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V FOR *VOLTA*: TURNS AND SHIFTS IN SHAKESPEARE’S *SONNETS*

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ABSTRACT

Tampere University
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In my MA thesis I focus, through poetry analysis, on the turning points in Shakespeare's sonnets. Even though, barring a few exceptions, the sonnets' formal structure is always the same, i.e. it follows the rhyme scheme ababcdcdefefgg, their semantic and syntactic structures vary. The turns in the sonnets do not, then, often match with the formal structure. My thesis attempts to find out what type of generalisations can be made of the turns in Shakespeare's sonnets by analysing each of the 154 sonnets from this viewpoint.

Although an abundance of quality writing on the *Sonnets* exists, the turning points, which are an important structural feature, have not been systematically analysed. Helen Vendler has analysed all the sonnets in the *Sonnets* and she often discusses their structure. My thesis draws from her work on many of the more difficult sonnets. But she only writes about the sonnets' structure at times and from a broader view, whereas my study looks at the structure of every sonnet in the *Sonnets* focusing on the turns. In support of my analyses I have also used all other available published writing I have found on singular sonnets. It must be noted, however, that published writing on some of the sonnets is not to be found, especially works that would discuss structure.

I found five different types of structures that could be generalised from the *Sonnets*: an 8-6 structure, an 8-4-2 structure, a 4-4-4-2 structure, a 12-2 structure and many different experimental structures. As experimental structures I count structures that do not occur in more than one or two sonnets, e.g. the 4-4-6 structure of sonnet 97. Besides the line or lines on which the sonnets turn I further divide the found structures by whether there is a clear turn or a subtle shift. In this way the aforementioned structures are divided into subcategories, e.g. an 8-6 sonnet with a turn or an 8-6 sonnet with a shift.

My analyses raise the question: What is a Shakespearean sonnet in the end? A 4-4-4-2 sonnet which is usually regarded as Shakespearean is rarer than an 8-6 sonnet in the *Sonnets*. My research also questions the generalisation made in a dictionary of literary terms that Shakespeare's sonnets usually turn on line 13. The matter is more complex.

Keywords: Shakespeare, sonnet, *volta*, turn, structure, syntax, semantics

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Tarkastelen pro gradu -tutkielmassani Shakespearen sonettien käännekohtia runoanalyysin keinoin. Vaikka sonettien muodollinen rakenne on muutamaa poikkeusta lukuun ottamatta aina sama, eli riimikaavaa ababcdcdefefgg noudattava, niiden semanttiset ja syntaktiset rakenteet vaihtelevat. Sonettien käännekohdat eivät näin ollen useinkaan osu yhteen muodollisen rakenteen kanssa. Tutkielmani tarkoitus on analysoida kaikkien 154 sonetin käännekohdat, jotta selviäisi millaisia yleistyksiä niistä voi tehdä.

Vaikka soneteista on kirjoitettu paljon laadukasta tutkimusta, niin rakenteen kannalta tärkeitä käännekohtia ei ole analysoitu systemaattisesti. Helen Vendler on analysoinut systemaattisesti kaikki sonetit ja kirjoittaa usein myös niiden rakenteesta. Tutkielmani nojaakin monien haastavien sonettien kohdalla hänen tulkintoihinsa. Hän kuitenkin kirjoittaa sonettien rakenteesta vain paikoin ja yleisemmällä tasolla, kun taas minun tutkielmani käsittelee kaikkien sonettien rakennetta ja keskittyy erityisesti käännekohtiin. Olen analyysieni tueksi käyttänyt myös kaikkea muuta kirjallisuutta mitä olen löytänyt yksittäisistä soneteista. Huomattavaa kuitenkin on, että kaikista soneteista ei löydy julkaistua tekstiä; varsinkaan sellaista, joka käsittelisi rakennetta.

Tutkielmani tuloksena on viisi erilaista rakennetta käännekohtien suhteen: 8-6-rakenne, 8-4-2-rakenne, 4-4-4-2-rakenne, 12-2-rakenne ja monet eri kokeelliset rakenteet. Kokeellisiksi rakenteiksi lasken sellaiset, joiden rakennetta ei löydy kuin yhdestä tai kahdesta sonetista. Esimerkiksi tällaisesta rakenteesta mainittakoon sonetin 97 4-4-6-rakenne. Käännekohtien rivin lisäksi erotan analyysissäni käänteet joko selviksi ("turns") tai hienovaraisiksi ("shifts"). Näin edellä mainituista rakenteista hahmottuu uusia rakenteita, esimerkiksi: 8-6-sonetti, jossa on selvä käänne tai 8-6-sonetti, jossa on hienovarainen käänne.

Analyysini tulokset herättävät kysymyksen: mikä lopulta on Shakespearelainen sonetti? 4-4-4-2-sonetti, jota pidetään shakespearelaisena on *Soneteissa* harvinaisempi kuin esimerkiksi 8-6-sonetti. Tutkimukseni asettaa myös kyseenalaiseksi erään kirjallisuuden termisanakirjan yleistyksen siitä, että Shakespearen sonetit kääntyvät rivillä 13. Asia on tätä monimutkaisempi.

Avainsanat: Shakespeare, sonetti, *volta*, käännekohta, rakenne, syntaksi, semantiikka

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck –ohjelmalla.

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1 INTRODUCTION

I became interested in poetry and sonnets during a course taught by Liesl Yamaguchi, then a PhD candidate at Princeton University. She was a visiting teacher at Tampere University. In her course we examined language from many perspectives, and we were given great freedom to do our final paper on what we wished. I ended up choosing to write two differently structured sonnets and discussing them at length in my paper. This experience sparked an interest in the sonnet structure in me.

As I became more familiar with the sonnet tradition and the academic discussion about it, I was partly overwhelmed by the quantity of writing in the field. But the studies of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* were not as exhaustive as I would have expected for a work that was printed in 1609. A great deal of good writing existed, but for many of the less famous single sonnets the Andor search engine of Tampere University fell silent. Published papers only seemed to regard the ostensibly famous sonnets in the sequence, which account for a clear minority of all the 154 sonnets, or they discussed the whole sequence in broader terms. Books that analysed all the sonnets in detail were rare and to find explicit analysis of their structure was even rarer. Helen Vendler (1999) proved an exception.

Some articles discuss a subsection of the sequence, (e.g. Stockard (1997) discusses sonnets 1–126, i.e. "the Fair Youth sonnets"[1]) but they do so from a specific point of view, only quoting and analysing some of the sonnets in their work. Joel Fineman (1986) discusses the whole sequence in his book from the perspective of the invention of poetic subjectivity. But in his work no one sonnet gets analysed in detail as he focuses on painting a bigger

[1] Helen Vendler (1999) calls him "the young man". I call him the Fair Youth because this is a term also used of him and I think it highlights his two salient features, beauty and young age, whereas his gender is pronounced (by pronouns) relatively rarely. I use capitalisation mainly to avoid confusing the term with common nouns and adjectives. Burrow (2002) calls him "the friend" which seems a bit innocent.

picture, quoting a line from the *Sonnets* here and there, or if a whole sonnet is quoted, the discussion soon turns to another sonnet.

All the modern editions of the *Sonnets* are compromises between the original so-called original Quarto version from 1609 and all the emendations that have been made to it over time[2]. The annotated versions of the *Sonnets* necessarily deal with the whole sequence but do so mostly through brief glosses of words and lines. Some are more detailed in their glosses than others; the most detailed is Stephen Booth's (2000) version. His glosses on single lines can range from a few lines to a few pages.

The most comprehensive work on the *Sonnets* is by Helen Vendler in her book *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1999), in which she analyses each sonnet. Often, she notes phonetic patterns, puns, etymological wordplays and almost as often she comments on the structure of a given sonnet. She is the only writer I have found who has commented explicitly on the structure of the sonnets. Her book is the encouragement I needed to start studying the structure of Shakespeare's sonnets, because without any previous academic work on the structure of the sonnets my thesis would have proved to be an impossible task. But her book is not specifically about structure, it is just one part of it. Sometimes she discusses a structure of a sonnet explicitly and other times she discusses it more broadly, more rarely she does not discuss structure at all. At her most explicit she offers diagrams to illustrate the structure of a sonnet, in addition to discussing it in the text. Her discussions on the structure of the sonnets are what lead me to my research. I decided to read the sonnets from the perspective of their "turns", i.e. on which line of the sonnet one theme turns to another, where a metaphor shifts to another, where there is a clear change in syntax etc. Another way to describe a turn would

[2] For this thesis I chose *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems* edition by Burrow (2002), because it is far more detailed in its glosses than e.g. Kerrigan's (1986) but avoids the over-complication sometimes evident in Booth's (2000) edition.

be to say that it is the point or points in a poem where one unified section has ended on the previous line and another unified section begins. In the sonnet form's tradition this point in the sonnet is often called the *volta*. That term has overtones of the Italian sonnet form, and since Shakespeare's sonnets vary from the Italian version of the sonnet, I decided to see if a volta could be found in Shakespeare's sonnets and in general to see how they turn and shift through the 14 lines.

As I started to search for academic sources on the structure of Shakespeare's sonnets and in particular their turns, I quickly realised that no such systematic study had been published, even if Vendler had come the closest. (I attribute the lack of academic studies published not to the subject being uninteresting, but rather it being a hard sell for a publishing house). Instead, I found various brief accounts of the so-called "Shakespearean sonnet"-form which seemed sometimes to contradict each other, and definitely gave a very different account of the structure than what was written in Vendler's book. And since even Vendler had not discussed every sonnets' structure in detail or the structure of the sonnets in the broader sense of the whole sequence, there seemed to be a clear opportunity for further research.

Michael Theune's (ed.) (2007) book *Structure and Surprise: Engaging poetic turns* was the theoretical starting point for this study. It describes eight different types of turns in poems, including the ironic structure, the emblem structure etc. The book gave ideas of how to analyse the turns in Shakespeare's sonnets, but its categories did not directly work for the *Sonnets*. While some sonnets of Shakespeare did fit in some categories of Theune's book, it did not give me an adequate way to describe all the sonnets individually or as a whole sequence. Instead, I had to find my own way to describe the structures Shakespeare had used.

In this thesis I will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. On which line or lines do Shakespeare's sonnets usually turn or shift?

2. How can these turns or shifts be described besides the line in which they occur?

3. How does structure affect meaning in the *Sonnets*?

In chapter 2 I give a brief account of the sonnet form's history. In chapter 3 I discuss theoretical views on reading and analysing poetry and define the key ideas behind my analyses in this study. In chapter 4 I present five types of structures and their subtypes according to my analyses of the sonnets, through 18 analyses of different sonnets. In chapter 5 I draw conclusions regarding the turns and shifts in the sonnets and discuss the structure of the sonnets at large.

An MA-thesis' length is restricted, thus it is not possible to give a detailed account of my analysis of each sonnet. Instead, the interested reader will find summaries of my analyses of the sonnets that did not make it to the actual text of this thesis, in the appendices 7.2 *Brief paragraphs of structural analysis*. The lines of the turns or shifts have been colour-coded in a manner explained at the beginning of the appendix. The appendix is useful to the reader who wants to form a clearer picture of how I formed my conclusions about the five different types of turns/shifts in the sonnets and their subdivisions according to whether they turn or shift. The appendix also presents the *Sonnets* in an easy to copy format for other researchers, through a simple deletion of my colour-coding. The decision to discuss some sonnets in detail and give a brief overview of all of them in the appendix is modelled after Dympna Callaghan's (2008) *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, as she discusses the sonnets through six themes and sometimes focuses on analysing a single sonnet, while in her book's appendix she gives brief paragraphs on each of the sonnets. For the uninitiated reader, I have included a list of terminology used in this thesis with brief descriptions in appendix 7.1.

2 THE SONNET FORM'S HISTORY

Oppenheimer states that the first sonnets were written in Sicily by Giacomo da Lentino, who lived ca. 1188–1240 and was a notary in the court of Frederick II (Oppenheimer 1989: 171). The *volta* or "turn of thought" so characteristic to the sonnet has its roots at the very beginning of the form. Da Lentino innovated a new form of poetry by adding a sestet to an octave and this mix of two unequal parts of a sonnet laid the foundation for the volta (ibid. 23). The octave and the sestet are unequal, not just in length, but also in their rhyme scheme and their historical origins. According to Oppenheimer, da Lentino borrowed the octave from a song form called the *strambotto* that was familiar to thirteenth-century Sicilian peasants (ibid. 171). A strambotto is defined in The Oxford Dictionary of Music as a:

> 'Rustic Song'. Italian Renaissance poetical form, often set to music on the lines of the frottola. Poem had 8 lines, rhyming ABABABCC; musical setting was usually strophic, with only 2 lines set to music and repeated for each remaining pair.
>
> (Rutherford-Johnson (ed.) 2012: The Oxford Dictionary of Music, *strambotto*)

In the sonnets of da Lentino, however, Spiller states that the rhyme schemes are as follows:

> The sonnets divide into an octave and a sestet, the octave rhyming in all cases ABABABAB, and the sestet varying: CDE CDE (15), CDCDCD (9) and GCD CCD (actually AAB AAB). (Spiller 1992: 13)

The last two rhymes of da Lentino's sonnets' octave, then, do not match the rhyme scheme of a strambotto.

Spiller speculates a different origin for the octave than Oppenheimer. He suggests that da Lentino may have borrowed the octave of his sonnets from an even older form of poetry than the strambotto, i.e. from the *canzone* form (Spiller 1992: 16). The canzone is a form that has 7 to 20 verses, varying rhyme schemes and mostly hendecasyllabic lines, or in other words eleven syllable lines (Fucilla & Kleinheinz 2012: 190, Canzone). Da Lentino did write

canzoni but in none of his canzone's were there fourteen-line stanzas similar to the sonnet form, and none of them began with an eight-line rhyme scheme of ABAB ABAB present in all of his sonnets (Spiller 1992: 16). Spiller sees this as a deliberate modification of the canzone form, meant to distance the sonnet from this previous form of sung poetry (ibid.). But, similarly to Oppenheimer, Spiller (referring to E. H. Wilkins's work from 1915) does also admit that the octave may have been derived from the strambotto (ibid.). Fucilla & Kleinheinz favour this origin, stating about the strambotto:

> A monostrophic It. composition generally of eight or six *hendecasyllables (less commonly of four or ten) … In its Sicilian form, the strambotto may have influenced the devel. of the *sonnet by serving as the model for the *octave. (2012: 1360, Strambotto).

Whether da Lentino borrowed the octave from the canzone or the strambotto form, this was not his stroke of genius. It was the addition of the sestet to the octave.

The sestet's origins are even murkier yet. Spiller calls the addition of the sestet a masterstroke and suggests that it bears resemblance to a *sirma* which was a six-line formation in a *canzone* (Spiller 1992: 16). Oppenheimer refers to E. H. Wilkins's work in 1915 that states that no clear origin of the sestet can be found, except the need for the octave to be resolved thematically by a more tightly organized and brief structure (Oppenheimer 1989: 187).

Oppenheimer also suggests that the number of lines allotted to the octave and sestet may derive from the aesthetics of the time related to the numbers 6, 8 and 12 (ibid. 188–9). These numbers were the harmonic proportions of rooms in the Renaissance architecture and a harmonic proportion in Pythagorean-Platonic mathematics (ibid. 189). The number 12 that Oppenheimer refers to comes from an interpretation by him that although the sestet of a

sonnet is a unit, its two final lines are especially important, thus dividing the sonnet also in to 12 lines and the final two lines:

> Before proposing a solution, however, we must, in all fairness to the aesthetically satisfying momentum present in the shape of Giacomo's sonnets as well as in the Shakespearian variation which involves the concluding couplet, and which of course comes along a good deal later in literary history, include another number in our considerations: the number twelve. For the momentum toward what Fuller has called the decisive conclusion of even Giacomo's sonnets, with their cde-cde sestets, is established not simply in the six-line unit taken as a whole, but most powerfully in the final two lines. These seem frequently, and despite appearances and rhyme scheme, to stand off by themselves, and so in a sense to leave the previous twelve lines as a rhetorically and numerically separate unit within the poem … (ibid. 188)

In a sense then, in the English or "Shakespearean" version of the sonnet, the couplet has not come out of nowhere, but was already present in the Italian form. The rhyme gg in the couplet of English sonnets just brings these concluding lines to the fore in a different way than in Italian sonnets because of the immediacy of the rhyme.

While Oppenheimer saw relations with the sonnets original number of lines and numbers that were seen as aesthetic in those times (8, 6, (12)), Russ McDonald sees correlations with the Elizabethan sonnet vogue and the architecture of the 16th century, an architecture with its "style based on 'composition' ": he cites Nikolaus Pevsner's Inaugural Lecture at Birkbeck College, University of London, in 1960:

> 'And as, what we have seen, is really a process of ordering, can one not draw a parallel also with the tidying up of meter in poetry of the sixteenth century and especially the development of so highly contrived a form as the sonnet?' (Mcdonald 2016: 487)

McDonald answers this question "yes" before going on to describe the similarities between Elizabethan sonnets and the architecture of the time (ibid.).

Chiasson and Rogers quote Oppenheimer's notion that the proportions of the sonnet, i.e. 8:6:12, [3] are exactly the same as the "harmonic proportion of rooms in Elizabethan architecture", but they take the idea of "special" numbers in the sonnet structure even further: the English version of the sonnet form with its ten syllable lines conforms to the Pythagorean theorem $a^2+b^2=c^2$, where the octave=8 (lines), sestet=6 (lines) and syllables per line=10, so $8^2+6^2=10^2$ or 64+36=100, which is a true statement (Chiasson and Rogers 2009: 53–4). This mathematical beauty of the form does not of course add up with the Italian version with eleven syllables per line, but perhaps the English perfected a near perfect form when adapting it to their language.[4]

Leaving speculation aside, one can see that from the very beginning of the sonnet's invention the division to eight and six lines has persisted. Spiller notes that the division of eight and six with a volta is nearly always present in da Lentino's sonnets: "… two quatrains and two tercets, marked always by a change of rhyme and nearly always by a break in syntax and thought at the 'turn' (volta) between octave and sestet" (Spiller 1992: 51). Bermann says something alike:

> Certainly, as Giacomo used it, the sonnet was well suited to displays of virtuosity and meditative themes. And already, it revealed the characteristic octave-sestet division, with its turn of thought at (sic) line 8 that eventually became standard.
>
> (Bermann 1988: 13)

She of course means **after** line eight, i.e. on line nine (Bermann 1988).

Spiller states that Dante was the next to use the sonnet form in his *Vita Nuova* (published in 1295, over fifty years after da Lentino had passed) and after him came Petrarch

---

[3] (8 lines for the octave, 6 for the sestet through the rhyme scheme, but as above mentioned also a 12:2 division because of the importance of the last two lines)

[4] To speculate even further one could note that Shakespeare's sonnet sequence has 154 sonnets or 11x14 sonnets, perhaps a nod to the Italian sonnet version's 11 syllables on each of the 14 lines which totals 154 syllables per sonnet.

(Spiller 1992: 51). According to Spiller the first to write a clear sequence of sonnets is Petrarch, whose sequence, however, also included canzoni and *ballata* poems (ibid.). Petrarch's sonnets were published in the late 14th century. Bermann lists as Petrarch's predecessors also Guido Guinizelli, Guido Cavalcanti in addition to Dante (Bermann 1988:14). Colin Burrow states that: "… the sonnet was brought to prominence by Dante and Petrarch" (Burrow 2013: 110). He continues that Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey were imitators of Petrarch and that they originally crafted the English or Shakespearean version of the sonnet form (Burrow 2013: 111). Brogan, Zilmann, Scott and Lewin (2012: 1320) write that:

> … The sonnet arrived in England from Italy via Thomas Wyatt (1503–42), who preferred the sestet's closing couplet. Wyatt adhered to the Petrarchan octave; Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey (1517–47), established the ababcdcdefefgg rhyme scheme, a pattern more congenial to the comparatively rhyme-poor Eng. lang. in that it filled the 14 lines by seven rhymes, not five. This pattern was popular in the Ren. Wide variation existed in rhyme schemes and line lengths; Shakespeare was its best practitioner …

The major differences to the Italian version are the final couplet and a simpler rhyme scheme in general, due to the English language's sparser catalogue of rhyming words. And of course, to suit the popular iambic pentamer feet the Shakespearean sonnet form has one less syllable. Shakespeare's line lengths do not usually vary.

The final couplet is what really stands out as different to the Italian form. The immediacy of a rhyming word with another in the English rhyme scheme ababcdcdefef**gg** and their position as the last rhyming words foregrounding the **gg**-rhymes is something that is not found in the Italian sonnet. The Petrarchan rhyme schemes abbaabbacdecde or abbaabbacdccdc do of course have rhymes without a line between, but because they are more common and also not placed in the end of the sonnet, they do not have the same effect. In the English version, rhymes other than the couplet always have a line between them and this

makes them “harder to hear”/perceive than the couplet’s rhyme. As one reads an English/Shakespearean sonnet, the preceding rhymes are more like echoes and the couplet’s rhyme is like a shout into a valley that would cause such echoes. This phonetic prominence can sometimes make the couplet seem more detached from the sestet than it really is if the sonnet is read with care. Vendler summarises the couplet’s function in the following way:

> And the couplet—placed not as a resolution (which is the function of Q_3) but as coda—can then stand in any number of relations (summarizing, ironic, expansive) to the preceding argument. (Vendler 1999: 25)

Vendler gives a good general description of the couplet and Q_3, but in many cases the couplet of Shakespeare’s sonnets will continue quite seamlessly from Q_3 and form one unit with it, where even the couplet’s rhyme does not stand out that much because the sentiment does not change. As a part of the larger structure of the sestet the final rhyme becomes less prominent than if the last two lines clearly differ from Q_3 in sentiment, metaphor, rhetoric or otherwise.

Structure has been an important feature of the sonnet form since the first sonnets of da Lentino. The sonnet form was born of a combination of two existing structures; six lines were added to eight. The English made modifications to the sonnet form to suit their language, but structure became no less important. The importance of rhyme schemes and on which line something happens might seem quaint to modern readers, but the sonnet form is a form built on rules. Free verse was not known in 1609 or for a long time after. An essential part of poetic language, then, was that it had to adhere to some rules. On the other hand, breaking and bending those rules (not written up anywhere after all) could be used as an effect on its own; a reader in 1609 would notice a deviation from the rules and see it either as “wrong” or delightfully new. The sonnet form, because it has such a long history (beginning with da

Lentino in the 12th century and continuing to the 21st with poets like Marion Shore) is in fact, diachronically, also known for its flexibility:

> … if we take a look at its history and production of meaning, we can see rather a living organism the nature of which opens up both in its ideal structure and its divergence from it; the relationship between these two is dialectical. Ever since Giacomo da Lentini invented the sonnet, this poetic form has proved its longevity and vividness. The reason lies not only in the invention of a perfect form for a poem, but also in the sonnet's intrinsic open nature, its ability to transform itself in so many aspects without losing its essence. (Lotman 2013: 331)

This thesis focuses on how Shakespeare used this "living organism" of poetry.

3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE *VOLTA*

3.1 *The (poetic) speaker or the I of poems*

In much of poetry and in the majority of Shakespeare's sonnets there is an *I* that acts as a voice for the content of the poem. This *I* is generally referred to as the poem's speaker, i.e. "the speaker" or "the poetic speaker"[5]. Both terms carry with them some problematic associations. For unless a poem clearly indicates reported speech in its text, and such cases a quite rare, there is not really anyone speaking the lines of a poem. The reader is reading a text and will or will not imagine a voice behind the lines. This depends on the interpretation the reader will give the text. Especially in reading a single poem which has the pronoun *I* in it, it might not benefit the reader in any way to imagine a speaker behind the lines. Culler, after analysing nine famous poems and demonstrating how imagining a speaker in them will not help the reader, states that:

> … there are certainly lyrics that attempt to sound like someone speaking, but as the examples considered here suggest, there are many other lyrics where the text does not encourage readers to imagine the voice of a speaker or reward them for trying to do so … Rather than imagine that lyrics embody voices, we do better to say that they create effects of voicing, of aurality. (Culler 2015: 35)

This is often true, and Culler presents many good examples in his book. A sequence of poems like a sonnet sequence, however, might be a special case. In a sequence of poems tied together by the fact that they were published in one book and in a certain order, one cannot help the fact that a picture of the speaker starts to form. But even in sequences the picture will often be far from a clear one. Culler's phrase "an effect of aurality" (ibid.) describes well the indefiniteness that a poetic voice has and the difficulty in pinning down one's impression of

[5] I contemplated using "I" in this thesis to refer to the speaker, because "the speaker" is in a sense a misleading pair of words, but as so few other academic sources do this, and instead use "the speaker" or "the poetic speaker", this would only add confusion in my written analyses, when I would speak of the "I" of the sonnet and my sources would usually use "the speaker".

the speaker of a poem. It is still human of us that we start to draw this picture in the table of our minds if the sequential poems seem to suggest a continuous way of thinking behind them. We are used to characters and are in a sense expecting to find one. So, we start to form one out of the clues we find, even if those clues have not been intended to form any complete and coherent character. In the *Sonnets* the picture of the speaker will necessarily evolve quite considerably throughout the sequence. The procreation sonnets' (1–17) speaker is drastically harsher in his critique of the Fair Youth than the one in, e.g. the next 17 sonnets where the speaker is still in an idealising phase of love where critique is not a part of the vocabulary.

It is important to note that sequences such as Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are relatively rare in poetry, so the speaker of the *Sonnets* is a special case in that sense. Made special by the great length of the sequence that has an *I* that seems to form a sort of a character, such sequences being in the minority of all of poetry. Discussing the relatively rare case of sequences Culler draws on Greene's ideas:

> Discussing the lyric sequence— a series of related poems in which a broad narrative is discernable (sic)— Greene maintains that 'lyric discourse is defined by the dialectical play of ritual and fictional phenomena, or correlative modes of apprehension that are nearly always available in every lyric … For him, the ritual element is first everything that can be construed as 'directions for a performance.' 'In the full play of its ritual mode, which goes well beyond prosodic elements to include rhetorical, semantic, and symbolic features, lyric is utterance uniquely disposed to be re- uttered,' and it offers 'a performative unity into which readers and auditors may enter at will.' On the other hand, there is the fictional element, 'where the poem's voice is posited not as the reader- auditor but as character' and 'where the history evoked by the work is not merely coextensive with its performance' but involves a plot and circumstances that suggest a fictional world. The fictional is what we produce when we attempt to imagine a fictional speaker and a situation of utterance … (Culler 2015: 123)

The other sonnets in the sequence the reader has already read effect the way the speaker "sounds" in the sonnet being read in the now. We the readers create a fiction out what we have read previously and the sonnet that is being read will either reinforce this fiction or force us to adjust what we think is "the speaker". At least two things at once may happen as one

reads a poem in a sequence with “a speaker”: the reader will imagine how the poem would be performed, which might seem like a quaint idea if you are not a part of a poetry club,[6] and the reader will also start to form a picture of the speaker as a sort of a character.

