

Chapter 1 : William Boyd on Shakespeare's love triangle | Books | The Guardian

The Shakespearean sonnets are considered among the most romantic poems ever written. It was the bard who kickstarted the modern love poetry movement with a collection of love sonnets.

It has been argued that the dedication is deliberately ambiguous, possibly standing for "Who He", a conceit also used in a contemporary pamphlet. It might have been created by Thorpe to encourage speculation and discussion and hence, sales. The 18th-century scholar Thomas Tyrwhitt proposed "William Hughes", based on puns on the name in the sonnets. Sonnets using this scheme are known as Shakespearean sonnets, or English sonnets, or Elizabethan sonnets. Often, at the beginning of the third quatrain occurs the volta "turn", where of the poem shifts, and the poet expresses a turn of thought. Sonnets 99, , and Number 99 has fifteen lines. Number consists of six couplets, and two blank lines marked with italic brackets; is in iambic tetrameters, not pentameters. In one other variation on the standard structure, found for example in sonnet 29, the rhyme scheme is changed by repeating the second B rhyme of quatrain one as the second F rhyme of quatrain three. Apart from rhyme, and considering only the arrangement of ideas, and the placement of the volta, a number of sonnets maintain the two-part organization of the Italian sonnet. There are other line-groupings as well, as Shakespeare finds inventive ways with the content of the fourteen line poems. Current linguistic analysis and historical evidence suggests, however, that the sonnets to the Dark Lady were composed first around, the procreation sonnets next, and the later sonnets to the Fair Youth last. It is not known whether the poems and their characters are fiction or autobiographical; scholars who find the sonnets to be autobiographical have attempted to identify the characters with historical individuals. The young man is handsome, self-centered, universally admired and much sought after. The sequence begins with the poet urging the young man to marry and father children sonnets. One popular theory is that he was Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, this is based in part on the idea that his physical features, age, and personality might fairly match the young man in the sonnets. Here are the verses from Venus and Adonis: By law of nature thou art bound to breed, That thine may live when thou thyself art dead; And so in spite of death thou dost survive, In that thy likeness still is left alive. Particularly, Wilde claimed that he was the Mr. The sequence distinguishes itself from the Fair Youth sequence with its overt sexuality. Sonnet. The Dark Lady suddenly appears. Sonnet, and she and the speaker of the sonnets, the poet, are in a sexual relationship. She is not aristocratic, young, beautiful, intelligent or chaste. Soon the speaker rebukes her for enslaving his fair friend. Sonnet. The Rival Poet[edit] Main article: The sonnets most commonly identified as the Rival Poet group exist within the Fair Youth sequence in sonnets 78-86. The sonnet sequence considers frustrated male desire, and the second part expresses the misery of a woman victimized by male desire. In each part the young man is handsome, wealthy and promiscuous, unreliable and admired by all. An old man nearby approaches her and asks the reason for her sorrow. She responds by telling him of a former lover who pursued, seduced, and finally abandoned her. She recounts in detail the speech her lover gave to her which seduced her. The spoken prologue to the play, and the prologue to Act II are both written in sonnet form, and the first meeting of the star-crossed lovers is written as a sonnet woven into the dialogue. The comedy features the King of Navarre and his lords who express their love in sonnet form for the Queen of France and her ladies. This play is believed to have been performed at the Inns of Court for Queen Elizabeth I in the mids. In it he mentions that sonnets by Shakespeare were being circulated privately: It is an anthology of 20 poems. This small publication contained some spurious content falsely ascribed to Shakespeare; it also contained four sonnets that can be said to be by Shakespeare: They are instead harshly frank, ironic and recriminative regarding the relationship of the speaker and the Dark Lady. The spoken epilogue is written in the form of a sonnet. This publication was greeted with near silence in the documentary record, especially when compared with the lively reception that followed the publication of Venus and Adonis. Thomas Heywood protests this piracy in his Apology for Actors, writing that Shakespeare was "much offended" with Jaggard for making "so bold with his name. Benson is even more wildly piratical than Jaggard. Benson imperfectly rewrites the sonnets to make them appear to be addressing a woman - the pronoun "he" is often replaced by "she". This edition is unfortunately influential and resulted

in confusing and confounding various critical understanding and response for more than a century. Then Shakespeare went on to create one of the longest sonnet-sequences of his era, a sequence that took some sharp turns away from the tradition. Or he may have been inspired by biographical elements in his life. It is thought that the biographical aspects have been over-explored and over-speculated on, especially in the face of a paucity of evidence. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare and Milton seemed to be on an equal footing, [73] but the critics, stymied by an over-emphasis of their biographical explorations, continued to struggle for decades. First edition and facsimile.

Chapter 2 : My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun (Sonnet) by William Shakespeare - Poems | www.n

"Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove. O no, it is an ever-fixed mark • William Shakespeare, Sonnets.

