

СЕМИОТИКА И ПОЭТИКА ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ТЕКСТА

THE ANALYSIS OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET 92*

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The analyzing of W. Shakespeare's sonnets is quite important to understand his works. This study involves the context of the sonnet 92, the structural and meaningful analysis and the style analysis.

Key words: Faith, youth, lyric, quatrain, couplet, stanza, iamb, iambic, pentameter, rhyme, rhythm.

William Shakespeare¹ (baptized 26 April 1564; died 23 April 1616) was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon". His surviving works, including some collaboration, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories, genres he raised to the peak of sophistication and artistry by the end of the 16th century. He wrote then mainly tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights. W. Shakespeare was a respected poet and playwright in his own day, but his reputation did not rise to its present heights until the 19th century. The Romantics, in particular, acclaimed Shakespeare's genius, and the Victorians worshipped Shakespeare with a reverence that George Bernard Shaw called "bardolatry". In the 20th century, his work was repeatedly adopted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular today and are constantly studied, performed and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world [1].

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Here's the text of Sonnet 92 we're going to analyze:

SONNET 92

1st Quatrain

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine,
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.

2nd Quatrain

Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend;

3rd Quatrain

Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O, what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!

Couplet

But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

Historical Context

Sonnet 92 appears as a part of a larger collection of 154 sonnets published in 1609 under the title "Shakespeare's Sonnets". Sonnet 92 is one of his love sonnets. It is address the deep issues of life. Love is dealt with most comprehensively. Sonnets 1-126, or the "Fair Youth" sequence, are commonly thought to be addressed to a young man, though that man's identity is not known. It is believed that the majority of the sonnets were written in the 1590s, including Sonnet 92. By the 1590s, when Shakespeare wrote Sonnet 92, England was in the midst of a period of unprecedented colonization, industry, and commerce. Charles Andrews points out in his *History of England* that in the era of Elizabeth, England entered its period of "modern history" and had "become a power of first rank". The Spanish Armada had been defeated in 1588. At the same time, coinage became standardized. The English East India Company launched its first spice trading expedition in 1598, and England began its first colonization attempts in North America. In commerce, industry and wealth, England experienced unprecedented growth and all of these areas were, by the 1590s, all "regulated and controlled by the state".

As England become more powerful and regulated, the accurate measurement of time helped in standardizing the payment of wages for labor, regulating industry, and keeping governance efficient [2].

I. Structural analysis

Formal Structure

A Shakespearian sonnet has 14 lines. The sonnet consists of fourteen lines structured as three quatrains and a couplet. Each quatrain has four lines and couplet has two lines. The third quatrain generally introduces an unexpected sharp thematic or imagistic “turn”; the volta. In Shakespeare’s sonnets, however, the volta usually comes in the couplet, and usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh new look at the theme.

The Rhythm and the Rhyme

Sonnet 92 displays the traditional characteristics of a Shakespearean sonnet. The rhythm of a Shakespearian sonnet is fixed. Shakespeare’s sonnets are written predominantly in a meter called iambic pentameter, in which each sonnet line consists of ten syllables. The syllables per line are divided into five pairs called rambes or iambic feet. An iamb is a metrical unit made up of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable.

The rhythm of Sonnet 92’s first line is like this:

˘	/	˘	/	˘	/	˘	/	˘	/
but	do	the	worst	to	ste-	al	thysel ^f	a-	way

The divisions between feet are marked with a | ;

˘ / ˘ / ˘ / ˘ / ˘ /

But do |, thy worst |, to ste- |, al |, thysel^f |, a- |, way,

The first syllable in each pair is unstressed; the second syllable is stressed. But there may be an extra syllable in each line. Even Shakespeare put one in every once in a while, to break the monotony of the sonnet’s rhythm.

In order to figure out the rhyme scheme of a poem first of all look at the form. The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. The rhyme scheme in a Shakespearean sonnet is *a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g*. This means there are seven different sounds. In the first stanza, lines one and three rhyme with each other, and lines two and four rhyme with each other. In the second stanza, lines five and seven rhyme with each other, and so do lines six and eight. In the third stanza, lines nine and 11 rhyme, and so do lines 10 and 12. The last two lines are a rhyming couplet. See the scheme below:

away, mine (A,B)
 stay, thine (A,B)
 wrongs, end (C,D)

belongs, depend (C,D)
mind, lie (E,F)
find, die (E,F)
blot, not (G,G)

II. Semantic analysis

Shakespeare's complex sentence structures and use of now obsolete words lead to think reading Old or Middle English. In fact, Shakespeare's works are written in Early Modern English. Meaningful analysis of Sonnet 92 is quite important for understanding easily, e.g.:

But do thy worst: the action is dubious and dishonest one

Steal thyself away: removing something furtively, as a thief does (neither image is flattering to beloved)

Term of life: legal documents; the period of a contract

Assured: certain; confirmed; betrothed (or having submitted to a contract of marriage)

It depends upon: my life is controlled by

The worst of wrongs: the stopping of love and casting aside of his love by the youth

In the least of them: withdrawal of love

Humour: caprice

Wex: cause pain

Inconstant mind: faithlessness

Since that: because

Revolt: betrayal

Doth lie: is dependent on

A happy title: pleasing name (your lover)

Blessed-fair: a person who is beautiful and blessed with all good things in life

Blot: stain, moral fault.

Shakespeare also used some verbal plays and repetition as following:

Canst not and constant: the verbal play, one being an anagram of the other

Happy to have thy love, happy to die!: repetition of happy and the exclamation mark shows us, as if the speaker is also prepared to laugh at himself and the situation; the poet will wither enjoy the love of the youth, or if it is denied him, he will die and become one of the blessed saints in heaven.

Commentary on the understanding:

While offering a kind of interpretation, we are proceeding from quatrain to quatrain.

First Quatrain:

However, the worst thing is stealing my love dishonestly like a thief. You will be my engage; you promise me to give in marriage. When your love departs from me, my life will end. My life is controlled by your love.

Second Quatrain:

Therefore I don't need to fear the stopping of love and aside of your love. As a result of the least of stopping of your love, my life will be ended. I know my soul is blessed in heaven, which is more important than my whim.

Third Quatrain:

You cannot cause me pain because of your faithlessness. Because my life depends on the betrayal. O, I am so lucky to have you. I can be joyful that I have your love, and I can be joyful even if I die for you.

The quatrain analyzed are finally followed by the couplet:

The Couplet:

Still the purest being willed fears showing some fault. Maybe I am false still I don't know.

The Summary:

But do the worst, dishonest and doubtful action of you. Go away like a thief with stealing my great love, hurt me. As long as I live, you have been guaranteed by my love. And my love depends on your love, it will not be continued if you stop loving me. I have no need to fear losing your love or throwing away, any more. Because I know my life will be ended when you withdraw your love. Right now, I understand clearly that my soul is blessed in heaven, which is more important than my whim. You cannot cause me to suffer from the idea of faithlessness. Changing your mind about me means betrayal of me so my life would be ended soon. Oh, I am so lucky to have you; I can be joyful that I have your love and I can be joyful even if I die for you. But do you show some fault while you are being so beautiful, pure and blessed with all good things in life? Maybe I am false, still I don't know.

III. Style

Sonnet 92 is a lyric poem in a familiar well-elaborated lyric genre at the end of the Renaissance in the English literature. The second, final outburst of galling despair and derision, the dark climax of the "fair youth" sequence. The poet turns from submission to a bitter catalog of the youth's falseness and dissipation, which is even more repulsive because the youth had once seemed so pure. But it is life itself, not merely the fair youth that stands accused here.

In conclusion we have to sum up as follows:

Sonnet 92 is a very nice part of Fair Youth collection of Shakespeare. All Shakespeare's sonnets discuss the stages or future of love. Sonnet 92 is about the fight of love and forgiveness versus great pain and despair. According to some critics; it is this tragic portrait of human love that makes the sonnet immortal.

W. Shakespeare by all means is the greatest writer in the English literature of the Renaissance. Many of the poems are bleak cries of emotional torment and spiritual exhaustion. The form and the structure cause a new view of the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare's "fair youth" could exert through his influence over so many hearts, lives and careers. This is the opening into the poet's love. Physically superb, radiantly youthful, politically ascendant, socially powerful, the fair youth represents nearly everything that Shakespeare's culture valued in external life accomplishments and courtly character. To highlight this idealization (and allude to a patronage relationship), the fair youth's perceived virtues are explicitly contrasted with the poet's "too sullied" and demeaning real world existence [4].

At the same time W. Shakespeare is the greatest master of poetic forms that makes those a model, an ideal of literary creation and envisages the 3D analyses: poetic structure, meaningful units and their interpretation and style.

REFERENCES

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АНАЛИЗ СОНЕТА В. ШЕКСПИРА (Сонет 92)

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Анализ сонетов В. Шекспира весьма важен для понимания его творчества. В статье рассматривается контекст сонета 92, осуществляется его структурный, содержательный и стилистический анализ.

Ключевые слова: вера, молодость, романтика, катрен, куплет, ямб, ямбический, пятистопный размер, рифма, ритм.