This character will never be as explicitly detailed as in a novel or even a play, but what it lacks in clarity it makes up in scope. All those missing pieces of information that are never revealed about this “character”, i.e. “the speaker”, necessarily lead to great possibilities for the reader to fill those gaps with their imagination. And less of the *Sonnets* one reads the greater these gaps will be. A casual reader who happens on a single Shakespearean sonnet will necessarily read that single sonnet differently than someone who has read all of them multiple times. In fact, for the casual reader, the *I* of the *Sonnets* might not form any sort of a character and the pronoun might go relatively unnoticed and be seen as a poetic function inherent in the genre. This is not wrong, because without this pronoun Shakespeare would surely have been in great pains to create his sequence. A love sonnet written in a way Shakespeare wrote them simply needs an *I* and its recipient *thou* or *you*. Just as an analysis of such a sonnet needs a term to refer to this *I*, i.e. “the speaker”, and a term to refer to the *thou* of the sonnet, in this case he is called “the Fair Youth” and *she* (of sonnets 127–154) historically “the Dark Lady”. Therefore, the so-called casual reader might not always lose anything by not having a larger picture of the *I*, they will simply read a sonnet differently. This might be especially true of Shakespeare’s sonnet sequence, since no one has been able to definitively prove that the sequence was arranged in its established order by Shakespeare or to prove the opposite either. Spiller (1992: 149) writes that: “it is not even clear whether the 154 sonnets were intended by Shakespeare to form any kind of a sequence, nor what relation they should have with ‘A Lover’s Complaint’.” Colin Burrow presents his own views and

[6] Performance might not be essential with the sonnet form. Oppenheimer (1989: 3), e.g. states that: “… it is the first lyric form since the fall of the Roman Empire intended not for music or performance but silent reading”.

previous academic writings for and against the idea of Shakespeare putting the sequence in the order of the Quarto publication, but he can come to no definite conclusion (Burrow 2002: 91–108). The uncertainty over the order of the sonnets makes it even more important to realise the role of the reader in, in effect, creating "the speaker".

3.2 *Triangulated address and the artificiality of the speaker*

> The love poems that are central to the Western lyric canon are not, though, communications of lovers which are later recognized and assembled as poems, but compositions by poets for an audience other than a particular lover, where address is a rhetorical strategy of triangulated address. (Culler 2015: 206)

So, even as a fragmented picture of the speaker of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* will form in reading the sequence, the speaker has a double role other than this. Through the *I–thou*/*you* address of the *Sonnets* a situation where the reader is the onlooker of this addressing is created. The sonnets might have been written for someone special, and much exhaustive speculation about this has been written, but Shakespeare most likely did not intend them to be for that special someone's eyes only. On the contrary they were almost certainly written for an audience, not of one but many. The addressing of *thou* or *you* is then at least partly pretence. It creates a situation where the reader is not directly addressed but witnesses a communication that is directed through the addressee, as if through a lens, to the reader. Culler, who thinks this is one of the key elements of lyric, phrases it this way:

> My account of the lyric grants major importance to its characteristic indirection, which I call 'triangulated address': addressing the audience of readers by addressing or pretending to address someone or something else, a lover, a god, natural forces, or personified abstractions. (Culler 2015: 8)

Shakespeare's speaker almost always addresses a *thou* or a *you* in the sonnets and often addresses other entities, most often *Time*, so this indirection is always present. It creates a comfortable distance from the tumultuous nature of the relation of the speaker and *thou*/*you*

which would be hard to bear if it were directed more directly at the reader. And of course, it maintains the illusion that the speaker knows what he is talking about, meaning that he knows this *thou*/*you* and they have a history. There is no such history between the reader and the speaker, and if this indirection were abandoned the sonnets would have been written in a very different way than they are now as they are directed at the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady or, through apostrophe, *Time*.

3.3 *Apostrophic address*

> Apostrophes invoke elements of the universe as potentially responsive forces, which can be asked to act, or refrain from acting, or even to continue behaving as they usually behave. The key is not passionate intensity, but rather the ritual invocation of elements of the universe, the attempt, even, to evoke the possibility of a magical transformation. (Culler 2015: 216)

In Shakespeare's *Sonnets* apostrophes lead the speaker to address another entity than the *thou*/*you* and thus increase the range of the sonnets. Instead of being completely intimate, the sonnets, through apostrophe, often become universal and afford the reader to step inside the speaker's metaphysical thought processes. This directs the reader to contemplate larger issues than the drama between the speaker and the Fair Youth. They also work to add a poetic dimension to the speaker:

> In an operation that sounds tautological, the vocative of apostrophe is a device which the poetic subject uses to establish with the object a relationship that helps to constitute the subject itself as poetic, even vatic. Apostrophic address works to establish a relation to the poetic tradition (Culler 2015: 216)

Apostrophe takes the speaker from the ordinary plane into greater spheres. The speaker is clearly a man desperately in love, but he is also something much more than this. How else could he address *Time* and companion *Death*.

3.4 *Hyperbole*

> … hyperbole is a fundamental characteristic of the lyric which, when not manifest, takes the form of an underlying convention: that apparently trivial observations are of considerable significance. (Culler 2015: 259)

A reader used to poetic language will expect hyperbole to be present in poetry. A reader unfamiliar with poetry will soon become accustomed to it. It is characteristic as Culler says and it also has a function in poems. Hyperbole differentiates poetic language from ordinary speech acts by making the poem's subject matter more vivid and urgent. As if we were reading something of great importance, instead of just a string of words ordinary to language we encounter every day. Culler's (ibid.) point is that even when hyperbole is not present in a poem its tradition underlies it and the reader will read even more ordinary language as if it were not ordinary. Shakespeare's sonnet 37 begins: "As a decrepit father takes delight / To see his active child do deeds of youth / …", and the reader is confronted with normal language. But the reader expects that hyperbole will follow and raise the first two lines above their original ordinary meaning. This expectation makes the reader read the first two lines, already at the get go, as something more than they state, as something important. The reader, reading those lines, is not expecting a report of geriatric joys to follow. Not that that could not be important language, but in poetry the expectation is not of something important but something especially important. Culler (ibid. 260) notes that in literature the Gricean co-operative principle, according to which we expect communication to be relevant, is "hyper-protected" and readers are more patient and understanding of difficult language in literary texts than in real life. So, even a reader utterly uninterested in geriatrics will continue reading sonnet 37 to find out what it is really about.

3.5 *Lyric present*

> Lyrics have a variety of strategies for framing fictional elements— fictional speakers and represented events— and bringing them into the lyric present, which is a present of enunciation. Ever since Pindar and doubtless before, lyrics have been constructed for reperformance, with an iterable *now*: not timeless but a moment of time that is repeated every time the poem is read, … (Culler 2015: 294–5)

Read, not necessarily out loud, a poem gains presentness by the simple fact that it is being read *now*. This is often supported by the language of a poem which can suggest a present by its use of tenses. Culler provides ample evidence of the simple present tense's use in poetry to create the lyric present, where something happens instead of something happening (ibid. 293). "To see his active child do deeds of youth" writes Shakespeare in sonnet 37 line 2. Not "Seeing his active child doing deeds of youth", or whatever the metrically correct way of writing such a line would be. The effect of this is that the simple present tense makes it a general statement instead of a report of a specific instance. Culler (ibid. 291), talking about the present simple in Frost's famous *Stopping by Woods*, states: " 'He gives his harness bells a shake,' introduces a distance from any particular fictional moment and marks this as a different kind of discourse, a ritualistic act not tied to a specific observable moment". The simple present draws the reader into the world of the poem instead of keeping the reader at an arm's length as an observer. In Frost's poem we are not being described the act of harness bells being shook but we are being called to imagine a situation with these parameters. To step into **a** situation and not into **the** situation of being in the woods. Culler (ibid. 287) says it well: "…lyrics use a special nonprogressive present with verbs of action to incorporate events while reducing their fictional, narrative character and increasing their ritualistic feel". In short, it makes the language poetic by making it unlike other literature or common language. Culler thinks that the uniqueness of the simple present tense's use in poetic language is also further proof of the futility in trying to imagine an actual speaker behind a poem's lines (ibid.

292). We are not, then, reading reported speech from a character, like in a fiction, or reading an anecdote from a newspaper when we read *Stopping by Woods*, but a more ritualistic type of language called poetry.

3.6 *Voicing*

I have already touched upon the problems the term "the speaker" includes. It is a matter for the reader to decide if there even is a unified character speaking in the *Sonnets*. Moreover, no one is really speaking in the *Sonnets* and some sonnets even refer to the *I* of the *Sonnets* as a writer: "Why write I still all one, ever the same, /" (Sonnet 76, line 5). Should the speaker not rather be the writer then? The answer is that this would be possible, but also highly uncommon in analysis of poetry. Richards (2012: 1525) states:

> To define voice in written poetry immediately poses a problem, for there is no literal voice in the poem: voice is an oral *metaphor employed in the description and analysis of the written word. It is not just any metaphor, however, but one that foregrounds fundamental distinctions underpinning Western culture: orality and literacy, speaking and writing. Regardless of how much one insists that writing is not speaking and that voice is not literally present in the poem, literary critics have persistently relied on metaphors of voice to analyze writing; it is difficult to imagine how one would go about discussing poetry in particular if we were forbidden to use the terms voice, speaker, and other vocal terms like * monologue or * song, to give a few examples.

The term "the speaker" is a type of a necessary evil that enables an analyst to speak intelligibly about poetry. To use "the writer" would create a confusion because Shakespeare is the one who has written everything in the *Sonnets*. Shakespeare has constructed a character of sorts in the sequence from the *I* of the *Sonnets*, and even though everything in the *Sonnets* goes through this *I* and is not Shakespeare's own thought in that respect, the character has not possessed Shakespeare after all. Shakespeare has possessed the character, the *I* of the *Sonnets* if anything. Richards, quoting Ong, explains:

> For Ong, as for many other theorists, poetry's operations are the ideal example of literary communication. In the *lyric poem, the author masks his or her expression by

> speaking through an objectified figure of voice. In this way, the “poem … advertises the distance and remoteness which, paradoxically, are part of every human attempt to communicate, and it does this in so far as it is under one aspect ‘objective,’ … which is to say, non-vocal.” But under another aspect, it is not objective, since it is trying to communicate; in this sense, the poem has a voice. That voice is not simply individual but compound, however, since the speaker anticipates the listener and vice versa. They meet in the poem. (ibid.)

In a lyric sequence as long as the *Sonnets* where a character has time to form from the *I* (in a reader’s mind), I would argue, the voice of Shakespeare himself becomes even more masked than in single poems. Richards says that “the author masks his or her expression” (ibid.), but in the *Sonnets* it feels like the *I* takes on a life of its own and is more than a mask for Shakespeare. It is a fragmented character that Shakespeare has written lines for. That is not to say that Shakespeare does not express his own thoughts through the character, but it is harder to attribute those thoughts to Shakespeare than in a single poem. Shakespeare masks his expression more thoroughly because the length of the sequence allows him to create a more complete character, a more complete speaker than any one poem could.

3.7 *Volta*

T.V.F.Brogan writes this definition of the volta

VOLTA, *volte* (It., “turn”). A musical and prosodic term for a turn, particularly the transition point between the *octave and *sestet of the *sonnet, which, in its It. form, usually rhymes abbaabba cdecde : the *volta* is significant because both the particular rhymes unifying the two quatrains of the octave and also the *envelope scheme are abandoned simultaneously, regardless of whether this break is further reinforced syntactically by a full stop at the end of the octave (though usually it is), creating a decisive “turn in thought.” By extension, the term is applied to the gap or break at line nine of any sonnet type, though in the Shakespearean form, e.g., the type of rhyming (*cross rhyme) is not abandoned at that point. (2013: 1527)

The volta, then, comes from the Italian version of the sonnet, where it is reinforced by the rhyme scheme. I argue that even though in Shakespeare’s sonnets the rhyme scheme does not always reinforce the turn or turns, i.e. the volta, there still are turning moments in his sonnets. The rhyme scheme (ababcdcdefefgg) Shakespeare uses always implies a 4-4-4-2 structure

with three turns. But not nearly all of the sonnets' semantics or syntax or metaphorical developments or logic follow the rhyme scheme. To put it simply: what is being communicated in the sonnets does not always fit the rhyme scheme and instead creates another structure on top of it. Brogan et al say that:

> The Spenserian and Shakespearean patterns offer relief to the difficulty of rhyming in Eng. and invite a division of thought into three quatrains and a closing or summarizing couplet; even though such arbitrary divisions are frequently ignored by the poet, the more open rhyme schemes tend to impress the fourfold structure on the reader's ear and to suggest a stepped progression toward the closing couplet. (2012: 1319)

The rhyme scheme "invites a division of thought" but often Shakespeare denies this invitation; "tend to impress…tend to suggest" but on a closer reading these impressions and suggestions by the rhyme scheme do not fit with the content of a sonnet of Shakespeare's, i.e. "such arbitrary divisions are frequently ignored by the poet" (ibid). If all the sonnets' communication were structured in line with the rhyme scheme the sequence would be structurally monotonous. There are turns or shifts in the sonnets that are not supported by the rhyme scheme and some of them actually resemble the original Italian structure with an octave and a sestet, the 8-6 structure. There the first two quatrains form a unified sentiment and there is no clear distinction between the third quatrain and the couplet. And something clearly changes (or more subtly shifts) starting on line nine. Edmonson & Wells referring to the golden mean (the same as the harmonic proportion discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis) write:

> The idea of the sonnet often turns after the octave (the first eight lines) and changes the direction for the reader in the sestet (the next six lines). This turn is known as the volta and it occurs at a particularly satisfying moment for the human mind, eye, and ear. Spatially, then, there might be thought to be an underlying, classical principle for the sonnet as a literary form. Here, the Shakespearian sonnet can exist in creative tension with its Petrarchan antecedents, an earlier tradition which lends itself more readily to 8 : 6 because of its abbaabba–cdecde rhyme scheme. The Shakespearian volta can often seem deliberately weak, his form providing a different scope of subtlety and argumentative development. Shakespeare's form of three quatrains and a

> couplet makes the golden mean less apparent, and perhaps best perceived as a point of tension and identification with an earlier tradition. (2004: 52)

But to accept an 8-6 structure in Shakespeare's sonnets one has to put the rhyme scheme aside and look at what is actually being "said" in a sonnet. The rhyme scheme in this type of sonnets is a supporting actor, a tradition that is being adhered to in order to make it fit the formal requirements of a sonnet. I have not read Petrarch's sonnets closely enough to be able to say whether his sonnets "turn" on line nine is in any way better because the rhyme scheme fits it unlike in Shakespeare's sonnets. I think that it cannot hurt but that it is also not necessary. A turn that does not fit a rhyme scheme can also be dramatic and important. In some way, when the two do not fit it makes the turn more surprising. It is surprising that Shakespeare has written sonnets with the ababcdcdefefgg rhyme scheme that still have octaves and sestets when one reads their contents (closely), whereas this is presupposed in a Petrarchan sonnet. This surprise might make the turns more emphatic but at the same time the rhyme scheme that does not fit the logical structure of the sonnet creates a tension between the message and the formal features of the sonnet. It might make them seem less eloquent than Petrarch's because in effect they do not take advantage of the rhyme scheme, but what is lost in eloquence is gained by structural variety in the *Sonnets*.

Edmondson & Wells (2004: 51–7), who write one of the best short descriptions of Shakespeare's sonnet structure and volta, note correctly that the octave-sestet structure is not nearly always the one used in the *Sonnets* and that some sonnets turn in the couplet while some seem to stress the tripartite quatrain structure. Sonnets that turn in the couplet are relatively rare by my analysis, possibly because it is a difficult structure for a sonneteer. 4-4-4-2 sonnets are much more common; this structure affords three modifications to the theme of Q_1, or three distinct quatrains and a couplet, distinct by imagery or changes in thought for example. When all the quatrains and the couplet are distinct it might not be useful to talk

about the sonnet turning three times because it blurs the metaphor of a poems “turn”. Where will a poem end after so many turns, could a poem turn 14 times for example, once per line? For me, at least, a “turn” or volta is a useful term when we are talking about a division to two parts or three at most, i.e. a sonnet can turn once or twice. When the quatrains and the couplet are not distinct but rather modify Q_1, I think the idea of shifts in a sonnet could be applied, i.e. a 4-4-4-2 sonnet with three shifts. The idea of three or even more shifts in a sonnet seems acceptable, because the metaphor of a “shift” in a sonnet is more moderate than a “turn”; something that changes the sonnet more moderately can be accepted to happen more often in a poem that has just 14-lines.

Edmondson & Wells write that: “The degree to which a Shakespeare sonnet demands to be thought of as three quatrains and a couplet varies, and reveals just how differently sensitive Shakespeare remains throughout his collection to the nuances of structure” (2004: 56). The varying structures of the sonnets, at least to a close reader or an analyst, are what make the sequence rich in innovation. That they are rich in Shakespeare’s grand command of the English language and innovation in thought is of course the basis of their greatness, but the varying structures are needed because there are so many sonnets about basically the same thing: the speaker loves the Fair Youth.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 *Introduction and a brief overall description of the following sections sonnet structures*

> 2. The English sonnet (also called the Shakespearean sonnet after its foremost practitioner) comprises three quatrains and a final couplet, rhyming ababcdcdefefgg. An important variant of this is the Spenserian sonnet (introduced by the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser), which links the three quatrains by rhyme, in the sequence ababbabccdcdee. In either form, the 'turn' comes with the final couplet, which may sometimes achieve the neatness of an epigram. (Baldick (ed.) 2015: The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, *sonnet*, point 2)

Dictionary writers must of course be brief in their accounts but describing the "turns" in Shakespeare's sonnets as simplistically as above leads to a misrepresentation. In fact, as discussed in 3.7, the sonnets that turn in the couplet are in the minority in all of the 154 sonnets; they form the smallest set according to my analysis. Often the couplet is tightly knit together with Q_3, offering only a slight shift in sentiment. For example, in the last six lines of sonnet 97 the two are not easily separated:

> Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
> But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit,
> For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
> And, thou away, the very birds are mute.
> Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
> That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near. (Sonnet 97 lines 9–14)

The couplet only modifies the muteness of the birds, and the *winter's near* which ends the sonnet is a glance back at the theme of Q_1 of this sonnet. Sonnet 97 has in fact turned twice before the couplet, from winter as a metaphor for the absence of the beloved in Q_1 to the actual time of year (summer) in Q_2 and back to metaphorising the absence of the beloved for the last six lines quoted above, resulting in a 4-4-6 structure rather than 12-2.

As discussed in 3.7, Shakespeare's sonnets vary in their structures to the benefit of the reader, because reading, e.g. "the Fair Youth sonnets" 18–126, means reading 109 sonnets,

some of which cannot help but feel repetitive in their argument since the overarching topic that unites them is one man. As Shakespeare wrote in sonnet 76 ll.9–14:

> O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
> And you and love are still my argument;
> So all my best is dressing old words new,
> Spending again what is already spent:
> For as the sun is daily new and old,
> So is my love, still telling what is told. (Sonnet 76 lines 9–14)

One of the ways Shakespeare "dresses old words new" is by varying the structure of the sonnet, and if all the sonnets turned in the couplet the monotony might become unbearable, just as the sun would (become unbearable) if it never set.

Lines 9–14 of sonnet 76 (see section 4.2) are another example of a sonnet where the couplet is so similar in sentiment to the previous four lines (especially lines 11–12) that it is only distinguishable from them by its rhyme and different metaphor. The couplet does not turn the sonnet in any way. The metaphor changes but the sentiment remains, and this thesis is not specifically concentrated on Shakespeare's metaphors, which often change and shift in such a complex way that they cannot be the basis for any comprehendible description of the structure of all the sonnets in the scope of an MA-thesis.

The rhyme pattern always foregrounds the couplet because the closeness of the last two rhymes is very different from the rhymes of every other line in the quatrains. But in terms of describing the overall structure of a sonnet, one must, in my opinion, see beyond the rhymes and look at the bigger picture of what Shakespeare has written for us, i.e. an ever-present turn in the rhyme scheme does not mean an ever-present turn in the sonnet's actual contents.

Shakespeare does use the 12-2 structure at times, but the reason why it is not in the majority might be because argumentatively it is quite a rigid structure. It is rigid in the sense

that a poet has to turn the preceding 12 lines in just 2 lines at the couplet, which is an operation in itself, and rigid also because the twelve lines preceding the couplet become bound to it. The poet must write twelve lines with the last two lines in mind, and should the poet wish to change the course of his thought before the couplet he cannot do so if he is firmly decided on a 12-2 structure. For Shakespeare of course, this is no real challenge, and he can write rememberable and eloquent sonnets in this structure:

> Sonnet 30
> When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,
> I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
> And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;
> Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)
> For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
> And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
> And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight;
> Then can I grieve at grievances fore-gone,
> And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
> The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
> Which I new pay as if not paid before.
> But if the while I think on thee (dear friend)
> All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

Although the turn (a happy one) in the couplet seems somewhat abrupt compared to the previous twelve lines abundance of sighs, weeps and moans, the abruptness serves to foreground the swiftness by which the mere thought of the "dear friend" exiles a host of negative thoughts. The 12-2 structure then, is not a bad structure or a structure Shakespeare avoided, but neither is it the only structure to be found in his sonnets or even the most common one. As fine a sonnet as 30 is it would be near impossible to use that structure 154 times and not lose the reader, and not only would the sequence become monotonous to the reader but also to a poet of such an inventive scope as Shakespeare. Helen Vendler suggests that: "Sometimes, when a sonnet seems otherwise unremarkable … we may suspect that

Shakespeare's interest lay less in the theme than in structural invention" (Vendler 1999: 341). Variation in structure then, can be a way to keep the reader engaged and also to keep the poet engaged in his own work by allowing him to test the boundaries of the sonnet form and with it the boundaries of his own thought by challenging himself to write a sonnet in a new way.

In the next sections I will present the results of my study. As I analysed the sonnets, I found four types of main structures Shakespeare has used, and many sonnets that did not fit these main structures; these sonnets I call Shakespeare's experiments because Shakespeare rarely uses their structure more than once. The main structures are based on the line or lines the turn or turns occur. I have further divided the main structures into two types according to how clear and strong the turns are. In some sonnets the turn is more subtle than in others, and I call these cases **shifts** rather than turns in order to have a differentiating term. The word shift is, then, used in the sense of: "**shift >** as a noun, meaning 1: a slight change in position, direction or tendency, e.g. a **shift in** public opinion" (OED, Pearsall & Hanks (eds.) 2003: *shift*). So, for example, I have formed two sets of the 8-6 structure, a set of 8-6 structures with a turn and a set of 8-6 structures with a shift.

The sets are based on my reading of the sonnets accompanied with what the literature on the sonnets suggests about the structure of a given sonnet. Necessarily, however, my own analysis of a sonnet is the basis on which I build my analysis of a structure of a sonnet and can therefore be criticised. However, I hope to provide strong enough arguments of my own and of other scholars (where to be found) to convince the reader of the logic by which I have formed these units.

Helen Vendler's (1999) *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* discusses each sonnet in detail, often remarking on the structure of a sonnet, along with phonetic, etymological, and thematic analysing. On some of the less known sonnets I did not find any other scholar who

had published an analysis. Fortunately, Vendler's analyses are so well written that having just that one source on some sonnets did not hurt this thesis too much. Besides a brilliant analytical mind, she also worked on her book for nine years (Vendler 1999: vii). At times, when stuck on a sonnet analysis, Vendler's commentaries were invaluable to me. On occasion I disagree with her analysis and prefer my own, and of course, since she does not focus solely on structure she does not always comment on the structure of a sonnet, at least explicitly. If she had analysed every sonnets' structure in detail, discussed the turns, and drawn conclusions, there would have been no need for this thesis, or it would have had to have been named *V for Vendler*.

The 8-6 structure with a turn or a shift is common in the *Sonnets*. As discussed in 1. Introduction, the Italian sonnet form differed from Spenser's, Wyatts and Earl of Surreys not just in its rhyme scheme but also in the organisation of thought. In the Italian form there was a distinction between the octave and the sestet, where the volta or "turn" occurs, or rather is placed by the poet. As John Fuller (1978: 3) states about the division to an octave and sestet:

> This bipartite structure is one of observation and conclusion, or statement and counter-statement. The turn after the octave, sometimes signalled by a white line in the text, is a shift of thought or feeling which develops the subject of the sonnet by surprise or conviction to its conclusion.

In Shakespeare's sonnets there is no white line signalling the turn, nevertheless, in the movement of thought in a sonnet there is often a turn at line 9 just as in the Italian form. In some of Shakespeare's 8-6 sonnets the couplet stands out and turns the sonnet again forming an 8-4-2 structure.

Broadly speaking, the 4-4-4-2 structure with shifts modifies Q_1 two times and the couplet either modifies it the third time or offers a conclusion. The other type of a 4-4-4-2

structure I have identified I call a 4-4-4-2 structure with distinct quatrains; each quatrain and the couplet are distinctly different instead of modifying one thing.

Again, broadly speaking, the 12-2 structure is unified for twelve lines and the couplet usually turns the sonnet's meaning (rarely is there a more subtle shift in meaning).

I discuss the sonnets by quoting (with italics) lines and words from them with a frequency that means that it might benefit a reader (who does not know the sonnet by heart) to have the sonnet in hand (or on a split screen) to avoid scrolling back and forth.

As in the appendix, in this chapter I use different coloured fonts to highlight turns and shifts (8-6 turn, 8-6 shift, 8-4-2 turns, 4-4-4-2 distinct Q's, 4-4-4-2 shifts, 12-2 turn). Other colours are used to highlight keywords or phrases for my analysis.

4.2 *An 8-6 structure with a turn. Sonnet 76*

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
4 To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
8 Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
12 Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love, still telling what is told.

Sonnet 76 is divided into an octave of questions and a sestet of answer. The questions of Q_1 and Q_2 are in essence the same question expressed in different words or dressed anew if you will. Q_3 and C form a unified sestet, because the couplet continues the idea of lines 11–12 seamlessly, even repeating *old* from line 11. The answer to the question(s) of the octave is

that the repetition in the *Sonnets* is a sign of fidelity; the speaker's topics are the Fair Youth and love because of love.

The sonnet, I think, also comments on the choice of Shakespeare to use the *noted weed* (6) (glossed as "familiar dress" by Burrow (2002: 532)) of the sonnet form to express his speaker's thoughts. The sonnet form was surely by Shakespeare's time a most familiar form of poetry as Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* had been published in 1591 and Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalmion* in 1596 (Neely 1978: 385–7). The reason for the choice of the familiar dress of sonnet form and the rejection of *compounds strange* (4), could be read as a "surrender" to the topic of love. The sonnet form is historically the form of poetry used for the topic of love and adoration, and since *you and love are all my argument* (10) it is natural that the sequence is in sonnet form. Mario Aquilina writes:

> Since it is a staple of the tradition of epideictic poetry to think itself in terms of a relation to a 'thou', the style of the sonnets, in echoing tradition, is also marked by its relation to convention, beyond both the 'I' and the 'thou' of the text. Style, in this relation, dispossesses the author and downplays his importance by gesturing towards a structure of belonging to something that pre-exists and stretches beyond the poet's own writing. (2015: 131)

It is through such gesturing that the speaker excuses himself from the self-accusatory octave (besides the defence of fidelity). *O know, sweet love, I always write of you* (9) so how could I use any other form of poetry? Aquilina says of line 9 that:

> The volta at the beginning of the third quatrain presents us with an ambivalent denial: 'O know sweet love I always write of you, / And you and love are still my argument'. Using rhetorical terminology once again, the poem constructs a dichotomy between 'argument', or subject matter, and style, or 'dressing old words new'. (2015: 128)

The subject matter of the Fair Youth and love have directed the use of the sonnet form and the repetitive nature of the sequence in general. All the speaker can do is *dressing old words new* (11), which can be read as "writing again in a new way" what his predecessors have

written of love. One of the ways the speaker, or Shakespeare really[7], can do this is to bend the rules of the sonnet's logical structure, traditionally tied to the rhyme scheme. In this sonnet Shakespeare uses the Petrarchan 8-6 division which creates a tension between the ababcdcdefefgg rhymes and the semantic development of the sonnet. In other sonnets he is even more inventive with structure (see section 4.6).

Shakespeare is inventive also in other ways besides structurally in his sequence. Stephen Booth notes of the octave of 76 that:

> Note the syntactic jerkiness that results from this succession of appositives and appositive-like pairs; it comically testifies that, although the speaker protests that his verse lacks the virtues of witty substantive variation, his verse—at least this example of it—is capable of the vices of one kind of quick change: although the ideational reiterations obviously witness the truth of the speaker's description of his verse, its syntax glances aside spastically. (2000: 265)

The clever syntactical play makes the self-accusations seem disingenuous, since while the speaker is whipping himself for being boring, Shakespeare has inscribed in the accusations themselves something interesting. Helen Vendler is surely right when she writes that: "Of all the indictments that could be made against these astonishingly inventive poems, monotony is the furthest off the mark" (1999: 344). The modest hope of this thesis is to try to describe the inventiveness in structural variation Shakespeare shows in the *Sonnets*.

