beauty's treasure would be inseminating some woman. Lastly, it could indicate the youth's image, which is to him the treasure of his beauty, or that which he himself treasures. And he ought to give it to his progeny "ere it be self-killed"–again, there is the notion that narcissistic love amounts to suicide. The word *self-killed* is contrasted in similation to *distilled*, for distillation, in this context, would be the opposite of suicide. Note also the catachresis: the financial image of treasure is qualified by a human image of taking one's own life.

The second quatrain brings back the polyptoton play on *use* / *usury* and the concept of Nature's loan from Sonnet 4. In that poem, the youth was called a "profitless usurer" because he used "so great a sum of sums" only for "traffic" with himself; here, that "abuse" of Nature's loan is contrasted to "That use … / Which happies those that pay the willing loan," for, as the speaker states, it "is not forbidden usury." Although not strictly forbidden by law in England,[127] usury was, nevertheless, considered a sin in Christian theology, just as masturbation was not prohibited but regarded as sinful–and the phrase "forbidden usury," as the context and Sonnet 4 give us reason to believe, makes reference to masturbation. As

[127] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 16.

opposed to that, to "pay the willing loan" is "for [the youth] to breed another [him]," that is, of course, to increase–the proper and legitimate use of Nature's loan.

Ingram and Redpath have remarked that this is a "difficult passage, surprisingly neglected by almost all commentators."[128] Its complexity, as they see it, lies in interpreting the metaphor:

> A fair sense is made if Nature is taken as the usurer (cf. 4. 3), and the borrower as the Friend … . The usury would not be iniquitous if the rate of interest were a hundred or even a thousand per cent, for the borrower would be made happier in direct proportion … . Perhaps still a better sense, however, is given by taking 'use' as having its contemporary sexual meaning and as referring to the Friend's intercourse with a wife who would 'pay the willing loan' (bear him children).[129]

However, I would add that the young man is potentially both borrower and lender: he was loaned his beauty by Nature with the provision that he should loan it in turn to his progeny–"being frank, [Nature] lends to those are free." Furthermore, Nature is only the lender as ultimate cause for the youth's beauty; the more immediate cause is his own parents, specifically his mother, from whom the addressee received his beauty, as Sonnet 3 tells us. Thus, every beautiful parent who begets beautiful children is at once borrower and lender, and so they should be, for those are the rules of Nature's bequest of beauty, according to the speaker. For the young man "to breed another [him]" is then both to make appropriate sexual use of his beauty and "to pay the willing loan."

The word *willing* resonates with *distilled* and *self-killed*: it is contrasted to the latter and approximated to the former in similation. Here it means primarily "voluntary," but it could be read as well in the sense of "desirous" and "contented," or yet as indicating the future character of this loan. By reason of its connection to "Nature's bequest," it implies in addition

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[128] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 16.

[129] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 16.

a will, something that is legated. And, in the context, it also carries sexual overtones, as *will* could refer to sexual desire in Shakespeare's time.[130]

For the young man to produce one child would "happy" him, both in the sense of making him contented and in the sense of making him fortunate or rich, but to generate ten children, "be it ten for one," would make him "ten times happier," that is, more contented and richer, the rate of happiness grows in direct proportion to the number of children, as Ingram and Redpath noted in the aforementioned passage. Line 8 is elliptical, and would require a complement such as "or [*thou wouldst be*] ten times happier" in order to be properly understood, yet the following verse repeats the idea in full: "Ten times thyself were happier than thou art, / If ten of thine ten times refigured thee." Though it could seem at first the speaker is saying the youth will be "refigured" a hundred times–ten times for each of his ten children–, he means primarily that the young man's ten children would each "refigure," i.e., reshape or renew him once, for a total of ten "refigurations."

But line 10, in which the multiplication of "tens" purposefully comes to a head, is indeed ambiguous, and so is the previous verse. If we accept the speaker's argument that ten children would bring ten times the happiness, and if we note the addressee is to "breed another [him]"–and note also the similation through assonance in *br*e*ed* and *th*ee–, we may suppose these lines to be saying thus: "ten times thyself," that is, ten of you, would be happier than you are if each of the ten bred ten more of you, possibly because they would be aware of multiplying their father's great beauty tenfold into posterity. The word *refigured*, while it means primarily reshape or renew, carries multiple meanings. It plays on *figure* meaning "number," and as such it would mean "renumbered"; yet the noun *figure* can also refer to images in general, to idea, or to the imagination itself,[131] so there is at least a suggestion here

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[130] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2. See also Sonnets 165 and 165.

[131] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

that refiguring is making a representation or recalling to the imagination, and therefore we may interpret the word as "remembered," in its double sense of calling to mind and reshaping, as discussed in my analysis of Sonnet 3–and this, I contend, reinforces the interpretation that the young man's children would be all the happier for their awareness of reshaping their father's beauty in their own progeny.

Were the youth to increase, whether he had one child or ten, death would be powerless against him–that is the implication of lines 11 and 12. These lines hark back to Sonnet 4, with *leaving*, and Sonnet 3, with *posterity*, and perhaps *depart* resonates with line 547 of the *Metamorphoses*, to which I have referred before–though here, in spite of his departure, the young man's image will remain, for he will "leav[e] [himself] living in posterity," by virtue of procreation (*posterity* can be understood in a double sense of progeny and perpetuity). However, the subject of *leaving* is not specified; it could be the youth, as in the reading above, but it could also be death, who, in the face of progeny, would have no choice but to leave the young man living. The speaker's use of the objective pronoun *thee* instead of the reflexive *thyself* may reinforce this interpretation, although the objective pronoun is perhaps meant to resonate with "another thee." Evidently, both readings are possible simultaneously, as they are concurrent.

The initial *d* in *death* and *depart* approximates the two words in similation; yet the type of departure here described is not dying altogether, so they are similar and contrasting at one and the same time. Likewise, *leaving* and *living* are contrasted in similation by their initial *l* and *-ing* ending, as the former implies death; yet the type of leaving here described is not properly dying, so they are at once contrasting and similar. These similations formally enact the defeat of death represented in these verses.

Moreover, *leaving* resonates with *leaves* and *left* from Sonnet 5, evoking the botanical and the distillation metaphors that gave rise to Sonnet 6. It carries overtones of mathematical

language, as it can be used to express the result of a subtraction (for instance, ten minus five *leaves* five). And it implies inheritance in the sense of leaving possessions to an heir. In this word, therefore, the organic, the inorganic, and the artificial are conflated.

The couplet opposes the negative alternative presented to the addressee, "make worms thine heir," to the positive one introduced in the first quatrain, "Make sweet some vial," and contrasts the "willing loan" to the "self-willed" use of the young man's beauty. The compound *self-willed* resonates in similation with *distilled*, *willing*, and *self-killed*, being contrasted to the first two and approximated to the latter. It means primarily "obstinate, headstrong," but in the context of inheritance it carries overtones of "legated to oneself" and, perhaps more significantly, as *will* can refer to sexual desire, of "self-desired," implying also the act of masturbation. To be self-willed is then to be self-killed, as narcissistic love is suicide.

Commentators have generally interpreted *conquest* either as military language or as related to Scottish law. Booth, for instance, states: "The primary meaning must be the usual one: 'spoils of war,' but the context of inheritance invokes a play on a sense *conquest* has in Scottish law … : 'real estate acquired otherwise than by inheritance."[132] Ingram and Redpath remark:

> The 'inheritance' images in these early sonnets suggest much less the sense 'spoils of war' than the meaning in Scottish law, 'real estate acquired otherwise than by inheritance … as opposed to 'heritage' (OED). The military in place of the legal sense here would weaken any antithesis with 'heir'.[133]

And Schmidt, in his *Shakespeare Lexicon*, mentions this passage as example of the sense "that which is acquired by force, prey, booty."[134] While I do not deny that both readings seem appropriate here, I do contend that neither of them are the primary senses the speaker has in

[132] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 143.

[133] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 17.

[134] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1.

mind. Perhaps my interpretation is anachronistic, but it seems to fit perfectly in the context: death is here portrayed as a suitor for the young man's love, and the conquest in question is a romantic one. The youth, says the speaker, is far too beautiful to be won by death, but should death succeed in its suit, their "love" would produce no other heir than worms. As self-love is suicide, it is ultimately an infatuation with death.

Sonnet 7

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having climbed the steep-up heav'nly hill, 5
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage.
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age he reeleth from the day, 10
The eyes ('fore duteous) now converted are
From his low tract and look another way.
So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
Unlooked on diest unless thou get a son.

Sonnet 7 establishes an extended image in its three quatrains, in which the sun is shown, in its heavenly course from sunrise to sunset, in relation to the gaze of human beings, to serve as a simile for the young man in the couplet. There are thus two concurrent narratives in the body of the poem, the first describing the sun, the second describing mortals. The physical narrative of the sun's ascent and descent is expressed in words and phrases connected to royalty or to religious language, and therefore the sun is metaphorically established as a king–in the first quatrain–and as a religious figure, perhaps a saint or Christ–in the second quatrain. As Booth has remarked,

> The conjunction of the rising sun, religious language and the climbing of a hill gives the whole poem vague, substantively unharnessed, but pervasive reference to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; the pun on 'sun' and *son* in line 14 is obviously also pertinent to Christ, but the Christian references never solidify, never add up to the sacrilegiously complimentary analogy they point toward; they do, however, give an air of solemnity and miraculousness to the equation the poem implies between the sun's cyclical birth, death, and rebirth and human victory over mortality by procreation.[135]

[135] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 143.

While I do agree that an explicit reference to Christ is never solidified, nevertheless I would argue that the second quatrain quite clearly depicts a holy man going up a hill in pilgrimage. This image is not necessarily Christian, yet given the religious context of Renaissance England, it is hard to suppose it anything else but Christian. However, the third quatrain portrays the sun as the Greek god Pheobus Apollo driving his chariot,[136] so it is theoretically probable, though unlikely, that the holy pilgrim was imagined as a Greek or Roman person.

The first quatrain opens with an inverted foot, where the stress falls on the interjection *Lo*, with a play on *low*. This interjection, used to call the interlocutor's attention to something visible ("look!"), anticipates the key word in the poem, *look*, which is present in the latter part of each of the three quatrains−the part that shows people's relationship to the sun at different stages of its course−and in derivate form also in the couplet (*unlooked*). The sun, represented here in metonymy as a "gracious light," is personified and "Lifts up his burning head." The adjective *gracious*, according to Ingram and Redpath, is "a richer word than in current modern usage" and brings in "simultaneously the senses (1) regal or sovereign, (2) emanating and bestowing beauty, and (3) spiritually beneficent."[137] The pronoun *his*, as frequently in the poems, may refer−as *its*−to *light*, or to the personified tenor of the metonymy, the sun. When he lifts up his burning head, "each under eye / Doth homage to his new-appearing sight, / Serving with looks his sacred majesty." The phrase *under eye* may be understood as "eye that is under," that is, the eyes of human beings, or yet, reading *under* as an adjective of eye, we may interpret the phrase as "subject eye," that is, eyes that are subservient or subjected to the sun. Furthermore, we might suppose that, since there are "under eyes," there are also "over eyes," i.e., the eyes on the sun's burning head, or perhaps we might see the sun itself as an eye−foreshadowing Sonnet 18's "the eye of heaven"−; as Booth notes, "the justice of the

[136] Harvey, Sir Paul, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937, p. 34.

[137] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 18.

analogy was increased [in the Renaissance] by the belief that eyes emit light."[138] The word *sight* can reinforce this interpretation. Everyone on earth then pays their respect to the sun by "Serving with looks his sacred majesty," where the phrase *sacred majesty* may be read both as descriptive of the holy glory of the sun or as a honorific title for the sun as a king with divine right, as in "his sacred majesty, the king."

In the second quatrain, as I have mentioned, the sun is portrayed as a middle-aged holy man climbing a steep slope in pilgrimage. This is when the sun reaches noon, after "having climbed the steep-up heav'nly hill." The adjective *heav'nly* does double duty in the line, meaning both "holy" and "celestial." The sun concludes his ascent "Resembling strong youth in his middle age," that is, either with the vigor of youth though in middle-age or looking as strong youth will look upon reaching middle-age. I contend that the third foot is more profitably read as a trochee, with the stress falling on *youth* rather than *in*, which allows for two successive stress syllables (*strong youth*) and emphasizes the character of strength attributed to "youth"−which is, evidently, a metonymy for a young man. At noon, "Yet mortal looks adore [the sun's] beauty still / Attending on his golden pilgrimage." *Yet* and *still* may be understood as synonyms, meaning "as previously" or "nevertheless"; according to Booth, *still* "repeats the senses of *Yet*."[139] However, *yet* can also be understood as an adjective, given the passage a sense of "looks that are yet mortal, that have not become immortal yet," which is not repeated by *still*; in turn, *still* may be interpreted as an adjective, with the order of noun and adjective inverted in anastrophe,[140] indicating lack of movement in the sun (as in the phrase "stay of the sun"[141]), or yet as referring to the stillness of the "mortal looks" (a

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[138] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 143.

[139] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 143.

[140] Anastrophe: the reversal of order of an adjective and its noun. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 42.

[141] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p.157.

metonymy for the people who contemplate the sun, of course). In any case, the "under eyes" continue to adore the sun's beauty, following the course of his pilgrimage up the heavenly hill. The word *Attending*, in its sense of "traveling as servants with someone," also evokes the royal metaphor from the previous quatrain. Finally, the sun's "golden pilgrimage" may bring to our attention a French pun on *or*, meaning "gold", embedded into several words in this poem: _**or**ient_, _m**or**tal_, _ad**or**e_, and _'f**or**e_.

Having reached the highest point of his course in the second quatrain, now in the third, "with weary car," the sun starts his descent. It is not, evidently, the car that is weary; the metonymy represents either the driver or the horses pulling the chariot, or the driver *and* the horses. Whereas in the first two quatrains there are no significant pauses in the middle of lines, here in the third there are many such pauses, for instance, the commas that involve "with weary car." This helps to slow down the lines, and the reading is more labored, mimicking the weariness of the sun described in the quatrain. The assonance of the long vowel sound in *feeble* and *reeleth* contributes to slowing the pace of reading as well, and the metrical stress on *from* emphasizes the sun's departure from the day. The phrase *feeble age* is another metonymy: the sun is being compared in simile to a feeble old man who goes to bed when the sun is setting. The eyes that had been following the sun's course, "'fore duteous"−paying homage to the sun and attending him on his journey−, "now converted are / From his low tract and look another way." As the sun starts descending, people lose interest and look away from him−and therefore I would read the first foot of line 12 as inverted−, perhaps as they lose interest in an old king. Finally, "the literal sense of the Latin *tractus* is 'drawing out, dragging,"[142] which reinforces the feeling of weariness of the quatrain and explains the reason why the speaker chose this word rather than, say, *course*.

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[142] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 35.

This passage echoes the Renaissance proverb "the rising, not the setting sun, is worshipped by most men,"[143] which gives the simile, as West proposes, a sense that perhaps "Neglect comes suddenly to the great."[144] In this respect, Ingram & Redpath say that "it is natural to ask whether the Elizabethans did not admire sunsets less than the Romantics were to do,"[145] and West suggests "It might seem as though Shakespeare is bending the facts to fit his case."[146] I would argue, however, that the proverb does not refer to aesthetic appreciation, but rather to religious gratitude for the bounty propitiated by the rising sun. While the sunset brings about the night, darkness, cold and sleep, the sunrise brings warmth and light, allowing people to carry out the activities on which their livelihood depends; therefore they tend to *worship* the rising, but not the setting sun.

The third quatrain gives us the first instance of the word *convert* in the procreation sonnets, a word which will appear again at Sonnet 11 and Sonnet 14. As Booth has observed,

> Many of the words in this sonnet are religious in derivation or common usage−*gracious*, *homage*, *sacred*, *heavenly*, *adore*, *pilgrimage*. In such a context, the choice of the verb *convert* to describe the simple physical act of averting the eyes gives the action overtones of apostasy; however−and moreover−it simultaneously suggests a conversion from superstitious heathen fear to a higher religion.[147]

This "conversion" from following the course of the sun could be regarded as sacrilegious. Nevertheless, the eyes are looking away from the sun's "low tract," and the adjective *low*, in view of the religious overtones of the poem, may imply a moral sense of "vile, base." Perhaps that lends strength to Booth's suggestion of a "higher religion." Even so, the religious

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[143] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 144.

[144] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 35.

[145] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 18.

[146] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 35.

[147] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 144.

overtones in *convert* seem to be vague, with no clear indication as to whether it is morally wrong or right to "convert" from the sun's low tract. And, in the other instances of *convert* in the procreation sonnets, the religious overtone is very faint if it is there at all.

The couplet then brings in, with *So thou*, the simile between the narrative about the sun and his observers and the young man. "Thyself outgoing in thy noon," the speaker says, "Unlooked on diest, unless thou get a son." According to Both,[148] the sentence *Thyself outgoing in thy noon* can be read in four ways: (1) "So you, outlasting your prime"; (2) "So you, at the moment when you surpass yourself"; (3) "So you, yourself already in the process off departing (i.e. dying) at the moment of your prime"; and (4) "So you, yourself already in the process of going out (as a light goes out, is extinguished) at the moment of your prime." Ingram & Redpath argue that "To take 'outgoing' as intransitive (= (1) dying or (2) declining) would be unsatisfactory," because "(1) would not fit the simile of lines 1-12" and "(2) would require '*from* thy noon," and therefore gloss the passage as "So you, outlasting your prime."[149] They seem to be in accordance that the primary meaning of the sentence is "living beyond the height of your beauty." I would add that sense (4) suggested by Booth, in spite of Ingram & Redpath's reservation about reading *outgoing* as *declining*, seems to fit the simile quite well; we need not read *outgoing* precisely as *declining* and therefore requiring the preposition *from*, but we may interpret it as an intransitive "going out." This is in line with the aesthetic strategy of the poem, which depicts, in its body, the sun as a human or anthropomorphic figure, and now portrays in the couplet the youth as a sun. The simple present *diest* emphasizes the fact that, while the youth does not procreate, he is subject to decay; as West remarks, "Here, and at 3.14, even at his peak the young man is dying."[150] The sun is "reborn" every day, so his going

[148] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 144.

[149] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 18.

[150] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 35.

out will not destroy his beauty, but the youth must procreate in order to be reborn as the sun of a new day. The word *sun* itself never appears in the poem, yet as Vendler has stated, "the long … suppression of the word *sun* of course makes the word *son*, when it finally leaps off the page as the closing word, entirely inevitable."[151]

Finally, the phrase "Unlooked on diest" appeals to the youth's pride in his beauty, referenced in Sonnet 2's "proud livery," in order to convince him to procreate. In Sonnet 5, the speaker states that the young man has a "lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell," and here he tells his addressee this will no longer be true when his beauty is destroyed by time, not unless he is re-membered in a child. I contend that the presence of the word *son* in this poem is evidence less of a concern with the gender of the child than of an interest in the simile, in portraying the child as the sun of a new day for the youth's beauty. The word *son* appears only one other time in the subsequence, in Sonnet 13, to be precise, where it also carries an overtone of "sun."[152] Of course the speaker may have underlying dynastic concerns for his addressee, which are implied now and again in the subsequence, as in the house metaphor of Sonnet 10 and Sonnet 13, but the fact remains that in all of the other poems but this one and Sonnet 13 the speaker is urging the young man not to have a son specifically, but to have a child. The addressee's beauty needs to be "repaired," whether in a son or daughter, as his mother's beauty was "repaired" in him.

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[151] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 76.

[152] Refer to my analysis of Sonnet 13.

Sonnet 8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy? 5
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering; 10
Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing;
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none."

Sonnet 8 sets off from the commonplace observation of the fact that music frequently makes its listeners feel sad, questioning why that should be so (first quatrain), then proceeds to explain to the youth the reason for his sadness upon listening to music (second and third quatrains) and, using this explanation, concludes with another appeal for him to procreate. The first quatrain opens with the vocative *Music to hear*, metaphorically calling the young man's voice music–an expression which signals a coming change in the procreation sonnets, as the speaker appears to become more and more taken with his addressee. Saying that someone's voice is "music to hear" is something usually done by people who are in love, and as we progress in the subsequence we will get the feeling that the speaker is increasingly coming to love the young man dearly.

In a chiasmic structure, the speaker asks, "Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?," implying afterwards that it should not be so, because "Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy," that is, pleasant or joyful things do not clash with one another, therefore the young man, himself a sweet or a joy should logically not turn sad with music, another sweet or joy. Why, then, does his addressee love that which he does not receive happily, or

why does he receive with pleasure what annoys him?−the speaker asks. In other words, why does he enjoy music if it makes him sad? As Booth says,

> The wit of this quatrain is derived from a playful perversity in which a commonplace observation … is treated as if it revealed a serious logical inconsistency. The inconsistency is first exaggerated by means of the contrast between the chiasmically balance epithet and question in line 1; the next three lines then analyze the inconsistency with inappropriately rigorous logic.[153]

Yet, because the question in lines 3 and 4 is expressed in general language, with no specific reference to music except that given by the context set up by the previous lines, we might suppose that, on a deeper level, the speaker is asking him: Why do you love things that are bad for you? Why do you love yourself in such a narcissistic way and refuse to procreate, when that deprives you of the renewal of your beauty and youth? Furthermore, *receiv'st* may carry sexual overtones, especially because of the presence of the word *love* and in the phrase *receiv'st with pleasure*, and perhaps the speaker means to imply by this that the sexual act the youth refuses to engage in−to produce a child−would be a mixed pleasure for him, as music is, and thus there is no reason he should not perform it.

In the second quatrain, the speaker proceeds to explain to the youth the cause of his annoyance with music, although he does not explain how it is possible for the youth both to take pleasure and to find pain in it. It is the "true concord of well-tunèd sounds" that "do offend [his] ear," or as Ingram & Redpath paraphrase it, "the harmonious agreement of notes in tune and in just musical relation is distasteful to [him]."[154] *Concord*, then, is a musical term, synonymous with "harmony,"[155] and *true* in this context means "just, exact" or "conformable

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[153] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 144.

[154] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 20.

[155] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 231.

to reason or to rules,"[156] in this case the rules of harmony in music. However, both *true* and *concord* may have different connotations in this line, given the analogy between the musical and human realms established with *by unions married*. The adjective *true*, in a context of marriage, could mean "honorable," "genuine," "lawful," or "faithful." The noun *concord* could refer to an "agreement of minds,"[157] etymologically it means "hears together,"[158] and, moreover, it bears legal overtones related to property legislation: "*concord* is an agreement about fines for trespass."[159] In addition, the noun *unions* also has legal meaning; according to Booth, "in Scots law … a 'union' is a 'uniting into one tenantry of lands or tenements not lying contiguous"[160] through marriage of interested parties, and this noun produces a musical echo as well, by its close similarity with *unison*.