The Shakesperean world is impressed, as a whole, with an unmistakable joy in healthy living. This tells habitually as a pervading spirit, a contagious temper, not as a creed put forward, or an example set up. It is as clear in the presentment of Falstaff or Iago, as of Horatio or Imogen. And nowhere is it clearer than in his handling of the relations between men and women. Criminal love, of any kind, holds a quite subordinate place in his art; and, on the other hand, if ideal figures are to be found there, it is among his devoted, passionate, but arch and joyous women. It is thus possible to lay down a Shakesperean norm or ideal type of love-relations. It is most distinct in the mature Comedies, where he is shaping his image of life with serene freedom; but also in the Tragedies, where a Portia or a Desdemona innocently perishes in the web of death. In the earlier Comedies it is approached through various stages of erratic or imperfect forms. The present study will follow the plan thus indicated. The third traces the gradual approach to the norm in the early Comedies. The fourth and fifth sections, finally, discuss the treatment, in Comedy and Tragedy, of Love-types other than the norm. The Shakesperean norm of love, thus understood, may be described somewhat as follows. Love is a passion, kindling heart, brain, and senses alike in natural and happy proportions; ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental, pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course, and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affections elsewhere. They commonly love at first sight and once for all. Love-relations which do not contemplate marriage occur rarely and in subordination to other dramatic purposes. Tragedy like that of Gretchen does not attract him. The course of love rarely runs smooth; but rival suitors proposed by parents are quietly resisted or merrily abused, never, even by the gentlest, accepted. Crude young girls like Hermia, delicate-minded women like Desdemona and Imogen, the rapturous Juliet and the homely Anne Page, the discreet Silvia and the naive Miranda, are all at one on this point. And they all carry the day. And with this security of possession his loving women combine a capacity for mirth and jest not usual in the dramatic representation of passion. Rosalind is more intimately Shakesperean than Juliet. Married life, as Shakespeare habitually represents it, is the counterpart, *mutatis mutandis*, of his representation of unmarried lovers. His husbands and wives have less of youthful abandon; they rarely speak of love, and still more rarely with lyric ardour, or coruscations of poetic wit. But they are no less true. The immense field of dramatic motives based upon infringements of marriage, so fertile in the hands of his successors, and in most other schools of drama, did not attract Shakespeare, and he touched it only occasionally and for particular purposes. II The norm of love lent itself both to comic and to tragic situation, but only within somewhat narrow limits. The richness, depth and constancy of the passion precluded a whole world of comic effects. It precluded the comedy of the coquette and the prude, of the affected gallant and the cynical rascal, of the calf-lover and the doting husband; the comedy of the fantastic tricks played by love under the obsession of pride, self-interest, meticulous scruple, or superstition. The normal love, not being itself ridiculous, could thus yield material for the comic spirit only through some fact or situation external to it. It may be brought before us only in ludicrous parody. Or again, the source of fun lies in the wit and humour of the lovers themselves. Some of them, like Rosalind and Beatrice, virtually create and sustain the wit-fraught atmosphere of the play single-handed. But Shakespeare habitually heightens this source of fun by some piquancy of situation almost always one arising from delusion, particularly through confusion of identity. It is a mark of the easy-going habits of his art in comedy that he never threw aside this rather elementary device, though subjecting it, no doubt, to successive refinements which become palpable enough when we pass from the Two Gentlemen to Cymbeline. But his genius made perennially delightful even the crude forms of confusion which create grotesque infatuations like those of Titania, Malvolio, Phoebe, Olivia. And Portia crowns her home-coming to her husband and her splendid service to his friend with the madcap jest of the rings. Again, the normal love offered in itself equally little promise of tragedy. Tragic these healthy lovers of themselves will never become; they have to be led into