[7] "The speaker" is in this sonnet really "the writer" since he is talking about the written sequence, which makes using the term "the speaker" more complicated. It makes the boundary between Shakespeare and "the speaker" less clear. I think that in this sonnet Shakespeare's own voice seems to take over the character's voice to a degree. See section 3.6 for a discussion on "voicing".

4.2.1 *An 8-6 structure with a turn. Sonnet 119*

What potions have I drunk of siren tears,
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
4 Still losing when I saw myself to win?
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessèd never?
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
8 In the distraction of this madding fever?
O benefit of ill, now I find true
That better is by evil still made better,
And ruined love, when it is built anew,
12 Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent

This sonnet's octave is thematically tied together by the concept of errors and the juxtaposition of positives (l.3 *hopes*, l.4 *win*, l.6 *blessèd*) with negatives (l.3 *fears*, l.4 *losing*, l.6 *never*). A juxtaposition that anticipates the turn in the sestet to the co-mingling of good and evil. In the octave, however, good and evil are still separate and the attempt to mix them is seen as a mistake. In Q_1 the speaker shifts blame of this attempt of *Applying fears to hopes* (3) and vice versa and *losing when I saw myself to win* (4) to the mysterious *siren tears* (1)[8]. In Q_2 some blame is accepted as the synecdoche *my heart* (5) stands in for the speaker, accepting that it has made *wretched errors* (5). But this partial admission of sin almost immediately becomes another deflection as *the distraction of this madding fever* (8) explains the misprision of line 7 where the eyes of the speaker (another synecdoche) have hyperbolically been misplaced. Booth (2000: 401–2) finds the phrase *been fitted* (7) unusual and explains it through the Quarto spelling *bene fitted*, and thus an allusion to the Latin

[8] The Oxford Shakespeare: the Complete Sonnets and poems (2002: 618) does not explain why it opts not to use a capital letter with *siren* as in the Quarto edition. For a detailed analysis of the Quarto's "*Syren* tears" see Katherine Duncan-Jones (1997: 56–60)

wordplay which begins line 9, i.e. *benefit*. *Bene* is derived from *bonus* which in Latin means *good* (Simpson 2000: 75 *běně*, 79 *bŏnus*, *-a*, *-um*). So, in the Quarto version's line 7 there is an anticipation of the wordplay of line 9, and the Quarto's *bene* of line 7 is juxtaposed with line 8's *madding fever*, thus continuing the juxtaposition of good and evil prevalent in the octave.

The sestet turns to a union of good and evil from its first line with its wordplay *benefit of ill*, literally meaning something like "a good fit of evil/bad". This unorthodox union is further exemplified in line 10 where *better is by evil still made better*, and in the unholy trinity of the couplet where *by ills* (14) the speaker gains *thrice more* (14) than what he has spent. In the sestet then, there seems to be an absence of the separateness of good and evil still apparent in the octave, and in turn it deals with the dilemma of good and evil co-existing and affecting each other.

The blame of the octave seems to dissolve along with the dissolving of the juxtaposition, as the marriage of these two extremes in the sestet is offered as a solution to the inner turmoil and regret of the octave. The dissolving of (self)blame and regret in the sestet does not come out of nowhere, because the blame had already been deflected by synecdoche as I discussed above, or as Vendler states of the octave:

> A large amount of self-exculpation enters into this confession of "evil": the Siren tears had presumably the power of magic over the helpless speaker, the imbibing heart was deceived (thinking itself *blessèd*), and a *madding fever* was the infectious agent of the eyes' (involuntary) distraction from their spheres. (Vendler 1999: 503)

Vendler also notes the change of expression from the octave to the sestet, where they seem almost spoken by two different characters:

> When we compare the exclamatory, theatrical, self-dramatizing octave to the sober, "adult," proverbial sestet, we see that the person speaking has not integrated the two selves represented by the two halves of the poem. The sober, rebuked, bettered self

> hardly knows, anymore, the earlier deluded, thrashing, fevered self. Self 2 simply abjures self 1. (Vendler 1999: 505)

While true that the speaker's tone changes quickly in the sestet, I would argue that rather than renouncing the negatives of the octave the speaker unifies them with positives in the sestet. The octave's juxtaposition of good and evil is already a flirtation between the two, which leads to the "marriage" of the two in the sestet.

Finally, a few words about the couplet. I see it as tightly knit together with Q_3 because it personalises the quatrain's thoughts for the speaker, while basically retaining the same idea: that evil can lead to good. Above I called the couplet's monetary metaphor of spending and gaining thrice more by ill "an unholy trinity". But what is it that makes it seem so "unholy"? It is the contrast it has compared to lines 11–12 *And ruined love when it is built anew / Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater*. The only negative of these lines is *ruined*, and in contrast to line 9's *ill*, line 10's *by evil* and line 14's *by ill's* the word seems to lack agency. The love it speaks of is in ruins, but not by anyone's fault. By far the most beautiful and positive lines of the sonnet precede the couplet's metaphor, which makes the couplet's cold monetary deductions seem even more nefarious than they otherwise would be. I cannot describe the way lines 11–12 are built any better than the brilliant Helen Vendler does:

> If we attempt to distinguish among the three "proverbial" moments of the sestet, those threefold gains of the repentant lover, we can see that the first and third are the more "proverbially phrased"—epigrammatic, balanced, shrewd. But the second is descriptive, eloquent, and fresh—what Herbert would call "new, tender, quick": *And ruined love when it is built anew, / Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.* Shakespeare takes advantage here of the progressive sense of *grow* as he had used it in 115 (*that which still doth grow*) and adds to it the persistent comparatives (*fairer*, *more strong*), ending in an intensified comparative, *far great**er***. When he made up his own "new" proverbs (lines 10, 14), Shakespeare made them rhetorically "proverbial"; but when he took an old proverb, he vivified it into a growing beauty of love, as each phrase enacts the continued development not only of grandeur (from *fair* to *strong* to *great*) but also of intensity of growth (- *er*, *more*, *far* -*er*). If it were not for this enactment of hope, one would scarcely credit the economy of better made better by ill. (Vendler 1999: 506)

4.2.2 *An 8-6 structure with a turn. Sonnet 120*

That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
4 Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, y' have passed a hell of time,
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
8 To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.
O that our night of woe might have rememb'red
My deepest sense how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then, tend'red
12 The humble salve, which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

Shakespeare sometimes begins his turns with an interjection, for example in sonnets 10, 21, 23 and here. Most of his interjections come at line 9 and the next most common line is line 1. I counted 33 O-interjections in the sonnets; 19 of them come at line 9 and 13 at line 1. Broadly speaking there might be a reason for this, because as Irma Taavitsainen writes, interjections have been used to signal turns even in Chaucer's times:

> In Chaucer's fabliaux the cumulative use of interjections is used to mark important turning points in the plot, e.g. "*Out! Help! Allas! Harrow! he gan to crye*" is found in the Merchant's Tale (line 2366) and "*Fy! allas! what have I do?*" "*Tehee!*" in the Miller's Tale, (line 3740). (1995: 464)

Of course, Shakespeare does not use interjections in this cumulative way, but quite often an interjection coincides with the turning point in his sonnets.

Another readily distinguishable way the turns start is the word *but*, e.g. in sonnets 19 and 20. The *But that* of line 13 in this sonnet, which begins the couplet, however, is not a

turn, because in all its ambiguity it links the couplet to Q_3 more than it makes the couplet turn from Q_3. Booth, rejecting the sense of *Except that*, writes:

> As one comes upon it, *But that* in line 13 makes the same sort of arbitrary conjunction that *And* made in line 2, but this time the conjunction *But that*, is one which signals that the clauses it connects are related not only syntactically but logically (the difference is that between "Thursday I had the day off, and the king of France ate beans," and the same clauses connected by "but."). (2000: 407)

So, even as the word *But* at first would seem to signal a possible turn, in the construction *But that* and the logic of the poem it actually signals a connectedness of Q_3 and C. The connection is ambiguous on purpose, as it says two things at once, that the speaker at once feels the Fair Youth's pain because his own pain is similar and at the same time does not feel it because he is overwhelmed by his own pain (ibid. 408).

In this sonnet the O-interjection signals a turn to a wish of how things could have been and should have been. The reciprocal transgressions of the octave need not have taken place if they had realised upfront the sorrow and pain waiting for them. Line 9 is exceptional in this sonnet also because it is the only line that fuses the two lovers together in ***our*** *night of woe*, whereas the rest of the sonnet is strictly divided between a *you* and an *I*. The two have committed something foul against each other and have separated each from each and this is shown in syntax as well; the only *our* comes in the line of nostalgic hope, not reality.

Vendler sees an asymmetry between the pair's crimes in the final word of the sonnet *me*: "The friend needs only to have his offence ransomed, but the speaker needs to be ransomed in his entire self, bought back into the current of love" (1999: 510). The speaker can only know his side of their relationship and knows his dependence on the Fair Youth; he cannot know if the same is true for the Fair Youth. The end is in line with the abject love of the speaker, where the worth of himself is not recognised but the Fair Youth's worth is never truly in doubt. This type of love could also be described as virtuously humble were it not so

clear from the sequence that the Fair Youth treats the speaker as a thing of not much worth. The sequence is what gives this type of endings a tragic note.

4.2.3 *An 8-6 structure with a shift. Sonnet 36*

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
4 Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which, though it alter not love's sole effect,
8 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
12 Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

> Sonnet 36 represents, in the ongoing drama of the sequence, the first acceptance by the speaker of permanent division from the beloved. The division is enacted by the way in which the first-person plural which dominates in the octave (*we*, *our*) is replaced by the first- and second- person singular (*I*, *thou*) which dominate in the sestet; this contrast sets up an Italianate two-part form. (Vendler 1999: 191)

The octave-sestet division of this sonnet serves the theme perfectly, as the division from the beloved is portrayed not just in the content of the lines, but also by the structure of the poem. The *our undivided loves* and the punning *hours* of the octave turn to a strict division of *I* and *thee* in the octave, accompanying the octave-sestet division in sentiment. In the octave the division between the speaker and the beloved is tempered by the undivision of their love(s) (2), but the sestet goes as far as a total division where the speaker cannot so much as *acknowledge* the beloved in fear of bringing shame on him. But rarely, if ever, does

Shakespeare keep his sonnets neat and orderly structure-wise, and such is the case here as well with the octave's line 3-4 where *me*, *thy* and *me* appear, apparently making the octave-sestet division less clear. Vendler reads lines 3-4 as a sign that the dreaded division to *twain* (1) has already happened (theoretically, in the realm of this sonnet sequence) and is the reason for this sonnet (Vendler 1999: 192), even though one reads the octave as a prediction of future events. Saying one thing while also saying another is a technique Shakespeare uses on numerous occasions in the *Sonnets*, and so Vendler's analysis is credible. This technique, in a way, leads to two sonnets in one, because it offers two readings. Sonnet 36 can be read as a glance to a future where the two are going to be divided, or as a possibly more current sonnet describing what has just happened or is just about to happen. This type of sonnet is built on the ambiguity of what the "correct" reading might be, when in fact the two readings are meant to co-exist and create the poem together. So, the lack of neatness and strict order in the structure of Shakespeare's sonnets almost always serves the purpose of enriching the sonnets by making them more multi-layered. Another "untidy" aspect of this sonnet which Vendler does not comment on is the dilemma of *Although our undivided loves are one* (2) and *In our two loves there is but one respect* (6). The plural form *loves* on line 2 presents us with a logically incompatible idea of something *undivided* that is nevertheless many (*love**s***) and at the same time *one*. I read this logical infraction as a sign of doubt by the speaker about the real undivisability of their love. The doubt gains momentum on line 5 where the *undivided loves* of line 2 have become the more clearly separated *our two loves*, and instead of their loves being *one* as in line 2, in their loves now *is but one respect*, a far less clear connection than being *one*. The doubtfulness of the speaker on the unity of their love seeps through the lines in the octave, which supports Vendler's reading.

4.2.4 *An 8-6 structure with a shift. Sonnet 17*

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

The octave goes from l.1 *will believe* (simple future interrogative) to l.2 *were filled* (were-subjunctive) to ll.3–4 *is*, *hides*, *shows* (simple present) to ll.5–6 *could write*, (*could*) *number* (present conditional) to l.7 *would say* (future conditional) to l.7 *lies* (simple present) to l.8 *ne'er touched* (simple past negative). Such a high frequency of tense and mood shifts, in such a few lines, is not a normal feature in the *Sonnets* and it draws attention to itself. The reader has gone through a whirlwind of shifts in the octave but finds himself in a calmer climate by the sestet. The sestet decides to continue the mood and tense introduced on l.7, i.e. the future conditional, and does so throughout Q_3+C with *should be . . . scorned*, (should) *be termed*, *were . . . alive*, *should live*. It seems as if the octave was a fighting-ground for different forms and Shakespeare picked the future conditional as the winner.

The octave and the sestet are divided by the choice in tense and mood, but otherwise the division is not so clear. Q_3 is tightly linked with lines 7–8 through its first word *So*, meaning here "In similar fashion" (to the reported speech of lines 7–8, i.e. *The age to come would say …*). Also, the sestet is not completely unified, because the couplet starts with *But*

were some child of yours alive that time, which seems like a turn in itself. However, because this is the last of the so called "Procreation sonnets" the couplet's advice is hardly a dramatic turn, because its advice has already been given a multitude of times in the previous 16 sonnets. The couplet is thus something a reader would already expect at this point of the sequence. It is not so much of a "turn" as it is an appropriate end for this set of sonnets. But a 12-2 structure (turning at the moment of advice in the couplet) can be argued for because it is the apparent structure by which the argument proceeds, but at the same time there is a division to 8-6 which at least to me stands more out because such clear syntactic divisions are rare in the *Sonnets*.

4.2.5 *An 8-6 structure. Turn or shift? Sonnet 29*

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
4 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
8 With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising)
12 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Sonnet 29 is a fine example of a remarkable sonnet, which on the surface of its structure, however, is not quite so remarkable, in the sequence of all the 154 sonnets. The turn from one theme to another at line 9 is something a reader of the *Sonnets* quickly becomes familiar with. And the turn is quite often from a given theme to the Fair Youth as is the case here, when

octave's weeps, cries, curses and jealousy turn to the joyous moment of *Haply I think on thee* in Q_3 and an all-redeeming memory of *thy sweet love* in C. But very rarely are Shakespeare's sonnets simple when one takes a closer look at them, as Helen Vendler has done. Vendler states that: "As so often in Shakespeare, the analytic moment (here, line 8) in the sonnet becomes the fulcrum of change" (Vendler 1999: 162). By this she means the "chiastic paradox" of the line: *With what I most enjoy contented least* (8), which becomes paradoxical because the Fair Youth is (or is at least supposed to be) the thing he enjoys most, so how can he be least content with him (ibid.). Vendler finds a way out of the paradox by surmising that the Fair Youth is the thing the speaker "most most enjoys" (the type of a double superlative Shakespeare uses in sonnet 110 line 14 *your most most loving breast*), a kind of an ultimate enjoyment which only comes to mind after the speaker has gone through, in his thoughts, all the other enjoyable things in life (ibid.). Therefore, the turn to the Fair Youth on line 9 (or more accurately on lines 9–10) might not be so sudden as it appears on a first reading, since the last line of the octave contains a thought process that leads to the thought of the Fair Youth expressed in the sestet.

Another way Shakespeare has made the turn to the Fair Youth less sudden is that the *volta* is really a phrase of a line and a half ***Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising, / Haply I think on thee****, and then my state* /. By enjambing line 9 to 10 Shakespeare makes the reader wait a moment before revealing the turn to the Fair Youth, whereas the turn of <u>thought</u> is implied immediately by the first word of line 9 *Yet*, followed by *in these thoughts myself almost despising*. The end of line 9 necessarily convinces the reader that a turn of thought will be presented in the following lines, but that the turn is to a thought about the friend is only revealed in the last word of the phrase *thee*. Wright describes the metrical features of how we come to this line and a half and what happens in it brilliantly:

> The sentence, however, which all this while has been elevated in pitch, drifting through one modifying phrase after another, waiting for the main clause and especially for the verb that will resolve it, at last in line 9 breaks through to the significant conjunction “Yet"; and as we arrive at a string of words that promises shortly some grammatical resolution of the growing syntactical tension, we find a medial trochee followed by a feminine ending and an initial trochee in line 10. The whole effect of this sequence (especially after line 9’s initial trochee, though the meter is temporarily restored in the next two feet) is to give us the momentary illusion of having shifted to another, a falling, meter: ↗Yet ↘in | these thoughts myself | ↗al-↘most | ↘des-↗pi-↘sing, ↗Hap-↘ly … This turn of metrical events brings the self-dissatisfaction to a troubled climax, but the resumption of regular meter in the last four feet of line 10 no longer carries the tone of melancholy we saw earlier in even lines; rather, it seems on the verge of something imminent and admirable, which does indeed materialize in the spirited line 11. (1991: 80–1)

I would argue that the rhyme of reason and metrical features in this sonnet is what makes it such a memorable and wonderful sonnet. Shakespeare’s invention has been spent on these issues rather than complex structure because it does not need a complex structure to work.

However, the structure is not completely one dimensional either. The way in which the volta is structured in this sonnet, with the preceding quatrain and especially line 8 concerned with a process of thought, i.e. the speaker thinking on his own, and the turn on line 9 —explicitly mentioning *Yet in these* ***thoughts***— only turning to the Fair Youth on mid line 10 it could very well be argued that the turn in this sonnet is a turn in a thought process, caused by the memory of the Fair Youth and his love, rather than a turn in thought to the Fair Youth as such. The difference is one of the reader’s perspective: whether one sees the speaker’s state arising because of a memory securely in the past, or because of a thought about the Fair Youth’s still present love. The phrase *For thy sweet love remembered* is ambiguous by design. The difference between these two interpretations is somewhat subtle and they coexist as one reads the sonnet.

Line 9 could be read as a turn because of the dramatic and long awaited *Yet*, but as Shakespeare makes the reader wait a line and a half before the sonnet really reveals what causes this turn, it makes it less sudden and almost rather a shift. Often in the sequence’s

sonnets there is either a clear turn to the Fair Youth or a very subtle shift, here both could be argued for; especially because of the semantics of the sonnet, which make it ambiguous whether the sestet is about a memory of the Fair Youth or his living person.

4.3 *An 8-4-2 structure where the couplet is clearly separate from Q_3. Sonnet 15*

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment;
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows,
4 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheerèd and checked even by the selfsame sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
8 And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful time debateth with decay
12 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.[9]

Although Cheney (2001: 237) calls sonnet 15 "a perfect instance of the 'Shakespearean sonnet' of three rhymed quatrains and a concluding couplet", he also says later in the same article that: "If the octave uses theatre to represent the material and metaphysical problem of living in an uncertain universe, the sestet thus discovers the solution in the intertwined activities of philosophical vision and written verse" (ibid. 239). In my mind these two statements do not quite go together, because if there even is a "a perfect instance of the Shakespearean sonnet" it is a 4-4-4-2 sonnet in which Q_1 and Q_2 are clearly distinguishable

[9] Weinfield (2016: 116) notes the humanistic/naturalistic (instead of Christian) viewpoint of this sonnet: "In the first nine lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 15, the opening quatrains and then the turn to the sestet, two main ideas, transience and fatalism, are posed against each other in such a way as to constitute a single theme, one that is actually foreign to a specifically Christian outlook … Nature in these lines is the vortex from which everything emerges and into which all things disappear". Notice the anaphoric construction with only a modification in the octave from *every thing* to *men as plants*, which is still a wide scope, to a clear turn in the sestet to a narrow *you.*

from one another (as well as of course Q_3 and C). Look at sonnet 50 lines 1, 5, 9 and 13 for example:

> Line 1: How heavy do I journey on the way, /
> Line 5: The beast that bears me, tirèd with my woe, /
> Line 9: The bloody spur cannot provoke him on /
> Line 13: For that same groan doth put this in my mind: /

The topic changes each time, with Q_1's *journey*, Q_2's *beast*, Q_3's *bloody spur* and C's *groan*. Whereas in sonnet 15 Q_1 begins *When I consider every thing that grows* / and Q_2 begins *When I perceive that men as plants increase,* / . The anaphora ties the quatrains together, and the change from considering every thing that grows to perceiving that men as plants increase leads Q_2 to a narrower but similar sense of what in Q_1 had been considered, i.e. (absolutely) everything that grows. Cheney (ibid. 238) also notices the anaphora of line 5 and says: "In line 5 he uses anaphora to consolidate and specify the materialist (and theatrical) consideration of the first quatrain …". His analysis is of course not concentrated on the structure of the sonnet, and since it all in all makes similar observations as I have done, I draw the conclusion that Cheney meant that this is an especially good sonnet by Shakespeare, perhaps with especially Shakespearean language of the theatre, and that therefore, this is a "a perfect instance of a Shakespearean sonnet" as he would put it. In any case, structurally this is not a perfect 4-4-4-2 sonnet, if there is such perfection even to be found in the *Sonnets*, but it is not a perfectly divided 8-6 sonnet either because of the couplet. Remember what Cheney said of the sestet: "the sestet thus discovers the solution in the intertwined activities of philosophical vision and written verse" (ibid. 239). There are two "solutions" in the sestet then: the "philosophical vision" of Q_3, and lyrics which only appear in C. In the above quote Cheney sees these as an intertwined solution to the octave, but Q_3 seems to be as much of a solution as further problem. The speaker has laid out Time's detriments to *everything that*

grows in Q_1, to *men* in Q_2 and now in Q_3 these detriments threaten the Fair Youth, further continuing the specification of Time's victims. The sense of solution Cheney refers to comes from line 10 *Sets you most rich in youth before my sight*, where Time's detriments' only positive side is taken to account: the limitedness of youth makes it to be cherished in the now, not in some time in the future, and this realisation makes the speaker appreciate the Fair Youth all the more. But this is not precisely the same solution as in C.

The real answer to the octave arrives in the couplet's line 14 where the speaker declares to *engraft you new*. Burrow glosses engraft as a metaphor: "I renovate and eternize you through poetry", but Burrow also details the actual process of engrafting a scion (Burrow 2002: 410). Booth (2000: 158) examines *engraft* a bit more closely. One meaning is immortalising through verse; a meaning only made clear by the next sonnet's Q_1 (ibid.). The second is "I insert you, a scion of one tree, into another tree", meaning to join the Fair Youth with a wife (ibid.). The second meaning does not fit with sonnet 16, because its whole proposition is that the speaker's *poor barren rhyme* (l.4) is an inferior substitute for real offspring. Why would the speaker ask in sonnet 16 *But wherefore do not you a mightier way / Make war upon this bloody tyrant Time,* (l.1–2), if just in the previous sonnet's last line he had not offered lyric as a means of battling Time (and not procreation which he is offering now as *a mightier way*)? Booth argues that prior sonnets make no mention of poetry defeating Time and therefore a reader's first impression will be ambivalent between the two meanings (ibid.).

However one glosses *engraft*, it is the solution to Q_3 in which the Fair Youth was realised to be at Time's mercy too. And it does tie C to the octave because as Cheney argues well, *engraft* carries with it both the "writing of verse" meaning and the horticultural dimension: "… poetic ingrafting also solves the problem from the preceding quatrains where the growing plant increases only to decrease; the poet is himself the gardener who can

intervene protectively in this process, extending the life of the dying plant" (Cheney 2001: 240). Then, while C really answers only Q_3, it is still very much in connection with the octave's horticultural imagery.

My analysis has hopefully illustrated that there are at least two overlapping structures in sonnet 15. It is a 8-4-2 sonnet in the sense of: 1–8=Time's detriments, 9–12=solution to the octave/a new problem (Time's limitedness makes me appreciate you more / but also makes me realise you are its prey), 13–14= solution to Q_3 (by poetry, but also carrying with it the associations of engrafting a scion); on the other hand it is an 8-6 sonnet in its broader strokes, with a turn from a problem to the Fair Youth (When I consider, when I perceive, then I think of you). I would argue that the 8-6 division is what one at first notices or feels because of the foregroundedness of the rhetorical when-when-then-structure[10], but a closer reading reveals the disjointedness (differences of problem-solution) of Q_3 and C, thus favouring a more precise 8-4-2 division.

[10] Burrow (2002: 410) remarks about the when-when-then structure that: "The meditative structure of the sonnet, moving inevitably from general observation to the particular case of the friend, closely parallels that of 12, but it broadens outwards from the violets and trees of the earlier poem to absorb the astronomical breadth of 14".

4.4 *A 4-4-4-2 structure with distinct quatrains and a couplet. Sonnet 50*

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say
4 'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.'
The beast that bears me, tirèd with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
8 His rider loved not speed being made from thee.
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan
12 More sharp to me than spurring to his side,
For that same groan doth put this in my mind:
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

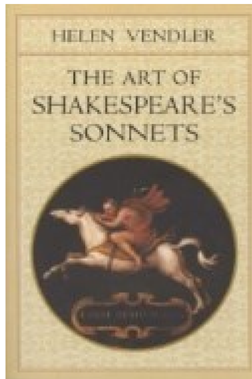
While this might not be one of the greatest sonnets of the sequence, it is a good example of a 4-4-4-2 structure with distinct quatrains and a couplet. The clarity of imagery in this sonnet's each section is a rare occasion, and as such it might work as a welcomed break from the previous sonnets. Q_1 introduces us to the reluctant *journey* away from his beloved of the speaker, Q_2 paints a picture of the equally reluctant *beast*, Q_3 is dominated by the *bloody spur* that causes a *groan* in the horse. C modifies the *groan* into the emotional pain of the rider, even as the horse is the one actually in pain its pain becomes a footnote for the speaker: "We are meant, I think, to wince at this tenacity in private grief in the presence of the horse's pain" (Vendler 1999: 249). Were all the sonnets in the sequence written in this clear but monotonous way they would become unbearable for the reader, but one only has to glance at the previous 49 sonnets to see that the opposite is true. They are full of intensity, hyperbole, ambiguity, passion, devotion and vulnerability. As such, this sonnet serves as a breathing space of clear imagery and slow pace. And just in time before the next sonnet's passionate haste and speed toward the beloved. Sonnet 51 is like an antithesis of this one, and read in

sequence they become juxtaposed, as 50's sluggishness makes 51 feel all the more pacier. Whoever (Shakespeare or the printer) has organised the order of the *Sonnets*, at least here, they have gotten it right.

Vendler, who writes one of the shortest analyses of her book on this sonnet, does still notice the twin nature of horse and man in this sonnet (Vendler 1999: 248). The speaker's *heavy* journeying is mirrored by the horse's *heavily* produced *groan*, the speaker's *weary travel's* is coupled by the horse's *tirèd* approach to the speaker's *woes* (ibid.). And Vendler reminds us that Hopkins has noted the alliterative chain that is reminiscent of a horse's plod throughout the sonnet "*miles/measured, beast/bears, woe/weight, speed/spur …*" (Vendler 1999: 249). Even in the fabric of the sonnet, which is otherwise structured on the speaker's fictive consciousness, the horse's presence is felt and the two are thus joined. The connection of these two is what makes the speaker's dismissal of the horse's pain, as a symptom of his own mental suffering, so startling and makes the reader "wince". To that point of the *bloody spur* hitting the horse's side and leading to the *groan* at the end of line 11 the two have been in it together, but as soon as the thought of the beloved enters the speaker's mind everything else loses meaning. The speaker loses the connection with the animal and is again alone with his love.