If the harmony in polyphonic music offends the youth's ears, then, "they do but sweetly chide [him]," affirms the speaker. Here we come to the reason why the youth is sad in listening to music. The "marriage" of harmony annoys him, chiding him sweetly–causing him pain even while giving him the pleasure of music–, because he "confounds / In singleness the parts that [he] shoul[d] bear." This means, in musical terms, that he cannot distinguish between the individual sounds of instrument or voices and the unison of harmony; the individual parts that he should bear in mind are confused in his understanding as a single unit. But to "bear a part," in Renaissance music language, is also to execute one's lines of music "in an instrumental ensemble or singing in consort,"[161] which the youth cannot do because he does not understand the difference between his individual parts and the whole of the

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[156] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, pp. 1262-1263.

[157] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 231.

[158] Harper, Douglas. “concord". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2017.

[159] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 145.

[160] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 145.

[161] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 37.

composition. This brings us to the deeper, metaphorical meaning of the passage: the young man, "by remaining single, supress[es] those roles (of husband and father) which [he] should play."[162] I would add as well that not only does he not comprehend the parts that he himself should play, but also the parts of the wife and the child which would make for a harmonious marriage. Lastly, *bear* has obvious overtones of "bearing children;" *confounds* has overtones of "wasting, destroying;" and *parts* has overtones of "sexual organs;" all of which is not logically and syntactically harness to the verses, but is clearly pertinent in the context.

The third quatrain opens with an inverted first foot in an attempt to call the young man's attention, by making reference to lute strings,[163] to the individual parts that each string plays in harmonization−and this is in turn treated metaphorically in terms of marriage. One string is "sweet husband to another," so when it is struck, it produces sympathetic vibrations in its neighbor strings, who all together then "Resembl[e] sire, and child and happy mother"−in short, a happy family. West has remarked, according to advice obtained from a musician familiar with the lute, that "it's actually quite difficult to pluck one string … and leave the other free to resonate,"[164] because the pairs of strings, which are tuned together, are quite close to one another. And since the speaker's analogy involves sympathetic resonance of three different strings, West concludes that "Shakespeare … use[s] technical terms of music as analogies for human experience, but … not always … correctly."[165] While not disputing the truth of his statement, I would argue that for the purposes of the poem it does not really matter if the analogy is technically correct or not, since we are nevertheless capable of conceiving of three strings resonating when only one of them was plucked. Therefore we can imagine that the strings, "all in one, one pleasing note do sing."

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[162] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 20.

[163] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 146.

[164] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 37.

[165] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 37.

The strings, in their harmonized individualities, produce a "speechless song"—a song without words, but with oxymoronic overtones of a "silent song"—that is actually not one song but many, only "seeming one." That is, harmonious marriage—like harmonious music—unites disparate individualities into an apparently single entity. This offends the youth in his Narcissistic, isolated state; therefore music sings to him: "Thou single wilt prove none." In its pleasantness of unison, music reminds him of his duty to procreate and of the oblivion that awaits him should he not fulfill his duty. The similation between *sing* and *single* serves to reinforce this message by reminding the youth constantly of the difference between the composite singleness of music and his unitary singleness. In music's speechless words to him, there is a play on an ancient proverb that says "one is no number."[166] If the young man remains in unitary singleness, that is, unmarried, he will never produce an heir, thus never be more than one, and eventually, when he dies, he will become zero, or none, because there will be no child to "bear his memory."

To conclude, this poem is, among all of the procreation sonnets, the one most insistent on the idea of marriage; the insistence is appropriate, since having a child in wedlock was the "truest"—to use the language of the sonnet—way to go about it. Nevertheless, the focus of the subsequence is on children rather than on marriage. To a great extent, the speaker's concern with marriage is purely incidental; it is not often valued for its own sake, and in most of the procreation sonnets there is no direct reference to marriage at all.

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[166] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 147.

Sonnet 9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou cosum'st thyself in single life?
Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow and still weep, 5
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
Look what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it; 10
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unused, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

Sonnet 9 opens with the raising of a hypothesis, in the form of a question, for the young man's refusal to procreate: is it perhaps out of fear of leaving a sad widow behind, mourning his death? The speaker then proceeds to explain why that would not be a valid reason for his addressee's lack of increase. Duncan-Jones states that "the weakness of the sonnet lies in its opening proposition: if [that] is *not* the motive for not marrying, none of what follows applies."[167] I would contend, however, that the consequences of the youth's childlessness as described in this poem would remain the same regardless of his reasons, and in fact very similar consequences have been expressed in previous sonnets. The hypothesis raised by the speaker may indeed be weak, but perhaps it is purposefully so. As West argues, "a possible tactic for an orator is to propose a feeble case for his opponent, destroy it, and claim that he has won the argument."[168] The weakness of the proposition, therefore, was likely meant to reinforce the strength of the concluding couplet, which drives home with unprecedented violence the criminal, hideous nature of the young man's attitude.

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[167] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 128.

[168] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 39.

The question takes up the first two lines of the poem, but only the first half−the first verse−of it is hypothetical; "thou consum'st thyself in single life" is a statement of fact, descriptive of how the young man actually leads his life: in self-destructive narcissism. The word *single* recalls the prophetic conclusions of Sonnet 3 ("Die single and thine image dies with thee") and Sonnet 8 ("Thou single wilt prove none"). In this context, the mere phrase *single life*, then, suggests the death of beauty in the world, beyond its ordinary sense of "unmarried life," and gives evidence that the speaker's concern with marriage is incidental. The word *consum'st* here means primarily "to perish or dwindle,"[169] but although this is its first occurrence in the *Sonnets*, by its overtones of "to devour; to destroy; to waste," it recalls similar concepts from previous poems in the subsequence, and thus emphasizes the suggestion of death. As Duncan-Jones points out,[170] it evokes self-cannibalism (and therefore the gluttony of Sonnet 1), bodily self- consumption (and therefore the candle that feeds its flame with its own waxen substance), and economic waste (and therefore the words *spend*, *abuse*, and *use* from Sonnet 4). Moreover, the word *consume* is used by Golding, in the *Metamorphoses* (616), to describe the death of Narcissus: "Did he consume and melt away with Cupids secret fire."

Lines 3 and 4 clearly shift the focus of the poem from marriage to procreation and prove the speaker's concern with marriage is incidental. That is why I disagree with Duncan-Jones on her assessment that "none of what follows applies." The issue here is not whether the youth will die single in the sense of "unmarried," but rather in the sense of "issueless" or "childless." Whether the young man will not get married "for fear to wet a widow's eye" or for some other reason, if he should die without increasing, the world will grieve his departure as if it were his wife, in spite of his actual civil state. *Makeless* in line 4 means primarily

[169] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 240.

[170] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 128.

"without a mate,"[171] indicating first and foremost that with the young man's death the world will be as a widow, a wife who has lost her husband. However, *wife* may refer not only to married women in particular, but also to women in general,[172] so rather than reading *makeless* in the sense of "having lost a mate," we could read it as "never having had a mate:" the world would then be a single woman, beguiled and unblessed by the youth, mourning a prospective partner–*the* prospective partner. This interpretation, along with overtones of "non-creating; unproductive" in *makeless*–and the similation between this word and *issueless*–, shows that, beyond the speaker's apparent concern with marriage, there lies a deeper concern with procreation–as the means for perpetuating beauty.

The "world" may be a synecdoche for people who have known the young man's beauty or who will come to know it. Evidently, it is not the planet that will mourn his loss, but the people who have felt the impact of his beauty, and who would wish that it could endure in the planet through procreation. Men will lament the disappearance of this marvel from existence, and women, in addition to that, will grieve that they will have been beguiled of the chance of being the medium for its continuation. Alternatively, the "world" can be construed as "Nature," the cosmic force responsible for the attribution of beauty to human beings, which in personification will grieve that the young man has not redistributed by means of increase the beauty that was lent him. Both readings are pertinent, of course, though line 7 will likely make us give preference to the second one. Furthermore, as Duncan-Jones has pointed out,[173] *makeless* carries also a sense of "peerless; matchless," suggesting that only the young man would be an appropriate mate for the world–and, in this context, it would make more sense to read *world* as representing Nature. The youth, as the fairest creature, is the only one who can provide Nature with children who are unmatched in terms of beauty.

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[171] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 686.
[172] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 147.

[173] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 128.

Lines 4 and 5, with their constant alliteration of the *w* sound, in *world*, *will*, *wail*, *wife*, then *world*, *will*, *widow*, *weep*, mimic with great emphasis the immeasurable weeping of the world for the young man's beauty. The world's grief is then put in contrast with the grief of the "private widow[s]" in line 7, where the alliteration is much weaker, resonating only between *when*, *widow*, and *well*; and this contrast is reinforced by the internal rhymes in lines 4 and 5 of *will*, *will*, and *still*, and by the meanings of "continually" and "everlasting" in the latter word. All of which suggests that the world's grief will greatly outweigh and outlast that of any individual human widow. The adverb *still* could also be read as meaning "nevertheless," that is, even if the youth would not marry for fear of leaving a mourning widow behind, the world would nevertheless grieve his childlessness. The speaker is telling the youth, once again, to "pity the world." It is significant, moreover, that after Narcissus' death, the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* tells us

> The water Nymphes, his sisters, *wept* and *wayled* for him sore
>
> …
>
> The Wood nymphes also did lament. And Echo did rebound
>
> To every sorrowfull noyse of theirs with like lamenting sound. (635-638)

The speaker of the sonnets uses the same verbs the narrator of the myth employs to refer to the grief following Narcissus' demise, and Echo's "rebound" of their "lamenting sound[s]" is here reproduced in alliterations.

The word *widow* in line 5 limits the sense of *wife*, in line 4, to "a married woman." That is not to say that the speaker's concern with marriage is being brought to the forefront, but simply that the metaphor he wishes to establish is based on viewing the world as a widow mourning the young man's childless death. This metaphor, according to the speaker, is relevant if the youth dies issueless, but not necessarily if he dies unmarried. This and the

preceding sonnets and my analysis have made this point sufficiently clear, so I will no longer press upon it.

The world will "still weep," says the speaker to the youth, "[t]hat *thou* no form of *thee* hast left behind." The polyptoton of the personal pronoun *thou*, as West remarks,[174] imitates the procreation in which the young man should engage, "since 'thee' is another form of 'thou." It also suggests the impossible separation between subject and object that is at once a condition for and the limitation of narcissistic love: to love oneself as Narcissus did, it is necessary to conceive of oneself as an entity apart from one's self, or to separate the self from the image of the self; yet because the two entities are in reality one, the separation will always remain conceptual, and narcissistic love will only lead to frustration. In the word of Narcissus himself (588-590):

> I would to God I for a while might from my bodie part.
>
> This wish is straunge to heare, a Lover wrapped all in smart
>
> To wish away the thing the which he loveth as his heart.

Thus the speaker often employs the subjective pronoun *thou* to refer to the youth himself, and the objective pronoun *thee* to refer to his image. As in Sonnet 6, line 12, where we might have expected *thyself* instead of *thee*, here we might have expected *thine*–these would be the more idiomatic constructions. But in opting for the objective pronoun, perhaps the speaker is reminding us of the conceptual separation that narcissistic love entails, and of the agonies that are sure to come with it.

Line 6, along with lines 5 and 4, is also meant to contrast with lines 7 and 8. The world, as the youth's public widow, will have no living form to remember him by, whereas the private widow of any man–that does increase–needs only look at their children's eyes in order to see her husband alive again. And, in a secondary sense, a private widow may keep her

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[174] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 40.

husband's shape in mind "through the vision of the children themselves, who remember their father and look forward to renewing him in their own progeny."[175] The rhymes in the second quatrain, as well as the metrical distribution of the words, also help intensify the contrast between the public widow and the private one: the former "will … still *weep*" that "no form [has been] left *behind*," while the latter "well may *keep*" the "husband's shape in *mind*."

Moreover, the word *left* in line 6 may reinforce the interpretation of "the world" as Nature. It resonates with line 12 of Sonnet 4, in which the speaker asks his addressee: without children, "what acceptable audit canst thou leave" to Nature? Derivates of the verb *to leave* have so far been associated in the procreation sonnets either with increase or with death, and sometimes with both at the same time, as in "[l]eaving thee living in posterity" (6.12) and in the example from Sonnet 4. In the case of *left* in the present sonnet, both associations are pertinent as well. But since that first occurrence of *leave* in Sonnet 4, the word has been inextricably linked to Nature, procreation, and death, and to Nature's audit, at least in the context of the subsequence. Therefore *left* here may lead us to see "the world" as Nature rather than simply the people who have been affected by the youth's beauty.

The third quatrain brings back from sonnets 4 and 6 the financial image that was implicit in *consum'st*. Whatever capital a prodigal person spends in the world, the speaker tells us, merely changes its place, or changes hands, because this capital will continue to circulate in the world, and so the world will still enjoy it. In line 9, "the world" is not a synecdoche for people, nor is it Nature; rather, it refers either to the world as a place where the capital is spent or as the condition in which it is spent, that is, to life. But in line 10, "the world" stands for the people who live in this place. Whatever capital is spent by a prodigal person in life will remain in this world and will continue to be enjoyed by other people. Alternatively, we could interpret *his* in line 10 as referring not to *what* in the previous line, as

[175] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 128.

Booth suggests,[176] but to *unthrift*: what the prodigal man spends in the world might shift his place in it−he may rise or fall in economic status, according to the profitability of his investment−, yet his individual fate does not bear upon the benefits of his investment to the world. Finally, the word *enjoys* does double duty here, because it may be understood in the sense of "is able to use" or in the sense of "derives pleasure from" (with overtones of sexual pleasure, as for instance in Sonnet 129), and the feminine ending of line 10 in *it* signals perhaps that the capital in question, once it is spent in the world, will be beyond the control of the investor.

To the financial capital of lines 9 and 10, lines 11 and 12 oppose a different kind of capital, that of beauty. Contrary to financial prodigality, the waste of beauty produces the extinction of this type of capital. When it is used profitless, as the addressee uses it, it does not generate a return for the investor, nor does it change hands. It simply ceases to be. Here in line 11, *world* refers, as in line 9, to the world as a place−from which beauty will disappear upon being wasted. Therefore, beauty "kept unused, the user so destroys it." The polyptoton of *use* plays on two different meanings of the word; the first is use for procreation, the second is misuse, or abuse−the waste of beauty in narcissistic love (with sexual overtones). Note that in the three previous lines, *world* was present at the exact same metrical position. Here, however, it is missing, and *so* occupies its place. The primary meaning of the line is, of course, that the misuse of beauty destroys it. But *it* could also refer to the world: the abuse of beauty destroys the world. Accordingly, the absence of the word in the line reinforces this idea. It is a very serious accusation that foreshadows the prophetic visions of Sonnet 11 and Sonnet 14.

The force of the concluding couplet contrasts with the weakness of the initial proposition. It makes a very strong accusation against the youth, as if saying: "No, it is not for

[176] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 148.

love of others, that is, for fear to leave a grieving widow behind, that thou consum'st thyself in single life, because one who is so intent on destroying his own beauty cannot possibly love oneself, and so cannot possibly love another." There is implicit reference here to the biblical command "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31), and implied denial of the youth's self-love, or implied statement that his narcissistic passion is not truly self-love. How could it be, when it leads to the destruction of his greatest gift from Nature, to the extinguishing of that which he seems to love the most? Thus narcissistic love is "murd'rous shame", i.e. shameful murder of beauty and life, which ought to produce a shame so deep, so "all-eating," as to kill the person who feels it. The pronoun *himself*, as Booth indicates,[177] may refer either to *bosom*, which in synecdoche represents the addressee himself, or to its tenor, that is, the youth. In either case, the young man's crime is brought about by absence of love in his heart−for himself, for his neighbor, for the world.

[177] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 148.

Sonnet 10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident.
Grant if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
But that thou none lov'st is most evident;
For thou art so possessed with murd'rous hate, 5
That 'gainst thyself thou stickst not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
O change thy thought, that I may change my mind.
Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love? 10
Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove.
  Make thee another self for love of me,
  That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

The word *shame* in line 1 of this sonnet signals its connection to the previous one. Sonnet 10 continues the argument that the youth's refusal to procreate does not spring from self-love, but from lack of self-love, or, rather, from self-hatred. One who does not seek to perpetuate his incredible beauty cannot possible love himself, and thus cannot possibly love another. And so the poem opens with *For shame*, which may be read as "shame on you!," as "out of a sense of shame," or as "in order to avoid shame."[178] This is not the same "murd'rous shame" from the preceding couplet–that distinction is reserved for the youth's obstinacy in not procreating–, but they are indeed connected; someone who does not love himself, being *so unprovident*, should be ashamed to claim to love any other person. The adverb *so* may be read as expressing the degree to which the youth is unprovident, or better yet as referring to the way in which the youth is unprovident, that is, to that which is said in the couplet of Sonnet 9 and indeed in all of the previous sonnets: the youth is unprovident for himself in not procreating. The adjective *unprovident* means primarily "not careful in preparing for future exigencies,"[179] yet because it comes from the verb *to provide*, it also carries overtones of "not providing what

[178] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 148.

[179] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1290.

is necessary" and "not caring for"[180]–thereby implying husbandry as management of a house, from Sonnet 3, and foreshadowing the beauty-house metaphor that will be introduced in the second quatrain of this poem.

The verb *deny*, with its initial *d* sound and sense in the context of denying love, may remind us of previous initial *d* sound words in the subsequence and their destructiveness: *die*, *dig*, *disdains*, among others. The verb *bear'st*, in turn, may recall its first occurrence in Sonnet 1, and the sense of bearing children. The word *love* is repeated in polyptoton three times in the first quatrain, all of them accompanied by pronouns referencing a certain quantity of people: *bear'st love to any*, *beloved of many*, *none lov'st*. Note that *bear'st love to any* and *beloved of many* occupy the same metrical position in their respective lines, with the same metrical stress, where the *love* syllable is stressed. In contrast, *none lov'st* is placed earlier in its line, the pronoun precedes the *love* syllable, and the phrase straddles the second and third feet, where *none* is stressed and *lov'st* is unstressed. The *love* words are contrasted in similation, and this lack of stress enacts the lack of love mentioned in the line. The third foot has as its stressed syllable the verb *is*, which would typically be unstressed, and this highlights the fact that the youth's lack of love "*is* most evident."

Nevertheless, in case this was not clear already from the subsequence so far, the second quatrain explains why it is so evident that the young man "none lov[es]:" "For [he is] so possessed with murd'rous hate / That 'gainst [himself] [he] stick[s] not to conspire." And he conspires against himself by "Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate / Which to repair should be [his] chief desire." *Possessed* means primarily "filled with, affected by,"[181] but perhaps in this context it may have other connotations. The image here is that of a house, represented in synecdoche by *roof*. So *possessed* also has overtones of "occupying; taking possession of,"

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[180] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 915.

[181] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 882.

especially by its connection with *possession*, a word frequently employed in relation to property. Moreover, "'gainst thyself thou stickst not to conspire" may remind us of the house divided from the Bible ("if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot continue;" Mark 3:25), because in the context it portrays the young man precisely as a house divided against itself. And, by virtue of the biblical allusion in the passage, *possessed* might convey a religious sense of "controlled by an evil spirit"—after all, this "murd'rous hate" leads the young man to the suicide of beauty.

The house-beauty metaphor has another, less obvious implication, which foreshadows the conclusion to the procreation sonnets and to the young man's narcissistic problem. The word for "arrangement of lines of verse" in English is *stanza*, which comes from the Italian and may signify, in that language, "room." It is possible to think of a poem, therefore, as a house made up of stanzas—in the case of the Shakespearean sonnet, four different rooms, each with their characteristic particularities, with their own furniture, so to speak, but all belonging to the same whole, the same house. We may see an implicit connection then between the beauty-house metaphor and poems, a relationship that anticipates the flower-beauty-poem metaphor that I will discuss when we come to the last three sonnets of the subsequence, and through which the procreation sonnets will reach their conclusion. The house-beauty-poem metaphor is barely suggested here, but in retrospect it will seem intended—as the speaker is grappling with different kinds of metaphor to express the youth's predicament and attempt to solve it, his final solution begins slowly to take shape in the back of his mind, and this is where we may first see it starting to form.

Aside from being interpreted literally and concretely, the house image can be read abstractly as referring to the youth's family, as a dynastic house. Though, as West has

remarked, "That reasoning is not used in the Sonnets"[182]–not explicitly at any rate–, the interpretation is not undue, since the murder the speaker accuses the young man of committing is precisely the "murder" of his would-be descendants, who would perpetuate his beauty through the generations. Reading *roof* as referring to family, furthermore, falls perfectly in line with the biblical allusion of the house divided. And West's assertion that "Shakespeare's avoidance of the obvious word 'house' is perhaps a deliberate strategy to avoid bringing in that extraneous argument" is patently wrong, given that the speaker does employ the word *house* in Sonnet 13 and that there is a clear implication of a concern with family in the *lines of life* of Sonnet 16. I do agree, however, that dynastic concerns are not at the forefront of the argument, just as concerns with marriage on the part of the speaker are merely incidental.

The inverted, trochaic first foot in line 7 disrupts the steady rhythm of the second quatrain and may enact formally the destruction to which the line refers. The word *beauteous* recalls *beauteous niggard* from Sonnet 4–in both instances the adjective is used in a context of reproach–, and *desire* harks back to Sonnet 1 and the universal principle of conservation of beauty through procreation, "from fairest creatures we *desire* increase." Here the speaker says the youth's "chief desire" should be "to repair that beauteous roof," implying then once more, by contrast of the contexts in which desire was used, that the youth *is* the fairest creature and therefore it is understandable that he desires none other but himself. The verb *to repair* brings back the French pun on *re-père*, appropriate in the situation, adding force to an interpretation of *roof* as "family," given that the idea of fathering again makes reference to lineage.

The third quatrain presents a startling and unique moment in the procreation sonnets, "the equivalent of the entry of a new *dramatis persona* on the stage:"[183] the introduction of the speaker, through the use of the first person pronoun *I*, as a character who is emotionally

[182] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 42.
[183] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 88.

involved in the arguments. There had been moments before when the speaker's emotions came to the surface of the poems, as for instance in Sonnet 8, but never so clearly and explicitly as now. Here the speaker begs the youth to "change [his] thought," so that he may "change [his] mind" concerning his judgment of the young man as a person who "none lov[es]." In his appeal, he contrasts two words that are often synonyms, *thought*−which here might be glossed as "attitude"−and *mind*−which we might read as "opinion"−, thereby expressing the divide between their two minds. Thus he invokes his own emotional connection to the young man as a reason for the young man to procreate, and he will do so even more emphatically in the concluding couplet of this poem. In addition, the introduction of the first person makes the sonnets more dramatic, rather more like a conversation than poems addressed in apostrophe to someone remote in time or place.

