

Good essay on sonnets 18 and 130 by william shakespeare

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



William Shakespeare was popular for his works in the entertainment industry where he was mainly recognized as a good play writer, poet, and a dramatist. Today there are total number of “ 38 plays, 154 sonnets, poems and 2 narrative poems as the surviving works of the author (Damrosch 25).” He lived in the late sixteenth and the early seventieth century in England. Regardless of the fact that he died in the early seventieth century, his works have been appreciated across the globe and been translated into many languages. Shakespeare’s literary pieces works have also been used in schools. Shakespeare’s works have been used to perform plays and poems. England recognizes Shakespeare as the national poet, which is a great honor for his literary works. Shakespeare is known to have refined the English sonnet, which was later known as the Shakespearean sonnet. Shakespeare mastered the literary elements that made him a unique architect of the sonnets for many centuries. This paper will examine some of his works, sonnet 18 and sonnet 130, by comparing and contrasting how these literal arts explore love and admiration.

Shakespeare’s popular sonnet is sonnet 18, which is a part of the sonnet cycles that he wrote during his lifetime. Sonnet 18 is part of the Fair Youth sequence that anonymously refers to a man in his youth addressing the sonnets (Napierkowsk 52). Most of Shakespeare’s sonnets are romantic. Shakespeare uses passionate and affectionate dialogue. Sonnet 18 is the first poem after Shakespeare’s opening procreation sonnet cycles and can also be categorized as Petrarchan poem because it focuses on creating a relationship. Sonnet 18, which is known as “ Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?” Praises a beloved one and compares an individual’s beauty

to Summer. The author illustrates that the beloved is “ more lovely and more temperate” compared to summer. This means that the author acknowledges that his beloved is beautiful and more appealing. In this case, summer has been personified by describing that “ summer is sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, and often his gold complexion dimmed.” Shakespeare uses metaphor as a way of emphasizing the beauty of his beloved through comparing him in many different ways with summer. Love is a thematic component in this poem because the author wants the beloved to live eternally. The author writes, “ they eternal summer shall not fade nor shall death brag thou wander’st in the middle.” This illustrates that the author loves and admires his beloved such that he wants their relationship to last forever. In addition, the use of analogy is to signify love and admiration of his lover by contrasting the lover’s perfections and the shortcomings of the summer. For example, the author illustrates that summer will fade but their love will not to exhibit a strong relationship that is not bound to end.

Like Sonnet 18, Sonnet 130 also uses metaphors as a language element to show how the author’s lover is good-looking compared to other things as a way of reiterating how the lover is perfect. The author describes the lover’s physic by outlining that his mistresses’ “ eyes are nothing like the sun; coral is far redder than her lips red; her breasts are as white as snow” The author goes on to outline the beauty of her mistress and how he passionately loves her. In addition, he uses metaphors to emphasize the beauty of the mistress and the perfect beauty that she exhibits by comparing her to nature. The last line of the poem, the author declares love for her mistress. Shakespeare sonnets are unique because they are contrary to petrarchan poems in that

Shakespeare acknowledges that his characters in the poem are not perfect, which makes them human. For example, the author writes that “ I love to hear her speak, yet I know that music has a far more pleasing sound.” This indicates that the author loves the mistress so much that he is willing to overlook the fact that regardless of having a bad voice that may not be appealing to the ears, but he still loves her to great depth.

Shakespeare twists the art of love poems by using the imagery of a non-perfect mistress whose breath does not smell like perfume or using a dark skin goddess who does not have roses on her cheeks because of her phenotype. The author is trying to dismantle a certain form of socialized beauty that has been established in the society. Thus, the author chooses to describe the beauty in terms of love and not the physicality. This illustrates that the physicality does not matter in a relationship as long as two people love each other. In addition, women do not need to be an idol or someone that matches to the society’s standard of beauty. This is an important theme in today’s society because we live in a patriarchal and at times misogynistic world that does not respect the internal beauty of a woman. The author writes, “ Shakespeare describes that women do not need to be a rose flower in order to be loved, but the inner beauty is what matters (Damrosch 63).” The inner beauty stands for an individual’s virtues and beliefs that shape their character and morals. This shows that the author loves and admires the mistress regardless of her imperfections.

Sonnet 18 and sonnet 130 both are written to express love and admiration for their lover as the key themes. Though both sonnets are romantic, sonnet 18 emphasizes beauty and love more passionately compared to sonnet 130.

Sonnet 130 is a humorous poem, but it does have the love as a key theme and also it describes the mistress in a more sexual way compared to sonnet 18. Though both of these poems are written in a somewhat different spectrum, Shakespeare literal elements are evident in both works. The author uses different ways to convey the message in both poems by using different analogies but in the last line, Shakespeare manages to make his point effectively that demonstrate his love for the other party. Napierkowsk writes, “ Both poems are love court sonnet where the author uses nature effectively to demonstrate the lover’s beauty (Napierkowsk 114).” For example, in Sonnet 18 the author uses summer as a prime metaphor to show that the relationship will not fade just like summer has to fade eventually to give way to her seasons. Instead, the author makes it clear that he loves his beloved lover and that there is nothing that can come between them. In addition, the author indicates that his lover in sonnet 18 is perfect and cannot be comparable to anyone or anything else because of a lover’s beauty. On the other hand, Sonnet 130 demonstrates that there are many types of women and that the standardized beauty of women as established by the society is a hoax and that every woman can get a chance to be loved despite their physical attributes. Though many people view sonnet 130 as a poem that ridicules women, it actually helps their self esteem in that Shakespeare steps out of the society’s standard beauty box and decided to show that other women can be loved too. The author points out that “ any type of woman can become a goddess to her lover irrespective of her physical attributes (Napierkowsk 121).” It is crucial to note that despite using different imagery in both poems, Shakespeare successfully demonstrates

that love and admiration can be achieved by anyone in a given society. Shakespeare works may be alive till today because it applies to current social problems. Sonnet 130 clearly resonates with today's society where women tend to seek beauty surgery to enhance their beauty to get love yet, the poem show that people fall in love despite the physical imperfections relative to the ideal standardized beauty.

Works Cited

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