This is one of those sonnets (which there are too many) of which it is near impossible to find academic analyses, and as mentioned even Vendler seems to fall somewhat silent on it. But it might not always be a sign of a bad poem. Some sonnets just are harder to verbalise into a meaningful analysis, especially into one that someone will choose to publish. That does not say anything about the effect of such a poem. Just because something is difficult to put to words does not mean it does not work as a poem and have an effect on the reader, and in fact sometimes the opposite is true. Would Vendler, for example, have been so affected with

sonnet 51 as to allude to it in her book cover, if it were not preceded by the sonnet 50 discussed here:



(Illustration: "Allegory with Horse and Rider" (1530), attributed to Holbein the Younger)

4.4.1 *A 4-4-4-2 structure with distinct quatrains and a couplet. Sonnet 118.*

Like as to make our appetites more keen
With eager compounds we our palate urge,
As to prevent our maladies unseen
4 We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
8 To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t' anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assurèd,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
12 Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be curèd;
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

From physical maladies (Q_1) to their psychological equivalent (Q_2) and then to a combination of the both (Q_3) to the lesson learned (C). Each quatrain and the couplet changes clearly and makes it fruitless to talk about an octave or a sestet. The changes are quite clear and can be called turns, although the term is not perfect for a 4-4-4-2 structure, it is better to talk about

distinct quatrains and a distinct couplet (see section 3.7). For a 4-4-4-2 structure where the quatrains and C are not so clearly distinct see for example sonnet 49 in the appendix.

To say that the quatrains are distinct does not mean they are not connected. Q_1 and Q_2 are strongly connected by *Even so*, which creates the apparently natural connection with laxatives/aperitifs of Q_1 and the metaphors of unfaithfulness in Q_2. *Even so* (5) is a stealthy phrase which without further questions equates Q_1 and Q_2, as if matters of digestion were as serious as those of fidelity. The speaker's self-excusing strategy invites the reader to accept this equitability, where affairs are *bitter sauces* (6) counteracting the *ne'er cloying sweetness* (5) of the Fair Youth. Not only are the speaker's missteps to be regarded as equally natural as appetite or digestion, their cause is a quality in the Fair Youth. That this quality is a positive one (*sweetness* (5), *welfare* (7)) is the strangest part of the sonnet. It introduces the idea of there being such a thing as "a too much of a good thing". Vendler writes that: "The psychological mastery of the sonnet lies in it seeing one's ennui with *welfare* as itself a *sick*ness, like loss of appetite or indigestion" (1999: 501). Whether the reader rejects or accepts this, he or she will at least puzzle over it before deciding. As much of a poor excuse by the speaker it might sound, there is light and dark in every person, and the idea of rejecting a situation of pure light or *ne'er cloying sweetness* is surely not ideal but it might perhaps be humane, as if a balance of the two need be maintained.

In Q_3 the idea of too much good reaches its rhetoric climax with *rank of goodness* (12) and *by ill be cured* (12) and the sonnet starts to sound less and less like an apology and more like a (possibly mad) rationalisation of unfaithfulness. While on the one hand Q_3 praises the Fair Youth as a source of *healthful*ness (11) and *goodness* (12) on the other this is undercut by *rank* (12) and the couplet's *sick of you* which again places the speaker as a hopeless/natural victim of a disease rather than an active wrongdoer. Vendler describes Q_3 as a nexus where the analogy between digestion and sexual morality breaks down and says that

it contains a "chaos of mixed metaphor" (1999: 500). It seems logical that when the speaker's argumentation about something so hard to argue for (a necessary evil) reaches its peak, then the most complex language of the sonnet appears. The reason for the complexity of language is to make the reader forget the simple truth of "do not cheat", and make he or she instead lost in the fog of the opposite argument's logic where *policy* (9), *grew* (10) and *medicine* (11) are used to make infidelity seem a natural cause of an effect, and also to make being faithful sound ever so hard a task that in order to accomplish it policies would need to be changed, natural growth stopped and medicines administered.

4.4.2 *A 4-4-4-2 structure with shifts. Sonnet 87*

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:
4 My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
8 And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thy self thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
12 Comes home again, on better judgement making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

The sonnet shifts from *too dear for my possessing* (1), *how do I hold thee* (4), *Thy self thou gav'st* (9) to *Thus have I had thee … no such matter* (C). The first quatrain deals with the idea of possessing something too valuable, like a beggar who has a ruby ring on his finger. Q_2 shows that this *fair gift* (7) is the beggar-speaker's by the grace of the Fair Youth and the idea of possessing changes into the idea of having something because the Fair Youth wills it. The agency of the possessing is the Fair Youth's and not only is the speaker unworthy (by his

status) of this gift, but he has also not done anything to deserve it. The third quatrain goes further by saying that the giving of the gift has been a grave mistake which has now been noticed and the gift recalled. Had the Fair Youth realised the value of himself he would have never gifted himself to the speaker not of his worth. The couplet ends the sonnet on the dark realisation that the relationship has been so insignificant, the gift so quickly demanded back, that it might have been a dream. All four sections of the sonnet shift the idea of possessing. We started with the speaker letting go of the Fair Youth *Farewell, thou are too dear for my possessing*, then in Q_2 the speaker is no longer the one in control and letting go, but the Fair Youth is the gift-giver who can withdraw his gift. It does not matter whether the speaker is ready to let go of the Fair Youth since their relationship is not in his power. The Fair Youth will shake the speaker off like dust from a jacket when he will, so the idea of the speaker letting go does not matter. In Q_3 the speaker finally loses his possession completely as the Fair Youth's *better judgment* (12) of his own worth compared to the worth of the speaker is realised. The dust is off the jacket. In the couplet even the history of the speaker having the gift is erased. He never had the gift really. It was a dream that the speaker could have ended up with the Fair Youth and he ends up wide awake to this reality. This sonnet is like an antithesis to sonnet 29 where the love of the Fair Youth was vividly remembered in the sestet.

Vendler, with her idea of a key word (that many of the sonnets have a repeated word in the quatrains and the couplet), thinks that the reader will expect the word *gift* in the couplet because of the phonetically similar *gives* of Q_1 and the *gift* in Q_2 and Q_3 (1999: 383). She deduces that the *gift* is missing in the couplet because the gift has been withdrawn (ibid.). She also notices well that the otherwise legalistic language of the sonnet is broken free of in the phrases *that riches*, *this fair gift*, *thy great gift* and *a king* and that this shows the speaker's emotion breaking through the "legal excuses" that are being made for the Fair Youth (ibid.). As completely as the speaker understands the Fair Youth's decision this does not bring relief;

just because you understand something does not make it better. The breaks from the legal language betray the emotions that wished for another verdict. Vendler also perceptively notes that the language of this sonnet avoids a direct accusation of "you took back your gift" to the last, and to avoid it inanimate things take actions when "*a charter…gives*, *patent… is swerving*, *a gift…comes home*, a *dream…flatter*[s]" (ibid. 381). The accusation remains unuttered, but it is obvious in another way. Gifts are to be given and not to be taken away. The speaker, if he wanted to avoid all traces of accusation, would use a word like *loan* instead. Instead of a loan which naturally demands reimbursing this sonnet is about a gift which is taken back because its great worth and its recipients low worth are realised. The beggar's ruby ring has been appraised and will be placed on a worthier hand if anywhere.

4.4.3 *A 4-4-4-2 structure with shifts. Sonnet 71*

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
4 From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
8 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if (I say) you look upon this verse
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
12 But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

Quatrain by quatrain the speaker subtly fades away in this sonnet. Vendler states:

> The secondary dynamic is the speaker's increasingly distanced view of himself…In Q_1 he is so recently dead that his death knell is still sounding; in Q_2, the detached *hand that writ it* seems long dead, but still an integral body part. But by Q_3, the speaker is wholly *compounded...with clay*, dissolved into dust. In C, he is *gone*, no longer corporeal at all. (1999: 329)

As the primary "aesthetic dynamic of the poem" Vendler sees "the thinning down of requests": mourn for *me* in Q_1, at least remember my *hand* in Q_2, at least say my *name* in Q_3 (ibid.). She reads the sonnet as meaning the opposite of what it says: that the speaker is actually indirectly pleading the Fair Youth to recognise him and his fore coming demise because he fears that in reality the Fair Youth might not be moved at all even by his death (ibid.). This reading is in line with the sequence where the love of the speaker is undeniable and absolute, but the return of this love is almost always unsure. The reading is also strengthened by the impossibility of what the speaker is asking of the Fair Youth. How could he not *remember the hand that writ* this sonnet's lines without serious amnesia. How could he cease mourning the speaker immediately as the church bells started to toll if he really had strong feelings for him. If the Fair Youth loved the speaker, it would not be likely that he would not even read this sonnet as Q_3 suggests.

Vendler rejects the ironic readings of the sonnet by Booth and Kerrigan and says that it is rather a genuine representation of "hapless love" (ibid. 327). She is referring to Booth saying that it is a sign of narcissistic smugness of the speaker that he asks the Fair Youth to forget him, when how could he if he is reading this sonnet (Booth 2000:257). I much prefer Vendler's point of view, because I would argue that this sonnet is a good example of triangulated address, where the real audience of the sonnet is us the readers and not the Fair Youth-the reader. The sonnet does after all say *O, if you (I say) look upon this verse* (9). The Fair Youth's interest in reading this sonnet is in question, but anyone else reading it is (obviously) reading it. It is to us that the speaker would show his sacrifice for love as Vendler notes: that he is willing even to be forgotten for his love, which, considering that the sequences only defence against Death has been immortality in verse, is the ultimate sacrifice (Vendler 1999: 328). It is also a sign of selfless love that the speaker wishes the best for the Fair Youth regardless of his own fate. This is well in line with the image of the speaker that I

have formed in reading the *Sonnets* and I see nothing ironic in this sonnet. My speaker, at least, always holds the Fair Youth on a higher pedestal than himself, so why should he not do so even in death. The speaker seems ever doubtful of the return of love from the Fair Youth, so why would we not expect these pleads from him if we accept Vendler's opposite reading of the sonnet. Nay, if and when we read these lines, we need not be cynical and literal, but we can accept that such hyperbole and ultimateness as this sonnet represents depicts well a certain phase of love or being in love. A phase where *You are my all the-world* as sonnet 112 says.

4.5 *A sonnet with a douzaine and a clear turn in the couplet. Sonnet 22*

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date,
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
4 Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me.
8 How can I then be elder than thou art?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself, but for thee will,
Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary
12 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain:
Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

The douzaine is unified by the unity of the lovers, expressed in various terms. In Q_1 the idea is introduced indirectly through a denial of the mirror's image. The speaker sees not the real image in the glass, because he identifies himself so completely with the Fair Youth that he only sees his reflection in him. If they are one, he cannot be old, as long as the Fair Youth remains young. In Q_2 the idea of oneness of appearance leads to the explicit statement of the hearts co-dependent state of residence. Line 8's question is posed directly *How **can** I then be*,

instead of *How **could** I then be* in the conditional, which undermines the speaker's resolve that they are one that has preceded the sonnet to this point. Q_3 connects the idea of unity of the lovers' to the possible perils this unity entails. Each with each other's heart to care for, they also have the power to hurt the heart entrusted to them.

Vendler sees this sonnet as being about the fear of the speaker for his heart being slain, and reads it as progressing backwards from the couplet and becoming an "exposé of its false beginning" (Vendler 1999: 134–5). She is right, but she misses a crucial word in the sonnet. The revealing word in the couplet is *when* on line 13. The meter would be preserved perfectly well if instead of *when* it read ***if** mine is slain:*, one unstressed syllable would be in place of another. So, the doubt revealed by line 8's direct question, which already almost burst the image of two being one, is now a certainty of being *slain* by the Youth. Vendler misses the certainty of the speaker in the couplet and states: "Nobody is caring for the speaker's heart for the speaker's sake; indeed, it is in **danger** of being *slain*" (Vendler 1999: 135, emphasis added). I read it as more than a danger (because it reads *when*, and it does not read *if* or even *should mine be slain*, where the meter would also be preserved; *should* and *be* are often in unstressed positions in the *Sonnets*). The certainty of the speaker is in such contrast with everything beautiful and hopeful that precedes it, that it makes the sonnet almost tragic. Why reserve such words of sentiment for someone who you know will only hurt you? In this light line 14 reads as a desperate threat in a situation that resembles a hostage being held. It is made all the more desperate by the fact that the other party clearly does not love him back, and therefore he does not really have the Youth's heart as hostage. Emily Stockard also misses the certainty of the couplet, like Vendler, but aptly notes of the "hostage situation" that:

> … the appropriation of the language of courtly love reveals his **fear** of being "slain" by one who does not requite his love … the threat of death applies not to both lover and beloved, as Shakespeare's speaker suggests, but to the lover alone. The couplets

> warning is predicated on mutual love; but **should** the youth withdraw his love, Neoplatonic union would cease to exist, thus subverting the basis on which the threat depends. (Stockard 1997: 473–4, emphasis added)

4.5.1 *A sonnet with a douzaine and a clear turn in the couplet. Sonnet 34*

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
4 Hiding thy brav'ry in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
8 That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace;
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief:
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss.
Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
12 To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

For me, the abrupt end this sonnet has makes it a 12-2 sonnet. For 12 lines the speaker has described what will not be enough of an amends for the *disgrace* (8) the Fair Youth has put him through. This is done through a potpourri of metaphors, but when we come to the couplet the language is plainer and the idea clear: true tears of love as proof of the emotions of the Fair Youth. If the Fair Youth will shed tears because he realises that he has injured the thing he loves, then the speaker can accept his regretfulness. Lesser acts of regret are just drying the rain (6) (i.e. tears) on the speaker's face when it will still get wet, because the base cause is still there: The Fair Youth's disgracing action is still seen as a sign of not loving the speaker. Shame is just shame, it *lends but weak relief* (11) to the speaker, who is looking for a sign of real affective emotion from the Fair Youth. Whatever has happened between the two, the speaker did not see it coming and travelled *forth without* his *cloak* (2). He let his guard down because he believed that only sunshine would be coming from the Fair Youth as

promised. This is the primary cause of the speaker's injury that now needs healing or ransoming. The promise of good times to come has been broken by a destructive act and therefore the only thing that can make this right again is that the primary promise be returned to and kept. The Fair Youth must love the speaker to be willing to do this, to keep his promise of a *beauteous day* (1) and that is why consoling (drying the rain), or shame will not do. Only a sign of love is acceptable because it is a sign that the Fair Youth repents his action and, more importantly, will after all keep his promise of sunshine and repair the damage done to the speaker's broken heart, which was broken not by the act in itself, but by what that act did to their relationship. Their relationship was damaged, but should the Fair Youth show willingness to repair their relationship by showing through tears that he still loves the speaker, then all could be well again.

Vendler, in her discussion of this sonnet focuses mainly on the shifts in metaphor, stating that after the first six lines meteorological metaphors' the following shifts occur:

Structure of Sonnet 34, Lines 7–14

Metaphor	Line							
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
A. Medicine	salve	heals wound cures	physic					
B. Emotional pain		disgrace	grief	loss	relief	bears	tears	
C. Religion			shame	repent	sorrow	cross		ransom
D. Sin / Ethical offence					offender's	offences		ill deeds
E. Wealth							pearl	rich
F. Love							love	

(1999: 180–1)

There is something so much simpler about the last two lines' metaphors than what has preceded it. The word *love* (13) breaks through like the sun amongst the clouds of all the

previous metaphorical complexity, where the speaker's injured feelings and the Fair Youth's inadequate repentant actions are described. The last two lines still combine categories of thought: the emotional pain showed through *tears* is equated with wealth as *pearl*, and the wealth of these pearls is what *ransom*s (because of the overall vocabulary used in the sonnet Vendler sees this as a religious term and not a financial transaction) the *ill deeds* (which Vendler equates with sin and ethical offence). But even though the couplet is not that simple in its metaphors, the singular appearance of *love* makes it plain compared to the rest of the sonnet (notice that it is the only bracket with only one instance in Vendler's diagram). Something difficult to accept and possibly complicated in its nature has been done by the Fair Youth, but the solution to this complication in their relationship is simple. Love.

4.5.2 *An experimental 12-2 structure. Sonnet 126*

O thou my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
4 Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st.—
If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)
As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
8 May Time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure:
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure!
Her audit (though delayed) answered must be,
12 And her quietus is to render thee.
(   )
(   )

This sonnet is experimental in its rhyme scheme aabbccddeeff and in its quiet couplet.

Jonathan Sell writes of the many interpretations of the couplet:

> Great and sometimes fanciful ingenuity has been applied to interpreting the twin sets of parentheses indicating the 'missing' couplet in the first edition (1609) of the

> sonnets. As Duncan-Jones's note *ad loc*. (1997:366) informs us, critics have discovered: marks in an account-book enclosing the final sum, but empty; an hour glass in which the sand has run out; waxing and waning moons; an empty grave into which the corpse of the lovely boy will eventually fall; and the image of a failure to 'couple', since what is missing is just that, the final couplet. (2013: 178)

There has even been speculation that this is a deformed sonnet, or that the parentheses have been added by the printer (ibid. 2013). To me the quietness of the parentheses is obviously intended by Shakespeare. After so many sonnets, so many words about the Fair Youth it has to end sometime somehow and why should the quiet that follows not be illustrated on the page. Without the parenthesis the poem would just oddly stop; now it softly fades out the Fair Youth sequence. *Quietus,* according to Burrow (2002: 633): "… is the technical term to mark the settling of a debt, at the time of an *audit* …". *Quietus* obviously has the word *quiet* in its body and this also suggests a quiet to follow, not something completely missing. The speaker has made his case in the 126 sonnets and closes his lips; he does not lose his tongue as the sonnets to follow prove. This is a seven-couplet sonnet. The final couplet rhymes as well, if you like, as silent rhymes with silent.

The parentheses are a remarkable instance in the *Sonnets* and therefore stand out in such a way that for me this is a 12-2 sonnet. The final couplet of parentheses signifies both the silence of the speaker and the coming end of the Fair Youth; it is such a dramatic moment after reading so many sonnets about the Fair Youth that it eclipses what has preceded it in the sonnet.

The other couplets' most noticeable feature is the defiant tone they produce. There is a defiance, I think, if you consider the sequence, in *O thou my lovely boy* (1) with its possessive *my*. The speaker rarely supposes the Fair Youth as his in any way. The Fair Youth is called a *boy* only twice in the *Sonnets*, the prior time was in sonnet 108 *sweet boy* (5). Sonnet 108 already dealt with the problem of repetition in the sequence, asking *What's new*

to speak, what now to register, / (3). *Boy*, now reappearing, creates a difference between the speaker and the Fair Youth. It highlights the Fair Youth's age as a source of inexperience. This necessarily recalls that the speaker is older; he is a man and has experience and therefore understands more than the Fair Youth.

The other interjection of the sonnet once again places the Fair Youth in possession, this time of Time's in *Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure: /* (9). The Fair Youth, before so adamantly admired, is now at the end seen in a subservient role of master Time, as her *minion*; *minion*[s] are many and not unique as the speaker usually has described the Fair Youth. It is as if in the end the speaker is forced to admit, or even wants to admit that the Fair Youth is not unique in the cosmological framework of Time itself. This is in a marked difference to how the sequence started, with urging the Fair Youth to defeat Time by procreation. And it differs from the idea of immortality in verse that is first introduced in sonnet 18. The surrender to Time that sonnet 126 announces stems from a giving up on the Fair Youth by the speaker. It is time to move on and accept what will be.

Shakespeare is very inventive in how he uses the sonnet form, and this sonnet is just an extreme example of it. No more extreme, however, than the 15-line sonnet 99, for why should parentheses be more extreme than an extra line. Shakespeare knew the "rules" of sonnet writing but was not bound by them. Why should he have been? If he felt that the idea he wanted to express through his speaker could not be best expressed by conforming to former ways of writing sonnets, he invented new ways of writing sonnets. There were no steadfast rules of how to write sonnets, there was only the tradition of how they were written. Shakespeare sought to transform this tradition and not just conform to it. This to me is evident not because of the singular case of a couplet sonnet or sonnet's 99 extra line, but by his many experimentally structured sonnets. Vendler writes that:

> Yet in spite of the domination of the series by the patterns 4-4-4-2 or 8-4-2, almost every conceivable restructuring possible within fourteen lines is invented by Shakespeare in the course of the sequence. The 4-6-4 structure here, the 1-11-2 structure of 66 (*Tired with all these*), the 8-4-1-1 structure of 94 (*They that have pow'r to hurt*), the 4-10 structure of 98 (*From you have I been absent in the spring*), the 7-7 structure of 111 (*O for my sake do you with Fortune chide*), the 12-2 structure of 117 (*Accuse me thus*), are examples of this variety. (1999: 341)

I do not agree with every and each analysis of Vendler's, but I definitely agree that Shakespeare tries out almost everything. I call these experiments, because often they are used in just one sonnet, and because Shakespeare has basic forms that he uses often like 8-6, 8-4-2, 4-4-4-2 and 12-2. A couplet of parentheses is "just" another experiment, and a very successful one, as it beautifully ends the main sequence of the *Sonnets*. At least it does for me. Another reader of the *Sonnets* might disagree with me, because, after all, a blank space where words usually are leaves a vast amount of working ground for the imagination. Jonathan Sell writes:

> We have the preceding co-text which leads us to this hermeneutic brink; we have, too, literary contexts such as the conventions and practice of Petrarchanism to help us that far; but once line twelve has been crossed, we are all at sea with nothing more to guide us or, in the absence of any succeeding co-text or rhetorical frontloading, to confirm us in the direction we take. When communication is suspended in this way, the reader is ejected ex mediis rebus from the communicative act and there can be no cognitive compensation. It might be argued that since the effect of this is very much to incite the reader to complete the writer's thought, terminally interrupted communication actually does lead to more communication or communing between writer and reader, when the reader struggles to complete the writer's thought. More than that: instead of 'absolute hermeneutic irresolution', such interruptions offer the reader 'absolute hermeneutic liberty' and the privilege of providing a heteronomous closure for the poem. (2013: 178–9)

The Fair Youth sequence's strength to the end is experimentation on the sonnet form and the openness for interpretation which allows the readers to read themselves into the sequence and find themselves in it.

4.6 *Experimental structures. Sonnets 154, 91 and 1 as examples*

154

The little Love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs, that vowed chaste life to keep,
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire,
Which many legions of true hearts had warmed,
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarmed.
This brand she quenchèd in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove:
Love's fire heats water; water cools not love.

91

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest;
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be:
And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast,
Wretched in this alone: that thou mayst take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

With sonnet 154 Shakespeare ends the sequence in a variation of the 12-2-structure, where the turn starts midway line 12. The *Sonnets* started with an experiment (4-10) and now they end with one. In sonnet 91, as another example of an experiment, the *But* turns the sonnet on line 7 and then the sonnet turns again in the couplet, effectively making this a sonnet of two sestets and a couplet, i.e. a 6-6-2-structure. The logic for the variation in sonnet 154 must be that Shakespeare wanted to write a longer couplet, or that he wanted to write these exact words and they would not fit on the last two lines. Shakespeare had no need to forcefully adhere to any structure; after all, the structure should serve the message of the sonnet and not be all important in itself. A similar experiment of a longer couplet is in sonnet 117 where the volta begins at the start of line 12 *But shoot not at me in your wakened hate* /. In sonnet 91 *wealth*, *hawks* and other things of pride are given the same number of lines as the speaker's only pride. Six lines for other people, six lines for the speaker and then the turn to the fear of losing the Fair Youth in the couplet. This fear the speaker feels intensely since the Fair Youth

is the only subject of worth in his life, unlike the other people who might have many things to boast about and therefore to lose one thing would not be so fateful to them. The equal number of lines allotted for the other people, i.e. *Some*, and the speaker juxtaposes the two. This could not be so effectively have been done with an 8-4-2 or 8-6-structure where the idea is the unequalness of the parts. The couplet of sonnet 91 reveals the downside of having life depend on someone's love: if that love ceases you have not just lost a hawk among hawks or your favourite horse eventually to be replaced, but you have lost all.

Sonnet's 154 authorship has been debated, but I see no reason why Shakespeare would not have written such a sonnet. The mythological story it presents is like the refreshing bath the story includes. After so many sonnets where the protagonists are the same, the reader is in the end brought to something more universal. In sonnets other than 153 and 154 love is always something between the characters of the *Sonnets* and this narrows their scope. They are about love, but always strained by the specificity of the characters' relationships, which makes them at the same time about the characters' love and not love in general. Not to say that this general dimension is not present in them, but in 154 the mythological story overpowers the relationship of *I* and *mistress* who have only half a line for them in …*but I, my mistress' thrall* / (12). Perhaps one reason for the lengthier couplet is that Shakespeare might have wanted to place that phrase in a position where it would pass with the least amount of notice, as I think it now does. It is just an introductory phrase for lines 13–14, explaining who came to the fountain (*I*) and why (because my mistress holds a power over me). The phrase …*but I, my mistress' thrall* / (12) and line 13 are in some sense one introduction to line 14, and line 14 could be seen as the turn in this sonnet, because it holds the final note of the whole sequence *Love's fire heats water; water cools not love.* (14). My interpretation is that the end of the mythological story of Cupid's arrow and the turn to the introductory line and a half before the end note of line 14 is the more noticeable structure,

especially as the sonnets often turn with the word *but*. Whichever the case, the sequence's end has the characters in proper relation to the larger notion of Love. They are but mortal instances of something as eternal as mankind itself.

The reason for these and other experiments of Shakespeare's must be that structure was always a means to an end and not the end in itself for Shakespeare. Rather than force himself to stick to rules that are not written anywhere Shakespeare innovated structures that served what he had to say through his speaker. For an analytic reader at least, the variation in structuring principles is one of the great strengths of a sequence where repetition of subject matter is *like prayers divine* (sonnet 108, line 5).

I count 43 sonnets to be of an experimental structure; that is their structure is a singular instance or repeated only once (see footnote 14 in 5 Conclusion). The experiments form a large group in the *Sonnets*.

If we believe that Shakespeare himself is behind the order of the *Sonnets* then sonnet 1 can be taken as Shakespeare's way of making it clear that he means to experiment with structures or bend structure to his will:

Sonnet 1 (4-10 structure)
From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
4 His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
8 Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
12 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.

The first sonnet of the sequence begins a subsection of 1–17 that have been called "the procreation sonnets". In these sonnets Shakespeare uses a multitude of arguments to convince the Fair Youth of the *Sonnets* of the necessity of his procreation. Q_1 of sonnet 1 lays the case for the rest of the sonnet and also the groundwork for the subsection. The young man is one of these *fairest creatures* (1) and thus has a moral obligation to preserve his beauty. That he is one of these *creatures* is made clear by line five's contrastive *But thou* and line nine's high praise of the *thou* that has been so sternly reproached starting from line five. The obligation to preserve his beauty comes from the speaker's stance that *we* (1) desire this, *we* seemingly alluding to the human condition in general. Time ever moving forward, the only option for this preservation put forth by the poetic speaker is *a tender heir* (4).