The speaker then asks "Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?," returning with *lodged* to the beauty-house metaphor. Shall hate dwell in a fairer abode than love does? The speaker is invoking the traditional connection between beauty and goodness, qualities which presently seem to be split in the youth. Note the similation between *lodged* and *love*, indicating that they belong together, that hate should have no place in this house. And the speaker continues appealing to the idea that beauty and goodness should go together: "Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind." This line can be read as having a trochaic first foot, which would give emphasis to the imperative. The verb *is* in this verse, as in line 4, where it falls in the exact same metrical position, is metrically stressed, and therefore it is contrasted with the imperative *be* when the first foot is read as a trochee. This contrast, at one and the same time, reinforces the split between goodness and beauty in the youth and admonishes him to unify those qualities again. Finally, the last half of the line echoes the first, since the fourth foot is also metrically inverted from the iambic pattern.

Gracious may mean "noble, beautiful, or benevolent,"[184] so it too conflates beauty and goodness; *kind*, in turn, means "affectionate, benevolent," thus the phrase "gracious and kind" is pleonastic to a great extent. However, *kind* also suggests "natural, according to 'kind,"[185] and this, according to Booth, would "partially recapitulat[e] *Be as thy presence is*,"[186] though one might argue that, since the young man's nature seems to be narcissistic, acting according to it is not what the speaker would recommend to him. If you are incapable of being gracious and kind, the speaker continues, "to thyself at least kind-hearted prove," that is, be affectionate to yourself, at least, and have children. Line 12 may be read as having either a trochaic or an iambic first foot. The trochee would stress *Or*, emphasizing the alternative, whereas the iamb would stress *to*, emphasizing the object of kind-heartedness. Both emphases are pertinent in the context, though I suppose I would prefer stressing *to* over *Or*. The difference, in any case, would be very subtle to have any major impact on the interpretation of the poem.

At last we come to the couplet and the most surprising passage in the poem. "Make thee another self, **for love of me**," the speaker tells the youth. But had the speaker not been saying that the youth "nove lov[es]"? How can he appeal to the youth's love for him? Booth observes that "this is the first point in the 1609 sequence where the speaker implies close personal friendship between himself and the young man he is addressing."[187] Yet if that is true, and if the speaker knows that they truly have a close personal friendship, the whole argument of the poem falls apart, because then the youth would already love someone. I propose that, rather than supposing speaker and addressee close at this point in the subsequence, we should see the speaker's appeal "for love of me" as his way of giving the

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[184] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 149.

[185] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 130.

[186] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 149.

[187] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 149.

youth an opportunity to prove him wrong: show me that you do love someone−anyone−, and procreate for my sake if for nothing else. "For love of me," given the context of the procreation sonnets, seems more adequately read as a sign of the speaker's growing feelings for the young man, as the speaker's desire to be loved by him, than as an indication that the addressee feels any love for the speaker.

I must once again disagree with West, who says that "Booth's … suggestion that the phrase ['Make thee another self'] suggests 'make yourself into another self,' that the young man should undergo some moral reform" is "absurd."[188] According to West, "thee" means "for yourself," as in "make yourself some tea." It is easy to see that is indeed the primary meaning of the clause, but that does not make Booth's suggestion absurd. In fact, moral reform is precisely what would lead the young man to "make [himself] another self"−after all, it is his immoral, unnatural, narcissistic love for himself that leads him to the refusal of procreation. So moral reform is not "irrelevant"[189] at all. The whole poem is arguing for it: change your attitude! prove that you are not narcissistic, that you truly love yourself, and that you truly love someone else, by procreating.

"Make thee another self" may be paraphrased, following West's suggestion, as "make another self for you," meaning "have a child to be your new self. Yet the clause is ambiguous; its object is unstable, so it may also be read as "make another self thee," meaning not "transform yourself," as Booth proposes, but "make your child, this other self, into thee." The end result is the same, of course: to be renewed in the child. Indeed, one reading reinforces the other. However, as in Sonnet 6, line 12, we could have expected here the reflexive *thyself* instead of *thee*; the objective form of the pronoun is perhaps meant to signify the youth as image, according to the separation between subject and object in narcissistic love. That may

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[188] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 42-43.

[189] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 43.

explain the emphasis on *thee* in the last line of the poem. It is certainly better than supposing the pronoun is there simply for the sake of the rhyme, as West suggests.[190] "That beauty still may live in thine or thee" could then be paraphrased as "that beauty may continue to live, or may always live, in your children or in your image." Finally, *live in* can also be construed as "dwell in," taking up again the beauty-house image.

[190] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 43.

Sonnet 11

As fast as thou shalt wane so fast thou grow'st–
In one of thine, from that which thou departest,
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st
Thou mayst call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase; 5
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.
If all were minded so, the times should cease,
And threescore year would make the world away.
Let those whom nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish. 10
Look whom she best endowed, she gave the more;
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish.
She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

Sonnet 11 opens with a paradox: "as fast as you dwindle, just that fast do you grow." How can one grow smaller and bigger at the same time? The verb *to wane* suggests its opposite *to wax*, instead of the verb *to grow* used here, and the image of a waxing and waning moon, though the moon waxes and wanes in successive phases, not simultaneously, so the image does not fit the meaning of the line. Perhaps the ghost of *to wax* here may suggest the image of a candle and remind us of the self-consuming candle of Sonnet 1–certainly after reaching the couplet we may see a candle in retrospect, from the implications of *seal*. According to Vendler, this poem begins with organic metaphors of generation to conclude, in the couplet, with the inorganic metaphor of the seal,[191] but the image of the candle is implicit here from the very beginning.

Because the paradox will only make sense when we come to the second verse, I find Booth's editorial choice of ending line 1 with a dash rather odd–it grammatically disjoins the clause *so fast thou grow'st* from those phrases that could take us beyond the paradox. I understand he wants to preserve an "inevitable formal pause"[192] at the end of the line to allow

[191] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 91.

[192] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 149.

readers time to read the paradox as a self-contained unit before allowing it to be dispelled. In that case, however, he might have kept the original comma of the 1609 Quarto after *grow'st*, thus allowing for a pause that would not have disrupted the grammatical unity of the sentence.

In line 2 we come to the realization that the addressee grows "in one of [his], from that which [he] depart[s]," i.e. in one of his children, as a result of his departure from his youth, he grows even while he dwindles. *In one of thine* resonates with *in thine* from the couplet of Sonnet 10, so we can see this poem is giving sequence to that one. The verb *departest* has different overtones that are pertinent in the context, though they are not "syntactically harnessed to the sentence in which they appear."[193] It echoes the famous words from the Elizabethan marriage service, "till death us depart," relating the line of the poem to the themes of marriage and death; furthermore, the theme of death is reinforced because *to depart*, as I have noted in my analyses of Sonnet 3 and Sonnet 6, means "to pass away" when used intransitively; *to depart* also means "to leave a place," as it does in the Narcissus myth from the *Metamorphoses*, line 548. In this last sense, we might think of *departest* as evoking the house-beauty metaphor from the previous sonnet, and perhaps *in one of thine*, as a locative construction, might also make us imagine a house. Indeed this image will resonate with other lines of Sonnet 11, which I will discuss shortly. Consider meanwhile the couplet made by verses 547 and 548 from the myth, where *depart* is used: "[Thine image] is nothing of it selfe: with thee it doth *abide*, / With thee it would *departe* if thou withdrew thy selfe aside."

The last two lines of the quatrain recall to some extent the concluding couplet of Sonnet 2, "This were to be new made when thou art old / And see thy *blood* warm when thou feel'st it cold," and the adjective *fresh* recalls the "fresh repair" from Sonnet 3. The resonance is relevant, for the context, here as there, is the renewal of beauty. The word *blood* in line 3, according to Booth, means "life," as an amalgamation of four different Renaissance senses of

[193] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.

the word: "vital fluid," "vigor," "sensual appetite," and "offspring;"[194] in addition, Duncan-Jones suggests the word refers to "semen"[195] in this case. All of these senses are in fact appropriate in the line. The adverb *youngly* means primarily "early in life,"[196] though Booth's suggestion of "zestfully; vigorously,"[197] and Duncan-Jones suggestion of "in a youthful manner"[198] are also pertinent. Finally, *bestow'st* also has pertinent overtones aside from its ordinary meaning of "to give; to grant." The verb *to bestow* often meant "to invest" in Renaissance English,[199] so it carries associations with the financial imagery of previous sonnets; in addition, it could also mean "to lodge" or even "to live in a place,"[200] and thus it may imply the beauty-house metaphor as well. In line 4, *thine* again points back to Sonnet 10. *Convertest*, though it means primarily "turn away from" or "change," was commonly used in financial language, as Booth tells us,[201] and so it reinforces the undercurrent of finance associations in the poem. Lastly, I think in "thou from youth convertest" we may read a pun on the pronoun *thou* and a neologism on *you*−a noun formed with the suffix -th−, as if the speaker were saying "when you change from your *youness.*"

Note that the rhyme pairs in the first quatrain are only distinguished in terms of sound by apocope of the last syllable of the verbs in the first pair. Otherwise, the four words, *growest*, *departest*, *bestowest*, and *convertest*, would all rhyme or nearly rhyme among themselves. They could indeed be read as a single rhyme group, though that would disturb the

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[194] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.

[195] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 132.

[196] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1408.

[197] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.

[198] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 132.

[199] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 26.

[200] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 106.

[201] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.

traditional rhyme pattern of the Shakespearean sonnet. However, I contend that the main reason for distinguishing one pair from the other is not merely conformism to the pattern, but rather the fact that the first pair is positive and expansive, whereas the second is negative and destructive in the context. To me it makes sense that, by virtue of their associations with death, *departest* and *convertest* should have feminine endings that trail away into nothingness, and that *grow'st* and *bestow'st*, by their connection with the renewal of life, should end energetically and abruptly in stressed syllables.

The first two lines of the second quatrain are apt to be read in several ways, "no one of which is fully realized," according to Booth.[202] The first and most obvious one is "in procreation you will find wisdom, beauty, and increase; without procreation, you will only find folly, age, and cold decay." Alternatively, we might say "in this principle expressed in the first quatrain… without this principle…" or, as Booth and Ingram & Redpath indicate,[203] "in this course of action… without this course of action… ." Or yet, remembering the house-beauty metaphor, we might say "in this house *lives*… outside this house… ." And last, we may suppose the speaker is implying that "in this poem (or collection of poems)… without this poem… ," foreshadowing thus the conclusion to the procreation sonnets, that will begin to take shape explicitly in Sonnet 15.

The syllepsis[204] in the singular third person verb *lives* to govern three nouns implicitly conflates wisdom, beauty, and increase, pointing forward to the unification of truth and beauty in Sonnet 14; moreover, in line 5, *and* receives metrical stress by virtue of its placement between two weaker syllables, indicating that the three items in the list are to be added one to the other emphatically, whereas in line 6 *and* before *cold decay* is metrically

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[202] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.

[203] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 150.; Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 26.

[204] Syllepsis: use of a word or expression to modify two or more words of which at least one does not agree in number, case, or gender. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 33.

unstressed, a contrast which metrically represents the loss of vitality brought about by the refusal of procreation. The noun *increase* recalls Sonnet 1 and it may evidently refer to procreation, yet it can also refer to growth, even to financial growth. The adjective *cold* again recalls the couplet of Sonnet 2 and reminds us of the associations between old age, winter and death.

Line 7, with *minded so*, harks back to Sonnet 10, when the addressee was asked to "change [his] mind;" the use of the same word *mind* in both poems signals that the youth and the hypothetical people mentioned here have the same attitude. In short, the speaker is saying that, if all were minded like the young man, if all refused to procreate as he does, "the times should cease" in two generations–in the span of 60 years. The noun *times*, of course, refers to "the times of man," though I cannot help but hear an echo here of the war metaphor from Sonnet 2, as if the speaker were saying "the times should seize," that is, the years in Time's army should win the siege against all mankind. To *make… away* means "to destroy; to do away with," and the *world* evidently expresses a synecdoche, as it does in line 3 of Sonnet 9, for it is not the planet that would be destroyed, but rather the world of humanity.

The third quatrain represents Nature, once again, as the entity responsible for the allotment of beauty to human beings. Nature made some people for store, that is, for preservation and procreation, namely, the beautiful. The others, those who are "Harsh, featureless, and rude," were not made for store, hence there would be no harm should they "barrenly perish"–*barrenly* meaning, at the same time, "worthlessly" and "unproductively." In addition, *store* carries non- logical but pertinent connotation of "hoarded wealth" and thus joins in the financial undercurrent that traverses the poem; it also echoes the idiom "to make store of,"[205] meaning "to value highly," and thus contrasts with *barrenly* in this sense as well.

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[205] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 150-151.

The rhythm of line 10 is jagged, and thereby represents formally the ugliness of the people it describes. The first foot is a pseudo-spondee, which can be read either as trochee or iamb; the second foot is a pseudo-pyrrhic iamb, in which the *-less* syllable is slightly stronger than the *-ure-* syllable; finally, the fourth foot is definitely a trochee. The verse is violent in its jaggedness, and the stressed syllables of the words referring to negative traits are rhythmically stressed, whereas the *-less* in *featureless* is metrically stressed, emphasizing the absence of features to which it refers.

Line 11 has been the object of some discussion among commentators. West, for instance, mentions the fact that Renaissance printers often spelled *thee* as *the* and proposes that we should read the line in this way: "Look, whom she best endow'd, she gave thee more."[206] With this emendation, the speaker would be saying that Nature gave more gifts to the addressee than to those others to whom she gave plenty. He would then be *the* "best endow'd" of all. This would certainly be in accordance with the speaker's type of praise regarding the young man. On the other hand, Booth, while acknowledging the possibility of the emendation, glosses the line primarily as "to those that she made most beautiful she gave extra powers of generation."[207] This reading is plausible, of course, though nowhere else in the procreation sonnets is there reference to the youth's having "extra powers of generation" or improved fertility. I propose therefore that the line is simply tautological, and that its point is merely to stress the responsibility of Nature in the allotment of beauty and thus the fact that the youth owes a great deal to her.

Line 12 recalls line 6 of Sonnet 4, "the bounteous largess given thee to give," and we would do well to remember also these words from line 3 in that poem: "Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend." Thus Nature's "bounteous gift" to the young man should be "in bounty

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[206] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 45-46.

[207] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 151.

cherished," that is, fostered through plentiful procreation. The young man needs to pay back the debt he owes Nature on account of his tremendous beauty, after all. According to Booth, *cherish* also meant "guard carefully," and therefore "this phrase embodies the paradox of several previous sonnets, that of keeping by giving, increasing by diminishing,"[208] and, I would add, it may remind us of the opposite paradox, the one associated with the youth's narcissistic condition, expressed by Narcissus as "my plenties make me poore" (587).

The couplet shifts from organic procreation to inorganic reproduction to state anew the youth's debt to Nature. The young man is Nature's own seal, the stamp she made for herself. The young man is to Nature, perhaps, as a seal is to a king or head of state. He is the emblem of Nature, as in Sonnet 1 he was "the world's fresh ornament." Therefore his purpose is to make more wax imprints for Nature, not sit uselessly and let the copy, that is, the pattern from which new copies can be made, die away. The metaphor seems to break down when we consider that each one of his children will not be a mere wax copy, in the modern sense of "reproduction" or "duplicate," but rather a new seal stamp on their own right. Although by the logic of the metaphor they would simply be repeating their father's beauty through the generations, in truth each child will be itself a new "copy" or pattern, as the youth himself was said to be patterned after his mother in Sonnet 3.

The implicit mention of wax here points back to the self-consuming candle of Sonnet 1 and to the opening of Sonnet 11. It certainly reinforces the association between the youth and candles. The phrase "She carved thee for her seal" may remind us of the opening of Sonnet 6, "those hours that with gentle work did frame." Though *carved* might not seem a particularly gentle verb at first, we ought to remember that an intricate, beautiful seal stamp would need to be carved in a delicate and careful manner. But the potentially aggressive

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[208] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 151.

associations of *carved* may refer us to Time's destructive work, that "dig[s] deep-trenches in [people's] beauty field," to employ the language of Sonnet 2.

The noun *copy* plays on the Latin noun from which it is derived, *copia*, meaning "abundance, plentifulness." Thus it carries financial overtones of "wealth," as well as "fertility." As I have demonstrated, all throughout the sonnet the language related to organic procreation and to inorganic reproduction is fused in layers of meaning. Finally, *print*, despite the fact that here it refers to wax imprints made with a seal, may remind us of printed texts, foreshadowing thereby the beauty-poetry metaphor of the last poems in the subsequence.

Sonnet 12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night,
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white,
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves, 5
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make
That thou among the wastes off time must go, 10
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow,
  And nothing 'gainst time's scythe can make defence
  Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence.

The speaker has a much more active role as a subject in this sonnet than in previous ones. As Vendler has remarked, "For the first time, the speaker's first-person pronoun dominates a poem."[209] This is highlighted in the first quatrain by the fact that, in lines 1 and 3, the first-person pronoun *I* receives metrical stress. The whole of the sonnet consists in a speculation presented by the speaker as his, differently from those of Sonnets 5 and 7, in which no first-person pronoun was used. This shift is in accordance with the growing personal nature of these poems, which will culminate in Sonnet 18's praise of itself.

The rhythmic regularity of line 1, in perfect iambics due to its being composed solely of monosyllables, mimics the beating of the clock described in it, as do the alliterations in *count / clock* and *tells / time*. Evidently, "count the clock" expresses a metonymy; it is not the clock that is counted, but rather the strokes or the ticking of the clock. *Tells*, in this context, means "to count out,"[210] implying that the clock is "saying" aloud what the time is at each moment (hour, minute, or even second). In fact, the whole of the first quatrain has a clearly regular rhythm, though no line is as regular as the first one. It is perhaps not fortuitous then

[209] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 97.

[210] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 151.

that this is sonnet number 12: after all, there are 12 hours in a clock. When the speaker watches (and hears) the passing of time on the clock… the sense will only be completed in line 9: then he questions the youth's beauty or speculates about it. From lines 2-8, the speaker paints different images relating to the effect of the passage of time, exemplifying the decay to which all things are subjected. Line 2 shows the passage of beautiful day into ugly night. Line 3 shows a withering violet. Line 4 shows a human head of black hair turned white with old age. Lines 5-6 show tall trees devoid of leaves, which in summer or spring protected herds from the sun. Lines 7-8 show the green plants of summer, more specifically corn or wheat or any such grains, dried up and gathered in a bundle in a time of harvest, and carried away as a dead old man with white beard is born on a pall.

From lines 1-4, we have one image per line, and from 5-8 we have one image per couple of lines, for a total of six different images. But the images in 1-4 are simple, linked by the copulative conjunction *and*, while the images in 5-8 are composite, established in two moments, as if the speaker needed to paint two distinct pictures to convey the complete image he wants to show us. The images are governed by the conjunction *when*: the first one governs the clock image and the day vs. night image; the second one, in line 3, governs the withering violet and the white hair; the third one, in line 5, governs the composite images of the tree now bereft of leaves which previously sheltered herds from the sun and the green corn turned white, that is now borne on a bier tied up in a bundle; so that each *when* rules two different sets of images.

The natural images presented in the first and second quatrains are linked to human ones, whereas the one human image in the two stanzas−in line 4−is linked to a natural one. Even the mechanical image of the clock in line 1 is personified through the verb *tells*. In line

2, *brave* means primarily "splendid, brilliant, showy,"[211] but evidently it carries an overtone of "courageous," anthropomorphizing the day in battle with "hideous night," and the latter adjective points back to Sonnet 5's "hideous winter," which was also personified in that context. The day as youth and night as old age concept had been anticipated in Sonnet 7, and it foreshadows the last line of the third quatrain in Sonnet 15, "to change your day of youth to sullied night." In line 3, the violet is "past prime," that is, past its spring or youthful moment, and the word *prime* had been used in Sonnet 3 to refer to the youthful time of the youth's mother. The human image in line 4, in turn, recalls the wintry "beauty o'ersnowed" from Sonnet 5. The leafless trees in lines 5 and 6 recall the "lusty leaves quite gone" of Sonnet 5, an image which, in that sonnet, was used to describe by allegory the decay of human beauty; moreover, the *lofty* trees that used to *canopy* herds from heat might remind us, as West suggests, of "powerful men who have lived in state and protected their people, but now are old"[212] and can no longer protect them. Finally, the sheaves of corn in lines 7 and 8 are quite clearly linked to a dying old man through the words *gird* and *beard*, and through the ambiguity of *bier*, which can refer either to a "handbarrow for carrying harvested grain" or to "a movable stand on which a corpse is carried to the grave."[213] All of these are "among the wastes of time" in line 10.

The 1609 Quarto has, in line 4, "or silver'd ore with white," which Booth emendates to "all silvered o'er." This line has generated much editorial discussion, and Duncan-Jones summarizes this debate as follows:

> … [there was] a preference among eighteenth-century editors for Charles Gildon's emendation to 'are silvvered o'er,' and some late nineteenth-century supporters of Brinsley Nicholson's suggestion 'o'er silvered all' (Rollins, 1.32-3), which is tightened up by Ingram and Redpath as 'o'er silver'd all'. …

[211] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 134.
[212] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 48.

[213] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 152.

> Booth, adopting Malone's emendation of 'or' to 'all,' points out sensibly that 'Shakespeare's contemporaries probably emended the line as they read.' Sisson's objection to 'all silvered o'er' as too similar to 'all girded up' in 1.7 is in fact a point in its favour, since the repetition of similar words or phrases within a sonnet is a habitual finesse (cf. Sisson, 2.209-10).[214]

Though Booth states that these emendations are all "equally likely,"[215] I would argue that perhaps there is no need for an emendation at all–or a slight one that merely adds a vowel, which in any case could be missing simply because of the instability of Renaissance spelling–, if we read the Quarto's line as "o'er silvered o'er," the first *o'er* being an adverb meaning "excessively." I have found no register of this usage of *over* in Schmidt, but the prefix *over-* seems to have been commonly used in this sense,[216] and in any case it appears consistent with Shakespeare's inventive use of language.

The adjective *barren* in line 5 points back to *barrenly* in Sonnet 10, not only because the latter is a derivate of the former, but also for the reason that both words are placed in trochaic feet which enact the ugliness they describe. In line 6, *summer's green*, aside from referring to the plants of summer–to corn or wheat, or any grains that have "beards" or "awns"–, may also indicate the "greenness or freshness of summer," with overtones of "youth" or "beauty," senses that will be present in the word *summer* in Sonnet 18 . Moreover, the insistent alliteration in *Borne*, *bier*, *bristly*, and *beard*, and the initial trochaic inversion in *Borne on*, may evoke the violence of death and strengthen the association between the explicit agricultural image and the implicit human one. A Booth says, "This line conflates two very

[214] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 134.