the realm of pity and fear, as into that of laughter and mirth, by the incitement or the onthrust of alien forces. The blindness of Claudio, of Othello, of Posthumus, of Leontes, is provoked by circumstances of very various cogency, but in each case it wrecks a love relation in which we are allowed to see no flaw. The situation of innocent, slandered, heart-stricken womanhood clearly appealed strongly to him, and against his wont he repeated it again and again. Hermione and Hero, Desdemona and Imogen, are to his graver art what Rosalind and Beatrice and Portia are to his comedy. But while the tragic issue is directly provoked by the alien intervention, it is clear that almost all its tragic quality springs, not from the operations of Iachimo or Iago, but from the wonderful presentment of the love they wreck. The poet of the Sonnets is implicit in the poet of Othello. And the dramas themselves abound in lyric outbursts, often hardly called for by the situation, in which his ideal of wedded love is uttered with the poignant insight of one who was probably far from having achieved or observed it himself. Or of Imogen, blind to all but the path of light and air that divides her from Milford Haven: I see before me, man; nor here, nor here, Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them, That I cannot look through. Even Adriana, in the Comedy of Errors, expresses the unity of married love with an intensity which we expect neither from this bustling bourgeoisie nor in this early play: For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall A drop of water in the breaking gulf And take unmingled thence that drop again Without addition or diminishing, As take from me thyself and not me too; II, ii. But there, where I have garnered up my heart, Where either I must live, or bear no life, The fountain from the which my current runs, Or else dries up: The husband in these cases, it is true, neither forgives nor condones, and Shakespeare unlike Heywood gives no hint that he would have dissented from the traditional ethics on which Othello and Posthumus and Leontes acted, had their wives in fact been guilty. Desdemona, Imogen, Hermione, alike beautifully fulfil the ideal of love presented in the great sonnet: Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove. In one drama only did he represent ideal love brought to a tragic doom without a hint of inner severance. The wedded unity of Romeo and Juliet is absolute from their first meeting to their last embrace; it encounters only the blind onset of outer and irrelevant events; nothing touches their rapturous faith in one another. Yet it is only in this sense immature. If Shakespeare had not yet fathomed the depths of human misery, he understood completely the exaltation of passion, and Romeo and Juliet, though it gives few glimpses beyond the horizons of his early world, remains the consummate flower of his poetry of ideal love. His conception of love If was still, at the opening of his career, relatively slight and superficial; his mastery of technique was equally incomplete. The early plays accordingly abound with scenes and situations where from either cause or both the dramatic treatment of love is not yet in the full sense Shakesporean. It will suffice in this sketch to specify two types of each. The young Shakespeare, as is well known, showed a marked leaning to two apparently incongruous kinds of dramatic device paradox and symmetry. In the riotous consciousness of power he loved to take up the challenge of outrageous situations, to set himself dramaturgical problems, which he solves by compelling us to admit that the impossible might have happened in the way he shows. A girl of humble birth, in love with a young noble who scorns her, to set herself, notwithstanding, to win him, and to succeed. Richard and Petruchio and Helen carry into the problems of love-making the enterprising audacity of the young Shakespeare in the problems of art. But the audacity of the young Shakespeare showed itself in another way. It was nearer akin to the boyish humour of mimicry. If he found a pair of indistinguishable twins producing amusing confusion in a Roman play, he capped them with a second pair, to produce confusion worse confounded in the English Comedy of Errors. And so with love. All four have forsworn the sight of women; all four fall in love, not promiscuously but in order of rank, with the French princess and her ladies, whose numbers, by good fortune, precisely go round. But love itself is not, as yet, drawn with any power. Equally immature is the representation of fickle love in the Two Gentlemen. His threat to outrage Sylvia V, iv. The inconstancy of the Athenian lovers attests only the potency of the faery juice. A second mark of unripeness in the conception of love as extravagant magnanimity. This, like other kinds of unnatural virtue, was a part of the heritage from mediaeval romance, fortified with Roman legend. The antique exaltation of friendship concurred with the Germanic absoluteness of faithful devotion, and for the mediaeval mind the most convincing way of attesting this was by the surrender of a mistress. The story, quoted in Sir T. But the humanity and veracity of the mature Shakespeare rejected these extravagances as the cognate genius

of the mature Chaucer had done before him. On the London stage it profited by the special piquancy attaching to the roles of girls in masculine disguise when the actors were boys, and its blend of audacious adventure and devoted self-sacrifice gave the Elizabethan auditor precisely the kind of composite thrill he loved. For some forms of sex-confusion Shakespeare throughout his career retained an unmistakable liking. But the finer instincts of his ripening art gradually restricted its scope. Viola, in the original story *Bandello*, II, 36 follows a faithless lover; in *Twelfth Night*, wrecked on the Illyrian coast, she disguises herself merely for safety, takes service with the Duke as a complete stranger, and only subsequently falls in love with him. In his latest plays he shows disrelish even for the delightful fun evolved from sex-confusion in *Twelfth Night* and *As you like it*. The adventures of Imogen in disguise are purely pathetic. Pisanio indeed proposes, and Imogen agrees, to follow her husband to Italy in disguise; but this opening is significantly not followed up. But in the *Two Gentlemen*, the entire motive without curtailment or qualification is presented in the adventures of Julia. Abandoned by Proteus, she follows him in disguise, takes service as his page, and is employed as go-between in his new courtship of Silvia. To the young Shakespeare the situation was still wholly congenial, and he availed himself of its opportunities of pathos without reserve, though with incomplete power. The case of another devoted pursuer of an unwilling man is more complicated, and calls for closer examination. Yet internal evidence leaves no doubt that this play, though originally written, and therefore planned, in the early nineties, was revised by Shakespeare at a date not far remote from that of *Hamlet*. In the original story *Decamerone*, III, 9 the flavour of paradox was even more pronounced. Like the other tales of the Third Day, it describes one who *alcuna cosa molto da lui desiderata con industria acquistasse*. Helena, as the heroine and predominant figure of the play, had to be of the sisterhood of Portia and Rosalind and Beatrice and Viola. But if the plot forbade this? And clearly, the most hazardous incident of all the substitution of Helen for Diana could not be eliminated without breaking up the plot altogether. Why then take up the old play at all? Plainly there must have been in the fundamental theme something which Shakespeare was unwilling to lose as well as something that he would have wished away. Could she be visibly endowed with this grace of clear sight and will, yet at the same time be rather drawn on by circumstances to the final conquest of Bertram than herself the active agent in it? Somewhat thus must the problem have presented itself to Shakespeare.