The sonnet is thus structured semantically by two main themes: 1: Praising the speciality of the young man and 2: Reproaching the young man for not making good use of his speciality. The poem turns on line five when the reproaches begin to fly. The couplet adds a warning: nothing but the grave awaits you if you do not pay the world its due. Lines nine and ten alleviate the surge of accusations but in doing so only make the reproach of lines 11–12 and the warning of the couplet more poignant and do not change the overall structure of the sonnet. The unusual place for the volta at the beginning of Q_2 is explained by Vendler as follows:

> Many of Shakespeare's sonnets preserve (except for rhyme) the two-part structure of the Italian sonnet, in which the first eight lines are logically or metaphorically set against the last six. An octave-generalization will be followed by a particular sestet-application, an octave-question will be followed by a sestet- answer (or at least by a quatrain-answer before a summarizing couplet). In such poems, we can see to what an extent Shakespeare had internalized the two-part structure of so many of his predecessors, Italian, French, and English. On the other hand, he finds a strenuous pleasure in inventing as many ways as possible to construct a fourteen-line poem; and I think it is no accident that the first sonnet in his sequence avoids the two structures a reader might expect—the binary structure of the Italian sonnet, and the quatrains-in-parallel of the English sonnet. (Vendler 1999: 50)

It is somewhat of a statement from Shakespeare to begin his sequence by bending the rules of the sonnet tradition so clearly. At the same time, he gives a nod to the Petrarchan tradition with Q_3 beginning with two lines of positive exhortation but as mentioned these two lines quickly become undermined by what follows. It is the structural equivalent to saying: “The rules are mine for the breaking”. Vendler states that the ghost of the Italian sonnet underlies all of the sonnets and a “shadow sonnet” can often be intuited behind them, and in this case it would be of the form: Q_1+Q_2= reproaches, Q_3+C= positive exhortations, but Shakespeare has made this sonnet into something quite different by “the distortive ‘overabundance’ of the narrative of reproach” (ibid.).

The effect of this overabundance is to set the tone for the “procreation sonnets”. The speaker will not hesitate to use even harsh words to urge the “Fair Youth” to reproduce. This makes these sonnets feel even more urgent in their pleas than they would feel without the accusations and reproaches that Shakespeare so artfully balances with the hyperboles of admiration.

Even if the sonnet sequence starts with a sonnet that deviates from any traditional structure Shakespeare does not go over the top with these “experiments”. The next sonnet is already a very Italianate 8-6 structure, and sonnet 3 is a 12-2 structure, while sonnet 4 returns to the 8-6 division which is a common structure for Shakespeare in general but common in particular in this subsection of the “procreation sonnets”.

4.7 *Sonnet 73. Beyond the general design*

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
4 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
8 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,
12 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

The "ground-plan" of this sonnet, as Nowottny calls it, is very clear; three "declinings" in relation to each other in the quatrains (1972: 77). The couplet shifts to the Fair Youth, making this a clear case of 4-4-4-2 with shifts. But in this case that does not tell us all that much of the sonnet. Nowottny says that: "to describe this clear and continuous ground-plan does not throw any light on the causes of the excitement we feel on reading the sonnet …" (ibid.). The ground-plan of 4-4-4-2 is the base on which this sonnet's greatness is built on, but as with architecture, one rarely stops to marvel well-built foundations and instead it is the finer things that catch the eye or in the case of this sonnet the ear. The finer things of this sonnet are its metaphors' relation to each other and how they develop, each building on one another.

The first quatrain's metaphor of a declining of a year as the faded youth of the speaker is like an introduction to this metaphorising of natural decline=the speaker's aging and loss of vitality. Things are still pretty simple: summer is over, it is cold and the birds have stopped singing. The second line's *or none, or few, do hang* phonetically mimic the falling of leaves which intensifies the feeling of being in nature and how naturally late autumn, leaf by leaf, erases the memory of summer.

The second quatrain can move on to more complexity, where the metaphor becomes more precise as now the point-in-life of the speaker is compared to a day turned to night, which reminds of the brevity of human life. A day, because of its brevity, is something closer to human nature, as we always notice its change to night whereas the change of seasons is something more readily noticed by nature. A human notices the change of seasons through nature, its falling leaves and silent birds; a day's passing is only noticed through the sun's trajectory. The second quatrain also increases the figurative layers of the sonnet as night is figured as both *Deaths second self* (8) and as something that *seals up all in rest* (8) (ibid. 79). Nowottny says that "the second quatrain occupies a stage intermediary between the first quatrain and the third" and notices that the tenses "hover between present and future" opposed to the past tense of line 4 *sang*, and it is this gliding of tenses which sets up the third quatrain where "the fire is made to symbolize continuous process" (ibid.).

The third quatrain takes the metaphor of natural decline=the speaker's decline even closer to humanity than the second quatrain. In Q_3 the metaphor is material, and the matter is the building blocks of the speaker; his physical body cannot but spring to mind from the *ashes* (10) which represent the past on which the current afterglow lies on. From Q_1 *year* to Q_2 *day* to Q_3 *ashes* the metaphor becomes more intimate as it becomes more intricate as well. Nowottny calls Q_3 as almost so intricate to be impossible to analyse (ibid.) and the complete effect of it is with the reader. Not everything can be beneficially broken down into its elements and Q_3 is case in point. What can be said of it is that, as Nowottny brilliantly shows us, the first two quatrains lead the reader into this most complex four lines of poetry and make it seem less complicated and more natural than its exact language would do (ibid.). If it were the first quatrain of a sonnet the reader would be hopelessly lost before the journey even started. Now a beautiful sense of past (*ashes*), present (*glowing*) and future (*death bed*) coexist with the complex relations of all these.

Even the best of things must come to an end and the couplet elevates the love between persons by the greatest weakness of mortal love, its necessary end date. To love a mortal, instead of deity, is a special condition of love because of the perishability of everything material. The speaker says that this requires more love than loving something eternal. Mortal love is determined to lead to an end and the sorrow of loss and is therefore risky, the love of a god or the God is a safe bet.

This type of a sonnet shows that often talk of poetic structure is just a starting point in what all there is to be said of a sonnet. Discussing structure can help to understand a sonnet, but at least in 73 there are more finer things that catch the ear and stimulate the imagination of the reader.

5 CONCLUSION

I think Stephen Booth says it well:

> Perhaps the happiest moment the human mind ever knows is the moment when it senses the presence of order and coherence … As he reads through the 1609 sequence, a reader's mind is constantly poised on just such a threshold to comprehension. The source of that pleasurable sense of increased mental range is the same multitude of frames of reference that frustrate him when he looks for a single label or formula by which his mind may take personal possession of the sonnets. (1972: 14)

It is towards such a happy moment that this thesis has striven to. I started my study with an idea of clear turns in the sonnets and I also thought Shakespeare had been influenced by Petrarch and the 8-6 tradition in general. I found something to that degree (8-6 sonnets are common in the sequence), but to my surprise there were many sonnets that could not in good faith be described as an 8-6 structure or even the 4-4-4-2 structure that the rhyme scheme implies. I read and reread and analysed and reanalysed every sonnet and even then I found no "single label or formula" (ibid.) by which to describe the sonnets and their structure. I did find, however, a multitude of structures and some order in them, enough that I could argue for the sets I presented in my analysis chapter. I gave serious thought to: "how else, besides the line of the turn/s or shift/s, could I describe these moments of change in the sonnets?". My original intent was to describe them in a much more detailed way than by whether they "turn" or "shift". But as I analysed the turns/shifts I found so many different types that I would have had to form 20 or 30 different sets, which would have been impossible to describe accurately in an MA thesis. What can be said here, is that the most common way the sonnets turn is from a given thing to the Fair Youth. But there are so many other ways too.

My analysis can of course be argued against, I did not achieve "personal possession" (ibid.) of the *Sonnets*. They are anyone's to read and interpret and no final and absolute analysis of them can be presented. That is because for whatever reason Shakespeare wrote

them, he definitely did not write them so that an analyst of poetry in the 21st century would have an easy time saying something definite about them. But that does not mean they cannot be talked about; it just means nothing can be said about them that would be “the end of discussion” on the *Sonnets*. Rather, what has been said about the *Sonnets* by famous academics and what is said about them in this humble thesis is (just) a continuation of a discussion that has gone on since they were published and quite possibly will go on for some time. Besides the overall quality of the *Sonnets*, their immortal subject matter and their ambiguity have made and will make sure of this.

In my study I found that only 35 sonnets follow the structure that the rhyme scheme would suggest, that is 4-4-4-2[11]. This might be a surprisingly low number but not even all of Petrarch’s sonnets follow the octave-sestet division they “should”. The 4-4-4-2 structure might be rare for the reason that it does not allow for a real turn and instead produces shifts between quatrains. This works very well for certain type of topics like in sonnet 73, but it would be hard to imagine the whole sequence with that structure. Some sonnets need a two-part division in order to juxtapose two things. The 4-4-4-2 structure instead usually modifies one thing three times, or somewhat more rarely produces four different images, i.e. distinct quatrains, like in sonnet 50 with its *journey* (Q_1), *beast* (Q_2), *bloody spur* (Q_3) and *groan* (C).

Out of the two-part divided forms the 8-6 structure is much more common than the 12-2 structure. Shakespeare follows the 8-6 or 8-4-2 division in 60 sonnets[12] which is a clear

[11] The sonnets with distinct quatrains occur 14 times by my analysis and are sonnets: 16, 48, 50, 55, 58, 60, 100, 101, 107, 116, 118, 124, 125 and 141. There are 21 sonnets that shift between the quatrains and the couplet by my analysis and they are: 42, 45, 49, 71, 73, 74, 87, 90, 95, 105, 106, 121, 122, 131, 133, 135, 137, 138, 140, 144 and 150.

[12] Vendler says that the “normal Shakespearean rhetorical structures” are 4-4-4-2 and 8-4-2 (1999: 634). She clearly sees the couplet as separate from Q_3 more often than me. I count as 8-4-2 structures only five sonnets: 15, 19, 56, 61 and 88 (the only one with shifts). As 8-6 structures I count 55 sonnets, 36 of them with a turn and 19 with a shift. The one’s that turn by my analysis are: 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 21, 23, 29, 31, 33, 37, 38, 44, 51, 62, 63, 70, 76, 78, 81, 82, 83, 96, 104, 110, 113, 114, 115, 119, 120, 127, 143, 146 and 153. The one’s that shift by my analysis are: 4, 7, 9, 13, 17, 28, 32, 36, 41, 47, 52, 68, 72, 77, 94, 102, 108, 109 and 112.

sign that he must have been familiar with the structure and therefore with his Italian predecessors. The 8-4-2 structure, e.g. sonnet 19, where the couplet is clearly separate from Q_3 and in effect another turn, can almost produce a whiplash since the sonnet has just turned on line 9. Shakespeare makes this work in his sonnets, but the structure must be a difficult one to write a sonnet in because of the proximity of the turns and therefore they are significantly rarer than the 8-6 structure. The point of the 8-6 structure is to create one turn and a disproportionate number of lines for the juxtaposed issues. Something is given eight lines and after the turn something only six lines. This can be done to give the matter of the octave more emphasis than the sestet, or to describe something in the octave with more precision than in the sestet, or to accelerate expression in the sestet since there are less lines available for expression. The single turn a sonnet takes in an 8-6 structure makes that one turn more dramatic than if there are two turns. Except in sonnets where there is a shift rather than a turn. Some 8-6 sonnets of Shakespeare have a more subtle difference between octave and sestet. These sonnets do not really turn but a distinction between octave and sestet can still be made. The juxtaposition in shifts is only implied then and not explicitly "announced" like in sonnets which turn.

The 12-2 structure is rare in the sequence[13]. It is quite a heavy structure, as something has to be kept going for twelve lines and then turned in only two lines. This not only might lead to monotony because of the long first part of the sonnet but it also puts a lot of stress on the last two lines. They now have to change the meaning of a sonnet in such a small amount of space and only so many words. In sonnet 130 it works well because Shakespeare lays the groundwork for it; the overtly critical first twelve lines brush on all the clichés of love poetry. The turn that the speaker still loves the Dark Lady despite all these "defects", i.e. that she

[13] I count 16 instances, two of which (sonnets 25 and 123) might be said to shift rather than turn in the couplet. The one's that turn in the couplet by my analysis are: 3, 22, 24, 30, 34, 46, 53, 65, 84, 126, 130, 139, 147 and 149.

does not fit into the model of Petrarch's Laura or the like, does not come out of nowhere. In other sonnets, like 126, Shakespeare's turning couplet can be more subtle and summative. The 12-2 structure **almost** always turns from the body of the sonnet and does not shift because to go on for twelve lines and then only slightly shift is even harder than a turn. Sonnet 123 is a rare case in example of a shift, because the couplet basically repeats the first line of the sonnet. If a reader has forgotten the first line it will feel like a turn, but it is really a modulation of where the sonnet began.

The second largest group of sonnets (after the 8-6 or 8-4-2) are the sonnets that cannot be grouped at all by structure because they occur only once or in rare occasions twice[14]. Some of them are minor adjustments from the structures discussed above. An 8-6 structure where the volta occurs at line 10 for example, i.e. a 9-5 structure, but it might better to see such a case as a variant of the 8-6 structure. Or a 12-2 structure where the couplet is three lines long (or two and a half lines long as in sonnet 154). Again, it might be better to talk of 12-2 variants rather than a 11-3 structure or a (God forbid) 11,5-2,5 structure. Shakespeare can also be more experimental in some sonnets, like in sonnet 91 with two sestets and a couplet. In such really experimental cases it could be rational to talk about a 6-6-2 structure for example. The many experimental structures might tell us something of how Shakespeare approached sonnet writing. They show that he did not feel any need to restrict his expression in order to adhere to any one (or four if you believe my thesis) structure in a sonnet. Instead, I think, he must have figured out what he wanted to say and if it did not fit any traditional structure he would invent another structure. I do not think he wrote these experimental

[14] I count 43 such sonnets by my analysis. It need be noted that a possible miniature group of 4-10 structured sonnets is to be found with six instances: sonnets 1, 8, 39, 98, 151, 152. The upside-down version of this structure, i.e. 10-4 also occurs four times: sonnets 57, 64, 85, 92. The 4-8-2 structure of sonnets 89 and 93, too, comes close to a 4-10 structure. The other sonnets experimenting with structure by my analysis are: 6, 20, 26, 27, 35, 40, 43, 54, 59, 66, 67, 69, 75, 79, 80, 86, 91, 97, 99, 103, 111, 117, 128, 129, 132, 134, 136, 142, 145, 148 and 154.

sonnets only in order to be experimental. For Shakespeare, structure was there to serve what he wanted to say through his speaker. Instead of his thought bending to a particular structure he bent the structure.

Lastly, it is important to note that in some of the sonnets there is more than one structure at play. For example, a sonnet might seem at once clearly divided into an octave and a sestet, but on closer inspection there is also a division into quatrains, or vice versa. I see these cases as structurally rich, as two (or even more, see for example sonnet 90 in appendices 7.2) structures work in parallel to create meaningful parts inside the sonnet.

Structure is not everything. But I think it helps discuss Shakespeare's sonnets and poetry in general. By identifying an internal division within a sonnet that can be argued for (and argue for is all one can often do) one finds the parts of the sonnet that "speak" with each other or resonate with each other. If the speaker, the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady are the main actors of the *Sonnets* then these parts within single sonnets are the supporting cast. That is the point of dividing the sonnets by their turns and shifts: to identify the smaller actors than the speaker et al. Wordplays, stress patterns, metaphors and other poetic tools Shakespeare uses are even smaller actors still but not at all less significant. Helen Vendler (1999) focuses on these more detailed aspects alongside structure and often shows us how they go along or even dictate the structure of a sonnet. This thesis has focused on structure to create an overview of a more specific subject than Vendler. Vendler discusses the *Sonnets* brilliantly. I only discuss the structure of Shakespeare's sonnets to the best of my abilities.

In my discussions I have had to do a disservice to the sonnets by simplifying (to a degree) what is said in them. This, I think, is unavoidable if one wants other people to understand what they are saying about the *Sonnets*. Analysis, etymologically, means "to unloose" or break up and in breaking up the fabric of a sonnet, while hopefully some insight

is gained, something will inevitably be lost in translation. Fortunately, the *Sonnets* can be found on the internet for free (although punctuated incorrectly for copyright purposes) or in this thesis' appendix (remove the colour coding if you will). The *Sonnets* need to be read, as much as read about, to appreciate them.

I think that the *Sonnets* will continue to provide academics interested in Shakespeare and poetry more to research. The next step, still not really taken by anyone else than Ulrich Busse (2002), would be to use computing to find features of the *Sonnets* the human eye misses. The *Sonnets* are a huge corpus for the human mind but a small task for a modern computer. A computer would find grammatical patterns in split seconds from a properly annotated corpus of the *Sonnets* and could even compare the findings to an already existing corpus of Shakespeare's plays. A corpus formed of the *Sonnets* and carefully annotated by hand could even be used to discern more complex features, e.g. Shakespeare's use of metaphors and similes in the *Sonnets*. The trick would be to find a way to annotate the corpus that would not take as much time as doing everything manually. To my disappointment, I did not manage this trick with the turns in the sonnets, as much as I hoped that I could have taken advantage of a computer. Computers aside, I at least would be interested in reading, e.g. a comprehensive analysis of the *Sonnets* rhythmic features like assonance, consonance and alliteration. Even though so much has been written of the *Sonnets* there are still significant gaps in the research of the whole sequence; the less known sonnets are often disregarded by academic research.

Even if, and possibly when, a reader of this thesis will not agree on all my interpretations (after all I do not agree with every one of Vendler's), I will regard it as a success if they have started to notice and think about the structure of the sonnets. I would love to hear well thought out counterarguments after so much time spent thinking about these things on my own. If a reader who has read this thesis can read the Oxford dictionary's gloss

on volta that Shakespeare's sonnets usually turn on line 13 (Baldick (ed.) 2015: The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, *sonnet*, point 2) with some serious scepticism, then my thesis will have made the world that much better. The structural variation I have found in the *Sonnets* has been one of its most enriching qualities for me and I hope a reader of this thesis will find that richness too.

6 References

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 *A list of poetic terminology used in the thesis*

Octave: the first eight lines of a sonnet.

Sestet: the last six lines, of the fourteen in total, in a sonnet.

Stanza: a group of lines in a poem that are not separated by an empty line or indentation.

Quatrain: four consecutive lines of a sonnet, beginning either on line 1, 5 or 9. Quatrains are usually discussed (and in this thesis) using abbreviations as follows: Q_1=lines 1–4, Q_2=lines 5–8, Q_3=lines 9–12.

Couplet: the last two lines of a sonnet, linked by rhyme in a Shakespearean sonnet. Abbreviated as C in this thesis.

Rhyme scheme: the organized way in which the last syllables of the lines rhyme, e.g. in a Shakespearean sonnet ababcdcdefefgg, where every other line in the quatrains rhymes with each other and the rhymes need be different in each quatrain and the couplet.

Volta: a turn, often of thought, in a sonnet; in a Petrarchan sonnet it occurs between the octave and the sestet. In Shakespeare, see this thesis.

Foot: in English poetry, either two or three syllables with the stress on syllables varying depending which feet is being used, e.g. an iambic pentameter consists of five feet of two syllables, the first of which is unstressed followed by a stressed syllable.

Stress pattern: e.g. the aforementioned iambic pentameter that is the basis of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Verse: as an uncountable noun: poetry instead of prose; as a countable noun: either one metrical line of poetry or in some uses more than one line.

Sonnet: A poem that has a prescribed form consisting of four key features: 1. Fourteen lines long, 2. The number of syllables on one line must be consistent, e.g. 10 in Shakespeare 3. Those syllables must follow a stress pattern, e.g. iambic feet in Shakespeare 4. A sonnet must have a rhyme scheme.

Alliteration and partial alliteration:

> Alliteration, then, refers to a repetition of the stressed syllable's opening consonant sound or sounds … we may also find *partial alliteration* where not all the initial consonants are repeated. (Roberts 1991: 45)

Anthropomorphism: "*Anthropomorphism* … endows non-human objects with human physical and emotional qualities: … *He stared at ruin. Ruin stared right back*" (Roberts 1991: 70).

Assonance: "in *assonance* the central vowel remains the same while the opening and closing consonants change. ('give/hit')" (Roberts 1991: 46).

Caesura: A break within a line of poetry, a comma or a full stop for example.

Consonance: "In *consonance*, the closing consonant sound is repeated, while all else in the syllable changes. ('hot-sat')" (Roberts 1991: 46).

Masculine and feminine rhymes:

> *Know then thy-self, presume not God to scan; / The proper study of mankind is Man.* In past centuries, this sort of rhyme was commonly known as 'masculine rhyme', but today *one-syllable rhyme* seems preferable. Similarly, *two-syllable rhyme* is a better term than the old 'feminine rime'. (Roberts 1991: 50)

Metaphor:

> 'Metaphor' comes from the Greek, meaning 'to carry over' … metaphor, describing one thing (the lake, the way the hostess moves) in terms of a another (a mirror, a gentle breeze) … In ordinary metaphor, the resemblance is stated directly, without any explanation. (Roberts 1991: 67)

Simile: "… *simile*, makes the comparison more explicit, however, by using the words 'like' or 'as' in stating the resemblance: ´the lake was like a quicksilver mirror' …" (Roberts 1991: 67).

Synedoche: "… *synecdoche* (from the Greek 'a receiving together'), in which a part of something stands for the whole thing. 'She was a lass of twenty summers' …" (Roberts 1991: 67).

Metonomy:

> *Metonomy* (Greek for 'other name') transfers the name of something to take the place of something else with which it is associated. 'A Whitehouse spokesman' really means 'a spokesman for the executive branch of the government of the United States of America'. (Roberts 1991: 67)

Oxymoron: "*Oxymoron* (which means 'extremely silly') occurs when a phrase is incompatible with fact; for example, 'a square circle' …" (Roberts 1991: 71).

Paradox: "… *paradox* (which means 'beyond belief') is like oxymoron, except that, as in the case of tautology, a statement is made, one which seems self-contradictory: 'The circle is square' …" (Roberts 1991: 71).

Personification:

> *Personification* occurs when the poem addresses an inanimate or abstract object … as if it were a person … *Earth, let not thy envious shade / Dare it selfe to interpose*. (Roberts 1991: 70)

Pleonasm: "… *pleonasm* (which means 'to be excessive'), a self-evident phrase like 'round circle' …" (Roberts 1991: 71).

Tautology: "… *tautology* (which means 'the same word'), the same as pleonasm except that it is made as a statement: 'The circle is round' …" (Roberts 1991: 71).

7.2 *Brief paragraphs of structural analysis*

1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
4 His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
8 Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
12 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.

See analysis on pages 65–7 of this thesis.

In this appendix I use different colours in fonts to highlight the first line of the turn/s or shift/s. For turns I use a red font and for shifts I use a pink font; occasionally I will use different font colours than these to highlight keywords in a sonnet. The 4-4-4-2 structure will be highlighted with a dark blue font for distinct quatrains and a couplet and a light blue font for shifts.

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,
4 Will be a tattered weed of small worth held:
Then, being asked, where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
8 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
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse',
12 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.

Vendler (1999: 52–6) analyses two structures for this sonnet: a 6-8 structure and an 8-6 structure, both for which she has very complex ideas. I read this more simply, as an octave of fading looks answered in the sestet by reserving one's beauty through an heir. Of the 6-8 division Vendler says that it is "an indication, in its topsy-turvy structure, that Shakespeare intends to experiment with the conventional Italian structure, here by turning it upside down and writing the "sestet" first" (ibid. 53). But I think that Shakespeare already showed his intent to experiment with the sonnet form in sonnet 1, so why would he stress the point again here? The change from the octave dominated by negative adjectives and phrases to the more positive sestet supports an 8-6 reading.

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
4 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose uneared womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
8 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;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
12 Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live remembered not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

"On the *But* of the couplet the whole poem appears to turn; the body of the poem would seem to be devoted to life, the couplet to death" (Vendler 1999: 58). Vendler notices, however, that life and death also appear throughout the poem in less obvious ways (ibid. 58–9). So, the turn in the couplet does not come from nowhere if one notices, e.g. the rhyme of l.5 and l.7 *womb-tomb*. Still, I would argue that it is quite a strong turn, for Vendler says of the couplet that it is "phrased almost as a death curse" (ibid. 58).

Burrow (2000: 90–1) has a convincing explanation for line 12's *wrinkles* as an idea derived from Aristotle that old people literally look through wrinkled eyes.

4

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

Vendler (1999: 63–4) is right to argue that: "The scattering of isomorphic questions through the three quatrains of the sonnet (1–2; 5–6; 7–8; 11–12) means that in its rhetorical structure this sonnet is distributively "Shakespearean" rather than contrastively "Italian"; but the "Italian" residue remains present in the fact that the first three "perfectly" isomorphic questions, which occur in the octave, have to do with spending, whereas the last question, which occurs in the sestet, has to do with nature's calling in her accounts—an audit instead of an expenditure. The "Shakespearean" distributed syntactic structure of the four questions, then, offers itself against the "Italian" two-part thematic structure of expense and audit; and one of the perpetual sources of aesthetic play in the sonnets is precisely this offer, to the attentive reader, of two sonnets in one".

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,
4 And that un-fair which fairly doth excel:
For never-resting Time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there,
Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
8 Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness everywhere.
Then, were not summer's distillation left
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
12 Nor it nor no remembrance what it was.
But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

This sonnet's key idea is the metaphor of distilling, appearing on l.9 and repeated in C, as it is offered as a remedy against Time's ravages which control the octave. An ingenious metaphor for procreation.

This is the first sonnet to introduce the important theme of outer appearance vs. inner substance, which is so prominent in the sequence. Although the emphasis in this sonnet still seems to be on beauty, the metaphor of distillation which leads to the *substance* of l.14 clearly implies to preservation of not just the Fair Youth's beauty but also his other essential aspects.

Vendler (1999: 70) gives a detailed diagram of a division to an octave for Time and a sestet for "Beauty's future".

6

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

"The formal scheme, frequently found in homily, frames positive exhortations (lines 3–12) with opening and closing negative brackets *Let not* (1–2) and *Be not* (13–14)—a firm if uninventive structure" (Vendler 1999: 73). Vendler seems altogether unimpressed by this sonnet, but it is not uninventive in the sense that it is an unusual structure for a sonnet. 2-10-2 must be a useful structure as well, because Shakespeare uses it again in different ways in sonnets 27 and 134, whereas usually these experimentative structures are used only once by him.

Lines 5–10 play with the idea of the maximum interest, i.e. 10% for a loan, as Booth points out (2000: 142). Here the hyperbolic hope for the reproduction of the Fair Youth seems to be tempered by the financial language, as if to make it seem less serious.

7

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

This surely one of the clearest examples of an 8-6 structure. The sun rises until line 9 where its trajectory starts to decline. It is a matter of opinion whether this is a shift or a turn. The *But* might make it sound like a turn, but the decline is also something to be expected and that is why I see it as a shift. As is the couplet's turn to the Fair Youth after the six sonnets before this have had the same message; therefore it does not turn the sonnet but it could be regarded as another shift.

Vendler (1999: 75–7) sees a more complex structure, where after two lines of the sun there is always two lines of *looks* (4), even in the couplet this logic is repeated as the Fair Youth (now in place of sun) occupies line 13 and 14 is again inhabited by *(Un)look(ed)*.

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,
4 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds
By unions married do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
8 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
12 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.'

Vendler (1999: 79) says that: "The metrical and phonetic disequilibrium is meant to enact the dis-ease (sic) of bachelorhood". She refers to the "cacophony of *lov**st that** which **th**ou receiv**'st**,* etc." (ibid.), and shows l.1 and l.3 consisting of eleven syllables. So, a quatrain for the turbulence of bachelorhood and the rest for the harmony of marriage. She also notes the repeated caesuras of Q1 (ibid.). But she does not comment on the caesuras of ll. 11–12. They are reminiscent of l. 10 *Strikes each in each by mutual ordering*. L. 11's three phrases separated by commas are like one string being struck after another *by mutual ordering*. Caesuras do not always then create discord in a poem, as here they do the opposite and in doing so juxtapose with the caesuras of Q_1.

9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consum'st thy self in single life?
Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die
4 The world will wail thee like a makeless wife.
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
8 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;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
12 And kept unused the user so destroys it:
No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

Q_2 line 5 starts with the same phrase as line 4. The anaphora ties the quatrains together. The octave seems to continue in the same way, but at a closer look there is more agency in the argument of reproach. In the octave the Fair Youth is accused of not doing. In the sestet the language is more direct. Vendler, who sees this sonnet mainly as a "Fantasy on the Letter W", notices that in the octave the speaker really accuses the Fair Youth of "a sin of omission" and in the sestet of "a sin of commission" referring specifically to the last line of the sonnet (1999: 84–6). Omitting to procreate is the reproach of the octave, while in the sestet this same reproach is worded as committing a *murd'rous shame* (14). A subtle shift not easy to pick up on, at least on the first read. The abundance of W's might also go unnoticed without Vendler's keen perception; a tribute to Shakespeare's craft.