[215] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 152.

[216] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 823.

different and yet similar public processions: a funeral procession and an Elizabethan harvest home."[217]

The second quatrain ends with a line that has an inverted first foot, and the third quatrain opens with a line that likely has a trochaic first foot as well. It would be possible, of course, to read the first foot as iambic and stress *of* over *then*, thereby emphasizing the object of the verbal phrase *to make question*−this emphasis is certainly not inappropriate to the sense of the line. However, by virtue of the temporal sentence structure set up by the three *when* in the first and second quatrain, it seems best to stress *then* over *of*, to highlight the cause for the speaker's reflection; after all, he does devote the better half of the poem to describing those observations that have prompted him to speculate on the nature of his addressee's beauty. The noun *question* here, according to Schmidt, means primarily "consideration,"[218] yet because of the word's possible meanings of "the act of asking," "a thing disputed," and "controversy," *make question* also carries overtones of "question the existence, or reality, or nature."

When the speaker beholds the decay of such beautiful things, he realizes that the youth too must grow old and die over the course of the years, that he too must be lost "among the wastes of time." The phrase *wastes of time*, while it refers in the first place to those things that time destroys, is highly ambiguous. We might read it as the common expression "waste of time," meaning a useless or frivolous activity, and though this sense is not logical in the sentence, it does relate to the youth's refusal to procreate and to the ideas of waste linked to it by the speaker since the very beginning of the subsequence. Furthermore, because the verb *to go* can refer to physical movement from one place to another, we may understand "the wastes of time" as a place through which the youth must travel, that is, as the wastelands or deserts of time.

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[217] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 152.
[218] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 930.

In line 11 the speaker sums up the conclusion he extracts from his observations of nature: "sweets and beauties do themselves forsake." So from lines 1 to 8, he was referring not only to the decay of beautiful things, but also to that of "sweet" things. Vendler proposes that we read *sweets* as "virtuous,"[219] but to me the explicit moralization of the word seems unjustified. The meaning given by Schmidt is "anything pleasant and delightful," and indeed this sense appears to fit Sonnet 8's "sweets with sweets war not" much better than the one suggested by Vendler. The only clear example of a sweet given in the sonnet are the trees in 5-6, which protected the herds from the heat of the sun, and which are eminently an instance of something pleasant rather than virtuous, though we could, by association of the concrete image with a human image, as mentioned before, read virtue into pleasantness. Nevertheless, this would be an overtone of the image, and not its primary, explicit meaning, thus not also the primary, explicit meaning of the word *sweets*. In any case, "sweets and beauties do themselves forsake," that is, they refuse, reject, desert or leave behind their own natures or what they truly are, and thus lose their beauty or pleasantness. Or, in the speaker's terms, they "die as fast as they see others grow"−a verse that resembles the opening line of Sonnet 11, "As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st," yet while there the subject both of waning and growing was the young man, here the sweets and beauties are the subjects of dying and other sweets and beauties, not necessarily the descendants of the first sweets and beauties, are the subjects of growing.

The couplet presents the only possible alternative against the destruction of sweets and beauties, represented in synecdoche by the scythe of a personified time: it is "breed," which can be understood either as a noun meaning "offspring" or as the infinitive *to breed* with omission of the preposition. The scythe may also remind us of a personification of death, which is traditionally depicted as carrying a scythe, and moreover it links the agricultural

[219] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 98.

image of reaping crops with the human image of dying, as in lines 7 and 8. *Time's scythe* also references the god Cronus or Saturn, who is also frequently depicted with a scythe, and whose frequent epithet is "the devourer" for his having eaten his children[220]–which would also connect the idea of gluttony from Sonnet 1 to death. The verb *brave* recalls line 2 of the poem and the implicit concept of battle between day and night, since here the context is clearly one of combat: *brave* here means "to defy." The two different interpretations of *breed* yield two different subjects for the verb *brave*–the noun indicates that the offspring will defy Time, whereas the verb indicates that the father will be the one to challenge the enemy. The similation through assonance between *breed* and *thee* suggests reading *breed* as "offspring" and interpreting *thee* as referencing not only the young man, but his children, as in some of the previous sonnets. Finally, the similation through alliteration in *breed* and *brave* reinforces the connection between one and the other: to breed is to brave Time.

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[220] Harvey, Sir Paul, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, pp. 125-126.

Sonnet 13

O that you were yourself, but love you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live.
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease 5
Find no determination–then you were
Yourself again after your self's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold 10
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O none but unthrifts, dear my love you know,
You had a father, let your son say so.

Sonnet 13 establishes another landmark in the development of the procreation sonnets: this is the first poem in the subsequence in which the speaker addresses the youth with the affectionate vocative "love." It therefore shows greater personal, emotional involvement on the speaker's part than ever before. In Sonnet 10, the speaker had suggested that the youth could procreate for love of him, but he has not done so, which leads us to conclude that either the youth's love for the speaker was not sufficient in moving him to increase or that the youth did not actually love the speaker–and to me the latter seems more plausible, given the argument of Sonnet 10. Whichever is the case, now we have a clear declaration of love from the speaker; whether the youth loves him or not, he does love the youth.

Booth's description of the cumulative effect that happens when we read lines 1 and 2 of Sonnet 13 is very precise:

> These lines present four different sentences; each succeeding phrase changes the nature of what precedes it. *O that you were yourself* is a standard idiomatic expression meaning "I wish you were in good health" or "I wish you were as you usually are"; the completed line presents a simple contradiction, an apparent paradox: "I wish you were yourself … but you *are* yourself"; the next potential sentence demands that a reader take conscious note of the possessive element, "your," in

> *yourself …* : *O that you were yourself, but love you are / No longer yours*, "O that you were your own (i.e. were free, were owner of yourself …), but, my love, you are not in possession anymore"; the final phrase of line 2 reveals the "no longer than" construction and again changes the meaning of the whole by making the reader's understanding of *No longer* obsolete: "you own yourself only as long as you remain alive."[221]

Despite these successive changes in meaning, by the end of line 2 we realize what the speaker is saying, after all, is that the young man is not himself, because his ownership over himself is temporary: it only lasts while he lives in this world. In the polyptoton play with the pronouns *you*, *yours* and *yourself*, there lies a distinction between the soul–or individual, personal, immaterial entity–and the material, individual embodiment of that soul–the physical person we can see, touch, hear, and materially address in words. The pronoun *you* and its derivates are ambiguous; they can refer to a second-person as physical presence, as immaterial entity, or as the combination of the two. So we can read the lines in this way: oh, that you (your body) were yourself (your soul, or belonged to your soul), but you (your body) is no longer yours (owned by your soul) than you, (your soul), here lives (in your body). *Here live* may then be interpreted as "dwell in this body," depicting the "relationship … of the eternal soul inhabiting a temporal house"[222] and anticipating the beauty-house metaphor from the third quatrain. Booth notes, moreover, the likelihood that *here* and *heir* might have been homonymous words, and that *yourself here live* could be read as *your self-heir live*,[223] meaning that the youth's beauty will only be his for as long as he continues to be his own heir and implying that, after he begets an heir other than himself, his beauty will pass on to someone else–a possibility that contradicts the speaker's frequent portrayal of procreation as

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[221] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 152-153.

[222] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 30. I do not know whether the speaker would consider the soul to be immortal, as this is never discussed in the procreation sonnets, but the image of the soul dwelling in the body is appropriate in the context.

[223] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 153.

renewal of the parent's beauty in the child, rather than as transmission of beauty from parent to progeny.

Against" the imminent death of his body, that is, in anticipation of death or in opposition to it−*against* does double duty in the line−, the youth should make preparations by giving his "sweet semblance" to some other, i.e. to a child of his. *Sweet* here, as before, seems to describe not only the beauty or pleasantness of the youth's "semblance"−his image−, but also his relationship to it: his "dear semblance." The pronoun *you* in line 3, according to my interpretation of the ambiguity of the second-person pronouns described above, refers to the soul-body compound, for the agency that allows the youth to give his semblance to a child pertains to the soul, but the semblance itself is expressed in the body.

If he made these preparations, the "beauty which [he] holds in lease" would "find no determination." To hold beauty in lease is to own it temporarily; a lease is a fixed term contract for an estate, and therefore the word *lease* anticipates the beauty-house metaphor in the third quatrain as well. This relates to the idea that "Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend," first introduced in Sonnet 4. The "determination" of a lease is legal language for its date of expiry. So giving his "sweet semblance" to a child would remove the limitations on his lease of beauty, extending it indefinitely (so long as his children continue procreating through the ages). In line 5, *you* refers to the youth's soul, which is seen as a tenant residing temporarily in his body.

"Then"−meaning both "at that time" and "as a result"−"you (your soul) were / Yourself (your body-soul compound) again, after your self's (your body's) decease." This line expresses the peculiar idea that progeny not only renews the beauty of the parent, but to some extent receives the parent's soul, an idea that has been stated or implied in previous sonnets, as in Sonnet 2−where the youth will see *his* blood warm in his children−, in Sonnet 4−with a similar polyptoton play, "thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive"−, in Sonnet 5−"breed

another thee" and "leaving thee living in posterity"−, and in Sonnet 10−"make thee another self… / that beauty still may live in … thee." According to the speaker, procreation is, in a sense, rebirth. I agree with Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine's scruples about reading this poem "in terms of an equation of *self* and *soul*,"[224] as Ingram & Redpath do.[225] On the evidence of Sonnet 10, "make thee another self," the word *self* is not to be understood as "soul," nor does that identification seem to fit in this sonnet, as my interpretation has demonstrated. The third foot of line 7 is clearly a trochee, and I propose that the first foot is also profitably read as inverted: stressing *your* over *self* in the first foot would emphasize the youth's renewed possession over his self (in this case, the union of soul and body), which seems to be the point of the argument, and would moreover allow for a nice rhythmic structure with back to back pairs of trochaic-iambic feet. Lastly, the sentence could perhaps be read as "then you were / Yourself a gain," i.e. a profit from investment, connecting it to the financial language of previous sonnets−and in play here to some extent in the beauty-house metaphor−; Booth, who suggested the wordplay, asserts that "the suggestion is farfetched,"[226] but to me it does not seem so at all, given the importance some of the preceding sonnets attribute to the idea of procreation as profit from investment of beauty.

Line 8 is ambiguous. Subject and object are unstable in the sentence; we could read it either as "when your sweet issue should bear your sweet form" or as "when your sweet form should bear your sweet issue," that is, either as "when your child bears your image" or as "when your image bears your child." So the line can be read in paradoxical directions; we can see the issue as producing the form, or the form as producing the issue. Both interpretations are viable at the same time, however: the issue produces the form because it carries the form

[224] Mowat, Barbara A. and Werstine, Paul (eds.) *Shaespeare's Sonnets and Poems*, p. 333.

[225] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 30.

[226] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 153.

on itself; the form produces the issue because, firstly, it is the youth's beauty that will lead to procreation, as "from fairest creatures we desire increase", and secondly because it is the youth's beauty that will be embodied in the child. Furthermore, the verb *bear* itself may produce a paradox, as in line 4 of Sonnet 1, since the child can be seen alternatively as bearing the parent's beauty as a herald bears a standard or as giving birth to the parent's image. Finally, the noun *issue* carries overtones that are pertinent in relation to the beauty-house metaphor, as it could refer to the "decision of a lawsuit,"[227] and the young man's issue, in this context, can be said to be the result of a suit that will extend his lease on beauty.

The third quatrain employs the beauty-house metaphor quite explicitly. This time, the house is not present in synecdoche (as in the "roof" of Sonnet 10), but in the word *house* itself. In line 9, the decay of the youth's house of beauty is formally and semantically enacted in the foot *fall to*, which should likely be read as falling trochee rather than as a rising iamb; moreover, the words *fair* and *fall* are contrasted in similation, heightening the destructiveness of *fall*. The verb *lets*, aside from meaning "allows," also carries legal and financial overtones in a play with "let (or lease) a house out."[228] The word *house* itself refers to the actual, physical house or dwelling place, to the youth's beauty seen as a "fair building," to his body seen as the dwelling place for his beauty and soul, and to his family line. This house could be kept standing, could be "honorably upheld", by husbandry, that is, by proper management of the estate. Note the graphical similation in ***h**ouse*, ***h**usbandry*, ***h**onour*, *up**h**old*, which highlights the connection between what the words describe. Moreover, *husbandry* is fraught with associations; there is, of course, the play on the word *husband*, implying that by being a husband the young man could preserve his beauty's house; the word may also refer to agriculture, to the cultivation and production of crops−its primary meaning in Sonnet 3−, and

[227] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 599.

[228] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

therefore it is related not only to the agricultural and botanical imagery of previous sonnets, but also to the alimentation images of Sonnet 1; last but not least, the action linked to agricultural husbandry in Sonnet 3 is *tillage* (and so *husbandry* might also convey sexual innuendo), an action that conveys an implicit connection to poetry which points forward to the beauty-flower-poetry association of Sonnet 15 and unifies it with the beauty-house-poetry metaphor of this sonnet: tilling, or plowing, is at the root the word *verse*, which is derived from Latin *versus*, meaning "turning' from one line to another (*vertere* = 'to turn') as a plowman does."[229] Husbandry is then doubly connected to poetry, through the sense of management of a house, which is made of *stanzas*,[230] and through the sense of cultivation of crops, which requires the making of *verses*.

Husbandry has the power to keep the house standing "Against (that is, in opposition to) the stormy gusts of winter's day / And barren rage of death's eternal cold." The phrase *winter's day* represents not a single day of winter, as Duncan-Jones suggests, but the whole season of winter in synecdoche. Nevertheless, it is possible to see "the ageing process … as the assault of a single *winter's day*,"[231] and in this sense it contrasts with the *summer's day* of Sonnet 18, though even in that poem I would argue that *summer's day* represents, alternatively, a single day of summer and the whole season. In any case, by line 12 the metaphor of the house confronted by the gusts of winter is abandoned, for concretely speaking a house cannot be affected by "death's eternal cold." The phrase *barren rage* merits some explanations. The noun does not refer primarily to anger or fury, as it does today, but rather to strong feeling or passion, though of course we might attribute death's destructiveness to anger. Moreover, it is a hypallactic construction; the rage itself is not barren, but it makes things

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[229] Harper, Douglas. “verse". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 15 Oct. 2017.

[230] Refer to my analysis of Sonnet 10.

[231] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 136.

barren. Even so, as often is the case with the speaker's hypallages, it can be read literally, perhaps as referencing, according to Booth's suggestion, "the threat [of death's rage] foiled as it can be by *husbandry*,"[232] or, according to Duncan-Jones, "posthumous frustration: after death the youth may remember, too late, that he has left no issue."[233]

Only "unthrifts" would permit the fall of such a beautiful house, the couplet tells us. Yet, as the speaker has been telling us from the beginning, the youth is prodigal in his waste of his beauty. The phrase *dear my love you know* in Booth's edition, which follows the 1609 Quarto in this line, "allows *you know* to be read first with the preceding phrase … and then with the phrase that follows."[234] The couplet then appeals to the youth's memory of his father, of the very fact that he had a father, to convince him to procreate. To invoke the French pun made by the speaker in previous sonnets, the couplet is asking him to *re-père* his beauty's house, as his father did, even if, in that case, the beauty came from the mother. The verb *let* contrast with *lets* in line 9; whereas there the suggestion is of leasing out the estate of beauty to death, here the suggestion is of transferring the lease of beauty to his son. The word *son*, moreover, evokes its only previous instance in the *Sonnets*, in Sonnet 7, and thus also the pun on *sun*. Hence the "son" may be seen as contrasting with the "winter's day" from the preceding quatrain. Finally, the word *so* might refer not only to "you had a father," but it could take us back to lines 5 and 6, as if the speaker were telling the youth: let your son say "that beauty which you hold in lease will find no determination; you will be yourself again, after yourself's decease."

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[232] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

[233] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 136.

[234] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

Sonnet 14

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck,
And yet methinks I have astronomy;
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell, 5
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find.
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art 10
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;
  Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
  Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

Sonnet 14 is another highly prophetic poem in the subsequence. In this sonnet, the speaker pokes fun at astrologers, opposing his ability to predict the future to theirs. He uses pompous diction, talking as if he himself were some sort of astrologer, to mock their art. In line 1, the verb *pluck* "gives the line the contemptuous tone that 'starcatcher' … had as an epithet for astrologers."[235] In line 2, he uses *methinks*, a verb that came from Old English,[236] probably already had an archaic feel even in Shakespeare's time, and which here, according to West, "is gently ironic as always in the sonnets."[237] In line 6, *Pointing* may evoke, as Booth suggests, an image of "an astrologer pointing his finger imperiously at a succession of particular minutes,"[238] and the trochaic first foot constituted by *Pointing* may reinforce the imperiousness of the image. In line 7, *with princes* is the object of the verbal phrase *go well*, yet "*with* can seem to express likeness or association and so … giv[e] a momentary

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[235] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

[236] Harper, Douglas. “methinks". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 21 Oct. 2017.

[237] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 53.

[238] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

impression of a self-aggrandizing astrologer delivering decrees as if he were a king,"[239] or, I would add, it may seem as if this astrologer were making his prophecies among princes and for them, as if he were so important as to be consulted by royalty. The convoluted syntax of line 8, in which *oft* must be read as an adjective, and *predict* as a noun, if we are to make any sense of the line without emendations, suggests "the pompous obfuscations of a smug hack."[240] Finally, in the couplet, the hyperbaton of syntax and the "portentous polysyllabic verb 'prognosticate'"[241] deploy a grandiloquent prophecy of doom.

In the first two lines of the poem, the speaker states that, unlike common astrologers−the word *astronomy* is used in the archaic sense of "astrology"[242]−, he does not base his predictions on observation of the stars in the sky, and yet he has−i.e. is skilled in−astrology. He then proceeds to list, in the next quatrain and a half, three different types of traditional astrology that he does not practice: mundane, horary, and electional astrology. In lines 3 and 4, he cannot foretell good or evil luck, that is, he cannot predict plagues, dearths, or the quality of seasons (mundane astrology). Note the relationship of these to the seasonal images frequent in the procreation sonnets. The speaker may not derive his prophecies from the stars, but he does predict in the subsequence plagues, dearths, and the quality of seasons in the young man's life. In lines 5 and 6, he says he cannot tell fortune for each minute or in a very precise way, saying whether there will be thunder, rain or wind (horary astrology). Finally, in lines 7 and 8, he states that he cannot predict whether the government or the life of princes will be successful from the position of the planets in heaven (electional astrology).

The conjunction *But*, which starts the third quatrain, continues the idea of line 1 in order to contrast normal astrologers with the speaker as astrologer: "Not from the stars do I

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[239] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

[240] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 154.

[241] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 54.

[242] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 61.

my judgment pluck / … But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive." As opposed to the conventional astrologers, who "pluck" their considerations from the orbiting, wandering stars–the planets–, the speaker extracts his knowledge from the "constant stars" that are the youth's eyes. Note the similation in *con**st**ant **st**ars*, which may be seen as reinforcing their fixed character. The adjective *constant*, moreover, aside from serving to contrast the eyes with the planets, imparts moral connotation as well, in its sense of "faithful," "loyal" or "true." The focus on the youth's eyes is also worthy of notice. In Sonnet 1, the youth was said to be "contracted to [his] own bright eyes"; in Sonnet 5, he was described as having a "lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell"; the eyes are known traditionally as windows to the soul, and the youth's, perhaps in account of their special beauty, seem to attract a lot of attention in the procreation sonnets: here, the speaker looks in them to find knowledge about the young man's future. In his eyes the speaker "read[s] such art, / As truth and beauty shall together thrive," that is, truth and beauty will flourish together, "If from [himself] to store [he would] convert," that is, if the addressee would turn away from storing himself, from refusing to procreate. The word *thrive* can mean "to succeed; to go well," which is the most likely for the word here, though it carries overtones also of "prosper in business"–and therefore connects the line to financial language–, and of "to grow, to increase, to flourish,"[243] linking it to the theme of procreation in general and to the procreation of plants in particular, as the word was often used to talk about the growth of plants: for instance, in *Henry V*, "wholesome berries thrive and ripen best / Neighbored by fruit of baser quality."[244]

The verb *convert* is approximated to *constant* in similation, which is appropriated, since this conversion seems to be the ultimate condition for calling the youth's eyes "constant stars." It is likely that there is a play on the pronouns in "if from thyself to store thou wouldst

[243] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1219.

[244] Mowat, Barbara A. and Werstine, Paul, eds. *Henry V*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009, 1.1.64.

convert," meaning "if the pronoun *thou* would convert from storing the pronoun *thyself* in it," implying "take *thyself* out of *thou*, give it away" and thus foreshadowing the first line of the couplet from Sonnet 16: "To give away yourself keeps yourself still." Finally, "read such art" may suggest deriving poetry from the youth's eyes, in which poetry truth and beauty will flourish together, thus anticipating the last few sonnets in the subsequence.

Whereas the last two lines of the third quatrain present the speaker's positive "astrological" prediction concerning the future of the youth and the condition for its fulfillment, the couplet gives us his catastrophic prediction upon the nonfulfillment of that condition. The speaker says, in pompous, prophetic diction, with hyperbaton and the verb *prognosticate*, of which this is the only instance[245] in Shakespeare: "Or else of thee this I prognosticate, / Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date." The foot *this I* might profitably be read as a trochee, emphasizing *this* and therefore what comes in the last line of the poem. The prophecy is bombastic–perhaps the most bombastic one in the *Sonnets* so far–and apparently hyperbolic. Regarding the qualities of truth and beauty, Vendler states that

> The impossibility of dissevering these two Platonic qualities [truth and beauty] from each other (a fact foregrounded by their twinned repetition), and their association with the Good (implied by the eyes' constancy) puts into relief the anguish of the eventual disjunction of these members of the Platonic triad in later sonnets.[246]

I would argue, however, that the nonfulfillment of the condition of "converting from thyself to store" already implies the dissevering of these Platonic qualities in the youth. The failure to procreate would show a lack of constancy in him, therefore a divorce of goodness from beauty, of his appearance (which is beautiful and should thus convey his goodness) from his reality (as a beautiful but selfish man) as has been suggested in previous sonnets (for example,

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[245] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 54.

[246] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 106.

in Sonnet 10). And, if appearance does not convey reality, then we cannot know the truth. Perhaps that is what the speaker means when he affirms that the young man's childless death would be the end of truth and beauty.