Chapter 3 : Shakespeare's Sonnets

Shakespeare's sonnets are not given here, as they are readily available on the main site. For those desirous of a quick selection I suggest Nos 18, 23, 31, 46, 53, 61, 75, 91, 98, , ,

Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments. Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove: If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved. Although in former times this sonnet was almost universally read as a paean to ideal and eternal love, with which all readers could easily identify, adding their own dream of perfection to what they found within it, modern criticism makes it possible to look beneath the idealism and to see some hints of a world which is perhaps slightly more disturbed than the poet pretends. Set in such a context it does of course make it appear even more like a battered sea-mark which nevertheless rises above the waves of destruction, for it confronts all the vicissitudes that have afflicted the course of the love described in these sonnets, and declares that, in the final analysis, they are of no account. In addition, despite the idealism, there is an undercurrent of subversion which permeates all. It is ironic that a poem as famous as this should be seized on by the establishment as a declaration of their view of what love should be. Does the establishment view take account of the fact that this is a love poem written by a man to another man, and that the one impediment to their marriage is precisely that, for no church of the time, or scarcely even today, permits a man to marry a man? It is useless to object that Shakespeare is here talking of the marriage of true minds, for the language inevitably draws us to the Christian marriage service and its accompanying ceremonies, and that is a ceremony designed specifically to marry two people, not two abstract Platonic ideals which have decided to be wed. We tend to forget that it is also an unconventional love, even more unconventional in the Elizabethan world than it is today. But it is precisely this unconventionality that gives to the sonnets their subversive tone, and it is that tone which forces us, not so much to be on the defensive, but to question more profoundly what we mean by the word love. What is that strange attraction which draws two minds so irresistibly together? Must we classify or restrict it? Does it depend on time, or place, on beliefs, on the sex of the lovers, on the Church, or politics, life, death, change, removal, doom, eternity, the day of judgement? Or on none of these? Is human love an allegory of divine love? Or should one prefer instead the all too human conclusion of W. I thought that love would last forever. SB gives a very detailed analysis of the many possible reactions to the nuances and suggestiveness of the language and tries to show how our minds respond to the ideal of love depicted, even though we gradually become aware of the hidden counter suggestions. The Quarto Version L
Et me not to the marriage of true mindes Admit impediments, loue is not loue Which alters when it alteration findes, Or bends with the remouer to remoue. If this be error and vpon me proued, I neuer writ, nor no man euer loued. Perhaps he was being told frequently by others, and the beloved himself, that love could not last for ever, that there were impediments, that there was change and alteration, loss and physical decay, all of which militate against true love. And finally, as an act of defiance, he insists that it is not as others see it, that love can surmount all these obstacles, that although nothing can last forever, yet true love can last and hold out until the final reckoning. See the introduction above. Compare Polonius in Hamlet: By all commentators this is taken to be a clear reference to the marriage ceremony, when the officiating clergyman proclaims: But the use of marriage in line 1 and impediments immediately following makes the connection almost inevitable. In Much Ado the word is used three times in connection with preventing a marriage: It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me MA. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow? You know he does. I know not that, when he knows what I know. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it. FRIAR If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it. Which alters when it alteration finds, Which changes ceases, becomes unfaithful, becomes less when it finds a change in the beloved, or a change in circumstances. Or bends with the remover to remove: In this context, the word remove has a rather indefinite meaning, suggestive of moving something or someone out of the way, possibly even suggestive of subterfuge. Then happy I, that love and am beloved Where I may not remove nor be removed. In

the days before lighthouses, mariners used well known and prominent features on the land as a guide to fix their position at sea. The spires of coastal churches, towers, outcrops of rock of a particular shape or colour were obvious sea marks. Beacons were no doubt also lit at the entrances to major ports, but there was no widespread network of lighthouses as in modern times. Mostly sailors were highly dependent on local knowledge. The point of the metaphor here is that the ever-fixed mark is permanent and unshakeable, always there as a guide to the storm tossed mariner. That looks on tempests and is never shaken; That looks on tempests - because of their height, the sea-marks would appear to be looking down on the world below, and almost riding above the tempests. Because of their solidity storms had no effect on them. It is the star to every wandering bark, It - i. Love is both the ever fixed mark and the Pole star to guide the lover through the stormy waters of life. In the Northern hemisphere it always appears to be unmoving in the Northern sky, while all the other stars circle around it. Julius Caesar boasts of being immovable, like the northern star: It can identify its position by reference to the Pole star. It was not known at the time what the stars were made of, or how they shone, although various theories existed. Modern astronomy cannot be said to begin before the eighteenth century, even though Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo had more or less overturned, by Elizabethan times, the Ptolemaic system of an earth-centred universe. The measurement would probably have been done with a quadrant. The sextant was introduced slightly later. See OED quadrant 5, sextant 3. The illustration of a quadrant opposite is of one which would be used on land. For sea travelling no doubt much more compact versions were available. Q gives high, which is probably intended to be highth, a variant form of height. And how it may be borne, whether in a right line, Or a half circle; or else may be cast Into an angle blunt, if not acute. In this, the alchemist and his assistant are attempting to trick a young jakanapes to give them money, and they try to impress him with scientific mumbo-jumbo, pretending that they can, using an instrument, tell when it is safe to quarrel with someone. The Alchemist was written circa But their position was probably precarious, and they were liable to physical punishment, or dismissal. Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: There is also the more general meaning of being the dupe or plaything of someone, being led by the nose. The following is also from King Lear: None of these rogues and cowards But Ajax is their fool. But with a reference back to the nautical metaphors of the previous lines. Time, with his scythe, or sickle, sweeps down the mortal lovers, the rosy lips and cheeks, as if they were blades of grass. All life is fleeting, and human life is measured by the brief hours and weeks of experience. In comparison with the eternity of love, any unit of time is short. But see SB pp. But bears it out even to the edge of doom. Or it can be applied to the day of the Last Judgement, or the judgement itself. What, will the line stretch out till the crack of doom! From the Latin verb errare - to wander. The combination of this term with that of error possibly implies religious heresy and action taken against it, as for example in the frequent practice used by the Inquisition to compel victims under torture to confess to the error of their ways. Compare also the following from Volpone by Ben Jonson, circa Would you have him tortured? I would have him proved. Best try him with goads or burning irons; Put him to the strappado; Volp. I never writ, nor no man ever loved. The weakness of the concluding couplet does contribute to a slight sense of disappointment, because the preceding lines are so vibrant with life and love. Perhaps this is intentional, in order to underscore the transitory nature of all that we experience, and to show that, despite our grandiose claims to immortality, we all must depart beneath the eternal vault, and love itself paradoxically, though eternal, is part of mortality: For the sword wears out the sheath And the soul wears out the breast, And the heart must pause to breathe, And love itself have rest. See the introductory comments for a discussion of the general mood of the poem.