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,
4 But that thou none lov'st is most evident:
For thou art so possessed with murd'rous hate
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
8 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?
Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
12 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 octave is overflowing with negatives while the sestet has only one, and even that (*hate*, line 9) is a part of a rhetoric question where *love* is more prominent because it is modified by *gentle* and it ends the line. Vendler says of line 9 that there is a "startling moment of personal sentiment … at the *volta*" (Vendler 1999: 88). What makes it so startling to her is that in the sonnets before this the speaker has been more general in the arguments, and this is the first instance of a first-person pronoun in the sequence, with line 9 *my* and line 13 *me* (ibid.). The absence of a first-person pronoun in the previous sonnets makes this like an entrance of a character, and certainly in the sonnets to follow *I* in its many forms appears very often.

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
4 Thou mayst call thine, when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.
If all were minded so the times should cease,
8 And threescore year would make the world away.
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish.
Look whom she best endowed she gave the more,
12 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.

Vendler (1999: 94) states that "Shakespeare introduces the ruling goddess Natura in the sestet as a contrast to his concentration in the octave on reproductive decision-making by human beings". There is, then, quite a clear division between the octave and sestet. Another division of "Increase" and "Perish", however, divides the sonnet in a more complex way (ibid. 93). This starting from line 1 which is divided between the two principles. A good example of overlapping structures, where it would be oversimplifying the matter to ignore either one. A plurality of structures also enriches a sonnet as there are more parts now that interact with each other, even if some clarity might be lost. But clarity cannot surely be the point in a sonnet with the themes of Nature and procreation, so rich in associations.

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,
4 And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
8 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
12 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.

A clear turn from the octave's nature to the sestet's Fair Youth. Burrow (2002: 404) glosses l.9 *do I question make* as "speculate about", which fits with the rest of the sestet grammatically. The sense of line 9 at first read, however, can also be: then your beauty becomes questionable. This sense is only temporary since line 10 begins with a pronoun that does not fit.

A similar rhetorical structure of *When-Then* as in sonnet 15, which also turns to the Fair Youth.

Vendler (1999: 97) sees a 12-2 division where the first 12 lines are "intransitive death" and 13–14 are "transitive death"; a structure clearly at play also in this sonnet, even if it is harder to spot than the octave-sestet division.

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,
4 And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination; then you were
Yourself again after your self's decease,
8 When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
12 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.

Vendler (1999: 102) states that: "The sonnet is an Italianate one, in which the octave argues for the preservation of the individual self, the sestet for preservation of family lineage". The couplet is linked to Q_3 as it answers the question of l.9, although it turns into a persuasive nostalgic argument on line 14.

Booth (2000: 15) leaves out the commas separating *love* on l.1, i.e. *O that you were yourself, but love you are*, as it was printed in the Quarto. Most editors add the commas. While the commas make the meaning clearer by turning the word *love* into a simple endearing term used by the speaker of the Fair Youth, they also make Q_1 sound like plain speech. Without the commas a sense of "you are love itself" hovers over Q_1, even if it would not make literal sense with what follows line 1.

14

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck,
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
4 Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well
8 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
As truth and beauty shall together thrive
12 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.

Not from the stars … *But from thine eyes* These. phrases divide the octave and sestet very clearly. Vendler attributes the octave to "Ordinary astrologers" and the sestet to "Speaker-Astrologer" in her diagram (1999: 106), which, if not eloquent, still very much true.

At least to a modern reader such as I, line 2 sounds delightfully light-hearted. This makes the last line's prognostication sound all the more dire. The last line could then be seen as the last twist or turn of the sonnet, even if the octave's predictions also had in them many negatives (*plagues* (4), *thunder* (6)) which makes this last negative prediction fitting rather than truly surprising, and therefore does not really turn the sonnet again.

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment;
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows,
4 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheerèd and checked even by the selfsame sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
8 And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful time debateth with decay
12 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.

See analysis on pages 43–6 of this thesis.

16

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

Q_1 and Q_2 are juxtaposed to show the apparent *barren*ness of the speaker's rhyme as opposed to the *living flowers*, i.e. children, which the Fair Youth should prefer. Q_3 further stresses the inadequacy of drawing (*pencil*) or writing (*pupil pen*) as a means to illustrate the Fair Youth's qualities. C advocates procreation. Thus a 4-4-4-2 structure.

Notice in C *keeps yourself still*, i.e. as a model for a painting would do. Burrow (2002: 412) briefly glosses this as gaining immortality through children, but I think the stress is on the authenticity of portraying which is alluded to on l.8 *painted counterfeit*. The Fair Youth himself is the only one who can reproduce his own portrait truthfully, through his own child.

17

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

See analysis on pages 39–40 of this thesis.

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,
4 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,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
8 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
12 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.

The phrase "let's not even analyse this" comes to mind. I could spend the rest of my life trying to write something as good as this sonnet and would fail.

One thing that differentiates it from the rest of the *Sonnets* is that its diction's positive phrases like *darling buds* (3), *gold complexion* (6), *eternal summer* (9) overwhelm the weak negatives like *all too short a date* (4), *too hot*, (5), *untrimmed* (8). This makes it sound like what one would expect from a love poem, which is unusual in the *Sonnets*. This is a portrait of a poet infatuated with his beloved. It turns on line 9 by elevating the Fair Youth above nature which governs the octave. Vendler calls *eternal summer* (9) "an everlasting brevity" (1999: 122); perhaps this slight paradox is an inclination that the Fair Youth cannot achieve actual immortality even if immortality through verse is achievable.

19

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion’s paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood,
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger’s jaws,
4 And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood,
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet’st,
And do whate’er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets:
8 But I forbid thee one most heinous crime,
O carve not with thy hours my love’s fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen.
Him in thy course untainted do allow
12 For beauty’s pattern to succeeding men.
Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

Really a volta that is two lines long ll.8–9, with l.9 making explicit what that one forbidden thing is. Lines 1–7 state in startling hyberbole the crimes of Time that the speaker will allow. The hyperbole, in what is allowed for Time, makes the turn to the forbidden aging of the Fair Youth all the more strong. Addressing Time itself turns out to be disingenuous; the speaker does not believe Time’s course can be altered with persuasions, and in C the speaker turns to immortality in verse to counteract Time’s *one most heinous crime* (8) which Time will necessarily commit despite the speaker’s pleas.

The violent imagery of *Devouring Time*’s actions (*blunt*, *make devour*, *pluck*, *burn*, *carve*, *do thy worst*) is made more shocking by juxtaposition to ameliorative descriptions (*sweet*, *keen*, *long-lived*, *fair*) of its victims.

20

A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman’s gentle heart, but not acquainted
4 With shifting change as is false women’s fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
8 Which steals men’s eyes and women’s souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
12 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick’d thee out for women’s pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love’s use their treasure.

Up until l.10 this sonnet compares the Fair Youth to women and feminine traits. The Fair Youth is similar to women, but superior according to the speaker. Vendler (1999: 128) says that: “But the octave of this poem is first a denigration of ordinary women, saying that they are, for the most part, false. The *true* pattern of woman can be discerned in the woman’s face and woman’s gentle heart present in the master/mistress” On l.10 the comparison of similarities is abandoned and the sonnet turns to the one thing different in the Fair Youth. The sonnet ends in a vow of platonic love despite this difference. Since this is the first sonnet where the volta is clearly out of its usual places, one could speculate a reason for this unusuality. Perhaps Nature’s unusual decision to *prick* the Fair Youth leads to the unusual placement of the volta.

21

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
4 And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare
With sun and moon, with earth, and sea’s rich gems,
With April’s first-born flowers, and all things rare
8 That heaven’s air in this huge rondure hems.
O let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then, believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother’s child, though not so bright
12 As those gold candles fixed in heaven’s air:
Let them say more that like of hearsay well;
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

“The artificial rival poets have been condemned for extravagant hyperbole in the octave … The sestet advocating truth …” (Vendler 1999: 131). Another way to describe it would be: ll.1–8 = other poets’ style, ll. 9–14 = Shakespeare’s style. The octave does not judge only the hyperbole of other poets, but also their inferior subjects, i.e. *painted beauty*/*every fair* compared to the true beauty of the Fair Youth. Q_3 begins with the verity of Shakespeare’s verse, the same idea C ends with.

Vendler (ibid.) sees the rule breaking repetition of rhymes (ababcdcdcfcfgg) as a rebuke to the artificiality of other poets. I tend to agree, but would also add that it says that Shakespeare will sacrifice conventions of the sonnet form if it brings him closer to a truthful expression; certainly, in the sequence, Shakespeare often deviates from conventional structures for this reason.

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date,
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
4 Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me.
8 How can I then be elder than thou art?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself, but for thee will,
Bearing thy heart which I will keep so chary
12 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain:
Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

See analysis on pages 55–7 of this thesis.

23

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put beside his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
4 Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
8 O'er-charged with burden of mine own love's might:
O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
12 More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.
O learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

Vendler (1999: 136–40) accepts the emendation to "looks" on line 9. Burrow (2002: 426) argues for "books" as follows: "Sonneteers regularly oppose the dumb eloquence of the gaze to their tongue-tied addresses to their mistresses (e.g. Griffin, *Fidessa* 45); that cliché is deliberately avoided here." I agree with Burrow. "Looks" would also be repetitive because of l.11 *look for recompense*; "looks" would "look for recompense" which seems too clumsy for Shakespeare.

In the octave the speaker struggles with his lack of eloquent speech in expressing his love directly. On l.9 the alternative solution of *books* (i.e. sheets of paper, i.e. sonnets) is introduced. This serves to establish a motive for the sequence; the speaker has to write what he cannot speak.

24

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled,
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
4 And perspective that is best painter's art,
For through the painter must you see his skill
To find where your true image pictured lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
8 That hath his windows glazèd with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun
12 Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee.
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art:
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

This sonnet is structured on a Latin wordplay noticed by Vendler (1999: 142); *perspective* on l.4 comes from Latin [<per-spicio] "to see through" (ibid.). The Fair Youth will see his own *beauty's form* by looking through the speaker's eyes into his heart; such is the Fair Youth's beauty that even the sun is delighted to gaze upon it, looking through the speaker's eyes which are glazed with the eyes of the Fair Youth. The couplet's *cunning* seems like a pejorative comment on the complexities of the sonnet's logic; the couplet also starkly states that only the outer form of the Fair Youth has been captured in the speaker's heart, while his inner essence remains a mystery.

For a thorough analysis of *perspective* in this sonnet and Shakespeare's plays see Mead 2012 *Shakespeare's Play with Perspective: Sonnet 24, Hamlet, Lear*.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
4 Unlooked for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies burièd,
8 For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famousèd for might
After a thousand victories, once foiled
Is from the book of honour razèd quite,
12 And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:
Then happy I that love and am beloved
Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

Vendler (1999: 145) states that: "Sonnet 25 ends with a private boast (*Then happy I*), countering the public boasts of the stars' triumphant favorites". The sonnet juxtaposes the momentariness of worldly successes to everlasting love. There is, however, something in the couplet that makes it not completely convincing, thus making the turn less stark. The declaration of happiness "Then happy I" seems like a wishful comment instead of a sure declaration. Real happiness need not be separately declared, or declared truthfully it would be so declared with more eloquence, not so laconically. Line 14 also shows that in this "happiness" there is also an element of unwillingness: the speaker cannot *remove* or *be removed*, whether he wants to or not. His happiness in love is shadowed by his lack of influence over the emotion.

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage
4 To witness duty, not to show my wit;
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
8 In thy soul's thought (all naked) will bestow it,
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tottered loving,
12 To show me worthy of thy sweet respect.
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

Vendler divides this sonnet into: apology, hope and apology (1999: 149). Schalkwyk (2005: 80) discusses the sonnet's feudal rhetoric of lord and vassal and notes the importance of fortune (*whatsoever star* on l.9) as a way to break the rigid social structure: "The poem's invocation of the transformative power of fortune places it within the context of the desire for social mobility, which both masks and declares its modern aspirations through the residual feudal language of duty and service". The sonnet could then also be said to turn on l.9 when "fortune" enters.

In the sequence, this is a remarkably pure and straightforward sonnet; sincere, without a hint of irony and humble to a fault. Maybe it reflects an idolising phase of love, as well as the different social status of the speaker and the Fair Youth.

27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travail tirèd,
But then begins a journey in my head
4 To work my mind, when body's work's expirèd.
For then my thoughts (from far, where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
8 Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel (hung in ghastly night)
12 Makes black Night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo, thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

This sonnet is divided into: corporeal (ll.1–2), mental (ll.3–12) and corporeal+mental (ll. 13–14). The only corporeal element of the middle section are the eyelids, but even those are without agency because of the darkness, and lead only to an imaginary sight of the Fair Youth. In the couplet the corporeal *limbs* and the immaterial *mind* are synthesised.

Vendler notes that this sonnet mimics exhaustion by its "line-by-line *étapes* of the of the night travail" (1999: 153). I would also argue that the sonnet is somewhat flat in its inventiveness and tone in order to mimic the tired state of the speaker, whose thoughts *Intend* (l.6) *a zealous pilgrimage*, instead of "start" or "begin" for instance: it remains an attempt of such a pilgrimage.

28

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarred the benefit of rest,
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
4 But day by night and night by day oppressed?
And each (though enemies to either's reign)
Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
The one by toil, the other to complain
8 How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day to please him thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven;
So flatter I the swart-complexioned night,
12 When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.

The rhetoric question of l.1 receives an insincere answer in trying to persuade the personified day and night of the worth of the Fair Youth. This persuasion fails as the couplet shows. The octave is really one long question with each line after the first making it clearer that the speaker cannot *return in happy plight* (1) and that it is really a rhetorical question. On l.9 (and l.11), however, the speaker attempts to answer this question by addressing the personified day and night, which is an insincere process; personifications in the *Sonnets* never respond and do not do so this time either. The mental exercise of the sestet can also be read as the speaker reasoning to himself that the subject that debars him of rest is at least worth all the trouble it is causing him.

29

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
4 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
8 With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising)
12 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

See analysis on pages 40–3 of this thesis.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
4 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;
Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
8 And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances fore-gone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
12 Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee (dear friend)
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

Fleischmann says that: "In Sonnet 30, the quatrains present the sorrows of the speaker's past as it increasingly encroaches on the present. The deaths of friends and the loss of old lovers become so painful to remember that the final line of the third quatrain declares them to be as distressing now as when they first occurred. Suddenly, however, the couplet offers a way to soothe this pain …" (2014: 85). The suddenness is striking because ll.1–12 are so filled with sighs and moans and negatives.

Rhetorically the sonnet is formed by four long sentences beginning *When* … *Then* … *Then* … *But* … , where the first three sentences continue each other and the *But* of the couplet changes this continuation starkly.

31

Thy bosom is endearèd with all hearts
Which I by lacking have supposèd dead,
And there reigns Love and all Love's loving parts,
4 And all those friends which I thought burièd.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
8 But things removed that hidden in there lie?
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
12 That due of many, now is thine alone.
Their images I loved I view in thee,
And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

"The sonnet turns on the substitution of the resurrective claim *buried love doth live* (in the solemn vocative of line 9) for the expected phrase "love doth lie" (the word lie being already present in line 8, *which* (sic.) *hidden in thee lie*)" (Vendler 1999: 170). I would argue that, although this resurrection is striking, it is not completely surprising. L. 2 and l. 4 temper the death that rules the octave by stating *supposèd dead* and *thought burièd*. So the Lazarus-like appearance of living love on l.9 does not come out of the blue, but is set up in the octave's hints.

Vendler accepts the emendation to *thee* on l.8. Burrow (2002: 442) argues for the Quarto *there*, because it means in the Fair Youth's bosom (l.1) and fits the meaning as well as *thee*. Vendler accidentally quotes *which* on l.8 where *that* is used.

32

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more resurvey
4 These poor, rude lines of thy deceasèd lover,
Compare them with the bett'ring of the time,
And, though they be outstripped by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
8 Exceeded by the height of happier men.
O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
12 To march in ranks of better equipage:
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love'.

Vendler sees the octave as the speaker's wish (starting on l.3) and the sestet as the imagined thought of the Fair Youth (1999: 173–4). The turn is then a subtle one, because the sestet states the same thing as the octave, — content over style, love over technique, but does so in a different manner.

If we believe that the sonnets are arranged in the order Shakespeare meant, the absolute humility of the speaker about the style of these sonnets becomes questionable, because of the highly ornamented language of sonnet 33. I would argue that there is nothing wrong with the style of sonnet 33 Q_1, which just happen to be the next four lines of the sequence after the speaker in 32 has recommended the style of other writers.

33

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

The octave describes the sun of heaven in all of its glory and vulnerability. The sestet turns the octave into a metaphor about the Fair Youth by beginning *Even so*; the metaphor is made even clearer by the proverbial last line.

Vendler notes that this is the first sonnet that remarks a "true flaw" in the Fair Youth, as the Fair Youth *permits the basest clouds to ride* … , an omission rather than a commission (1999: 178). At least as important as this *permit* is, in terms of pointing out a flaw, is the plural in *suns* on l.14. The Fair Youth is almost always described as uniquely beautiful, truthful, and also uniquely negative at times. Rarely is the Fair Youth compared to anyone, so equating him to the *suns of the world,* i.e. that he is just one sun among others after all, is a grave accusation that overshadows the couplet.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
4 Hiding thy brav'ry in their rotten smoke?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
8 That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace;
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief:
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss.
Th' offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
12 To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

See analysis on pages 57–9 of this thesis.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud,
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
4 And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting salving thy amiss,
8 Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense—
Thy adverse party is thy advocate—
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:
12 Such civil war is in my love and hate
That I an accessary needs must be
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

Lines 1–5 draw a multitude of examples of nature's flaws to salve the fact that the Fair Youth is also flawed (l.1 alludes to a specific flawed action to be precise). The rest of the sonnet is devoted to the speaker's self-accusation: his own flaw is making excuses for the Fair Youth.

Vendler reads Q_2 to be so strongly opposed to Q_1 that it turns Q_1 into its opposite meaning: instead of excuses for the Fair Youth lines 1–4 become accusations, i.e. "you have thorns", "you are stained" etc. (1999: 186). Vendler accepts an emendation in l.8 to *more than **their** sins are*, with an explanation that the speaker excuses the Fair Youth's sins more than the sins of *All men* on l.5 (ibid. 187). Burrow's gloss for his version is that the speaker excuses the sins of the Fair Youth more than the sins would even require (2002: 450).

36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
4 Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which, though it alter not love's sole effect,
8 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailèd guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
12 Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

See analysis on pages 37–8 of this thesis.

37

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,
4 Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crownèd sit,
8 I make my love engrafted to this store.
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am sufficed,
12 And by a part of all thy glory live.
Look what is best, that best I wish in thee;
This wish I have, then ten times happy me.

The octave lists the Fair Youth's positive traits, while in the sestet the speaker argues to share in these traits by his love of the Fair Youth. It is interesting that such a symbiotic wish list of a sonnet should appear straight after 36, where the twoness of the one loving couple was contemplated upon. Vendler suspects that this might be an earlier sonnet of Shakespeare, and besides the little game of an overabundance of *th's* in the sonnet she does not find too much invention in it (1999: 195).

The sonnet does seem naïve and (desperately) hopeful in its expression, either a mark that a younger more naïve Shakespeare wrote it or that he simply wanted to display this phase of love. A naïve phase where the idealisation of the beloved is so great that all good, even in the one in love himself, is seen to emanate from the beloved.

38

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
4 For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O give thy self the thanks if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight,
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
8 When thou thy self dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
12 Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

On line 9 *Muse* becomes incarnate as the Fair Youth instead of its normal meaning of inner inspiration (this meaning being present on l.1 and therefore throughout the octave). Vendler writes: "… when the Muse is externalized and named as the friend, an unnerving literalizing of allegory has been permitted, and the descriptive *object* of the poem—the friend—alienates the faculty of inspiration from the poet to itself" (1999: 199–200). Vendler also notes that *slight* on l.13 contains the *light (*of invention*)* of l.8, but it is still dismissive (ibid. 198–200).

Bawcutt notes that the chiastic last line is a well known *topos* which has appeared with slight variations in the works of Wyatt, Surrey, Chaucer, Petrarch and Bocaccio among others (1984: 77–9).

39

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring,
4 And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this, let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
8 That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
12 Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive;
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here who doth hence remain.

Q_1 is basically answered in length by the rest of the sonnet: division through absence is needed for a true account of the Fair Youth. This sonnet returns to contemplate the problem of individuality in a symbiotic relationship already contemplated upon in sonnet 36. In 36 the emphasis was on the speaker's flaws (*by me be borne alone*) while in this sonnet it is on the Fair Youth's praise-worthy qualities. The speaker, then, seems concerned to disassociate his own flaws from the Fair Youth (in 36) while claiming no similarity or ownership of the Fair Youth's laudable qualities. In this way all good originates and stays with the Fair Youth and all bad with the speaker.

Vendler comments on the repeated rhyme-pairs in 36 and 39 and the chiastic structure they create together and argues for a double sonnet (1999: 205).

40

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all:
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call:
4 All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,
I cannot blame thee, for my love thou usest;
But yet be blamed, if thou this self deceivest
8 By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
I do forgive thy robb'ry, gentle thief,
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;
And yet love knows it is a greater grief
12 To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
Kill me with spites, yet we must not be foes.

This sonnet is divided into two tones. Lines 1–6 are full of love, literally, with 7 instances of the word. Lines 7–14 contain only two *loves* and the first one of these is a part of the negative structure *love's wrong*. Lines 7–14 are also peppered with other negative words. The sonnet can, then, be divided roughly into a positive sestet and a negative octave, with a topsy-turvy structure where the sestet begins the sonnet. Although there are some positive words in the "octave" of the sonnet, they are hampered by the negatives that are attached to them (*do forgive*-*robbery*, *gentle*-*thief*, *love*-*greater grief*, *Lascivious*-*grace*, *ill*-*well*, *kill*-*spites*-*must not be*-*foes*). Vendler sees this sonnet's structure change at "the turn to forgiveness" at l.9 as she analyses the half-line structures of the sonnet (1999: 207–11)

41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
4 For still temptation follows where thou art.
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailèd;
And when a woman woos what woman's son
8 Will sourly leave her till he have prevailèd?
Ay me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
Who lead thee in their riot even there
12 Where thou art forced to break a two-fold truth:
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

This sonnet is torn between making excuses for the Fair Youth and accusing him at the same time. Q_1 places the blame on nature; it is natural to *commit pretty wrongs (sometime(s))* because of *youth*, *beauty* and *temptation*. Q_2 still exempts the Fair Youth by shifting the blame to women (or more specifically to the woman of the *Sonnets*, the Dark Lady, who now appears for the first time). Vendler calls ll.9–10 "the fulcrum of sincerity" and notes that it a passing moment in this sonnet, because on l.11 the Fair Youth is once again the victim of his beauty and youth who *lead* him, and in the couplet the active subject is not him precisely, but his beauty (1999: 213–5). So, the turn on line 9 is really a shift because it quickly deteriorates back into excuses, even if the sonnet does end in the accusatory *being false to me*.

42

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,
4 A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her,
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
8 Suff'ring my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain;
And, losing her, my friend hath found that loss:
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
12 And both for my sake lay on me this cross.
But here's the joy: my friend and I are one.
Sweet flatt'ry! then she loves but me alone.

Vendler says it best: "Shakespeare offers four models to describe the relations between the three persons in the triangle … The first model (Q_1) is the apparently true one. The young man (YM) and the mistress (M) are together in a relation that excludes the speaker (S) … In the second model (Q_2), their previous relationship of love with the speaker is the cause and very means by which the young man and mistress have fallen into their present affair (*because*, *for my sake*, *for my sake*) … In the third model (Q_3) their relation is the speaker's fault: he has somehow lost them both, because they have sought out each other—doing so even *for [his] sake*, presumably to solidify their relationship with him … In the last model (C), the speaker has absorbed the young man into himself, and the relationship therefore becomes one between himself and the mistress, eliding the young man altogether (*she loves me*)" (1999: 219–20).

43

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected,
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
4 And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
How would thy shadow's form form happy show,
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
8 When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so?
How would (I say) mine eyes be blessèd made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
12 Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

Vendler notes brilliantly the darkening quality of this sonnet as first *eyes best see*, then they become *unseeing eyes*, which turn to *sightless eyes*, until the eyes disappear altogether in the couplet and *dreams do show* (1999: 223). In this way the sonnet could be argued to be of a 4-4-4-2 structure with shifts rather than turns (because the change is so gradual). On the other hand, Vendler also notices the upward beat of the lines, where nearly all of them end in a brightening (ibid. 224). This means, structurally, that the sonnet is divided (roughly speaking) in half vertically, with the darker left half opposed to the mostly bright right side of the sonnet (the oxymoron *darkly bright* (4) resembles the structure). I think this structural division is the dominant one because, naturally, the ends of lines are foregrounded, especially so on the last line, which ends in a bright note *do show thee me*.

44

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought
4 From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then although my foot did stand
Upon the farthest earth removed from thee,
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land
8 As soon as think the place where he would be.
But ah, thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
12 I must attend time's leisure with my moan,
Receiving nought by elements so slow
But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

The basic structure of this sonnet is: If it were-But it is not. Vendler talks about the octave as a hypothesis and the sestet as an "admission of fact" (1999: 228).

Burrow writes that: "The human body was thought to be composed of two heavy elements (earth and water) and two lighter and more nimble elements (air and fire). The relative balance of these elements varied with mood, health, personal constitution, season, and age. To be composed of *earth and water* is to be slow both physically and mentally" (2002: 468). Perhaps the overabundance (notice l.11 *wrought*) of the heavy elements in the speaker leads this to be a somewhat unremarkable sonnet in Shakespeare's sequence, i.e. the sonnet is a basic sonnet because of a stylistic choice which serves the sonnets theme.

45

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide:
The first my thought, the other my desire,
4 These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
8 Sinks down to death, oppressed with melancholy,
Until life's composition be recurèd
By those swift messengers returned from thee,
Who even but now come back again assurèd
12 Of thy fair health, recounting it to me.
This told, I joy; but then, no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.

This sonnet continues the one before it; this time the quicker elements allow for a more pacey structure where each quatrain shifts the sentiment. In Q_1 air and fire's present-absent nature is revealed and Q_2&Q_3 describe the effects of absence/presence. C is divided unequally by the effects or emotions that the elements' swift motion causes. The "miniature turn" on l.13 *but then* leaves a third of the line for *no longer glad*, with more sadness to follow on l.14. The last word of the sonnet *sad* sounds all the more strong because of the partial alliteration of *grow* with *glad*; this, at least for me, envelops the *glad* on l.13 to *grow sad* and *glad* thus fades out of memory.

Vendler analyses the tenses of the sonnet and how they relate to the meaning (1999: 231–2).

46

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
How to divide the conquest of thy sight.
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar;
4 My heart, mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie
(A closet never pierced with crystal eyes),
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
8 And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impannellèd
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
And by their verdict is determinèd
12 The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part,
As thus: mine eye's due is thine outward part,
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.

47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other.
When that mine eye is famished for a look,
4 Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart.
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
8 And in his thoughts of love doth share a part.
So either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away, art present still with me;
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
12 And I am still with them, and they with thee;
Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart, to heart's and eye's delight.