It is also possible that, since the speaker declares in Sonnet 11 that in the principle of perpetuation of beauty through procreation lies wisdom, to him the principle expresses a universal truth. In fact, from the beginning of the subsequence, the speaker has been affirming what to him seem to be universal truths: the desire of procreation from the fairest creatures, the renewal of beauty through procreation, Nature's role in the allotment of beauty to human beings, the associated day of reckoning with Nature to account for the gifts given by her. All of this will become false if the youth dies childless. Or, at least, the speaker's belief in these truths, and therefore in Truth, will die. His hyperbolic prophecy may quite well be self-referential: as someone who has come to love the youth deeply in the course of trying to persuade him to procreate, his barren death would be the subjective death of truth, beauty, and goodness for the speaker.

Sonnet 15

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comménť;
When I perceive that men as plants increase, 5
Cheerèd and checked ev'n by the selfsame sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight, 10
Where wasteful time debateh with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
  And all in war with time for love of you,
  As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

The argument of Sonnet 15 has a structure that is very similar to that of Sonnet 12. One sentence traverses each of the poems, starting with *When* in line 1, turning on *Then* in line 9, to conclude in the couplet with a context of warfare against time. However, while the perspective in Sonnet 12 is, so to speak, horizontal—the images of decay are placed in parallel—, here in Sonnet 15 they are vertical, coming from a broad, cosmic perspective to a more limited and specialized one. Thus the poem opens with the speaker observing "everything that grows"—line 1 presents a self- sufficient unit of meaning, "when I observe all living things," that next becomes limited in sense in line 2: "when I observe that all living things are only perfect for a brief moment." Nevertheless, in order to realize the fleetingness of the beauty of living things, it is first necessary to consider all of them. From the contemplation of "everything that grows," we come down to a slightly narrower perspective, of the whole world as a stage that "presenteth nought but shows"—and, we might add, this perspective is rather more concerned with human beings, for if the world is a stage, then we are the actors. And, on this stage of ours, the speaker affirms, "the stars in secret influence comment," that is, the stars are hidden driving powers for our actions.

The cosmic perception introduced in line 1 might be highlighted by the etymology of *consider*, which comes from Latin *considerare*, meaning "to look at the stars, or constellations," the *sidera*,[247] and perhaps giving us a sense that the speaker is looking at all things in the universe, at any rate all things that grow or develop. He seems to be adopting a universal perspective, from which maybe even the life of stars might appear to be a "little moment." *Holds in*, in line 2, may be understood in two different ways, and we can read the first foot as iambic or trochaic, according to our interpretation. If we take *holds* as meaning "stays" or "keeps," and *in* as indicating condition, we will do well to read the foot as a trochee, emphasizing *holds*. If, on the other hand, we interpret *in* as expressing location, we may read *holds in* as "stores inside," and so we would do well to pronounce the foot as iambic, emphasizing *in* rather than *holds*. In line 3, the word *shows* harks back to Sonnet 5, with its opposition between "show" and "substance," to give us the idea, as Duncan-Jones has stated, "that human activities are no more than (empty) *shows*, superficial and delusory."[248] Lastly, as regards line 4, Booth remarks that it is "metrically unusual" and "asks to be pronounced as a twelve-syllable, six-stress line";[249] thus he supposes the word *comment* to be stressed on its second syllable. I would argue this would be metrically unusual indeed, since there are no other hexameters in all of the procreation sonnets−indeed, in all of the *Sonnets*, according to West[250]−, and since rhyming the metrically unstressed second syllable of *moment* with the metrically stressed second syllable of *commént* would be very unorthodox.[251] Therefore I recommend reading *influence* as dissyllabic by syncopation, with a slurring of the

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[247] Harper, Douglas. “consider". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 27 Nov. 2017.

[248] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 140.

[249] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 155.

[250] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 56.

[251] Booth reasons that, as in lines 6 and 8 of this poem, Shakespeare often rhymes stressed syllables with unstressed ones. However, that does not seem to be entirely accurate; to my knowledge, whenever he does so, the unstressed syllables have secondary stress in the word and are metrically stressed in the line, as in the pair sky / memory in this poem.

u and *e* vowel sounds, which yields a pentameter line with a feminine ending, and the verb *comment* should then be stressed on its first syllable, resulting in a double rhyme with *moment*, with near rhyme in the first syllable, but with perfect rhyme in the second, feminine one.

The influence of the stars evidently continues the astrological topic of the previous sonnet. Yet, while Sonnet 14 treated astrology with mockery and a certain contempt, this poem seems to take it rather seriously; at least there is no apparent irony in line 4. The stars exert secret power on the actions of people, as "influential critics"[252] in the theater of the world. Furthermore, not only the astrological theme is present in Sonnet 15, but the word *constant* from the preceding poem also appears here in polyptoton, in line 9, as *inconstant*, the *con-* prefix in that sonnet's *constant* and *convert* figures here in *consider*, *conceit*, and *inconstant*, and of course the word *stars* makes an appearance as well.

In the second quatrain, the speaker descends from the human realm, implied by *stage*, to the realm of botany, with the simile "men as plants increase." He is returning once again to the identification between men and plants established in the first sonnet, and the similarity between this quatrain and the first quatrain of Sonnet 1 may highlight this fact for us: the rhymes between *increase* and *decrease* (the word we might have expected in Sonnet 1, instead of *decease*) and *sky* and *memory* (where in Sonnet 1 we had *die* and *memory*), the idea of plants "ripening" and therefore decreasing, and even the resemblance in sound of *heir* and *their*. The word *increase* here is a verb meaning primarily "to grow," whereas in Sonnet 1 *increase* was a noun, synonym with *procreation*, though even here it has obvious overtones related to procreation by virtue of the context. Perhaps I am being over-ingenious, but I cannot help but hear a pun in *wear their*, as if the speaker were implicitly asking, in

[252] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 56.

describing the men who "wear their brave state out of memory," the question "where the heir?" that could "bear their memory" into the future.

Men, like plants, are "cheered," or encouraged, and "checked," or "repressed" or "rebuked" by one and the same sky. As Booth notes, "[*Cheerèd* and *checked*] are antonyms, linked phonetically by alliteration and logically by *and*,"[253] that is, they are contrasted in similation. These words may evoke the stage metaphor from line 3, for we can interpret *cheered* as referring to applause and *checked* to criticism or heckling, as if the sky were the audience of this show, and thus we might read *sky* as pointing not only to the physical heavens, but also to the stars that secretly influence the show. The participle *checked*, moreover, and the noun *sap* in the line below recall Sonnet 5, where the plants of summer were portrayed as having their "sap checked with frost." The verb *Vaunt* means here primarily "exult" or "rejoice,"[254] though by its etymology, from Latin *vanare*–"to utter empty words"[255]–, it tinges the sentence with overtones of vanity, worthlessness, and narcissism. The phrase *at height decrease* looks back to Sonnet 7, to the image of the sun that declines after his noon as those who marveled in his beauty turn away from him, and it also points to the next Sonnet 16's *Now stand you on the top of happy hours*. Line 8, aside from recalling Sonnet 1, as I have mentioned, brings back the "tottered weed" from Sonnet 2, the beauty that the young man wears with pride but that will wither as plant in time, and the word *brave* again evokes the sun in Sonnet 12's *brave day* as well as the idea of braving time from that poem's couplet. Note that "wear their brave state out of memory," which Both glosses as "wear their splendid finery beyond the time anyone remembers them,"[256] makes for a mixing of images, since it is taken from the human realm to qualify a botanic image that in turn is being

[253] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 156.

[254] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 140.

[255] Harper, Douglas. “vaunt". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 27 Nov. 2017.

[256] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 157.

compared in simile to human beings, and thus it helps to reinforce the identification between men and plants. As Vendler has affirmed, "What was visually and tenderly suggested in 12 in the emblematic intermixture of violets and curls, sheaves and beard, is in 15 curtly and propositionally asserted: men and plants share the same fate."[257] Finally, in "wear their brave state out" with have a suggestion of the phrasal verb *to wear out*, emphasizing the sense of decay in the quatrain.

The verb *consider* from the first stanza and the verb *perceive* from the second engender, in the third quatrain, the *conceit* (from *con-ceive*) *of this inconstant stay*. We have a double similation here, between ***con**ceit* and *in**con**stant*, and between *incon**sta**nt* and ***sta**y*. This is carried over from the previous sonnet, which had ***con**stant*, ***con**vert*, and *con**sta**nt*, ***sta**rs*. Moreover, the similation on *sta(nt)* / *stars*, which contrasted in Sonnet 14 the wandering planets to the fixed stars of the youth's eyes, is repeated throughout Sonnet 15: *stage*, *stars*, *pl**ants***, *state*, *inconstant*, *stay*. This foregrounds the importance of the "stay" of beauty−the fleeting moment in which living things are at the height of perfection−and its "inconstancy." The words *inconstant* and *stay* are evidently contradictory, rendering the phrase oxymoronic−an "inconstant constancy." The word *conceit* here means primarily "idea" or "thought," but it is a technical term from rhetoric, the name given to extended metaphors, and so it has clear rhetorical overtones in the poem, given that throughout the procreation sonnets there is an underlying extended metaphor between human beings and plants; furthermore, the word *stay*, which could refer to a support for a plant,[258] lends further evidence of that identification. Lastly, the expression "stay of the sun," meaning "solstice" (in Latin, literally

[257] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 109.

[258] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 157.

"stay or stand of the sun"),[259] the highest point of the sun in the sky, points back to Sonnet 7's *noon* and reinforces the echoes of that poem in this sonnet.

The perception of this "inconstant stay" puts into relief for the speaker just how beautiful and young his addressee is, "Sets [him] most rich in youth before [the speaker's] sight." The verb *sets* here means "evokes your image" or "places you,"[260] but it also contributes to the undercurrent of men-plants metaphor, since it can also mean "to plant"[261]−a sense of the word that will be taken up in Sonnet 16's *maiden gardens yet unset*. The noun *youth*, as I have mentioned in my analysis of Sonnet 11, puns on "you-ness," and thus identifies youth as an essential quality of the addressee, which seems paradoxical but is ultimately related to the speaker's solution to the young man's narcissistic problem, a solution that begins to take shape in the present sonnet. This pun makes the traditional designation by critics of the addressee as *the youth* or *the young man* all the more appropriate. The phrase *rich in youth*, moreover, may have three other possible senses, as Booth points out: with *in* indicating duration, "opulent, magnificent during the time of your youthfulness"; with *in* expressing that to which the attribute is limited, "possessed of an abundance of youthfulness"; and with *in* indicating relation to that which covers, "richly clothed in youthfulness."[262] Line 10 is then related to all three metaphorical contexts of the sonnet: *Sets* refers both to plants and to the sun (one of the stars in astrological theory), and *rich in youth*, in the last sense mentioned, may evoke an actor dressed in gaudy clothes for the stage (as well as *thy youth's proud livery* from Sonnet 2); in addition, the whole line suggests a theatrical performance, set

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[259] Harper, Douglas. “solstice". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 27 Nov. 2017.

[260] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 157.

[261] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1032.

[262] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 157.

up in the eye of the speaker's mind–a "miniature drama," as Duncan-Jones calls it.[263] Last but not least, the word *sight* refers both to thought and actual sight. The speaker sees his addressee before him, "rich in youth," and contemplates the inconstancy of his perfection against the impermanence of all living things in the universe. In the words of Vendler, "Thus do the verb of thought (*consider*) and the verb of sight (*perceive*) come together to generate the single *conceit* (physical and mental at once)."[264]

In his mind's eye, the speaker sees "wasteful time" conspiring "with decay" in order to "Change [his addressee's] day of youth to sullied night." The phrase *wasteful time* echoes *the wastes of time* from Sonnet 12 and conveys the same sense of destruction and devastation while also carrying equivalent overtones of "prodigal" and "idle." Contrary to the first impression we might get from "time debateth with decay," in which these two entities would be in dispute as regards how best to destroy the youth's beauty, they are actually in league to bring about this destruction. Alternatively, we may interpret *with* as expressing instrumentality, in which case Time would be studying how to erase the young man's beauty by means of decay; this is appropriate as well, since decay is caused by the passage of time. The image of transforming day into night resonates with the sunset simile from Sonnet 7 and with line 2 of Sonnet 12, in which "brave day" was "sunk in hideous night." Finally, the adjective *sullied*, meaning "dirty" or "tarnished," tinges the line with moral overtones.

The reference to the theater may lead us to think about the youth's life in terms of the stage. If his life was a play, would it be a tragedy or a comedy? So far, from what the speaker has been saying in the procreation sonnets, it seems that the young man's life will end in tragedy, the tragedy of the destruction and oblivion of his beauty. That is, unless he ends up procreating, which does not appear likely given his narcissistic condition. However, the

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[263] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 140.

[264] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 110.

speaker's solution to the youth's problem, which is introduced for the first time in the couplet of this sonnet, is bound to turn the story into a comedy. "And all in war with time for love of you," the speaker affirms, "As he takes from you, I engraft you new." At first, the metaphor of grafting might not be so clear. According to Booth,

> As a reader comes upon it in the 1609 sequence, this line [14] gives no hint as to which of the speaker's activities is described by *engraft*; he can be said to be have been doing two things–writing verse and urging the young man to marry. He has previously called no attention to the power of his verse or to himself as a writer; he has offered no alternatives to procreation as a way to immortality. … The reader's lack of foreknowledge about sonnet 16, the speaker's previous single-mindedness about urging procreation, and the similarities between grafting and sexual intercourse make it probable that a first reading of this line would suggest "As time withers you, I renew you by joining you to a wife."[265]

Because the speaker has not called attention to his verse and to himself as a writer, it would not be unjust to assume that Shakespeare is representing the speaker himself not as a poet, but simply as a character whose voice the poet is expressing in verse. In most narrative poems, and in many lyric ones, the characters and speakers do not seem to be aware they are talking in verse. Therefore it would be fair to suppose the activity of grafting is being invoked to describe the speaker's attempts to persuade the youth to procreate.

Nevertheless, in this fashion the speaker could not make sure of the perpetuation of the young man's beauty. He cannot truly join his addressee to a wife or make him procreate, he can merely attempt to convince him to do so. But given the youth's insistent refusal to procreate–either because he will not or because he cannot–, the speaker finds himself hard-pressed to find a different solution to the problem, one not explicitly envisaged in the previous alternatives he offered: "procreate or die." Reading the procreation sonnets in retrospect, however, we know that the speaker defines himself as a writer of verse in Sonnets 16 and 17

[265] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 158.

(and in 18 as well), so we can read *engraft* in a new light: the verb *to graft* is derived ultimately from the Greek verb *graphein*, meaning primarily "to write,"[266] and thus *engraft* can be construed as *inscribe*.

Grafting is, according to Booth, "the practice of replacing the wasted limbs of old trees with slips that grow to be new boughs."[267] In this sense, by grafting the young man, the speaker is "re-membering" him; and we have already discussed the connection between "re-membering" and procreation.[268] However appropriate this interpretation may be, "replacing the wasted limbs of old trees" is not the only purpose for grafting; the technique is also commonly used to preserve a scion of one tree by inserting it into a different tree, often with a view to making the scion produce unusual or modified flowers or fruit by its vital association with a different specimen. Moreover, Booth himself notes:

> I find no recorded Renaissance use of the verb "to engraft" where its direct object is the receiving stock and not the grafted scion; the usual way to understand the metaphor would be "I insert you, a scion of one tree, into another tree."[269]

The young man therefore would not be the stock into which new slips are being grafted so as to replace his wasted limbs, though that might seem to be the case at first, given the last line of the sonnet: "As [Time] takes from you, I engraft you new." Yet how could the speaker's verses achieve the miracle of renewing the young man's physical body? The idea of replacing limbs, of physically "re-membering" the youth through grafting is but a suggestion, an illusion that will finally be dispelled in Sonnet 18.

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[266] Harper, Douglas. “graft". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 27 Nov. 2017.

[267] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 158.

[268] Refer to my analysis of Sonnet 3.

[269] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 158.

As Booth testifies, the direct object of *engraft* is the grafted scion; in this case, the young man. Yet, if he is the scion, what is the stock? It is, as we may infer from the evidence of sonnets 16, 17 and 18, the speaker's verse. The youth is to the speaker's verse as a scion is to a stock. This metaphor would not be so poignant if the addressee had not been identified with plants–and, especially, with flowers–from the beginning of the subsequence. The speaker has been setting up his imaginative solution to the young man's problem from the beginning, even if he may not have been aware of it at first. He has not yet given up on persuading the youth to procreate, as we will see in sonnets 16 and 17. Nevertheless, he has conceived an alternative for the problem should his attempt fail, as it will, so by Sonnet 18 he will have given up entirely on persuasion and will present his solution as the definitive answer to the problem. Because that sonnet is, as I will argue, the proper conclusion to the procreation sonnets, I shall postpone further discussion of grafting–and of its implications and consequences–to my analysis of that poem.

The couplet brings back the implied image of Time as a war general from Sonnet 2, but now it is the speaker who is fighting against Time, for the sake of the youth. And he wages war against Time by "engrafting" the youth new in his verse. The phrase *for love of you* echoes in inverted relation *for love of me* from Sonnet 10–the speaker asks of the youth: procreate "for love of me"; yet since he will not, the speaker now "braves" Time, he says to the young man, "for love of you." This phrase ultimately reveals that the speaker's reason for writing these poems is his love for the young man. Perhaps he was in love with the youth from the beginning, or perhaps he had been commissioned, as a poet, to write these sonnets in order to persuade the young man to marry and have children, and in his attempt he has come to love his addressee; this is the most likely scenario in my opinion, given the evidence of increasing emotional involvement on the speaker's part, as I have noted before. And, when we

realize that "for love of you" can be interpreted not as "because of my love for you" but as "in order to obtain your love," we may see the latter possibility as even more plausible.

Line 14 has an interesting rhythm. We could read the first foot as a trochee, given that the sense of the line is opposing Time's action ("As **he** takes from you") to the speaker's activity ("**I** engraft you new"), I suggest it is more profitable to read it as iamb, so that both *he* and *I* will be metrically stressed and thus contrasted more emphatically. The second foot could also be read as inverted, yet I would prefer reading the line again as iambic and stressing *from* over *takes*, rendering the line a pseudo-spondee and highlighting the removal of beauty **from** the youth. The caesura thus falls in the middle of the third foot, separating *you* from *I* and giving the latter more strength. This is then how I would read the line: "As hé takes fróm you, Í engráft you néw." The first *you* in the couplet, the last word in line 13, is metrically stressed, but the second, in line 14, is unstressed, mimicking the fading of beauty through Time's agency; the third is again unstressed, but it is given force by its resonance with the stressed *new*, making the last foot another pseudo-spondee. As Vendler has observed, "The couplet, mimetically and phonetically additive to resemble 'ingrafting,' is 'YOU' / 'YOU new."[270] Lastly, the very change in spelling in the last two words of the poem represent grafting; the *y* is taken from the *ou* sound, and the *n* is added to it: *new* is the young man grafted into the stock of the speaker's verse, the *new you*.

[270] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 111.

Sonnet 16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant time?
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessèd than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours, 5
And many maiden gardens yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit.
So should the lines of life that life repair
Which this time's pencil or my pupil pen 10
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
To give away yourself keeps yourself still,
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

In the first quatrain of Sonnet 16, the speaker asks the youth why he himself does not fight against time (for love of himself, since he is so clearly in narcissistic self-love) and brace for Time's devastating effects with means stronger than the speaker's feeble poetry. This stanza is evidently taking its cue from Sonnet 15: I war against time out of love for you (by grafting), the speaker said then; why do you not wage war against Time yourself by procreating? In line 1, the pronoun *you* receives metrical stress, emphasizing the contrast between it and *I* in the couplet of the preceding sonnet. In line 3, though the preposition *in* indicates primarily condition, we can also read it, secondarily, as expressing location, and come up with a concrete image of the young man building a fort for himself in decay, to protect himself from Time's siege, thus recalling Sonnet 2. Line 4 activates in retrospect the *graft* pun on *graphein* from the previous poem and defines the speaker's activity as writing verse with "barren rhyme." The adjective *barren* may mean "worthless"−which possibly connects it with the financial language used throughout the subsequence−, but its main purpose here is to contrast the speaker's verse to actual procreation. As Ingram & Redpath put it, "Verses beget nothing;

you can beget a son."[271] Finally, the adjective *blessèd* is contrasted in similation with *bloody*, and it evokes "unbless some womb" from Sonnet 3; these "means more blessèd" are, of course, impregnating a woman, "blessing" her with the young man's substance and him with the renewal of his beauty.

The young man is at the height of his youth and beauty, thus many maiden would gladly bear his children, who would resemble the youth much more closely than the speaker's "barren rhyme." The young man stands atop "happy hours" as, perhaps, a single, beautiful flower sits lonely upon a hill. This image would help set the youth's beauty farther apart (and above) from that of other creatures. West suggests another image for line 5, that of a sundial, common in Elizabethan gardens, "mounted vertically on a south-facing wall with a projecting pointer which cast its shadow on the hours numbered in an arc beneath it"; in this image, the "happy hours would be the bright hours in the middle of the day, and … above them would be the sun, casting the shadow of the pointer down to the number XII at noon."[272] The young man would then be standing "on top of happy hours" as the sun at noon. The adjective *happy* directly recalls Sonnet 6 and, indirectly, Sonnet 1, in its senses of "content," "fortunate," and "rich." But, in contrast, the happiness promised in Sonnet 6 is at least ten times greater than the one the youth currently enjoys. Moreover, line 5 recalls the sun at high noon from Sonnet 7 and the plants (and men) that "at height" decrease from the preceding poem; therefore it may impart a feeling of impending doom.

The phrase *maiden gardens* depicts women as soil in which plants can be "set" or which can be "sown with seed,"[273] and thus, with *unset*, it recalls the "uneared womb" from Sonnet 3. They are soil to be "tilled" by the young man's "husbandry." The adjective *maiden*

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[271] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 38.

[272] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 60.

[273] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 38.

implies virginity, and so does "virtuous" in this context; the idea of lines 6 and 7, therefore, is that many untouched maidens would gladly bear the young man children in matrimony. Moreover, *virtuous* "may possibly also carry the secondary sense of fertility. (The use of 'virtue' = 'power' is frequent in Shakespeare. Cf. Lat. *virtus*.)"[274] I would add that the phrase *virtuous wish* may refer more specifically to the wish for perpetuating beauty, as stated at the very opening of the subsequence. These "maiden gardens" have a pure desire for procreation and preserving "beauty's rose," not the impure desire for the flesh. They would–and this word "probably means 'want to,' 'are eager to,' and is not merely conditional"[275]–bear the young man's "living flowers." This phrase evidently contrasts with the speaker's "barren rhyme": while the speaker's verse is barren and would not be the most adequate way of perpetuating the young man's beauty, his children, or "flowers," could be actually living. But they are contrasted also on a deeper level, which I shall only mention in passing here because I will discuss it in detail in my analysis of Sonnet 18: the speaker's "barren rhyme," the "flowers of poetry" he bears, are not living, not at least in the same sense that children would be.