Chapter 4 : Famous Shakespeare Sonnets: Shakespeare's Top Sonnets

Shakespeare love sonnets are intensely personal and address the deep issues of life. Love is dealt with most comprehensively. Critics over the centuries have been fascinated by the two main subjects of the lovesentiments - the 'fair young man' and the 'dark lady.'

Themes Different Types of Romantic Love Modern readers associate the sonnet form with romantic love and with good reason: These sonnets were addressed to stylized, lionized women and dedicated to wealthy noblemen, who supported poets with money and other gifts, usually in return for lofty praise in print. In contrast to tradition, Shakespeare addressed most of his sonnets to an unnamed young man, possibly Wriothesly. Addressing sonnets to a young man was unique in Elizabethan England. Furthermore, Shakespeare used his sonnets to explore different types of love between the young man and the speaker, the young man and the dark lady, and the dark lady and the speaker. In his sequence, the speaker expresses passionate concern for the young man, praises his beauty, and articulates what we would now call homosexual desire. Several sonnets also probe the nature of love, comparing the idealized love found in poems with the messy, complicated love found in real life. Sonnets addressed to the so-called dark lady, express a more overtly erotic and physical love than the sonnets addressed to the young man. But many sonnets warn readers about the dangers of lust and love. According to some poems, lust causes us to mistake sexual desire for true love, and love itself causes us to lose our powers of perception. In his sonnets, however, Shakespeare portrays making love not as a romantic expression of sentiment but as a base physical need with the potential for horrible consequences. Several sonnets equate being in love with being in a pitiful state: As the young man and the dark lady begin an affair, the speaker imagines himself caught in a love triangle, mourning the loss of his friendship with the man and love with the woman, and he laments having fallen in love with the woman in the first place. In Sonnet , the speaker personifies love, calls him a simpleton, and criticizes him for removing his powers of perception. It was love that caused the speaker to make mistakes and poor judgments. Elsewhere the speaker calls love a disease as a way of demonstrating the physical pain of emotional wounds. Throughout his sonnets, Shakespeare clearly implies that love hurts. Yet despite the emotional and physical pain, like the speaker, we continue falling in love. Shakespeare shows that falling in love is an inescapable aspect of the human condition—indeed, expressing love is part of what makes us human. Traditionally, sonnets transform women into the most glorious creatures to walk the earth, whereas patrons become the noblest and bravest men the world has ever known. Shakespeare makes fun of the convention by contrasting an idealized woman with a real woman. The speaker explains that his lover, the dark lady, has wires for hair, bad breath, dull cleavage, a heavy step, and pale lips. He concludes by saying that he loves her all the more precisely because he loves her and not some idealized, false version. Real love, the sonnet implies, begins when we accept our lovers for what they are as well as what they are not. Other sonnets explain that because anyone can use artful means to make himself or herself more attractive, no one is really beautiful anymore. Thus, since anyone can become beautiful, calling someone beautiful is no longer much of a compliment. The Responsibilities of Being Beautiful Shakespeare portrays beauty as conveying a great responsibility in the sonnets addressed to the young man, Sonnets 1— Here the speaker urges the young man to make his beauty immortal by having children, a theme that appears repeatedly throughout the poems: Later sonnets demonstrate the speaker, angry at being cuckolded, lashing out at the young man and accusing him of using his beauty to hide immoral acts.

Chapter 5 : The Sonnets of William Shakespeare

All of Shakespeare's sonnets are about love but that would be selling them short! Nature, time, art, immortality, philosophy and human emotion feature in almost every poem, combining to create an entangled world full of twists and turns and mystery.