48

How careful was I, when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That to my use it might unusèd stay
4 From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust?
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou best of dearest, and mine only care,
8 Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not locked up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
12 From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part;
And even thence thou wilt be stol'n, I fear:
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

Roychoudhury writes: "Critics intuit a dialectic in this sonnet. For Stephen Booth, it is between infatuation and true love; for Helen Vendler, it is between love's aesthetic and affective aspects. I would suggest that the two disputants represent different facets of consciousness, perception and contemplation, the eye being a window to the world and the heart being the closet of interiority. These are not alternatives; they are distinct yet connected aspects of ordinary cognitive experience" (2014: 112). The couplets equal verdict between eye and heart, even after the *impannellèd* jurors are biased for the heart, is a surprising turn in all of its unsurprise. The *mortal war* and 10 lines of court proceedings (l.3–12) dissolve into a neat and equal verdict; a peace is proclaimed, and the two needs must work together thinks the speaker.

The octave forms the *league … of good turns* and the sestet shifts to the somewhat more practical side of this peaceful reciprocity, i.e. the Fair Youth is with him through image and thought (even when he is really away). The couplet is very much tied to Q_3 as it continues the otherwise unfinished thought (*picture* still needs to be added after Q_3, in order to keep the balance between thought/heart and picture/eye prevalent in the sonnet).

Vendler concentrates her attention to the "cross-minuet of mutual courtesies" of heart and eye and analyses the structure as 2-4-6-2 (1999: 238–9). Her analysis is on the details of the *good turns*, while mine is on the larger frame of the *league* that is took. Both structures co-exist and effect the way the argument of the sonnet is perceived by a reader.

The sonnet goes from the material *trifles* of Q_1 to *thou* in Q_2, then to *Thee* which is *Within the gentle closure of my breast*, and lastly to a fear that not even in this immaterial manner can the Fair Youth be preserved for the speaker alone. The possessive nature of love is the theme Shakespeare has wanted to contemplate in this sonnet; the will to have the person you love and especially the fear of losing them completely. Here, this fear is externalised to everyone except the Fair Youth. Vendler writes: "The spectre of the beloved's infidelity is so inadmissible that the speaker would rather believe all the honest people of the world to be thieves rather than believe the beloved capable of parting from him" (1999: 242). The idea of possessing the Fair Youth is what leads to this train of thought, since only a possessed (object) can be stolen. This most problematic idea is what this seemingly simple sonnet deals with.

49

Against that time (if ever that time come)
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
4 Called to that audit by advised respects;
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
8 Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
Against that time do I ensconce me here,
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand against myself uprear,
12 To guard the lawful reasons on thy part.
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since why to love I can allege no cause.

The first two quatrains shift between two slightly different (future) images of the Fair Youth out of love with the speaker. The anaphora clearly leads the reader to anticipate an action in Q_3 or at the latest in C; an action that would repel the fearful images of the octave (e.g. line 9 could read "Against that time do I now write to thee"), instead the speaker's strategy is preparation (for the inevitable); the speaker accepts the loss of love as he sees no merit in himself, and tries to find solace in this acceptance. This sonnet could then also be read as an 8-6 sonnet with a turn on l.9, if the reader is surprised by this move by the speaker. In the sequence, as the reader comes to know the speaker, this is not such a dramatic turn.

Vendler reads the loss of love as something already happened (1999: 245–6)

50

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say
4 'Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.'
The beast that bears me, tirèd with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
8 His rider loved not speed being made from thee.
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan
12 More sharp to me than spurring to his side,
For that same groan doth put this in my mind:
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

See analysis on pages 47–9 of this thesis.

51

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed:
'From where thou art, why should I haste me thence?
4 Till I return, of posting is no need.'
O what excuse will my poor beast then find
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind:
8 In wingèd speed no motion shall I know.
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire (of perfect'st love being made)
Shall weigh no dull flesh in his fiery race,
12 But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade:
'Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.'

A metamorphosis of sorts occurs in this sonnet. The concrete *dull bearer* turns into a Pegasus-like creature with the phrases *mounted on the wind* and *winged speed*; in the sestet the impatient passion of the speaker allows *no dull flesh* to slow him down and the horse (winged or not) disappears. The excuse for the horse, which was the pretended idea of the sonnet on ll.1–2, ends the sonnet as the speaker *runs* towards the Fair Youth (runs in his thoughts, as in 43 where he wished that *The dull substance of my flesh were thought*) and gives the horse a second adieu if you will, since it was already abandoned on lines 7–8 and Q_3.

Vendler again hits the note as she says: "The amusement of writing the poem, for the poet, lies in drawing the comic disproportion between the impetus of desire and any and all physical means to its accomplishment" (1999: 252).

52

So am I as the rich, whose blessèd key
Can bring him to his sweet up-lockèd treasure,
The which he will not ev'ry hour survey
4 For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set
Like stones of worth they thinly placèd are,
8 Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide
To make some special instant special blest,
12 By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Blessèd are you whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph; being lacked, to hope.

The octave's two similes *So am I as* and *Like stones of worth* turn into a metaphor *So is the time* in the sestet. The metaphor for the Fair Youth's absence briefly shifts the sonnet into a more figurative space, but similes soon follow to make everything a bit more concrete. *As my chest* and *as the wardrobe* seem to fade away the difficulty of language that the metaphor brings. This difficulty arises because the metaphor of l.9 hinges (at least initially) on the similes of the octave to be understood. The couplet can be read to be ironic, which would be another shift in the sonnet. The phrase *Blessèd are you* does carry with it the idea "unlike me" or "you, not me (who *lacks* you)", because the stress falls on *you*. The speaker, however, is not bitter yet and 52 ends on *hope* which alleviates the undertone of possible irony.

53

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
4 And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you.
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
8 And you in Grecian tires are painted new.
Speak of the spring and foison of the year,
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
12 And you in every blessèd shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

The basic structure of this sonnet is a question which is answered in the couplet. The Fair Youth is all that (l.1–12) and more, i.e. *constant heart*. Lines 13–14 are in fact firstly a shift to a sum of all the material comparison, and the turn to the immaterial *constant heart* only comes at line 14.

Vendler offers another way to look at the sonnet: "Between the introduction (Q_1) detailing both the centripetal attraction (*tend*) and the centrifugal powers (*lend*) of the beloved, and the closing couplet explaining those powers, Shakespeare places the eight lines concerning representation (*describe*, *set*, *speak*). This conceptual structure (4-8-2) is one of the more unusual ones in the *Sonnets*, violating as it does both the Italian structure (8-6) and the English structure (4-4-4-2)" (1999: 259–60).

54

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give.
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
4 For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumèd tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
8 When summer's breath their maskèd buds discloses;
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwooed, and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
12 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth:
When that shall vade, by verse distils your truth.

This sonnet's structure is difficult to describe. Vendler thinks that its structure is similar to 53 which she thought to be a 4-8-2, but with this sonnet she is not so precise in her description, instead saying that "the most interesting part of the sonnet is a large central block flanked fore and aft by its preparatory and concluding material …" (1999: 245). Clearly the story of the *canker-blooms* stands out as its own part of the sonnet. Q_2 is concentrated on the similarities or roses and cankers, so it is a shift, but on l.11 the return to roses focuses on the difference between the two, so I would describe it as a turn. There is also a temptation to describe l.9 as a turn because the miniature story does turn there.

For a detailed analysis of what flower (i.e. poppies or wild roses?) the canker-bloom might be see Duncan-Jones (1995: 521–5).

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
4 Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
8 The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
12 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

The topic of the sonnet changes quite clearly with each Q and C. Q_1 is allotted for *time*, Q_2 for *war*, Q_3 for *death* and C for *judgment* or the afterlife in other words. The progression of the topics is surprisingly conventional, and the couplet's Last Judgement is possibly the clearest allusion to a Christian belief system in the sequence. In its progression the sonnet basically goes from *time* to an event which happens in time, i.e. *war*, to what ends time and ultimately to what is beyond time. The reader of the *Sonnets* might expect (from the sequence) a more jumbled arrangement.

Vendler thinks this sonnet is constructed around the key word *live*, present in each four sections of the sonnet, hiding in Q_3 *oblivious* (1999: 268–9).

56

Sweet love, renew thy force. Be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but today by feeding is allayed,
4 Tomorrow sharpened in his former might.
So love be thou, although today thou fill
Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
Tomorrow see again, and do not kill
8 The spirit of love with a perpetual dullness.
Let this sad int'rim like the ocean be,
Which parts the shore where two, contracted new,
Come daily to the banks, that when they see
12 Return of love, more blest may be the view;
As call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished, more rare.

"With respect to the *sad int'rim* represented here, the octave stands for time (*today*, *tomorrow*), and the third quatrain stands for space (*the ocean … which parts the shore*). The couplet offers a mediating *tertium quid*: not the impossible succession of reassuringly identical days of love—*today*, *tomorrow* —prayed for in the octave, nor the desolate *daily* vacancy of the ocean endured in Q_3, but rather the succession of spacious contrasting seasons (*winter* followed by *summer*)" (Vendler 1999: 271). So, time, space, and seasons which carry with them a connotation of space, are the structuring topics of the sonnet. The couplet is a sum of that which has preceded, and in that sense it turns from Q_3 which was solely concerned with space. The idea that adversity in love leads to its strengthening is repeated in stronger terms in 119.

57

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
4 Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
Whilst I (my sovereign) watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
8 When you have bid your servant once adieu.
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But like a sad slave stay and think of naught,
12 Save where you are how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will,
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

The couplet, I think, gives this sonnet an unmistakably ironic feel, whereas (most of) what precedes it only gives hints of irony. The first hint is the somewhat insincere sounding question *what should I do but tend*. The first line could have been phrased in many ways that would be clearly unironic, e.g. "Being your faithful servant I will tend". Other hints are the repeated *nor's* and the parentheses around *my sovereign*, where commas could have been used. Even if the couplet finally underlines the ironic tone with the word *fool*, there is a prior point where the irony becomes impossible to miss. On line 11 the certainty of slavery present on l.1 *Being your slave* turns into *like a sad slave* which implies a rejection of this role. Vendler goes as far as to suggest that the speaker means the opposite of what he says, i.e. he is bitter, he does jealously question etc. (1999: 274–75).

58

That god forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,
4 Being your vassal bound to stay your leisure.
O let me suffer (being at your beck)
Th' imprisoned absence of your liberty,
And, patience-tame to sufferance, bide each check
8 Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will: to you it doth belong
12 Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
I am to wait, though waiting so be hell,
Not blame your pleasure be it ill or well.

Four different imperatives form this sonnet. Q_1 is a negative imperative, Q_2 a positive one (*Without accusing you of injury* only states more precisely how the speaker is to suffer), Q_3 turns to the Fair Youth with a positive imperative and C turns back to the speaker. Vendler, as well, notes that: "The verb chains, negative and positive, of the forbidden and the exhorted connect the parts of the poem to each other" (1999: 277). A sense of bitterness runs (instead of the irony in 57) through the sonnet culminating in *crime* and *hell*.

Schalkwyk (2005: 84–5) paraphrases Magnusson to describe the strategies of 56 and 57 as having both "passive subjection" and "active resistance" through "negative politeness" which "works to do and undo the speech actions it undertakes".

59

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
4 The second burden of a former child.
O that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
8 Since mind at first in character was done,
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we are mended, or wher're better they,
12 Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

Vendler divides this sonnet as 4-6-2-2 through its pronominal shifts (1999: 281–2) saying of the speaker that "Speaking as *we*, he is a mind; speaking as *I*, he is a lover" (ibid.). It is hard to come up with any better division; Q_1 is clearly a unit and Q_2 overflows to lines 9–10. This sonnet is a good example that Shakespeare would not restrict his expression to fit a specific structure, even if he does use some structures recurrently and others only once or twice (see chapter 4 of this thesis). In a sense this is a 4-4-4-2 sonnet in which Q_2 is allowed to take two lines from Q_3, thus making Q_2 six lines long and Q_3 only two lines long. This structure places the emphasis of the sonnet to the longing wish of the speaker to be reaffirmed of the Fair Youth's uniqueness in history, because "Q_2" is the longest section of the sonnet, i.e. six lines.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
4 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned
Crookèd eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
8 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
12 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

"Like 73, sonnet 60 is one of the "perfect" examples of the 4-4-4-2 Shakespearean sonnet form. Each quatrain introduces a new and important modification in concept and tone, while the couplet—here a "reversing" couplet contradicting the body of the sonnet—adds yet a fourth dimension" (Vendler: 1999: 284). She goes on to describe the three models of life represented in the quatrains, where in Q_1 there is the idea of steady change and sequentiality, in Q_2 *Time* is "first generous" and then "malign" and in Q_3 *Time* is "exclusively malign" (ibid. 284–5). Vendler also notes that the couplet ends with *his cruel hand* which undermines the positive turn (ibid.).

The second quatrain is a showcase of Shakespeare's command of the language, where the entirety of life is brilliantly described in four lines.

61

Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
4 While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
8 The scope and tenor of thy jealousy?
O no, thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake,
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
12 To play the watchman ever for thy sake.
For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

Vendler summarises the structure as follows: "An "Italian" structure of question-octave / answer-sestet organizes the speaker's insomnia in the beloved's absence …" (1999: 288). I think that the couplet's jealousy turns the sonnet again. The third quatrain's turn is to be expected; the sonnet would be strange without it, that is if the sonnet read: "is it thy will, is it thy spirit, yes it is". The questions of the octave, I think, require a negative answer, but the couplet's straightforwardly jealous *with others all too near* comes as a surprise. Vendler also reads a "ghost-poem" for this sonnet in which the second quatrain's prying spirit is just the speaker's projection of his own jealousy (ibid. 288–9). The couplet, certainly, affords such an interpretation.

62

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul, and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
4 It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account,
And for myself mine own worth do define
8 As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chapped with tanned antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
12 Self so self-loving were iniquity:
'Tis thee (my self) that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

The octave is unified by *sin of self-love* and the sestet turns clearly on *But* as the mirror image of old days wakens the speaker to the realisation that he is better of loving the Fair Youth, and since they are one, himself through the Fair Youth. Technically speaking, Q_1 describes the quantity of self-love and Q_2 the quality; Q_3 turns away from self-love and C reveals what will replace self-love. In this sense a 4-4-4-2-structure is present alongside the 8-6-structure of Self-love–Love of the Fair Youth. Usually, however, in a 4-4-4-2-structure there is not such a clear turning point as in this sonnet's line 9. The emphatic *But* that turns the speaker away from the sin of self-love, for me, is so clear that it overwhelms the shifts of the sonnet.

Vendler sees two sonnets in one: the speaker consumed with self-love/the speaker consumed with praise of the FY (1999: 294).

63

Against my love shall be as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crushed and o'er-worn,
When hours have drained his blood and filled his brow
4 With lines and wrinkles, when his youthful morn
Hath travelled on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,
8 Stealing away the treasure of his spring:
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
12 My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them, still green.

The octave is (unusually) perfectly unified, as line 4 is enjambed to line 5. Burrow (2002: 506) glosses *Against* as: "To secure me against the time when. 'In resistance to in defence or protection from' (OED 13a)". The octave's self-deprecating fear of the Fair Youth becoming the Unsightly Senior is alleviated by the sestet's old (but true) answer of immortalising verse. The couplet, to anyone who has read the sequence to this point, does not come as a surprise and is therefore not a turn. Vendler states of the octave/sestet: "Though the octave is concerned with gradual decline and entropy, the sestet is concerned with the speaker's concession to his lover's eventual death at the hand of *Age* and his *cruel knife* … This distinction of emphasis between octave and sestet accounts for the double personification … personified *Time* stands for gradual destructive motion, while personified *Age* stands for instant and total cessation" (1999: 297).

64

When I have seen by Time’s fell hand defacèd
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age,
When sometime lofty towers I see down razèd
4 And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the wat’ry main,
8 Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay,
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
12 That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

Time’s destructive power occupies ten lines. The anaphora *When I have seen* seems to emphasise the personal nature of the speaker’s observations, as if he had actually been there to see it all. Sight is also emphasised, and this makes the first ten lines like an emblem of visible decay or ruin. On l.11 the sonnet turns to meditate on this emblem. The now anthropomorphised *Ruin* teaches the speaker that since all that the speaker has seen decays, so will the Fair Youth and not only decay but die, thus a turn to death.Vendler notes that *ruminate* contains *ruinate* and that l.11 is philosophically Latinate while 12 in contrast has a “naked primary defencelessness of Shakespeare’s helpless monosyllables” and that l.12 “feels like a death” (1999: 301). Also, the heavy consonance of l.11 foregrounds the turn. *Death* on l.13 does not come out of nowhere then.

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o’ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
4 Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O how shall summer’s honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of batt’ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
8 Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation; where, alack,
Shall Time’s best jewel from Time’s chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
12 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

The ninth line’s interjection might lead a reader to expect a turn in Q_3, but instead the almost exhausting line of questioning continues. The desperately sought answer comes in the couplet: the Fair Youth can survive only as words on a page. Even though the couplet’s answer is not surprising, it is still dramatic because of the eloquent build up that has led to it. This elevates the answer, that is poetry, because Time’s *rage*, *siege*, *decay* and *swift foot* have before this answer found no match. Poetry might stand a chance against all that has been described in previous lines.

Vendler notes that: “… the increasingly shorter line-lengths of the questions (4-4-2-1-1) join the octave to Q_3 in an *accelerando*” (1999: 306). She reads Q_1 as a question in its entirety.

66

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

This experimental sonnet is bracketed by a death-wish denied by love, making it a 1-11-2- structure. The anaphoric *And* emphasises the tiredness of the speaker and alludes especially to line nine’s *tongue-tied*[ness].

Vendler calls this a “couplet preceded by its expansion” (1999: 308). In its “expansion” of 11 lines she notes a masque of sixteen people is presented, with the actors coming in twos by midway of the sonnet (ibid.). Up until line 7 something was degraded somehow, but on line 8 this changes. There *strength* is *disabled by limping sway*. Vendler sees this as a change from the lamentation of the first seven lines to accusation (ibid.). This new gained agency, I think, is in anticipation of the denial to give up in the couplet. He’s not just complaining anymore but singling out things to fight against.

67

Ah, wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve
4 And lace itself with his society?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeming of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
8 Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggared of blood to blush through lively veins,
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
12 And proud of many, lives upon his gains?
O him she stores to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.

Vendler writes that: "The proportioning of the questions (4-2-2-4) exhibits chiastic symmetry that ultimately "calms down" the genuine agitation of Q_1" (1999: 314). The couplet, I think, introduces yet another shift as the only non-question of the sonnet.

The sonnet can be read as an indirect accusation or a genuine defence of the Fair Youth. Why should the vile world infect the Fair Youth or why does the Fair Youth choose to live with infection. The shorter questions pose the Fair Youth as a victim, while the longer questions imply agency: he chooses to live with infection, he bankrupts Nature. The length of these "questions" tilts the scale towards accusation, but the couplet tilts it back. This leaves the sonnet ambiguous.

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were born,
4 Or durst inhabit on a living brow:
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
To live a second life on second head,
8 Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:
In him those holy antique hours are seen
Without all ornament, itself and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
12 Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth Nature store,
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

"The ostensible plan of 68 is to praise the young man as a living example of the Golden Age. This praise is the way the octave begins; this praise (after the "derailing" in lines 3–8 of the octave's original intent) also marks the fresh start undertaken in the sestet. But the sestet too is "derailed" away from praise, and into satire of the present, even faster than the octave was" (Vendler 1999: 316). Instead of a pure praise of the Fair Youth (or young man as Vendler calls him) there is a strange derailment to the despisement of artificiality and especially the grotesque habit of the times to make wigs out of dead people's hair. Even as the sestet tries to start again fresh the same happens. The praise needs a counterpart, something ugly to highlight the Fair Youth's true beauty.

69

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend:
All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
4 Utt'ring bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crowned,
But those same tongues, that give thee so thine own
In other accents do this praise confound
8 By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds.
Then, churls, their thoughts (although their eyes were kind)
12 To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds.
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

I would divide this sonnet into: outward beauty-inward beauty in question-in question because. The speaker does not judge the Fair Youth's inner qualities by his actions and instead sees beyond them. Winnick has a more complex but believable view: "Sonnet 69 contains–indeed, was constructed around–an anagrammatic or graphic game in which the proliferation of *thou*s, *thee*s and, in particular, the orthographic and phonetic *parts* which comprise them–*th*, *ou*/*ow*, and *ē*–enact in a wittily literal way both line 1's reference to 'Those [orthographic and phonetic] parts of [the word] thee that the worlds eye doth view' and line 14's admonition to the young man that '[the word] Thou doest [orthographically and phonetically] common grow'." (Winnick 2005: 199).

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair.
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
4 A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being wooed of time.
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
8 And thou present'st a pure unstainèd prime.
Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days,
Either not assailed, or victor, being charged;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise
12 To tie up envy, evermore enlarged.
If some suspect of ill masked not thy show
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

The point of the sonnet is that a flaw in perfection enhances perfection. Absolute perfection is boring and unapproachable. The first eight lines speak to this effect. On line 9 there is a change that makes the octave hypothetical rather than something that has happened. The octave now reads: Should thou (someday) be blamed it will not be thy defect.

The alliteration on line 12 foregrounds *envy* ever-present that the Fair Youth cannot avoid facing. Even if the *canker* (7) loves *sweetest buds* (7) and therefore it is a sign of sweetness that the *canker* of *envy* takes you as its target, it is still something to be avoided. Line 12 stresses that it cannot be avoided.

C stays away from the (now) hypotheticals of the octave and is instead the speaker's personal view; he knows his imperfection.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
4 From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
8 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if (I say) you look upon this verse
When I (perhaps) compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
12 But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.

See analysis on pages 53–5 of this thesis.

72

O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me that you should love
After my death (dear love) forget me quite,
4 For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceasèd I
8 Than niggard truth would willingly impart.
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
12 And live no more to shame nor me, nor you.
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

The octave is almost a single sentence. The speaker confesses to no reason the Fair Youth should have loved him and the neither should the Fair Youth. The sestet shifts to define the Fair Youth's love as *true love*, but also keeps the idea that any praise for the speaker must be untrue. There is a contradiction in the sestet, because to love the speaker the Fair Youth must obviously see something good in him. The couplet repeats the speaker's own definition of himself. Surely if the Fair Youth loves the speaker, then he is allowed his own opinion of the speaker. The key word in the couplet is *shamed*. To bear your heart out will necessarily lead to this emotion that overbears the sonnet.

Vendler has a more cynical view as she thinks the speaker knows that the Fair Youth would not rise to his defence even after death (1999: 331).

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
4 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
8 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed, whereon it must expire,
12 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

See analysis on pages 68–70 of this thesis.

74

But be contented when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away;
My life hath in this line some interest,
4 Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
8 My spirit is thine, the better part of me.
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead,
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
12 Too base of thee to be rememberèd.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

The quatrains shift in their tense and voice. The *line … shall stay* (simple future) with the Fair Youth after the speaker's demise. The *line*s of the sonnet hold that which *was consecrate* (simple past) to the Fair Youth, that is the speaker's inner self, his thoughts and spirit. The body is *Too base of thee to be rememberèd* (passive voice) and this sonnet *with thee remains* (simple present). *Remains* of course has as its other meaning 'earthly remains' which are now transformed into something more precious, lines of poetry. The simple present of the couplet refers to the(exact) moment when the speaker has passed and the Fair Youth is reading this sonnet. What was still in the future in Q_1 is now in the present. Vendler notes the same phrases as I but focuses on the prepositions, i.e. *with*, *to*, *of*, *with* (1999: 338–9).

75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet seasoned showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
4 As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found:
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,
Now counting best to be with you alone,
8 Then bettered that the world may see my pleasure;
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
And by and by clean starvèd for a look.
Possessing or pursuing, no delight
12 Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

Lines 1–9 compare the speaker to a miser with a precious possession. This implies the speaker's view of possessing the Fair Youth or at least the desire to possess him. On line 10, I think, the speaker loses his agency as he is *starvèd for a look*. He does not starve himself for a look but instead is starved. This differs from the miser who can always decide when to enjoy his wealth/possession; a miser would not be starved. The speaker's possession is not, then, without a doubt really his possession. The next two lines admit as much as *Possessing* (11) is juxtaposed with the more truthful *pursuing* (11) . Vendler writes that this sonnet has a 4-6-4-structure, but she makes similar observations as I about the possession of the speaker and *starvèd* (1999: 341–2).

76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
4 To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
8 Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
12 Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love, still telling what is told.

See analysis on pages 29–31 of this thesis.

77

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste,
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
4 And of this book this learning mayst thou taste:
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthèd graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
8 Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look what thy memory cannot contain,
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,
12 To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

Burrow (2002: 534) glosses *give thee memory* on line 6 as: "remind you. The odd locution unites remembering with learning for the first time". I think that Shakespeare plays with the word's Latin origin *memoria* which has the added meaning of *history*. *Wrinkles* mean that the Fair Youth will have acquired a personal history. In the sestet the speaker encourages the Fair Youth to go beyond personal history. Vendler argues that *waste blanks* mean a blank notebook given by the speaker (1999: 348). It could also mean "beyond your own history", as in "see beyond yourself". If the interpretation of *memory* = history is to be believed, then the sestet implores the Fair Youth to look beyond himself because, as the octave noted, he will grow old, he is not enough on his own. This may seem like a stretch, but I have not found a better explanation for the "odd locution" of line 6.

78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use,
4 And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learnèd's wing,
8 And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee.
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
12 And arts with thy sweet graces gracèd be;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.

Vendler sees a "mock-*débat*" in this sonnet: "The mock-answer is that the young man should be prouder of having taught a hitherto *dumb* admirer to *sing*, and of having advanced *ignorance* as high as *learning*, because these achievements on his part testify more impressively to his originary power than his (slighter) accomplishments with respect to his learnèd poets—he but *mends* their style and *graces* their arts. This debate is presented in a Petrarchan logical structure, with a clearly demarcated octave and sestet" (1999: 351). Other poets are only given four lines (7–8 and 11–12), which makes this a mock-debate; the speaker is of course arguing for his poetry more than he is actually weighing who writes the best poetry on the Fair Youth. His poetry cannot be bested because it is borne of true love and a near compulsion to write only of him.

79

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
4 And my sick Muse doth give another place.
I grant (sweet love) thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen,
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
8 He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
12 No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thyself dost pay.

This sonnet is divided to the speaker's part after which he turns to the rival poet and shows the flaws in the rival's poetry. Vendler writes: "Structurally, the sonnet falls into a 6-6-2 division, with the illegal traffic in "invention" occupying the second block of six lines. Since this traffic, deduced from its written result, is the chief interest of the poem, it is worth noting that what the speaker says of his rival's invention is (he answers) equally true of his own practice—whatever he writes, he derives from the beloved's *gentle grace*" (1999: 356). The rival poet is presented as a thief, but the speaker is guilty of the same theft, *thou art all my art* he said in the previous sonnet. The difference is that the rival poet is not (as) aware that his subject deserves all the acclaim his poetry might achieve; this makes him a thief and the speaker a portrayer or a mirror.

80

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might
4 To make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame.
But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy barque (inferior far to his)
8 On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
Or (being wrecked) I am a worthless boat,
12 He of tall building, and of goodly pride.
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this, my love was my decay.

Vendler calls this a 4-8-2 structure because of the "obtrusive figure of the ocean" divides it in the middle (1999: 358). That is certainly true and the prominent structure of the sonnet, but a more subtle division also exists. The sonnet has only four lines without two actors (l. 5, 8, 11 and 12); *I–you*, *he–you*, *I–he* dichotomy is present in all the other lines. Two of these lines (5 and 8) are for the Fair Youth, the speaker and the rival both get a line (11 and 12) which seems a fitting and symmetrical division. This (line internal) division represents the love triangle almost symmetrically as the he–you gets three lines, the I–he three lines and the I–you gets four lines. I–you wins, love wins, **if** *love* is read as "my beloved" and not "my affection"; ambiguity about this "win" remains. Read as "my affection" it is just another line alone for the speaker.