By line 8 poetry has become painting, or the comparison between the "flowers of poetry" and the "living flowers" that are children has given way to a comparison with painting. It too is presented as weaker than actual children in renewing / perpetuating beauty; its results are not as "like" the youth as real children would be. A "painted counterfeit" is a portrait, such as the young man's family might commission in order to preserve a record of his beauty. Yet, given the context, it also implies a sense of "fake" or "imitation," of lack of originality or authenticity.

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[274] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 38.

[275] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 38.

The third quatrain is complex in its multitude of possible readings. William Empson, for instance, in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*,[276] lists 7 different readings for the phrase *lines of life* alone, and Booth adds three more possibilities. The primary meaning of the quatrain may be paraphrased thus: In this way, if you fortified yourself against time, the "lines of life" (the possible meanings of which I will give an account in the next paragraph) would renew that life, which, neither in internal value nor in external beauty, can the art of the portrait of our era or my inexperienced verse make you yourself live in the eyes of men. This reading is complicated first by the ambiguity of line 9; the subject and object in it are unstable, so the line may be read both as "should the lines of life repair that life" and "should that life repair the lines of life." Both senses are pertinent to the context; the lines of life, i.e. the youth's children or "living flowers," will repair that life destroyed by Time's siege; or that life, i.e. the life of the youth's living flowers, will repair the lines of life–the wrinkles–cared in the youth's brow by Time, as in Sonnet 2. The ambiguity is similar to that in Sonnet 2.12 and Sonnet 13.8 and to the paradox in Sonnet 1.4 and elsewhere: the young man may renew his life by having children, and the children may renew their father's faded beauty in his old age, as in the couplet of Sonnet 2.

The "lines of life" may refer

> to the form of a personal appearance, in the young man himself or repeated in his descendants (as one speaks of the lines of some one's figure); time's wrinkles on that face (suggested only to be feared); the young man's line or lineage–his descendants; lines drawn with a pencil–a portrait; lines drawn with a pen, in writing; the lines of a poem (the kind a Sonnet has fourteen of); and destiny, as in the life-line of palmistry.[277]

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[276] Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1949.

[277] Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, pp. 54-55.

And Booth, according to both, also to "lines of relationship (in a genealogical table), and the obvious–but not quite demonstrable–meaning, 'children," and "*Line* may also play on 'loin,"[278] since presumably *lines* and *loins* were pronounced identically or at least in a similar way. Some of these meanings are not semantically harnessed to the quatrain, however; for example, "lines in painting" or "lines of verse" do not make sense in the context, though ultimately the speaker will argue precisely that his lines of verse will forever repair the young man's life and beauty. These and a few other meanings are but suggested here. The most immediately pertinent senses are, of course, "children," "appearance," "lineage," and, given the context of procreation, "loins." Lastly, *repair* once more puns adequately on the French *re-père*, as in sonnets 3 and 10.

The word *pencil* does not stand here for what we today would call a pencil, for a graphite implement for writing, but for a small paint-brush.[279] Accordingly, "time's pencil" may be understood in personification, as the paint-brush of Time, with which in Sonnet 5 he "framed" the youth's "lovely gaze" but which now is "playing the tyrant" to his beauty. Alternatively, as I have mentioned, it may refer to the fashion in portrait-painting in the speaker's time. The speaker's "pupil pen," in turn, though the word *pen* referred to a goose-quill,[280] may be interpreted as being in apprenticeship either to Time's pencil or to the fashion in portrait- painting, if we understand verse-writing metaphorically as a form of painting. It could seem strange to look at the speaker as an apprentice of Time, against whom he has declared war; yet, it should be remembered that Time, aside from being the destroyer and devourer, also "did frame" the youth's "lovely gaze." Therefore the speaker, in attempting to renew or preserve what Time has made, is in this sense his student. Of course, we may also

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[278] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. xiii.

[279] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 850.

[280] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 850.

read "pupil" as meaning simply "inexperienced" and not expressing a relation to "time's pencil"; then "pupil pen" would be referring directly to the speaker's poetry. The word *pupil* also accords with *barren* in the self- deprecation of the speaker's verse, meant to show it as inferior to procreation as a means of renewing and preserving the addressee's beauty.

We may also detect in "pen" overtones of "pen-knife," an instrument which, as Vin Nardizzi has pointed out,[281] was used in grafting to make incisions on the bark of trees for inserting a scion and in writing as a material support in office work.[282] Then, by association, we could also detect a shade of Time's scythe in "Time's pencil," since both the scythe and the penknife are instruments in agriculture. This association might be a little farfetched, but the implication of a penknife is clear from the context of grafting set up in Sonnet 15 and the importance it will be given in Sonnet 18. Moreover, in retrospect, we may also notice overtones of grafting in "lines of life," as the lines of incision made on a stock for grafting. This anticipates the word *lines* in Sonnet 18 and helps conflate the practice of grafting and verse-writing.

The phrases "inward worth" and "outward fair" seem to unite the Platonic qualities of Beauty and Good in the young man, though previous sonnets question this unity, most notably sonnets 1, 9, 10, and 14. Why has the speaker abandoned his moral reproach of the young man's narcissism? The most plausible explanation is that his increasing emotional involvement with his addressee has come to blind him to the youth's defects. He is so taken with the young man's beauty and his "gracious and kind" presence that he can no longer bear to see those Platonic qualities divided in the youth. The noun *worth* links the passage to the financial language so frequent in the procreation sonnets. And the phrase *in eyes of men* can

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[281] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme, vol. 32, No. 1 (WINTER / HIVER 2009), pp. 83-106.

[282] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," p. 96.

be taken to refer to the actual sight of men or to their thoughts, imagination, or opinion. Furthermore, it anticipates Sonnet 18's "so long as … eyes can see."

To give away yourself maintains yourself in this world, says the speaker, and so you must live by your own effort. *To give away yourself*, according to Booth,[283] is either for the youth to give himself in marriage or to give himself to his children, i.e. transfer his self to them. But perhaps there is a sense also of "giving up on your self, relinquishing your self-love." Despite the fact that Booth modernizes the 1609 Quarto's spelling of *your self* in both cases in line 13, I believe an editor would be justified in modernizing the second *your self* and keeping the original spelling of the first, for the rhythm seems to favor this reading: "To give away your self keeps yourself still"; in the first instance, the beat of the iambic foot falls naturally on *self*, whereas in the second instance it falls naturally on *your*. To understand the second *self* as metrically stressed we would need to read the fifth foot either as a trochee, which would disrupt the *still*/*skill* rhyme, or as a spondee, which would give us three stressed syllables in a row at the end of the line−this would be too much, and as I have argued before, there are no true spondees in English accentual- syllabic versification. Furthermore, to let the stress fall naturally on the second *your* gives us a pertinent overtone of meaning, derived from Sonnet 13: *yoúrself* meaning "your possession over yourself,"[284] which seems to fit perfectly with the paradox intended in the line, of giving your "self" away but still retaining it. The adverb *still* may also mean "even after that has happened," "perpetually," "forever," as before in the subsequence, as well as, of course, "in the same place; unmoved," as suggested also in Sonnet 7.

The noun *skill* may refer to "cunning; wit," to "familiar knowledge of an art or science," or to "thought caused by consideration and judgment," all of which are relevant to

[283] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 159.

[284] Refer to my analysis of Sonnet 13.

the context.[285] The adjective *sweet*, as before, means not only "pleasant" or "lovely" but also "dear." The verb *drawn* here can be understood in multiple senses. What is more, as Vendler has observed, the verb contains a graphic anagram of *war*, a noun which, in turn, is contained in *ward*; ***inward***, moreover, is almost a complete inversion of *drawn*.[286] And she notes:

> The mighty *war* against the bloody *tirant Time* (a graphically reduplicatie phrase of Time's power in the Quarto spelling) seems to have faded from view by the time we come to the sweet paradoxes of the couplet, unless we remark the anagrammatic strategy (*war*, *ward*, *drawn*) which puts the martial in a meaningful relation to the artistic and biological.[287]

I would argue that this "anagrammatic strategy" is not the only link between the artistic and biological, however. Evidently, *drawn* here refers primarily to "represented by picture or painting." But *to draw* also has the military meaning of "to assemble; to array in battle,"[288] and this provides pertinent overtones in the context. There might be a suggestion that the youth must "draw" his armies with his own effort to "fortify" himself against time; and, if the winters, in Sonnet 2, can be seen as the soldiers in Time's army, the young man's children may be regarded as the soldiers in his army to "make defence" or "to brave" Time, to put it in the language of Sonnet 12. As for the biological, the sense of "painting with a pencil," the etymology of the word *pencil*—which comes ultimately from the Latin *penis*[289]—, the *lines* pun on *loins* in line 9, and of course the phallic shape of the pencil gives the couplet a sense of "procreated by your own sexual activity." In the senses of the word *drawn*, therefore, the artistic, the martial, and the biological are already conflated.

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[285] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1068.

[286] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 115.

[287] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 115.

[288] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, pp. 333-334.

[289] Harper, Douglas. “pencil". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2017.

Finally, *to draw* may also mean "to write down," which ties the sense of the couplet to the writing of verse as well; it can mean "to pull along," implying that the youth must live carried by his own strength; "to derive, deduce," combining with *skill* to mean that the youth must use his own intelligence in order to survive; "to lengthen," which implies that the youth's life must be lengthened or prolonged by himself, and which I contend favors a reading of the third foot as trochaic, so as to stretch out the distance between the stressed syllables of the third and fourth feet; and, lastly, "to withdraw," which may suggest that the youth must leave the spring or mirror on which he is given to contemplate his own image, for, as the narrator in the *Metamorphoses* says to Narcissus in apostrophe: "The thing is nothing of it self: with thee it doth abide, / With thee it would departe if thou withdrew thyself aside" (547-548).

Sonnet 17

Who will believe my verse in time to come
If it were filled with your most high deserts?
Though yet heav'n knows it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes, 5
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, "This poet lies−
Such heav'nly touches ne'er touched earthly faces."
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue, 10
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage
And stretchèd meter of an ántique song:
  But were some child of yours alive that time,
  You should live twice in it and in my rhyme.

Who would believe the speaker's verse in the future if it were filled with the youth's highest merits?−the speaker asks. Though, he says, his poems are like a tomb, hiding the young man's life, his true beauty and worth, and showing less than half of his qualities. Ingram & Redpath suggest that the question mark at the end of line 2 is an editorial mistake of the 1609 quarto and that really the query should come at the end of the first line, which would prevent the "unintelligible clash of tenses between 'will' in line 1 and 'were' (line 2)."[290] I would argue, however, that this clash is meant to contrast what the speaker's verse is with what it could be if it contained the youth's "high deserts." The question could then be paraphrased as "who will believe my actual verse in the future if I were to fill it with your most high deserts−which I have not?" This contrast is what allows us to explain *yet*, in line 3, in a plausible way: if my verse contained your greatest merits, no one would believe it, but as it is now heaven knows it is like a tomb that hides your life. Vendler says that, in the first and second quatrains, the speaker "represents the sort of escalating praise he wants to put in his verse; he hopes to"[291] fill his verse with the youth's merits, write the beauty of his eyes and number all his graces.

[290] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 42.

[291] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 117.

However, this is not an actual "hope" of the speaker, but rather something he wishes was possible. The idea here is that the speaker wishes it was possible to express the youth's character–and, in the second quatrain, his beauty–but knows it is not possible, and therefore his verse conceals the real young man.

The word *tomb* recalls Sonnet 3's *tomb*; there the tomb was the young man himself, and it could "stop posterity"; here, it is the speaker's verse, and it hides the youth's beauty. The effect of these two tombs is similar in that it conceals the beauty of the young man from the world. Moreover, as Booth notes, *tomb* may echo the word *tome*,[292] and in this it makes reference to the speaker's collection of poems. West implies that *tomb* may stand in metonymy for "epitaph," which "reveals only a fraction of the deserts of the dead."[293] Concerning *parts* and line 4, Booth states that they "may be intended to contain a crude and gratuitous play on 'bodily parts' and/or an allusion to a funeral effigy–a representation in half or three-quarter relief of the deceased," though it might be a stretch to see a funeral effigy here, since the speaker affirms his verse does not show even half of the young man's "parts"–that is, of his "gifts" or "endowments."[294] Finally, *parts* harks back to Sonnet 8 and therefore may evoke also a sense of "parts in a musical ensemble" or even "parts in a play."

If the speaker could express the beauty of the young man's eyes and with fresh lines of verse estimate all his beautiful attributes, the future ages would say he lies, for no mortal was ever so heavenly beautiful. As Vendler has noted,

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[292] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 283.

[293] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 62.

[294] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 836.

> The present tense [*'This poet lies'*] establishes the perpetuation of the living poetic voice in verse; the past tense [*Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces*] establishes the irrevocable pastness of the beloved's youth.[295]

The phrase *the beauty of your eyes* recalls "the lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell," and all images in the subsequence that call attention to the youth's eyes, which are emblems not only of his beauty but also of his narcissism. But the beauty of his eyes cannot be captured in words; it is impossible to verbally express someone's beauty with accuracy, let alone "write" it. The phrase *in fresh numbers number all your graces*, with its polyptoton play on *number*, would seem to mean at first "in fresh verses enumerate all your beautiful attributes," but that, as opposed to writing the young man's beauty, would be quite feasible; therefore I suggest reading the verb *to number* as meaning primarily "to estimate,"[296] with a secondary overtone of "to bring into verse." These are things the speaker cannot do; it would be impossible either to provide a poetic estimation of beauty or to bring that beauty into verse. The speaker knows of the impossibility of translating his addressee's beauty into verse. His point is that, even if he could do it, "the age to come" would think he was lying, because the youth's beauty is so great they would judge "such heav'nly touches ne'er touched earthly faces."

Line 8 has in it a chiasmic structure, with the contrasting adjectives *heav'nly* and *earthly* at the extremes of the structure and the polyptoton play on *touch* in the inner part, separated by *ne'er*, which "throws … [it] into relief."[297] The emphasis on *ne'er* reinforces the impossibility of that kind of beauty for "the age to come," as does the fact that *touched* is metrically unstressed, whereas *touches* receives metrical stress. The noun *touches* means

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[295] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 117.

[296] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 784.

[297] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 63.

"strokes of artistry"[298] or, we might say, continuing the painting metaphor from the previous sonnets, "brushstroke." Moreover, lines 6 and 8 recall these lines from the *Metamorphoses*, describing the death of Narcissus: "And death did cloze his gazing eyes that woondred at the **grace** / And beautie which did late adorne their Masters **heavenly** face" (630-631). And, as the myth of Narcissus can but lavish praise on Narcissus' beauty without actually transmitting to us just how heavenly his face was, so the speaker's verse is not capable of translating the youth's beauty into verse.

Then people would reproach the speaker's poems, now "yellowed with their age," for their lies, and the youth's "true rights," that is, those qualities which rightfully belong to him, would be considered the exaggerated fancy of the poet, the contrived verse of an old song. The poems "yellowed with their age" resonate with the *tomb* pun on *tome* in line 3, for the phrase evidently refers to verse recorded on paper; moreover, it calls up an image of the fall season, when leaves turn yellow before they die in winter, an image that the speaker will invoke in Sonnet 73 to describe his own aging process. His poems will be "scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue," that is, like senile old men who babble profusely but seldom say anything truthful. This comparison between poems and people reinforces the identification of men and flowers with poetry, which I shall discuss at length in my analysis of Sonnet 18. The "poet's rage" is not anger but strong passion (as in the "barren rage" of death in Sonnet 13) or even, as West suggests, *furor poeticus*, a divinely "inspired lunacy."[299]

The phrase *stretchèd meter* may mean "strained verse" or simply "poetic exaggeration";[300] it may also "be a dig at the long lines, fourteeners, used by earlier English

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[298] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 160.

[299] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 63.

[300] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 160.

poets such as Golding," according to West's observation[301] and as Ingram & Redpath note as well.[302] Perhaps there is in this a reference to the myth of Narcissus. We believe in Narcissus' beauty as myth, but were we told that he was real and so beautiful that "at his verie birth [he] might justly love have wonne" (430), I daresay we all would exclaim: "This poet lies!" The speaker's verses, in their hypothetical intent in this poem of being a record of the youth's beauty, would feel like the stuff of myth, resembling the "stretchèd meter of an ántique song." The word *song* and the secondary meaning of *ántique*, that is, "bizarre" or "fantastical,"[303] seem to reinforce this interpretation. Finally, though Booth states that, in relation to *stretchèd*,

> A modern reader may be tempted to point out this line as an example of the artificially *stretchèd meter* it talks about; [however, the reader should] remember that the dissyllabic pronunciation of *stretched* was the Renaissance norm and the monosyllabic pronunciation was the exception,[304]

We could wonder, given all the other dissyllabic verbs in the poem that should clearly be read as monosyllabic (*filled*, *touched*, *yellowed*, *scorned*, and *termed*, all of which, except for *yellowed*, are spelled in the 1609 Quarto according to a monosyllabic interpretation), whether making *stretchèd* feel artificial by contrast was not the speaker's intention here.

As we come to the couplet, we may notice that, as Vendler has remarked,

> From the direct quotation of future readers, and the visionary and vivid perception of yellowing pages, we descend into indirect quotation (be scorned, be termed) as the future becomes less vivid, declining to the colorless phrase, 'that time.'[305]

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[301] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 64.

[302] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 42.

[303] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 160.

[304] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 160.

[305] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 118.

But in the couplet perhaps the future is not imagined vividly because, even as the speaker argues in favor of procreation for the last time in the *Sonnets*, he knows his addressee will not be persuaded. That is why he introduced "procreation" through poetry in Sonnet 15 as a solution for the young man's problem. Though here he presents verse merely as a complementary means of reproduction, yet he states the possibility of "some child" of the young man being alive in the future as hypothesis, whereas he seems to have no doubt about the permanence of his poetry.

If by chance some child−and *child* can be understood as "descendant" as well−of his addressee were alive in the future−which can be extended indefinitely, "even to the edge of doom," to put it in the language of Sonnet 16−, the young man would then live twice, in the child and in the speaker's verse. However, the 1609 Quarto punctuates the last line of the poem as "You should live twice in it, and in my rime," giving us an alternate reading: you could live for the second time (after your first, bodily life) in your child, and for the third time in my verse. As Booth has declared,

> Neither a modern logical reading of the Q punctuation nor a more obvious and more satisfying substitute punctuation … can include all the substance of the line or retain the metaphor of procreation (a pair turns into a trio) or do justice to the dazzling emblem of infinity that the line is by virtue of its construction.[306]

After all, the ambiguity of the Quarto punctuation is responsible for this "metaphor of procreation" of "a pair [of lives] turn[ing] into a trio," this increase that symbolizes the infinite possibility of afterlife for the youth in the succession of generations and in the everlasting permanence of the speaker's verses. Lastly, the word *rhyme*, evidently, can refer to this poem in particular, to the hypothetical poem imagined in this sonnet−which would "write" the youth's beauty−, and to the whole collection of the speaker's sonnets about his beloved.

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[306] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 160.

Sonnet 18

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 dimmed; 5
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st, 10
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest 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.

A "summer's day" is traditionally considered one of the prime examples of beauty or goodness. As Booth remarks, "This poem plays on the proverbial comparative formula 'as good as one shall see in a summer's day' (Tilley, S967), meaning 'as good as the best there is,"[307] or, as Vendler puts it, "What is the most beautiful thing, the *summum bonum*, in an (English) world? A summer's day."[308] Thus, the speaker asks if he should compare the youth to such a day, then proceeds to list reasons for not doing so−thereby comparing him, in praeteritio,[309] to a summer's day nevertheless. The word *summer* evokes pertinent images from Sonnet 5 and Sonnet 7; the former has already established summer as a transitory season, and the latter has depicted the fleetingness of a summer's day. Ingram & Redpath note the possibility that "day' is here used for 'season' rather than for a single day," adding that "this would make the progression of the imagery logically more compact."[310] It seems to me,

[307] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

[308] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 121.

[309] Praeteritio: Mentioning something by pretending to omit it. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, p. 70.

[310] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 44.

however, that both an individual summer's day and the whole season of summer are intended and relevant in the poem, which will become clear as I discuss the imagery presented.

In line 2, the speaker states his general reason for not comparing the young man to such a day; from lines 3 to 5, he makes comparisons between the youth and either a day of summer or the season in order to show they are not adequate points of comparison; and, in lines 6 and 7, he broadens his scope to include as inadequate all beautiful living things. His general reason, in line 2, is that his addressee is more "lovely," that is, pleasant, beautiful and "gentle,"[311] and more "temperate," that is, "not susceptible to extremes,"[312] than a "summer's day." In relation to the youth's character, the adjective *temperate* evidently means that he has the virtue of temperance. Furthermore, this adjective could also mean "chaste,"[313] and so it could be read as converting the prior reproach of the young man's refusal to procreate as narcissistic into moral praise for his sexual purity. From lines 3 to line 5, the comparisons made by the speaker alternate between temperance and of loveliness. Finally, as regards its etymology, *temperate* is derived from Latin *tempus*, which can refer to either "a period of time' or 'time' in general. The word … thus embodies both of the qualities contrasted in the poem,"[314] namely, the quality of permanence and the quality of transience.

The first concrete point of contrast between the youth and a summer's day is that "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May." As Ingram & Redpath observe, we tend to "forget that Shakespeare's May ran from our mid-May to our mid-June, and was therefore for him a part of summer."[315] The "summer's day," thus, is here understood as a synecdoche for a part of the season of summer. The rough winds in this season disturb the buds of plants; the

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[311] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 44.

[312] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

[313] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1188.

[314] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

[315] Ingram, W. G., and Redpath, Theodore, eds. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 44.

young man is then more temperate. The adjectives *rough* and *darling*, often employed to describe human beings, may give us a sense that summer is often violent to delicate creatures, suggesting perhaps sexual violence on the part of men against women and reinforcing the overtones of "chaste" in *temperate*. In addition, the word *bud* recalls one of the first depictions in the subsequence of the young man as a flower, Sonnet 1's "within thine own bud buriest thy content."

The second point is that "summer's lease hath all too short a date"; in other words, the season does not last long, it is transitory. The noun *lease* harks back to Sonnet 13 and the beauty- house metaphor; thus it evokes also sonnets 3, 9, and 10, and it recalls as well Sonnet 5 and the homophonous *leese*–all references that highlight the temporary quality of summer here. The word *date*, in turn, calls back the "doom and date" from Sonnet 14, tingeing the line with overtones of death. In addition, *date* has legal meaning pertaining to lease: it denotes its "fixed point of expiration."[316] The youth is therefore more lovely, because, as the speaker will reveal in line 9, his "eternal summer shall not fade," i.e. his lease on beauty will not expire.