Nature, time, art, immortality, philosophy and human emotion feature in almost every poem, combining to create an entangled world full of twists and turns and mystery. Above all perhaps is the theme of division. Reading through the sonnets I get a feeling of a split personality having to cope with all sorts of loose ended emotion, inner fears and the inevitable loss of love. Do we know for sure if these sonnets were written with a real person or persons in mind? The true answer is: Shakespeare leaves us in the dark, which is where he meant us to be. If he had wanted anyone to know names he would have given clues. Writers and poets have speculated for centuries but no definite names have emerged. What is clear is that the verses reflect the changing nature of a poet helplessly in love, going through the age old processes, expressing them anew. This is the wonder of some of the sonnet lines - they are fresh, timeless, right on the nail. You can even see the influence of the sonnets in some modern pop and song lyrics. Source William Herbert aged 45, painted by Daniel Mytens. Source The Young Man: Taken as a whole these seventeen poems are saying: Time waits for no man, even a beautiful man! Then when you start aging, your kids will still retain your own youthful beauty. To end the agony of the ecstasy so to speak, it would be better for all if the young man simply hitched up with a female and sowed his seed. That way, a strained gay relationship would probably have to end? As to the reasons why Shakespeare was so adamant about his cause, well, he must have been in love, or, as some think, sponsored by someone to write such verses. But just who was this young man? One possibility comes in the shape of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, a patron of the arts at that time. Shakespeare dedicated his poems Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece to Henry Wriothesley but there is no other evidence to suggest any sort of emotional relationship between them. Another probable candidate for this beautiful young male is one William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, known to Shakespeare through court contacts and the theatre. As an eligible aristocrat his family, in particular his mother, would have wanted him to marry a suitably high status female. Or did he have a genuine relationship with William Herbert? You can read an endless number of sonnet theories and come back full circle blue faced and confused. The only conclusion I can draw from various sources is that no one really knows the truth and no one ever will. Sonnets Controversy follows controversy! If only Shakespeare had kept a diary or written more letters none of this loose ended speculation would be necessary! The so called Dark Lady character is much harder to focus on. Shakespeare must have known a good many female beauties of the time, meeting and greeting them at the theatre or getting to know them in court circles and social gatherings. Although he had a wife, Ann Hathaway, and three children, they were living in rural Stratford, a world away from the dizzying heights of London, royal courts and professional acting. But was this an ideal love? Was it a consummated love? Or did Shakespeare simply create the whole fantasy, writing a series of sonnets based on an imagined female? This would be hard to believe. Sonnet confirms that there was indeed a woman in his life, and that the relationship was physical. He leaves us suspended. He creates the space but never fills it himself, preferring his readership to tie up the loose ends, tantalising them. There must have been a Dark Lady, but no one has found concrete evidence of a name, only circumstantial. Over the years, several candidates have emerged. Marie Mountjoy - landlady of a lodging house on Silver Street. Jacqueline Field - wife of printer and publisher Richard Field. Source Six Outstanding Sonnets Out of the sonnets six stand out as being of particular importance because of their position within the sequence. Sonnet 20 - the subject, a male, with a deeply feminine aura, has such powers over everyone that even nature is left infatuated by such refined masculinity. Sonnet 87 - a sonnet of past participles, 10 lines ending with the feminine -ing. A dry lament of sorts, with reference to value, worth and lost riches. Sonnet - technically not a sonnet as it has only 12 lines. Sonnet - the first sonnet to the Dark Lady. And for a woman wert thou first created, Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting, And by addition me of thee defeated, By adding one thing to my purpose nothing. The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing; My bonds in thee are

all determinate. For how do I hold thee but by the granting, And for that riches where is my deserving? The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting, And so my patent back again is swerving. Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter: In sleep a king, but waking no such matter. Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Chapter 6 : SparkNotes: Shakespeare's Sonnets: Themes

Shakespeare's sonnets are poems that William Shakespeare wrote on a variety of themes. When discussing or referring to Shakespeare's sonnets, it is almost always a reference to the sonnets that were first published all together in a quarto in ; however there are six additional sonnets that Shakespeare wrote and included in the plays Romeo and Juliet, Henry V and Love's Labour's Lost.