The third point is that sometimes the sun burns too bright, or "too hot the eye of heaven shines," and this is something that may happen on a particular day of summer. In other words, the youth is more temperate. The "eye of heaven" recalls Sonnet 7, in which had already suggested the metaphoric characterization of the sun as the eye of heaven. In the subsequence, eyes are a frequent object of attention, and therefore this image invokes several other poems as well, such as Sonnet 6–"the lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell"–, Sonnet 1–"contracted to thine own bright eyes"–, Sonnet 11–where the youth's eyes are "constant stars," etc. Here, as in Sonnet 7, the "eye of heaven" would be an object of contemplation–except that here it shines "too hot."

[316] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

Finally, the fourth point is that frequently the sun's "gold complexion" is "dimmed," that is, it is often obscured by clouds. The reference here, as in line 5, is limited to a particular day of summer–in which the sun's golden face is hidden from view. The pronoun *his*, though the personification is appropriate in the context, is to be read as *its*[317] and therefore as referring to "the eye of heaven" in the line above, providing for a bizarre catachresis in which the sun is an eye that has a face. This confusion had already been implied in Sonnet 7, where the "above eye," the sun, "lifts up his burning head." This mixing of images is telling: the face and the eye are the only visible physical features of the youth to which the speaker has referred directly, and they are also his objects of narcissistic attention. The conflation of the images suggests, perhaps, that "contracted to [his] own bright eyes," the youth is contemplating his face within his eyes. It is telling also that the sun is portrayed as aspects of the human face; in order to compare the youth to the sun, the speaker uses a word related to the weather to describe his beloved, and words expressing human features to describe the sun. This approximates the objects of comparison and makes the contrast more poignant: the youth comes out of the comparison as the more lovely of the two.

In lines 6 and 7, the speaker generalizes the inadequacy of the "summer's day" comparisons to all beautiful things in the universe: "every fair from fair declines, / By chance or Nature's changing course untrimmed." The first noun *fair* stands for beautiful things in general, and the second *fair*, in antanaclasis,[318] refers to beauty itself. The verb *declines* indicates primarily a moving away from beauty, though by virtue of the sun image in the poem it also carries overtones of "set," evoking, with *course*–which could refer to the

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[317] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

[318] Antanaclasis: Repetition of a word in the same grammatical form but with different meaning. Cf. Quinn, Arthur. *Figures of Speech: 60 ways to turn a phrase*, pp. 75-76.

progress of the sun in the sky[319]–, the setting sun image from Sonnet 7. The participle *untrimmed*, in line 8, means primarily "stripped of ornaments," as Booth and Duncan-Jones both note.[320] West, however, argues that

> This does not fit the tight argument of the poem. Ornaments have nothing to do with the case. A more relevant meaning is in *OED* (trim 15), 'to adjust the (sails or yards) with reference to the direction of the wind or the *course* of the ship' … Some chance or some change in Nature may disturb the trim of the sails and set a vessel off course. In human terms that might be absence or accident or age or illness. The nautical allusion first surfaced at 'course untrimmed' in 8, but in retrospect the sighting was at 'declines' in 7. Its first meaning in *OED* is 'to deviate (from the straight *course*)'.[321]

And Duncan-Jones points out another sense of *decline* which supports the nautical reference: "cf. *OED* trim 13a, 'to distribute the load of (a ship or boat) so that she floats on an even keel."[322] While not denying that the nautical metaphor is pertinent in view of the evidence provided by these senses of the words *declines*, *course*, and *untrimmed*, I contend that it is excessive to say ornaments "have nothing to do with the case." Why should the sense of "stripped of ornaments" not "fit the tight argument of the poem," when it had introduced no nautical images as well up to this point? The words *course* and *declines* have different senses that are general enough to be compatible with reading *untrimmed* in this way. If we read *declines* as meaning "moves away from beauty," as I have suggested, and *course* as meaning simply "progress, way,"[323] it is perfectly plausible to paraphrase the lines as "every beautiful thing moves away from beauty, eventually becoming unadorned by accident or by the passage of time." We would do well to remember, moreover, that in Sonnet 1 the youth himself was

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[319] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 253.

[320] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 146; Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

[321] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 66.

[322] Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 146.

[323] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 253.

called "the world's fresh ornament" on account of his beauty. Therefore it seems reasonable for the speaker to conceive of the fading of beauty as the stripping away of ornaments. Last but not least, *untrimmed* may also suggest "pruned"[324] of leaves or branches, thereby setting up the context for the grafting that will take place in line 12.

The point of lines 6, 7, and 8 is that nothing in this world is fit for comparison with the young man, because every fair thing will in the end be "unfaired" by Time, "But [his] eternal summer shall not fade." The summer, used in images of transitoriness in the previous verses, is now an emblem of everlasting beauty. The youth shall not be compared (though he is) to a summer's day because, himself being a kind of summer, his beauty will not have a "date." It will transcend the limitations of natural beauty. "Nor [shall he] lose possession of that fair [he] ow[ns]"−the word *possession* invokes once again the idea of a "lease on beauty," that beauty which in Sonnet 13 the youth "hold[s] in lease," but which now will "find no determination." The contracted verb *ow'st* can be interpreted either as *ownest* or as *owest.*[325] It will be remembered that, as the speaker had established in Sonnet 4, beauty was not given to creatures but loaned by Nature, and therefore they had to provide an audit of their use of this beauty and pay it back to Nature by increasing. The ambiguity of the contracted verb reminds us of this debt the youth had to settle only to reinforce that he is now free of it. His lease will endure. "Nor shall death brag [he] wand[ers] in his shade," that is, as opposed to the sun, which is often obscured by clouds, the young man's beauty will not be dimmed, not even by death. Either he will never die, or his beauty will survive his death.

Prior to these lines, the only way of achieving the immortality of beauty the speaker had offered the young man was procreation. In Sonnet 15, the speaker invoked grafting as a form of renewing his addressee's beauty, but he had not claimed it was a means for

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[324] Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1258.

[325] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 161.

immortality. In Sonnet 16, he went back to his attempt to persuade the young man to procreate, alleging that his verse was "barren" in contrast to children or "living flowers." In Sonnet 17, the speaker affirms that even if he could translate the young man's beauty directly into poetry−which he cannot−, future men would not believe that beauty, not unless the youth had living descendants "to prove their beauty by succession his," and that therefore his immortality should be achieve through children *and* verse. Now, however, in Sonnet 18, he offers his addressee all of that without need for increase. Here we come to the speaker's truly imaginative solution for the young man's narcissistic problem. And, as I will argue, this solution was inspired by the very myth of Narcissus.

Sonnet 18 is perhaps one of the most famous love poems in the English language. It may well be, as Vendler says, "the most familiar of the [*Sonnets*] and the most indisputably Shakespearean, Elizabethan, and sonnetlike."[326] Curiously enough, however, it is not truly a poem about the beauty of the beloved, but rather about the power of verse. Everlasting beauty will become available to the young man "When in eternal lines to time [he] grow[s]." The speaker's verse, which had been characterized as barren, pupil, a counterfeit, a tomb hiding the young man's life, is now represented as the means for the immortalization of the youth's beauty. But what seems at first to be a poem in praise of the beloved's beauty is revealed in fact to be a poem in praise of itself−or ultimately in praise of the speaker's poems about him. The young man shall not be compared to a summer's day not on account of his great personal beauty, which is subject to the decline to which all nature things fall prey, but on account of the endurance of his beauty in the speaker's verses. His summer's lease does not have a date, his eternal summer will not fade, his fair will not decline from fair, his gold complexion will not be dimmed, death will not claim him, and he will not lose possession of his beauty *because* of this poem (and the others). As the speaker said in Sonnet 17, he cannot write the

[326] Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 120.

beauty of the youth's eyes. In fact, throughout the subsequence, he has not even attempted to describe his addressee's beauty or his features. What is recorded in these sonnets, therefore, is not the beauty of the young man, but rather the impact this beauty has on the speaker. And that is the true beauty they present to us: the beautiful expression in verse of the impact of the young man's heavenly beauty on the speaker.

It is grafting that will make possible the indirect preservation of the youth's beauty. He will be grafted to time in "eternal lines," in verse, as a scion is grafted to a stock. Therefore he will grow alongside time, and live forever. The phrase "eternal lines" may evoke at first cords or ropes, which suggests a scion tied for support to a stock tree; as Booth notes, "a graft is usually bound in place by cords until it has coalesced with the stock."[327] It also calls back the "lines of life" from Sonnet 16, and suggests an incision cut on the bark of a stock tree, into which the graft will be inserted, as well as "the threads spun by the Fates in classical mythology"[328]–and the youth's threads shall not be cut. As I remarked in my analysis of Sonnet 15, the fact that from the very beginning of the subsequence the youth has been identified with flowers makes the grafting metaphor more appropriate and poignant than it would have been otherwise. If he had not, it would probably feel rather like a *deus ex machina*, an arbitrary solution for the problem.

We do not know why, in the myth, Narcissus was ultimately metamorphosed into a flower. All that Ovid tells us, in Golding's words, is that after he died the nymphs made a fire to burn his body and prepared a hearse on which to carry it, "But as for bodie none remaind: in stead thereof they found / A yellow floure with milke white leaves new sprong upon the ground" (641-642). Whatever the explanation for his metamorphosis might be, the fact is that he was transformed, and in a sense his beauty continued to live in the flower–and lives to this

[327] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 162.

[328] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 162.

day, if we accept the mythological origin of the flower called narcissus. Thus his beauty endures through the generations. Just as Narcissus, the youth is now metamorphosed into a flower; not a natural one, as in the myth, but an artificial "flower of poetry." The designation of poems as flowers is a traditional one; Philip Sidney, in *The Defence of Poesy*, used the term to refer to the dialogues of Plato,[329] for instance, and Octavianum Mirandulum's compilation *Illustrium poetarum flores* [flowers of the illustrious poets] was a common book in Elizabethan grammar-schools.[330] Further evidence of this designation may be found in the word *anthology*, which comes from the Greek *anthologia*, meaning "collection of small poems," from the concrete primary sense of "collection of flowers."[331]

Discussing gardening manuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Nardizzi points out that

> … in the literature of Renaissance gardening, … grafting shares vocabularies, specifically verbs, with the *ur*-model of Judeo-Christian genealogy and conjugal procreation–'increase and multiply.' … In this literature, then, a seed-based paradigm of human procreation and animal generation was invoked to explain the seedless botanies of plant grafting.[332]

This can be grasped from a quick look at the prayer that Leonard Mascall (qtd. in Nardizzi), one of the writers of Renaissance gardening manuals, recommended to be said before grafting:

> Lord God heare my prayer, and let this my desire of thee be hearde. The holy spirit of God which hath created all things for man, and hath given them for our comfort, in thy name O Lord we set, plant, &

[329] Alexander, Gavin, ed. *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*. London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 5.

[330] Cf. Joseph, Miriam. *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language*. Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry Books, 2005, p. 11.

[331] Harper, Douglas. “anthology". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 01 Dec. 2017."

[332] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," p. 87.

> graffe, desiring that by thy mighty power they maye encrease, and multiplye uppon the earth, in bearing plenty of fruite, to the profite and comfort of all thy faithfull people, thorow Christe or Lorde. Amem.[333]

The speaker seems to have been familiar with the gardening literature of his time. He invokes precisely this biblical injunction in the very first sonnet, describing our aesthetic imperative to obtain procreation from the fairest creatures, when he uses the term "increase." He then proceeds, in the 14 initial poems, as also in sonnets 16 and 17, to attempt to convince the youth to "set and plant" for himself, to be his own husbandman. Only after he realizes that his addressee, out of Narcissism, will not, or cannot, be his own gardener does he take it upon himself to graft the youth in verse to time. In retrospect, we may read the biblical injunction invoked in Sonnet 1 as a justification for what the speaker is doing now: he desires increase from the fairest creature that is the young man, but being himself a man and thus incapable of bearing his addressee's "living flowers," he finds a way to be his husbandman and bear him the artificial "flowers of poetry."

Therefore I argue that Sonnet 18 should be considered the last of the procreation sonnets. It does not mention procreation because it is itself the youth's increase. In this sonnet, already removed from the natural succession of progeny through the ages out of his refusal to procreate−a fact that is evidenced by the speaker's use of the present tense in his prophecies of doom for the young man, as in "thine image dies with thee" and "unlooked on diest"−, the addressee nevertheless transcends the limitations of natural beauty as the speaker engrafts him to time and pro-creates him in poetry. This is at once the climax of and conclusion to the procreation sonnets. After this−even though he will still talk about the youth's immortalization in verse in Sonnet 19 and in others throughout the sequence−, he can move on to different themes and concerns, because the youth is no longer subjected to the destructiveness of time.

[333] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," p. 88.

The speaker found a solution to his beloved's problem in the problem itself. Perhaps considering his beloved's narcissism and realizing that he had been setting up this solution from the start by virtue of his identification between the beloved and plants or flowers, he turns once more to the myth of Narcissus, not to find more reproach for his beloved's fault, but rather to find in the destiny of Narcissus brought about by that same fault the answers to his predicament: metamorphosis. The couplet then concludes the subsequence saying that as long as this poem can be read by people, this poem lives–and, the young man living now in this poem, it gives life to him. The "eternal summer" of line 9 is qualified as everlasting rather than truly eternal. After all, poems may live only as long as the world lives. The pronoun *this* can–and to a great extent does–refer not only to this sonnet, but also to the subsequence or even to the whole sequence of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. But it primarily refers very specifically to this sonnet, which in its beauty and immodest claims achieves the immortalization it promises the beloved.

CONCLUSION

I shall now review those thematic elements in the procreation sonnets that are the most relevant to my argument: the principle of preservation of beauty as expressed in Sonnet 1, the identification between men and plants from the standpoint of procreation, the role of Nature in the allotment of beauty, the role of time as the enemy and destroyer of beauty, the narcissism of the young man, and finally his grafting, metamorphosis and immortalization. In addition, I will briefly recapitulate my reasons for including Sonnet 18 among the procreation sonnets, offer reasons why−in spite of their similarities−Sonnet 19 marks a thematic shift in the sequence and therefore should not be counted among those, and show further evidence of Shakespeare's interest in Narcissus and the theme of narcissism.

The procreation sonnets begin with the enunciation of the principle of preservation of beauty: "From fairest creatures we desire increase, / That thereby beauty's rose might never die, / But as the riper should by time decease / His tender heir might bear his memory" (1.1-4). This is an aesthetic internalization of the Biblical injunction to "increase and multiply."[334] We want procreation *from* the fairest creatures, in order to preserve "beauty's rose," that is, their concrete participation in universal beauty, through progeny who will bear that creature's memory into the future as a herald bears a standard or as a tree bears fruit, and who, in turn, will give birth to their parent's memory in their own progeny throughout the ages. This principle is expressed in the plural first person *we*, which signals the speaker's belief in it as a universal principle of Nature.

At first it might seem as though Sonnet 1 is reproaching the young man for not following this principle in not desiring procreation from others, but as we discover by the end of the poem, that is not exactly true. The sonnet implies that the youth is *the* fairest creature

[334] Cf. Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 46.

and thus he should desire procreation not from others, but from himself; instead, he just desires himself. The reproach directed at him concerns his refusal to procreate out of self-love; he ought to "pity the world" and increase, so that his beauty will endure. At no point in the procreation sonnets does the speaker condemn him for not desiring procreation from others. On the other hand, the speaker says he has a "lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell" (5.2) and implies that any woman would desire it from him: "For where is she so fair whose uneared womb / Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?" (3.5-6); "if thou issueless shalt hap to die / The world will wail thee like a makeless wife" (9.3-4); and "many maiden gardens … / With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers" (15.6).

The principle applies to the youth, therefore, differently from how it applies to other people. For him, procreation is a means of perpetuating his own beauty: "As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st / In one of thine, from that which thou departest, / And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st / Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest" (11.1-4). This is expressed also in 2.13-14, "This were to be new made then thou art old / And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold," analogically in 5.13-14, "But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet, / Leese but their show, their substance still lives sweet," in 10.7-8, "that beauteous roof … / Which to repair should be thy chief desire," and elsewhere. In this principle, affirms the speaker, "lies beauty, wisdom and increase; / Without [it], folly, age, and cold decay" (11.5-6) and thus he can say to his addressee that "truth and beauty shall together thrive, / If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert" (14.11-12). The truth of the principle, at least to the speaker, it seems, depends on the youth fulfilling his duty to procreate.

In a created, material, temporal world, the importance of this principle cannot be overestimated, because "every fair from fair sometime declines" (18.7) on account of the destructive agency of time. From the outset, time is present in the procreation sonnets as the

enemy of beauty, for "the riper [rose or creature] [will] **by** time decease" (1.3), and accordingly the youth can "eat the world's due" (1.11) **by** himself, that is, by not procreating, and **by** the grave, that is, by dying as a result, most likely, of the passage of time. In Sonnet 2, time is implicitly depicted as the general of an army of "forty winters" (2.1) who will lay siege to the young man's beauty and "dig deep trenches in [his] beauty's field" (2.2), turning his "youth's proud livery" (2.3), in other words, his beauty, into a "tottered weed of small worth held" (2.4). Time destroys beauty by death and decay. It will cause the youth's eyes to become "deep- sunken" (2.7); his hours will "play the tyrants" (5.3) to the young man's beauty and "unfair" (5.4) it; represented as winter, it will "deface / In [him] [his] summer" (6.1-2); represented as death, it will "make worms [his] heir" (6.14), among many other examples. In the first 14 sonnets, "nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence / Save breed" (12.13-14); thus the speaker attempts so avidly to convince his addressee to procreate.

But time's role in the subsequence is not always destructive; there is one instance in which it is presented as positive. In Sonnet 5, the hours that will "unfair" (5.4) the youth's beauty are the same which "did frame" (5.1) it. In this, time and Nature are conflated, for in general Nature is portrayed as responsible for the young man's beauty. Conversely, Nature, usually shown as a positive force, is what ultimately causes fair creatures to become "untrimmed" with her "changing course" (18.8) and "calls [creatures] to be gone" (4.11).

Nature's general function is the allotment of beauty to creatures. In Sonnet 4, the speaker states that "Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend, / And being frank, she lends to those are free" (4.3-4). She distributes beauty so that it may be distributed back into the world; "beauty's legacy" (4.2) is a "bounteous largess given [creatures] to give" (4.6). Accordingly, those who receive Nature's gifts must pay her back in kind through procreation; they have to pay "the willing loan" (6.6), or pay "the world's due" (1.14). Those whom Nature has "not made for store" (11.8), who are "Harsh, featureless, and rude" (11.9) are not bound to

her in the same measure, and the speaker sees no problem if they should "barrenly perish" (11.9), but to those "whom she best endowed she gave the more" (11.11), and therefore they should "in bounty cherish" this "bounteous gift" (11.12). After all, Nature will require them to present an "audit" (4.12) of that loan when they depart from this world.

The speaker's point in showing Nature's responsibility over beauty is to demonstrate that beauty is not something owned, but rather something over which the fair creatures hold temporary possession. Thus he says to his addressee: "you are / No longer yours than you yourself here live" (13.2-3). In other words, a fair creature only enjoys his or her beauty while he or she holds sway over his or her body. The speaker expresses this in the beauty-house metaphor, first hinted at in Sonnet 3, where the youth may see ,"through windows of [his] age" (3.11), that by having children through "husbandry" (3.6) his old age will really be, "despite of wrinkles," his "golden time" (3.12). Beauty is something that fair creatures "hold in lease" (13.5); in other words, it is like a house of which one enjoys temporary possession. Only "husbandry in honour might uphold" (13.10) this house and make it so there will be no "determination" (13.6), no "date" (18.4), to its lease. But the youth, in his refusal to procreate, is "seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate" (10.7); he is willing to let "so fair a house fall to decay" (13.9).

The beauty-house metaphor could be identified with poetry, for, as I have discussed, etymologically the word *stanza* means "room," so that a poem may be conceived as a house with several rooms in which the poetic argument is developed. Furthermore, the word *husbandry*, which may denote either the cultivation of crops or the management of an estate, is shown in Sonnet 3 to encompass "tillage" (3.6) as one of its constituent activities; the word *tillage*, as I have noted, is linked to the etymological meaning of *verse*: "the metaphor is of

plowing, of 'turning' from one line to another (*vertere* = 'to turn') as a plowman does."[335] Hence, *husbandry* connects the beauty-house-poetry association with the agricultural realm and thereby with the beauty-flower-poetry association.

The beauty-flower pair is present in the subsequence from the very beginning. In Sonnet 1, the youth is "beauty's rose" (1.2), with an "abundance" (1.7) of seed, burying "within [its] own bud" its "content" (1.11). He is a beautiful flower, "the world's fresh ornament" (1.9), "herald[ing] the gaudy spring" (1.10). In Sonnet 2, his beauty will be a "tottered weed" (2.4) after the siege of forty winters. In Sonnet 5, he will be as a plant in winter with its "sap checked with frost" and its "lusty leaves quite gone" (5.7). There are other echoes of the association here and there−as in Sonnet 12's "summer's green, all girded up in sheaves, / Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard" (12.7-8)−, but after the first sonnet the speaker starts moving away from botanical imagery in order to explore other metaphorical portrayals of his addressee, until in Sonnet 15 it comes back in full force with "man as plants increase" (15.5) and with the grafting metaphor (15.14), which becomes necessary on account of the youth's narcissistic refusal to procreate.

In his very characterization of the young man, the speaker, as I have demonstrated, depicts him as a Narcissus figure. He is "contracted to [his] own bright eyes" (1.4); Narcissus, upon first seeing his reflection, is "gazing on his shadowe still with fixed staring eyes" (524) and "it doth him good to see / His ardant eyes which like two starres full bright and shyning bee" (525-526). Narcissus, like the young man, is taken with his own image, and "the verie selfsame thing / That doth bewitch and blinde his eyes, encreaseth all his sting" (541-542), or as Narcissus says of himself, "so great a blindnesse in my heart through doting love doth raigne" (561). In other words, as the narrator of the myth says, "with greedie eyes he gazeth still uppon the falced face, / And through his sight is wrought his bane" (551-552). The youth

[335] Harper, Douglas. “verse". *Etymonline.com*. Online Etymology Dictionary. n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2017.

"feed[s] [his] light's flame with self-substantial fuel" (1.5), and Narcissus "is the flame that settes on fire, and thing that burneth tooe" (536), who "feedes a hope without cause why" (521), or, in his own words, "I doe both set on fire, / And am the same that swelteth too" (584-585), "give me leave a little while my dazled eyes to cheere / … Thereby to feede my wretched rage and furie for a tide" (602, 604). Narcissus asks "was there ever any / That loovde so cruelly as I?" (555-556) and the young man is "[himself] [his] foe, to [his] sweet self too cruel" (1.8). They are both in the paradoxical situation of lack in excess: the youth is "Making a famine where abundance lies" (1.7) and Narcisus states "my plentie makes me poore" (587).