From fairest creatures we desire increase Sonnet When forty winters shall besiege thy brow Sonnet Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest Sonnet Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend Sonnet Those hours, that with gentle work did frame Sonnet Lo, in the orient when the gracious light Sonnet When I do count the clock that tells the time Sonnet O, that you were your self! But, love, you are Sonnet Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck Sonnet When I consider every thing that grows Sonnet But wherefore do not you a mightier way Sonnet Who will believe my verse in time to come Sonnet So is it not with me as with that muse Sonnet My glass shall not persuade me I am old Sonnet As an unperfect actor on the stage Sonnet Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled Sonnet Let those who are in favour with their stars Sonnet Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage Sonnet Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed Sonnet How can I then return in happy plight Sonnet When to the sessions of sweet silent thought Sonnet If thou survive my well-contented day Sonnet Full many a glorious morning have I seen Sonnet Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day Sonnet No more be grieved at that which thou hast done Sonnet Let me confess that we two must be twain Sonnet As a decrepit father takes delight Sonnet How can my Muse want subject to invent Sonnet O, how thy worth with manners may I sing Sonnet Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all Sonnet Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits Sonnet That thou hast her, it is not all my grief Sonnet When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see Sonnet If the dull substance of my flesh were thought Sonnet The other two, slight air and purging fire Sonnet Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war Sonnet Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took Sonnet How careful was I, when I took my way Sonnet Against that time, if ever that time come Sonnet How heavy do I journey on the way Sonnet Thus can my love excuse the slow offence Sonnet So am I as the rich whose blessed key Sonnet What is your substance, whereof are you made Sonnet O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem Sonnet Not marble, nor the gilded monuments Sonnet Sweet love, renew thy force, be it not said Sonnet Being your slave, what should I do but tend Sonnet That god forbid, that made me first your slave Sonnet If there be nothing new, but that which is Sonnet Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore Sonnet Is it thy will thy image should keep open Sonnet Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye Sonnet Against my love shall be, as I am now Sonnet Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea Sonnet Tired with all these, for restful death I cry Sonnet Ah, wherefore with infection should he live Sonnet Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn Sonnet That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect Sonnet No longer mourn for me when I am dead Sonnet O, lest the world should task you to recite Sonnet That time of year thou mayst in me behold Sonnet But be contented when that fell arrest Sonnet So are you to my thoughts as food to life Sonnet Why is my verse so barren of new pride? Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear Sonnet So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse Sonnet Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid Sonnet O, how I faint when I of you do write Sonnet Or I shall live your epitaph to make Sonnet I grant thou wert not married to my Muse Sonnet I never saw that you did painting need Sonnet Who is it that says most, which can say more Sonnet My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still Sonnet Was it the proud full sail of his great verse Sonnet Thou art too dear for my possessing Sonnet When thou shalt be disposed to set me light Sonnet Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault Sonnet Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now Sonnet Some glory in their birth, some in their skill Sonnet But do thy worst to steal thy self away Sonnet So shall I live, supposing thou art true Sonnet They that have power to hurt and will do none Sonnet How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame Sonnet Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness Sonnet How like a winter hath my absence been Sonnet From you have I been absent in the spring Sonnet The forward violet thus did I chide Sonnet O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends Sonnet My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming Sonnet Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth

Sonnet To me, fair friend, you never can be old
Sonnet Let not my love be called idolatry
Sonnet When in the chronicle of wasted time
Sonnet Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Sonnet O, never say that I was false of heart
Sonnet O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide
Sonnet Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind
Sonnet Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you
Sonnet

Chapter 7 : Shakespeare's sonnets - Wikipedia

*Shakespeare's Love Sonnets [Caitlin Keegan] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Shakespeare's sonnets are revered the world over for perfectly capturing the torments and joys of love required or otherwise in just fourteen lines of iambic pentameter.*

Share via Email There are many mysteries in the life of William Shakespeare and perhaps none is more intriguing than the one he initiated himself when he published, in 1609, a collection of his sonnets. When we start to consider the enduring enigmas and controversies that circle and shroud the sonnets, it is a good idea to establish the few unarguable facts first. There are 154 sonnets in total: The last two are bawdy allusions to the notorious mercury baths, the favoured contemporary form of treatment for the pox. Furthermore, the sonnets possess a baffling dedication to one "Mr WH", described as "the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets". What more can one add before entering the lists of contention and dissent? On the other hand, some of the sonnets addressed to the Dark Lady are unabashedly misogynistic, full of lingering physical detail, and relentlessly explore the consuming and destructive power of lust. However, the problems inherent in the sonnets begin to multiply incrementally when someone asks you to write a film about them. This happened to me last year when the BBC approached me to write a full-length film - a drama - about Shakespeare and the emotional background to the sonnets as a counterpoint to their modern-dress Shakespeare Retold season. In which case, there could be no place for scholarly equivocation: If I were going to make Shakespeare, the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady live and breathe on screen I would need to establish their particular identities - if not once and for all that will never happen, but at least for the duration of the film. And so the reading began. The very rough narrative of the sequence and there is no evidence to establish the sonnets were written chronologically goes something like this: Then the obsession begins to grow and become more sexually orientated, more yearning and infatuated: And then eventually, at sonnet 130, the Dark Lady arrives: Then it becomes clear that the Dark Lady and the Fair Youth are engaged in some sort of sexual dalliance. The poet can only look on, impotent and suffering: To win me soon to hell, my female evil Tempteth my better angel from my side All this is to make highly complex poems and knotted, sophisticated arguments seem concise and relatively clear cut. But I think this redaction essentially conveys the main business of the sonnets. From the outset of any reading of the sonnets there is an inevitable and natural tendency to link the Fair Youth with the dedicatee, Mr WH, the "only begetter". Many candidates have been suggested over the years but the academic consensus focuses mainly on two: The arguments for both are strong; there is a biographical Shakespearean connection with each man and the dates fit though Southampton is older than Pembroke. But no, the Southamptonians argue, Shakespeare was trying to disguise the real identity of the dedicatee, and so swapped the initials round. Again, evidence in the sonnets makes the poet seem substantially older than the Fair Youth "My glass shall not persuade me I am old". Certainly, identifying the Fair Youth as William Herbert is dramatically more satisfying. The date range of the drama then becomes roughly 1592-1596. It places Shakespeare at the height of his reputation Hamlet was written in 1599; he is making serious money from his share in the Globe and his disastrous marriage to Anne Hathaway is long over in all but name. So who was the Dark Lady? Here, the arguments enter pure speculation. The most favoured candidates are aristocratic women such as Mary Fitton or Emilia Lanier the latter famously championed by the historian AL Rowse: Indeed, the more one reads the Dark Lady sonnets the more one sees the lust-driven nature of the relationship and the concomitant self-loathing on the part of the poet as the key to her identity. I take the title of the film from sonnet 130. To be honest, no one will ever know who the Dark Lady was and perhaps, as some scholars have suggested, she should be regarded as a deliberate inverse of the idealised Petrarchan love object - a pointedly anti-romantic stereotype. However, this will not do for a film, and my own reading of the sonnets leads me in another direction. Historical records establish that there were black and mulatto prostitutes in Southwark brothels at the time, and it seems highly feasible that the Dark Lady might have been such a working girl. It also rather neatly explains how Mr WH and the Dark Lady could have met - and why the poet was powerless to intercede in or prevent their union as it was overtly and strictly commercial. Read the poems - it makes very valid sense. And so our characters

assemble: William Shakespeare, middle-aged, successful, famous, very unhappily married, sexually stirred and enthralled by William Herbert, the talented and epically handsome son of the Earl of Pembroke. These identifications are, though inevitably conjectural, highly plausible all the same, and can be stringently defended from the scant evidence that exists. And this starting point is all the licence the imagination requires in the making up of a story that unites these three people in a disturbingly passionate and fraught love triangle. But, overarching all this speculation, the sonnets stand themselves, irreproachable and magnificent. It is, in a way, quite extraordinary that we should have this sequence of intensely intimate poems from Shakespeare to set beside the great masterpieces of the plays.

Chapter 8 : About Shakespeare's Sonnets

William Shakespeare wrote sonnets. Shakespearean sonnets consist of a poem of fourteen lines. Shakespearean sonnets, also referred to as English sonnets, have three four line stanzas, or quatrains, and a two line couplet.

These most famous sonnets are quoted regularly by people at all levels of modern western life – sometimes without even realising that they are quoting a line from a Shakespeare sonnet. The most famous sonnets approach the great universal themes of love and death, or the slow ageing that precedes death. So, what are these most famous sonnets? Perhaps the most famous of all the sonnets is Sonnet 18, where Shakespeare addresses a young man to whom he is very close. When to the sessions of sweet silent thought An interesting take on ageing and love. The narrator describes the things that people agonise over as they descend into old age – all the regrets and the pain of reliving the mistakes he has made. Full many a glorious morning have I seen This is a poem about loss; the loss of a loved one. When he was loved by the beloved it was like the glorious morning, but now, having lost the beloved, it feels like an overcast and gloomy morning. That time of year thou mayst in me behold The narrator of Sonnet 73 is approaching death and thinking about how different it is from being young. The things that one gave him life have destroyed his life. From that experience he has learnt that one has to love life as strongly as one can because it will end all too soon. He shows time passing through the seasons and the years, everything changing. Except the beauty of the beloved. He goes further by saying that no matter how long the world will endure, even though the beloved is long dead there will never be another as beautiful. Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments There are two striking definitions of love that we refer to again and again. Love is patient, love is kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Shakespeare ends by staking everything on his observations about love by asserting that if he is wrong about it then no-one ever wrote anything and no-one ever loved. The expense of spirit in a waste of shame Sonnet is an interesting take on the imperative force of lust, but its ultimate shallowness. Everyone knows how shallow and guilt producing lust is but very few men can avoid it. Shakespeare shows how lust brings out the very worst in people and the extremes they will go to. He satirises the usual way of expressing love for a woman – praising her lips and her hair, the way she walks, and all the things that a young man may rave about when he thinks about his beloved.

Chapter 9 : Analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnets and Paraphrase in Modern English

Available for Pre-order. This item will be released on November 13,

Let me not in languour pine! Love loves no delay; thy sight, The more delayed, the more divine! O come, and take from me The pain of being deprived of thee! Thou all sweetness dost enclose! Like a little world of bliss: Beauty guards thy looks. The rose In them, pure and eternal is. Campion, circa Shall I come, sweet love! Shall I not excluded be? Will you find no feigned let? Let me not, for pity, more, Tell the long hours at your door! Who can tell what thief or foe, In the covert of the night, For his prey, will work my woe; Or through wicked, foul despite. So may I die unredrest, Ere my long love be possest. Do not mock me in thy bed! While these cold nights freeze me dead. I can write for you alone, on a wordless universe and make you feel my god, to whom I can belong more than once-- I -- your woman , a poet -- can make you immortal with a song. Or else it will plain and then appear ; But rather restore it mannerly, Since that I do ask it thus honestly ; For to lose it, it sitteth me too near; Help me to seek. Alas and is there no remedy? But have I thus lost it wilfully? I wis it was a thing all too dear To be bestowed, and wist not where: It was mine heart, I pray you heartily Help me to seek. Sir Thomas Wyatt - Come live with me and be my love, And we will all the pleasures prove That hills and valleys, dales and fields, Or woods or steepy mountain yields. And we will sit upon the rocks, And see the shepherds feed their flocks By shallow rivers, to whose falls Melodious birds sing madrigals. And I will make thee beds of roses And a thousand fragrant posies; A cap of flowers and a kirtle Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle. A belt of straw and ivy buds With coral clasps and amber studs: And if these pleasures may thee move, Come live with me and be my love. The shepherd swains shall dance and sing For thy delight each May morning. If these delights thy mind may move, Then live with me and be my love. O Mistress mine, where are you roaming? From Twelfth Night Act 2 Scene 3.