As the young man got his "beauty's legacy" (4.2) from his mother, for he is "[his] mother's glass" (3.9), so Narcissus seems to derive his beauty from his own mother, as I have argued in my analysis of Sonnet 3. And as the young man is a flower (Sonnet 1) in whom his mother "calls back the lovely April of her prime" (3.10), so Narcissus is the son of a flower-like nymph (Lyriop [429], from the Greek *leiri-ope*, "having the eyes or face like a lily") and will himself become a flower after his death. As Narcissus looks at himself on the surface of a mirror- like spring, so does the youth sees his face in "[his] glass" (3.1); they are both in love with their own images. The young man "is so fond [that he] will be the tomb / Of his self love," (3.6-7), and Narcissus is a "fondling" (543), "tooting on his shadow … fondely" (634), whose foolish self-love brings about his death. Narcissus' "fickle image" (543) is "nothing of it selfe: with [him] it doth abide, / With [him] it would depart if [he] withdrew [himself] aside" (548), and the youth, should he die childless, will "Die single, and [his] image dies with [him]" (3.14).

The addressee of the procreation sonnets is "rich in youth" (15.10), in his "day of youth" (15.12), in "youth" (11.4), standing "on the top of happy hours" (16.5), the "world's fresh ornament" (1.9), and Narcissus is "three times five and one" (437) who seems "to stande

betweene the state of man and Lad" (438), not "yet so growne in yeares" (572), "in the floure of youth" (592), a "yongling" (594), a "sweet boy beloved in vaine" (627). They have both received "Nature's bequest" (4.3), her "bounteous gift" (11.12), the "grace of Nature's gift" (441). No maid is "so fair" (3.5) that she would "disdai[n] the tillage of [the young man's] husbandry" (3.6), and "many maiden gardens … / would bear [his] living flowers" (16.6-7). The young man bears "no love toward others" (9.13), he "none lovest" (10.4), whereas Narcissus "to be toucht of man or Mayde … wholy did disdaine" (442). The youth's eyes are "constant stars" (14.10), while Narcissus' are "two stars" (526) that are "fixed" (524). The young man "consume[s] [himself]" (9.2), he "spend[s] / Upon [himself] [his] beauty's legacy" (4.1-2), and Narcissus, "being spent and wasted through desire, / Did … consume and melt away with Cupids secret fire" (615-616). The world "will wail" (9.4) and "still weep" (9.5) the youth's childless death, as the nymphs "wept and wailed" Narcissus'. Finally, the young man is "beauty's rose" (1.2), Narcissus is a "pierlesse piece" (570); the young man has a "gracious" presence (10.11) and is full of "graces" (17.6), Narcissus had the "grace of Nature's gift" (441) and his own "grace" (630); the young man has a face shaped by "heavenly touches" (17.8), Narcissus has a "heavenly face" (631).

Aside from these direct parallels between the two characters, many of the images in the procreation sonnets appear to have been suggested to the speaker by the myth of Narcissus. The financial imagery is, of course, logically contained in the Biblical injunction to "increase and multiply." But it is also present in the myth; Narcissus has "greedie eyes" (551) for himself, and his "plentie makes [him] poore" (587). The candle image in Sonnet 1 (1.6) is evoked time and again in the myth; Echo, after seeing Narcissus, "waxed warme" (462), and as she approached him "The hoter ever did she waxe as neerer to hir flame" (474); Narcissus, apart from being compared to a candle in the two passages I have quoted, is also said to be as "lith and supple waxe" that "doth melt against the burning flame" (613). The comparison

between the young man and the sun in Sonnet 7 is implicit in the myth, for Narcissus' hair "one might worthely Apollos haire it deeme" (remember that the sun "lifts up his burning head" in 7.2), and the sun as the "eye of heaven" (18.5) is suggested in the narrative as well, for there the "Sunne … glareth" on the morning dew (614). The image in Sonnet 12 of the leaves that "erst from heat did canopy the herd" (12.6) is suggested in the myth: in a passage that mentions "sheepeheirds" (510), goats, and cattle, the narrator tells us that "with their leaves the trees did keepe the heate of Phoebus out" (514) of the spring in which Narcissus met his doom. Even the military imagery that is recurrent in the sonnets is present in the narrative; Narcissus says in apostrophe to the woods in which he finds the spring that they are a "fort of refuge strong" (557). Lastly, the "floure of youth" (592) may be seen as implying the "flowers of poetry" that are the climax of the procreation sonnets.

Furthermore, a great deal of the words the speaker employs in his sonnets are used in the myth, or their derivates are. Just to list some of the more relevant examples: *increase*, *fair*, *fresh*, *beauty*, *love*, *death*, *age*, *trim*, *young*, *fond*, *Nature*, *gift*, *grace*, *touch*, *face*, *image*, *pride*, *disdain*, *wax*, *hot*, *tongue*, *lovely*, *leaves*, *buds*, *blood*, *field*, *content*, *joy*, *desire*, *silver*, *low*, *chance*, *shade*, *eyes*, *gaze*, *stars*, *rage*, *depart*, *feed*, *like* (in the sense of similar), *flame*, *seek*, *cruel*, *fort*, *draw*, *set*, *time*, *hands*, *pity*, *breast*, *grow*, *year*, *stretch*, *sweet*, *perceive*, *conceit*, *part*, *sorrow*, *weep*, *wail*, *grief*, *young*, *life*, *decay*, *forsake*, *cry*, *cheer*, *ripe*, *orient*, *spend*, *waste*, *consume*, *state*, *mind*, *happy*, *bear*; let alone indirect synonyms and words. The speaker seems to have drawn a large part of his vocabulary from the myth as translated by Golding—some of the most important words in the subsequence, in fact.

A question might be raised as to why I did little to incorporate the nymph Echo in my analysis. While I recognize that Echo has an important role in the myth, nevertheless her part is in a digression to the narrative which is not vital to Narcissus' destiny, though Echo's

destiny is inextricably linked to his and her part is vital to the narrative itself. Jane Hedley[336] has remarked that the speaker often functions as Echo in the *Sonnets*, invoking this passage from Sonnet 76 in order to support her claim: "So all my best is dressing old words new, / Spending again what is already spent" (76.11-12). I do not deny the truth of her statement, nor the fact that in the procreation sonnets the speaker often "dresses old words new," but my focus is on the parallel between Narcissus and the young man, and moreover in the procreation sonnets the speaker is frequently portrayed rather as the prophet Tiresias, making conditional prophecies–thou shalt live forever, if thou shouldst convert from storing thyself–to the young man, as Tiresias' prophecy about Narcissus was conditional: he will live "full long, so that him selfe he doe not know" (433).

The only means of achieving immortality the speaker presents in the first 14 sonnets to his addressee is "increase." In Sonnet 15, however, the speaker returns to the identification between men and plants he had established at the beginning of the procreation sonnets in order to offer a novel and imaginative solution: he will "engraft [the young man] new" (15.14) in his verse. As Nardizzi states, "In so doing, he links procreation to poetry making,"[337] because grafting was regarded in sixteenth and early seventeenth-century gardening manuals as a form of "seedless" generation, akin to seeded human, animal, and botanical procreation and included in the Biblical injunction 'increase and multiply.'"[338] I have noted that this link was already implicit in the words *tillage* and *husbandry*. In Sonnet 16, the speaker goes back to his attempt to convince the young man to procreate for himself, contrasting his "barren rhyme" (16.4) with actual children or "living flowers" (16.7). This attempt continues in Sonnet 17, in which poetry is presented merely as a complementary form of immortality,

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[336] Hedley, Jane. "Since First Your Eye I Eyed: Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Poetics of Narcissism," p. 15.

[337] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," p. 83.

[338] Nardizzi, Vin. "Shakespeare's Penknife: Grafting and Seedless Generation in the Procreation Sonnets," p. 85.

since it is "as a tomb" (17.3) that "hides [its subject's] life" (17.4); in a sense, poetry fails to preserve "beauty's rose" because it cannot properly capture "the beauty of [its subject's] eyes" (17.5) or "number all [his] graces" (17.6), and, even if it could, it would then "Be scorned" (17.10) as "a poet's rage / And stretched meter of an ántique song" (17.11-12).

But by Sonnet 18, the speaker has realized that, in his rhetorical world scenario, all his efforts to persuade the addressee to procreate are futile. He cannot be converted from his narcissism not even for the sake of that which he loves the most: his image. Thus the speaker presents grafting as the only solution for his beloved. In a poem that seems at first to be about the beauty of his beloved but is really about its own beauty, the speaker claims that a summer's day is not a fit comparison for the young man, nor is any other fair thing in the world, because his "eternal summer shall not fade" (18.9) "When in eternal lines to time [he] grow[s]" (18.12). Whereas Narcissus was metamorphosed naturally, so to speak, into a daffodil or narcissus, the youth is now metamorphosed into an artificial "flower of poetry" by the speaker. He has been grafted "to time" as a scion is grafted into a stock tree, and thus he will grow alongside time. As long as men live and have eyes to read this poem−and the other poems about him written by the speaker−, so long will this poem live and therefore so will the youth. The immortality that had been open to him in procreation finally becomes his, not through any effort of his own, but rather through the speaker's love for him. His lover, the speaker-poet, will not let him sin against Nature and fail to pay back her loan of beauty, will not let him "eat the world's due"−the speaker, in a sense, has obtained procreation from him.

It is general consensus among the commentators that Sonnet 17 is "the last procreation sonnet."[339] However, as I have argued, in Sonnet 18 the youth finally procreates−or, to be precise, is pro-created−and achieves immortality. Sonnet 18 is then the climax and conclusion to the procreation sonnets, and should therefore be included in the subsequence. Of course,

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[339] West, David, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 64.

there is no book of sonnets written by Shakespeare called *The Procreation Sonnets*; the division is made by scholars and critics, and is thus extraneous to the *Sonnets*. Booth himself acknowledges that the "dividing line between the procreation sonnets and sonnets 18-126" may be imperceptible.[340] Nevertheless, I believe I have been able to demonstrate that, by virtue of the link between grafting and procreation, between men, beauty, flowers and poetry, the first 18 sonnets, thematically speaking, belong together.

If anything remains to be said in this respect, it is that it might be argued that Sonnet 19 treats the same theme and should thus be counted as one of the procreation sonnets. There are a couple of reasons I can present to argue that is not the case. Sonnet 19 is the first one in the sequence that is not addressed to the young man, excepting Sonnet 5, which was nevertheless implicitly addressed to him. It is addressed to the recently vanquished enemy of the young man's beauty, Time. There is no mention of procreation in the poem, except for the ones implicit in the couplet in the idea of everlasting life in verse. But there is no botanical or agricultural imagery in this sonnet. No mention of grafting or plants or flowers. The claim of immortality is presented in clear, literal terms: "My love shall in my verse ever live young" (19.14). It is true that some of the words and images from previous poems reappear in Sonnet 19, but then again so do they reappear virtually everywhere in the *Sonnets*. The dividing line, in terms of theme and imagery, between the previous sonnets and Sonnet 19 is indeed subtle, almost imperceptible, but the change in addressees provides a very objective criterion based on which we can establish a well-defined boundary.

As a last piece of support for my argument concerning the myth of Narcissus as a source and inspiration for the procreation sonnets, I offer the fact that Shakespeare's interest in the myth is evident elsewhere in his works. And, if we can observe that he actually had an interest in the myth that was intense enough to show in at least two of his other works, then

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[340] Booth, Stephen, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 162.

we may believe it more readily that the parallels, echoes, and borrowings in relation to the myth of Narcissus are not mere coincidence or accident. The first of these works is *Venus and Adonis*.[341] The parallels between Shakespeare's first epyllion and the myth of Narcissus (and the procreation sonnets) should be clear enough to grasp, since it is a story of a beautiful, proud young boy who refuses love from others−in this case, from the goddess of love Venus herself−, and since the story ends with his death and subsequent metamorphosis into a flower.

The parallels between *Venus and Adonis* and the procreation sonnets are so many that they could probably be the subject of another thesis. I shall confine myself, thus, to pointing out some of the similarities it bears with the myth of Narcissus, aside from the obvious similarity of their metamorphoses. Adonis did not accept love from any suitors: "love he laughed to scorn" (V&A 4). His passion was dedicated solely to hunting (V&A 4), and ultimately his death comes as a consequence of hunting (V&A XX), just as Narcissus' did, for he came upon the fateful spring while engaged in this same activity. Adonis' complexion is said several times to be "white and red" (V&A 10), and the same is true for Narcissus: for instance, the narrator of the myth talks about his "lively hue of white and red" (617). As Narcissus sees his beauty reflected on the spring, so does Adonis sees his reflection in the glass of Venus' eyes, as she tells him: "Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies" (V&A 119); moreover, Adonis also "beheld his shadow in the brook" (V&A 1099). Finally, Narcissus is mentioned by name in the poem (V&A 161), and when Adonis dies and is metamorphosed into a flower, it is said to be "purple … checkered with white" (V&A 1168), as Narcissus' was yellow and white.

It might be argued that some of these similarities are to be found in the myths themselves, since Greek myths often share some core elements. This indeed is frequently the

[341] I quote from Mowat, Barbara A. and Werstine, Paul (eds.) *Shaespeare's Sonnets and Poems*. To distinguish the line numbers from *Venus and Adonis* and those from the myth of Narcissus, the former are identified as (V&A X).

case; for instance, in the *Metamorphoses* both the myth of Narcissus in Book III and the fable of Venus and Adonis in Book X end with the transformation of the young boys into flowers. However, while Ovid does not give reasons for Narcissus' metamorphosis, as regards Adonis he tells us that Venus, out of love and grief, "sprinckled Nectar on the blood" (855) with the express purpose of making a flower grow. But in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and in the myth of Narcissus the metamorphosis seems to be spontaneous, and Shakespeare even uses the same verb *to spring* ("A purple flower sprung up"; V&A 1168) employed by Golding to describe the flower's emergence. Furthermore, in Ovid's Venus and Adonis the flower that appears is "Of all one colour with the blood" (857), whereas in Shakespeare's version it is "purple … checkered with white" (V&A 1168), as in the myth of Narcissus the flower is yellow with white. Lastly, in Ovid it is implicit that Venus and Adonis are lovers, but in Shakespeare it is quite explicit that Adonis is too proud to give in to love, and thus Venus compares him with Narcissus. As the narrator of the fable says at the beginning of the poem, "love he laughed to scorn" (V&A 4).

There are many other parallels in language, both as regards phrases, constructions, and images, and in relation to individual words. Some of the important words (or derivates) that are shared between the myth and the epyllion are: *fair*, *fresh*, *beauty*, *brook*, *wax*, *increase*, *spring*, *ripe*, *grow*, *death*, *nature*, *pity*, *love*, *fire*, *eyes*, *sweet*, *boy*, *mother*, *forsake*, *like*, *sight*, *scorn*, *face*, *youth*, *heart*, *look*, *lips*, *kiss*, *seek*, *know*, *years*, *part*, *feed*, *sun*, *grief*, *echo*, *set*, *age*, *rage*, *flower*, *trim*, *sorrow*, *fickle*, *fond*, etc. This is sufficient indication that Shakespeare had a continued interest in the myth of Narcissus and that it was a source both for the procreation sonnets and for his *Venus and Adonis*.

The second work of Shakespeare in which we see a concern with narcissism is *Richard II*.[342] I will not make my case here at length because it has already been made for me by A. D. Nutall in "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self."[343] In the famous deposition scene in act 4 of *Richard II*, King Richard, whom Nutall calls "the most elaborately Narcissistic of [Shakespeare's] heroes,"[344] asks for a mirror in order to see his own face:

> Give me that glass, and therein will I read.
> {*He takes the mirror.*}
> No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
> So many blows upon this face of mine,
> And made no deeper wounds? O flatt'ring glass,
> Like to my followers in prosperity,
> Thou dost beguile me. Was this face the face
> That every day under his Household roof
> Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
> That like the sun did make beholders wink?
> Is this the face which faced so many follies,
> That was at last outfaced by Bolingbroke?
> A brittle glory shineth in this face.
> As brittle as the glory is the face,
> {*He breaks the mirror.*}
> For there it is, cracked in an hundred shivers.
> Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport:
> How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face. (4.1.287-302)

To which Bolingbroke, the "silent king," replies: "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed / The shadow of your face" (4.1.303-304). Richard's mirror is, of course, similar to the spring in which Narcissus looks at himself. According to Nutall, "As the reflection in the pool is at the heart of Ovid's story, so the reflection in the glass is at the heart of Shakespeare's play."[345] That is because what is represented by the reflection in the spring and in the mirror is the conceptual separation of one individual as subject and object of his own love−or, in Richard's

[342] I quote from Mowat, Barbara A. and Werstine, Paul (eds.) *Richard II*.

[343] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian influences on literature and art from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century*, pp. 137-150.

[344] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 137.

[345] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 141.

case, attention. As Nutall claims, "Even the notion of self-consciousness, insofar as it has real content, demands an artificial splitting of the individual."[346]

Richard is narcissistic because he is always contemplating himself as an object rather than acting out his life. When, in Act 3, Scene 2, upon returning from his war in Ireland, Richard arrives in England to news that his supporters and armies have scattered, he refuses to talk about practical matters and measures, preferring rather to give in to despair, self-pity, and talking "of graves, of worms, and epitaphs" (3.2.150). He removes himself from the action as "an oddly aloof Olympian consciousness"[347] in order to behold his own fall. Consequently, he starts acting as a spectator to his own drama, all the while living this drama and pushing his tragedy forward through his own inaction. As Nutall well observes, the silent, opaque Bolingbroke "seems merely to move … into spaces vacated for him − with elaborate and ironic art − by Richard."[348] Being oneself and seeing oneself are not possible simultaneously, and Richard seems to favor the latter.

In the deposition passage quoted above, Richard is confronted with the discrepancy between his self-image and his substance, or at least his true image. Expecting to find in the mirror a face ravaged by his self-indulging sorrows, what he finds instead is one that is not greatly changed from what it was before his tribulations. Thus he shatters the mirror on the ground, whereby he attempts to bring his true image to fit his self-image, and exclaims to Bolingbroke that his sorrows have destroyed his face. The "silent king's" reply is to note that the shadow of his sorrow−that is, his theatrical, self-indulging, and removed sorrow−has destroyed the shadow of his face−that is, his image in the mirror. Finally, the shattering of the mirror recalls that moment when, confronted with the unavoidable separation between him

[346] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 148.

[347] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 138.

[348] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 138.

and himself as object of his love, Narcissus weeps and blurs his reflected image with his tears (582-599).

As Nuttal affirms,

> We have isolated as central to Richard's nature the co-existence of self-regard and self-projection. These terms are highly abstract, redolent of the polysyllabic twentieth-century. If we try to re-express the though in *image* terms we shall find that there is one image which immediately conveys the required tension: the mirror. The face in the glass is oneself and yet not oneself, a mere projected image. This lies at the heart of the Narcissus story.[349]

And, again, "Richard is Narcissus, not by allusion but by his nature. And the matter is clinched by the mirror."[350] He points out, moreover, that Echo is an "*auditory* mirror."[351] I believe it is sufficiently clear now that Richard is a sophisticated kind of narcissistic character, and that Shakespeare was deeply involved in the Narcissus myth, enough to use it as source not only for the procreation sonnets, but also for two of his major works: *Venus and Adonis* and *Richard II*.

At the end of the *Metamorphosis*, in Book XV, Ovid claims that he has "brought a woork to end which neither Joves feerce wrath, / Nor swooord, nor fyre, nor freating age" (984-985) will be able to "abolish quyght" (986), and that "all the world shall never / Be able for to quench" (990-991) his name, ending the book with the line "My lyfe shall everlastingly bee lengthened still by fame" (995). And, as Bate notes,

> The poem from which the epigraph [to *The Rape of Lucrece*] is quoted [Ovid's *Amores*] ends with the claim that poetry is a way of cheating death–the claim which is also that of Shakespeare's Sonnets and

[349] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 139.

[350] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 141.

[351] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 141.

> which is borne out every time Shakespeare reanimates Ovid and every time we reanimate either of them in the act of reading.[352]

I would add that to read the procreation sonnets is not only to give life to the addressee, but also to "reanimate" Ovid. However, the Latin poet's claims are not precisely the same as the one made by the speaker in the procreation sonnets; he does not frame his allegations of immortality for himself, but for his addressee. In Sonnet 81, for instance, the speaker asserts: "I, once gone, to all the world must die" (81.6), and in Sonnet 72 he expresses his wish that his "name be buried where [his] body is" (72.11). His intention, at least explicitly, is to immortalize his addressee, but not himself. Nevertheless, by achieving immortality for the youth through his verses, the speaker necessarily cheats death. This thesis is one among a multitude of proofs that their claims have turned out to be true.

Finally, As Taylor has stated,

> The story of Ovid and the Elizabethans, of course, is one of translation and contains many variations, from the blunt 'englysshinge' of Arthur Golding struggling with cumbersome mid-Tudor metre and language to the glorious translation of Ovid in Shakespeare's work.[353]

Thus, by translating the myth of Narcissus into a short sequence of lyric poems–the procreation sonnets–, the speaker has given Narcissus a new metamorphosis, and to a great extent he has metamorphosed Ovid himself. In spite of the differences between the procreation sonnets and the myth, they share some of the same central elements as regards their main characters: their youth and unsurpassed beauty, their unquestionable desirability, their scorn of potential lovers, their love for their own images, their wasting away of beauty, their death–actual, in Narcissus' case, and potential, in the youth's case–, and their final metamorphoses into flowers.

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[352] Bate, Jonathan. *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 2.

[353] Talor, A. B. "Introduction," in *Shakespeare's Ovid*, p. 5.

To conclude, I invoke Nutall's caveat to his own analysis: "I have drawn an analogy between two studies of self-love, but it would be wrong to assume, in works as rich as these, that there will not be endless differences which escape the net,"[354] and I have mentioned a few in the course of my commentary to the procreation sonnets. Narcissus becomes a flower through natural metamorphosis, for one, whereas the youth needs the speaker to transform him into an artificial "flower of poetry." Narcissus died for his self-love, whereas the speaker merely "killed" his biological posterity. The differences are many, but, for the moment, I am more interested in the similarities. And they are numerous and significant, enough for me to feel justified in calling the procreation sonnets not "The Awakening of Narcissus," as Northrop Frye[355] mistakenly did, but rather "The Metamorphosis of Shakespeare's Narcissus."

[354] Nutall, A. D. "Ovid's Narcissus and Shakespeare's Richard II: the reflected self," p. 149.

[355] Frye, Northrop. "How True a Twain," in *The Riddle of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 39.

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