81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten,
From hence your memory death cannot take,
4 Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I (once gone) to all the world must die.
The earth can yield me but a common grave
8 When you entombèd in men's eyes shall lie:
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues-to-be your being shall rehearse,
12 When all the breathers of this world are dead.
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

This sonnet gets a breath of life in the sestet after the octave so full of death and decay. Vendler, as well, notes this, but she also notices the change from printed verse (lines 8 and 10) to its oral recitation (lines 11, 12 and 14); she also sees wordplay at play: "*created* contains *read*, *breathers* conceals 'hearers,' and *earth* and *rehearse* contain 'hear.' Of their respectively eight and nine letters, *rehearse* and *breathers* have seven in common. These words all act out, *mutatis mutandis*, the central paradox that two such opposed words as *death* and *breath* differ only by their initial consonants" (1999: 361). It is interesting to find such intricate methods in the "rival poet"-group of sonnets (78–86) where the speaker on the one hand stresses his humility (the previous sonnet) and unlearned nature (sonnet 78). His language, it seems, betrays the tongue-in-cheek nature of such self-descriptions.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint o'er-look
The dedicated words which writers use
4 Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise,
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
8 Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devised
What strainèd touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou, truly fair, wert truly sympathized
12 In true, plain words, by thy true-telling friend.
And their gross painting might be better used
Where cheeks need blood: in thee it is abused.

Vendler, with this sonnet as with some others, likes to imagine an anterior utterance to which this sonnet is a reply (1999: 365–6). That is of course one possible interpretative method of analysing some of the sonnets, but for me it narrows the sense of the sonnet into a part of a dialogue (the other part of which one has to imagine, or trust Vendler's imagination). I think the sonnet works well on its own without an imagined counterpart. Burrow (2002: 544) glosses *attaint* (2) as "dishonour", *o'erlook* (2) as "read; perhaps 'cast a glance at' …" The Fair Youth will look at other poets' work, but on line 9 with 9 with *yet* the sonnet turns to describe the mistake in this. The speaker-writer's quadruple (*truly*, *truly*, *true*, *true*) truthful depiction of the Fair Youth is superior.

C is clearly tied to Q3.

83

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set.
I found (or thought I found) you did exceed
4 The barren tender of a poet's debt;
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself being extant well might show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,
8 Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb:
For I impair not beauty, being mute,
12 When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
Than both your poets can in praise devise.

The octave is almost a single long sentence. It falls wittily short at line 8 because the syntax would require a continuation to *doth come too short* (Booth 2000: 282). Vendler (1999: 369) too quotes this Booth's notion, but neither of them notes the long sentence (3–8) in which this wittiness (or rather a skilful play on syntax in the already demanding sonnet form) is embedded in. Modern quills come short at the same time that the speaker (or Shakespeare rather; even Vendler abandons the term "the speaker" in this sonnet's analysis and speaks of Shakespeare (ibid.)) goes long.

The sestet, and therefore the sonnet, could be read as a reply since l.9 so clearly points to it *you did impute*. The sestet retorts the sin of silence by pointing to language's imperfect nature; words fail all poets trying to describe the Fair Youth.

84

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

Vendler notes that: "… the tautology of *you are you* is (like the *I am that I am* of 121) suggests a uniqueness normally reserved to the Deity" (1999: 371). The worship of the deity-like Fair Youth turns to a reproach in the couplet. The Fair Youth seems not to understand his unique divinity and is instead, to the speaker's dismay, subject to flattery. Had he the same view of himself as the speaker does, he would not be impressed by the rival poets' lent *glory* (7). *Let him but copy what in you is writ* (9) with its simplifying *but* is in opposition to the previous sonnet's couplet which stressed the impossibility of perfect mimesis through language. The *but copy* now makes representation seem like a simple procedure easily accomplished, if the poet just realises that copying is all that need be done.

85

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise, richly compiled,
Reserve their character with golden quill
4 And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.
I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words,
And like unlettered clerk still cry ‘Amen’
To every hymn that able spirit affords,
8 In polished form of well-refinèd pen.
Hearing you praised, I say ‘Tis so, ’tis true’,
And to the most of praise add something more,
But that is in my thought, whose love to you
12 (Though words come hindmost) holds his rank before.
Then others for the breath of words respect;
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

The speaker holds the Fair Youth highmost in his thoughts while other poets only lift him up in their poems’; the eloquence of other poets’ polished words is lived life for the speaker.

Vendler seems to argue for a 4-4-4-2 structure where the other poets get less and less line space by each quatrain (1999: 374–5). It is true, but lines 5–10 seem to form a unit that goes over the quatrain boundary between Q_2 and Q_3, as the *unlettered clerk* of line 6 is now the unlettered reader of poetry on line 9. On line 11 (if anywhere) the sonnet turns to *love* that redeems the supposed simplicity (not so) of the speaker; inner love is more important than an outer representation of that love, i.e. words. Line 5 has already expressed something similar, but now *good thoughts* become more intimate thoughts of love.

86

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
4 Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
8 Giving him aid, my verse astonishèd.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,
As victors of my silence cannot boast:
12 I was not sick of any fear from thence.
But, when your countenance filled up his line,
Then lacked I matter; that enfeebled mine.

Was it this or this? No, it was not those things but this. This rather clear 6-6-2 structure is how the argument proceeds. The first question inhabits Q_1, so one would expect the second question to take up Q_2, but instead it surprisingly ends short. The first “sestet” seems much more fluent and elegant than the latter full of negations and caesuras and the unnecessarily repetitive line 12. As if the speaker were at great pains to deny the first “sestet”. C then tells us the supposedly only reason for fearing the other poet: he began writing of the Fair Youth. But were not the other poet’s talent to be feared then surely it would not matter what he wrote of (hence the stuttering nature of ll.7–12). Vendler (1999: 377–9) sees the 6-6-2 structure but argues rather for a 12-2 because of the long wait on the answer of the couplet that foregrounds the couplet.

87

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know’st thy estimate.
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing:
4 My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
8 And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thy self thou gav’st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav’st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
12 Comes home again, on better judgement making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

See analysis on pages 51–3 of this thesis.

88

When thou shalt be disposed to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
4 And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults concealed, wherein I am attainted,
8 That thou in losing me shalt win much glory.
And I by this will be a gainer too,
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee:
The injuries that to myself I do,
12 Doing thee vantage, double vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

The tortured logic of the speaker is that defending the Fair Youth's betrayal will benefit him because the two are one and because by just *bending* his *thoughts on* the Fair Youth he gains (Burrow 2002: 556). In sonnet 85 the speaker *think*[s] *good thoughts* (5) and says that his thoughts love the Fair Youth (11), but here there is no such ease of thought and instead the speaker is *bending all my loving thoughts on thee* (10). This implies general loving thoughts that must now forcefully be bent towards the Fair Youth. In 85 the speaker's thoughts were about the Fair Youth and did not need forceful directing. Vendler (1999: 385) calls *thou art forsworn* (4) "the quiet bombshell". It briefly just mentions that: "O, remember when you betrayed me". It undermines the positives the speaker tries to find in Q_3. C is somewhat detached.

89

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence.
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
4 Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not (love) disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desirèd change,
As I'll myself disgrace, knowing thy will.
8 I will acquaintance strangle and look strange,
Be absent from thy walks, and in my tongue
Thy sweet belovèd name no more shall dwell,
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
12 And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself, I'll vow debate;
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

Vendler notes "the distinct enjambment of line 8 with line 9 which, for her, creates an octave in the middle bracketed by "external and internal speech (*comment*, *debate*)" (Vendler 1999: 388). It is hard to argue against that.

In sonnet 35 the speaker said *Such civil war is in my love and hate* (12). Here the speaker is in a more subdued state. *Love* only appears as a term of endearment (in parentheses) and *hate* which ends the sonnet is the Fair Youth's emotion instead of the speaker's. The speaker lowers himself into one of his deepest bows in this sonnet. This is either a sign of hapless and unequal love or some deep seeded feeling of guilt in the speaker. From the sequence it becomes clear that he is far from innocent himself, see for example sonnet 110. This might explain why he is willing to *disgrace me* (5).

90

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of Fortune, make me bow,
4 And do not drop in for an after-loss.
Ah do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow
8 To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come, so shall I taste
12 At first the very worst of Fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee, will not seem so.

Vendler: "The sonnet is logically organized, it would seem, into octave and sestet (an 8-6 structure) by its two "if " hypotheses: *If ever, now* (line 1) and *If thou wilt leave me* (line 9). On the other hand, it is also rhetorically organized by its "[do] not" sequence: *do not drop in*, *do not...come*, *give not*, *do not*. A set of negative injunctions (lines 4–10) is bracketed on either side by positive injunctions: *hate me*, *join*, *make me* on the left, and *come* on the right, suggesting a 4-6-4 structure. From another point of view, though, the *do not…come in the rearward* of line 6 matches the *in the onset come* of line 11, the climax of the poem; this suggests a 6-6-2 structure rather than an octave/sestet structure" (1999: 391). For me the *do not drop in* (4), *do not…come in* (5–6), *do not leave* (9), *will not* (14) is what stands out. But this is a good example of a sonnet with multiple parallel structures.

91

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,
4 Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest;
But these particulars are not my measure,
8 All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be:
12 And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast,
Wretched in this alone: that thou mayst take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

See analysis on pages 63–4 of this thesis.

92

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assurèd mine,
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
4 For it depends upon that love of thine.
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
8 Than that which on thy humour doth depend.
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,
12 Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessed fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.

Vendler says that the couplet gets the strength it needs to overturn the body of the sonnet from the string of infinitives *fear* (5), *to have* (12) and *to die!* (12) which set up the couplet through their relation as the only infinitives; she argues for a 1-11-2 structure (1999: 398). For me the first line is very much tied to what follows, and lines 11–12 are so over the top in their "happiness" that they turn the sonnet (even before *false* on line14). They are over the top because the speaker has just described a situation where the Fair Youth will always love him because at the very moment that that love would end the speaker's life would too. The subject matter is then: end of love=end of life. This does not seem to have much to do with happiness of any sort, so the exclamations of ll. 11–12 sound desperately unhappy already before the couplet.

93

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceivèd husband, so love's face
May still seem love to me, though altered new:
4 Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place.
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
8 Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange;
But heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell.
Whate'er thy thoughts, or thy heart's workings be,
12 Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show.

In sonnet 83 the speaker said *There lives more life in one of your fair eyes / Than both your poets can in praise devise.* (13–14). It seems that there is a difference with the Fair Youth's *eyes* and his *eye* (5). The speaker is at pains to merge two sides of the Fair Youth: he saw absolute beauty where he now sees deception and possible hatred, hence the alleviating change to *eye*, as if the speaker is still incapable to admit having been fully deceived and only one of the eyes can be seen as possibly deceitful. The sonnet is divided into Q_1 with a near admission of the Fair Youth's deceitfulness, and an octave in the middle which complicates this. After these complications the couplet can "only" use the hedging *If* (14). The speaker does not know.

Vendler too divides the sonnet into a 4-8-2 structure but has her own reasons (1999: 400–1).

94

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
4 Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow:
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense.
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
8 Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
12 The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name?
4 O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days
(Making lascivious comments on thy sport)
Cannot dispraise, but in a kind of praise,
8 Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O, what a mansion have those vices got,
Which for their habitation chose out thee,
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
12 And all things turns to fair that eyes can see!
Take heed (dear heart) of this large privilege:
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

96

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness,
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport.
Both grace and faults are loved of more and less:
4 Thou mak'st faults graces, that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a thronèd queen
The basest jewel will be well esteemed,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
8 To truths translated, and for true things deemed.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate?
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
12 If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state?
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

Easthope (1986: 53–60) points out that *rightly* (5) can either be read as ironic or sincere and that this creates two different readings that can both be argued for. Schwartz (1971: 397–9) argues for the unironic reading by saying that if the octave is ironic then the sestet would have to be too, and he argues that *hurt* (1) and *infection* (11) create an (imperfect) analogy between the octave and the sestet when the sonnet is read as unironic. Neely (1977: 83–95) too reads it as unironic, referring to Petrarch's sonnets' cool and aloof beloved; he also says that the sonnet is not divided into an octave and sestet as almost all the previous analyses say and that the two sections have too much in common for a clear division to exist. I have to agree with Neely. The sestet does not turn but it does shift (clearly) from *They* to floral imagery.

This sonnet has distinct quatrains in the sense that it goes from *rose* (2) to *tongue* (5) to *mansion* (9) and to the warning of the couplet. But since it modifies one thing (sin is not sin for the Fair Youth, he is judged differently because of his *beauty's veil*) I would say it shifts. Vendler sees a division to an octave and Q_3 as the octave stresses the Fair Youth's *name* and Q_3 his *beauty*, but she also notices that the second quatrain's "small narrative" breaks up the "helpless exclamations of wonder" in Q_1 and Q_3 (1999: 408–9). The warning in C where the Fair Youth's analogy is *hardest knife* (14) seems similar to the previous sonnets … *are themselves as stone* (3). This supports the unironic sense of sonnet 94. The warning portrays a hard cutting piece of metal as a positive; but even beauty has its limits and not all sins will be covered by his *beauty's veil*.

The anaphora implies an ironic tone. *Some say* when it sounds like the speaker is the one *saying* these things and more. The octave is a thinly veiled accusation while the sestet's questions sound rhetoric (the speaker knows *How many*) because of the end *mine is thy good report*. If the speaker really has the Fair Youth's report (reputation) in his hands then it is not in safekeeping when we read this sonnet's octave (*Thou mak'st faults graces* (4), *errors … to truths translated* (7–8)). The couplet is the same as in sonnet 36 but there it was sincere, here it is like the speaker is holding the Fair Youth's good reputation as hostage. Kerrigan is perceptive as he suggests that as this sonnet and 36 end subsections critical of the Fair Youth (sonnets 35–6 and 92–6) the repeated couplet makes these two groups of sonnets "rhyme" (1986: 297).

97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year?
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen?
4 What old December's bareness everywhere?
And yet this time removed was summer's time,
The teeming autumn big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
8 Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit,
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
12 And, thou away, the very birds are mute.
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

Fleeting (2) and *freezings* (3) are juxtaposed with *teeming* (6) through their assonance; *winter* (4) is juxtaposed with *summer's time* (5). The change from the first quatrain's frostiness does not last as the negatives quickly return on lines 7 and 8. This envisages the hopeless longing of the sestet. Despite the end stop on line 12 the couplet continues Q_3 so clearly that it is only a couplet by rhyme, the sestet is almost like one long sentence.

Evans (1963: 379–80) notices that *summer's time* could mean "summer's death" (as in "his time came" meaning his time was up, i.e. he died) and that therefore l.8's *lords' decease* would more logically mean the deceased summer. This certainly makes more sense than "summertime" and an abrupt jump to autumn on l.6. The FY's absence is the absence of summer.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April (dressed in all his trim)
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
4 That heavy Saturn laughed and leapt with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
8 Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew.
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight
12 Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

Even *spring* (1) is like *winter* (13) and a mere *shadow* (14) of the Fair Youth's when he is absent. "What light is light, if Silvia be not seen? What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by? Unless it be to think that she is by And feed upon the shadow of perfection" (The Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 3 scene 1, 175–8). This sonnet is like a poetic version of the above (already quite poetic) quoted lines.

"The poem seems to denigrate rhetoric insofar as the vernal beauties are only 'figures of delight' (1.11), not the real thing. But, when all is said and done, any praise for the beloved only comes through these vernal tropes and schemes" (Williams 1999: 46). Line 5 turns everything into the shadow of the Fair Youth.

99

The forward violet thus did I chide:
'Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride,
4 Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.'
The lily I condemnèd for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair.
8 The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair,
A third nor red, nor white, had stol'n of both,
And to his robb'ry had annexed thy breath;
12 But for his theft, in pride of all his growth,
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
But sweet or colour it had stol'n from thee.

This 15-line sonnet is divided to the personified violet and a bouquet of other flowers personified. The speaker is perplexed by nature's beauty when he had thought all beauty is the Fair Youth's; theft must be at play! While noting all these crimes the speaker is also indirectly praising the Fair Youth. The indirection, while taking the spotlight of the Fair Youth, also connects him to a whole system of natural beauty which can be described at detail for many lines.

Benardete comments at length on line 9's *blushing* which read literally would mean "blushing red" **and also** "blushing white": "… one wishes to take the line as saying that in turning pale the white rose does blush albeit only mutatis mutandis" (1996: 141). With the necessary imagination applied, it is a rather fresh way to avoid the phrase "turn pale".

100

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
4 Dark'ning thy pow'r to lend base subjects light?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent.
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
8 And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
12 And make Time's spoils despisèd everywhere.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life,
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crookèd knife.

The speaker addresses his Muse in three distinct quatrains and a couplet. It is like a reply to the three previous sonnets that had the Fair Youth as a sort of a supporting character when he should be all the speaker's art. The speaker's Muse has fallen of the track and astonishingly he now orders it. It almost sounds like an incantation. Muses are usually thought as something that cannot be controlled so maybe an incantation is closer to the truth (than an order) in this sonnet.

Vendler deduces, as the reason for the forgetfulness of the Muse, that there is a real fear of the Fair Youth aging and that the speaker urges his Muse to fight this change through poetry that will be faster than Time (1999: 426–7). There is a sort of an octave-sestet division too, of forgetfulness-action, on top of the distinct quatrains.

101

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends:
4 So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
Make answer, Muse, wilt thou not haply say
'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed
Beauty no pencil beauty's truth to lay,
8 But best is best if never intermixed'?
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so, for't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
12 And to be praised of ages yet to be.
Then do thy office, Muse, I teach thee how,
To make him seem long hence, as he shows now.

If the previous sonnet was an incantation, flirting with directly commanding the Muse, this sonnet is its direct version. The Muse is like a schoolboy getting a talking to from the headmaster. Line 13, especially, is a great line in its firm self-esteem. The speaker is usually very self-deprecating but when it comes to writing poetry, he realises his worth. In this sonnet he almost becomes too egotistical.

Vendler writes: "The aesthetic mainspring of the poem is the invention of the Platonic epigrams for the Muse …" (1999: 432). Lines 6–8 represent *Truth* (6), *Beauty* (7) and "the good" (8); Platonic absolutes demand purity instead of contamination (ibid. 431). But this is no excuse to fall silent says the speaker. Three questions with a commanding C is the apparent structure of 101.

102

My love is strengthened though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear.
That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
4 The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
8 And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough,
12 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

Line 9 sounds awkward to the usually so eloquent speaker that it is like the speaker is quick to deny something he knows is true. The Fair Youth is aging, *riper days* have come. But the speaker deflects this and says that their love has advanced to a phase where he needs to temper his sonnet writing so as not to become boring to the Fair Youth.

Burrow (2002: 584) says (as one explanation) that *Philomel* in mythology is female and that line 8's *his* could be because as she appears as a nightingale she assumes a male nightingale's form because only male nightingales sing; in Q_3 the *summer's front* is already over, the nightingale is quiet and the speaker is referring to Philomel as Philomel.

An octave of publishing tongues and nightingales in song, and a quieter sestet.

103

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That having such a scope to show her pride
The argument all bare is of more worth
4 Than when it hath my added praise beside.
O, blame me not if I no more can write!
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That overgoes my blunt invention quite,
8 Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?
For to no other pass my verses tend
12 Than of your graces and your gifts to tell.
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit
Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

"… the poet reveals that the beloved has been reproaching him for his silence, and he bursts out, in the exclamation-fulcrum (line 5) that spills over the quatrain limits: *O blame me not if I no more can write!* Because the poem re-begins after this outburst, and re-begins as self- defense (after originally beginning— *Alack* —in lament), the sonnet exhibits an anomalous structural division: 5+7+2" (1999: 438). The speaker-poet has written himself into a corner in a sense. Even if it is true that the Fair Youth is beautiful beyond words, sonnets still need to be written of him to express the speaker's love; 103 does this by describing the dilemma while giving the ultimate praise of there being no words or phrases that do justice to the Fair Youth. Even as on l.12 *gifts* is mentioned, this sonnet is concentrated on the superficial.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
4 Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
8 Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
12 Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived.
For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

You can never be old (1) … *Ah yet* (9) … Three years have passed and like a sundial's hand the Fair Youth's beauty is in motion. Even if the speaker cannot perceive this change, he acknowledges its existence on lines 9–10, and on lines 11–13 fears it. The *yet green* (8) Fair Youth of the octave is now in the sestet a victim of beauty stealing away.

Vendler notes the acceleration in the octave, where first we go from summer to winter, then from spring to autumn and finally from April to June, the endpoint of these timespans moving to an earlier point of year each time (1999: 442). It is like the speaker is getting more fearful of time's quick passing the closer to the fearful sestet he gets. The last of the timespans is also something that cannot be *eyed* (ibid.). This leads us smoothly to the stealthy dial hand simile.

105

Let not my love be called idolatry,
Nor my belovèd as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
4 To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love today, tomorrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confined,
8 One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
'Fair, kind, and true' is all my argument,
'Fair, kind, and true' varying to other words;
And in this change is my invention spent,
12 Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
Fair, kind, and true, have often lived alone,
Which three till now never kept seat in one.

In a worldly sense the speaker's worship of the Fair Youth is not idolatry, since it is solely concentrated on *To one, of one* (4); this sonnet describes something very crucial for the whole sequence, that is that the Fair Youth displaces God for the speaker making the sequence thoroughly secular. Of course, the Fair Youth is not God or even a god and this creates many of the dilemmas the speaker is confronted with; they arise from the Fair Youth's human imperfection when the speaker is expecting divine perfection.

Vendler writes that the speaker's holy trinity of adjectives is derived from the Platonic Triad and that on lines 1–8 *kind* (i.e. "good") is stressed but later *Fair* always precedes it as a type of highest value of the three, differentiating the speaker's faith system from the Christian one (1999: 445–6).

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
4 In praise of ladies dead, and lovely knights;
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
8 Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
12 They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

May Jr. Says that this sonnet is "a secular eulogy" developed by means of a *figura*, which is a technique of Biblical interpretation, e.g. that Adam's sleep when Eve was created was a figure of the later death-sleep of Christ (1960: 93–4). There is an octave that is a figure for the sestet in this sonnet, i.e. the octave is about the *descriptions* (2) and *blazon*[s] (5) of old which turn out to be *but prophecies* (9) … *prefiguring* (10) the Fair Youth in the sestet. On top of this division the sonnet goes *When* (Q_1), *Then* (Q_2), *So* (Q_3), *For* (C), which is an unusually logically strict progression for the *Sonnets* and seems to me the dominant structure.

Vendler writes that *you* (8) and *your worth* (12) are not mentioned in the couplet because of the *lack* of *tongues* which leaves room for only *to wonder* (14) (1999: 450).

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
4 Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage.
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
8 And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
12 While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

The first quatrain's uncontrollable *true love* (3) is interrupted by the second quatrain's short story. Usually, the sonnets work perfectly well without any historical context, but the story of *The mortal moon* (4) is hard to understand without context. Burrow thinks that it likely refers to the death of Elisabeth I, or possibly to her recovery from an illness (2002: 594). Recovery would fit with the *sad augurs* (6). Kerrigan notes that: "Shakespeare invokes public events to express and magnify the poet's situation" (1986: 313). In Q_3 appears the only instance of the *Sonnets* that says the speaker himself will gain immortality through verse, while the couplet turns into the more familiar idea that the Fair Youth will. Notice the rare heavy alliteration of l.8 and the consonance in l.14. Vendler has a superior and more complex analysis (1999: 453–7).

108

What's in the brain that ink may character,
Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what now to register,
4 That may express my love, or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
8 Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
12 But makes antiquity for aye his page,
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it dead.

"For those early moderns committed to the connectiveness of performance and devotional feeling, it was intuitive that the poet's repeated panegyric tropes, uttered daily like "prayers divine," would lead him not into hypocrisy but toward a fuller understanding of love" (Hokama 2012: 206). Hokama, arguing against Booth and Vendler, refers to Shakespeare's time's beliefs that common forms of prayer were superior to spontaneous prayer, and that outer performance was not antithetical to real devotion and thought, but instead one was a reflection of the other (ibid. 201–6). The couplet does indeed say *would* (14).

Structurally the octave differs from the sestet by its many caesuras. The sestet on the other hand is very smooth, and one long sentence where Q_3 and C are tightly connected.

109

O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart,
4 As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love; if I have ranged,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
8 So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
12 To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

The octave and the sestet are somewhat subtly different: the sestet goes a step further in saying *Never believe* (9). Believing comes before saying something and in the sestet the speaker forbids even this from the Fair Youth.

Vendler notes that even as the speaker admits his ultimate lack of virtuousness, logic is his saviour, as he will not, after all, leave his all (the Fair Youth) for nothing (1999: 465). This and the next sonnet do not (of course) explicitly state that the speaker has cheated on the Fair Youth; what he means by *travels* (6) is ambiguous. It could mean affairs or just his thoughts travelling to other destinations. The couplet can than mean, in modern language: "my affairs meant nothing to me", or "yes, I have been attracted to others but would never cheat on you".

110

Alas! 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
4 Made old offences of affections new.
Most true it is that I have looked on truth
Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
8 And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now all is done, have what shall have no end.
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
12 A god in love, to whom I am confined.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

This sonnet heavily implies infidelity by the speaker. There is a stark turn on line 9 from the octave in the past tense to a sestet in the present and future; as if to stress that all the *blenches* (7) are in the past in this sonnet as well as in real life. *Now all is done* (9) further stresses the importance (to the speaker) of leaving past things in the past. The past is also presented as something temporal and brief whereas the time to come (of forgiveness and return of love) is presented as something out of time and without limits *have what shall have no end.* (9).

The pleonastic or super-superlative *most most loving breast* seems like a bow in apology. Vendler sees it as a "quasi-divine" position for the Fair Youth, compared to *A god in love* (12). (1999: 467).

111

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
4 Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
8 Pity me then, and wish I were renewed,
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection.
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
12 Nor double penance to correct correction.
Pity me then, dear friend, and, I assure ye,
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

The speaker is not a noble man (because of *Fortune* (1)) so *harmful deeds* (2) are to be expected says the sestet. Burrow notes that a poet/playwright, even as he might not be poor, would still have been considered to be associated with low social ranks (2002: 602).

Pity, foregrounded by anaphora in the sestet, is the only cure possible for this unfortunate state. Pity borne by a realisation that the speaker's actions have been predestined by his lower rank compared to the Fair Youth.

Vendler writes that "the metaphor of dyeing or double-dipping till the color 'takes'" explains the sonnet's many doublings: alliteration, "double letters", chiastic arrangement of letters, word repetitions (1999: 470–1).

112

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow,
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
4 So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all the world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue.
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
8 That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stoppèd are:
12 Mark how with my neglect I do dispense.
You are so strongly in my purpose bred
That all the world besides me thinks y' are dead.

This is such difficult language that I recommend, to the modern reader, Burrow's glosses and his explanation for line 14's retention of the Quarto *y'are* instead of *th'are* (2002: 604). Vendler has accepted the emendation to *th'are* because she thinks it repeats line 7 in essence and preserves the dyad (1999: 474–5). Burrow thinks that *y'are* fits and means that the Fair Youth is truly alive only to the speaker (2002: 604). Whichever the case, in the octave the speaker *care*[s] (3) not of other opinions, while in the sestet he is more starkly deaf as an *adder('s)* (10). Vendler sees this as him being deaf to the Fair Youth as well (1999: 474). This makes sense as *flatterer* is also *stoppèd* on line 11. But then line 12 becomes hard to understand as an intro to the couplet. The neglect is dispensed how? By a declaration of everything but the FY being dead?

113

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function, and is partly blind,
4 Seems seeing, but effectually is out:
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape which it doth latch.
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
8 Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch:
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet-favour or deformèd'st creature,
The mountain, or the sea, the day, or night,
12 The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus makes mine eye untrue.

The sestet is an explanation (*For if*) to the paradoxical statement *my eye is in my mind* (1). Q_2 offers a description rather than an explanation. The sestet also works by juxtaposing opposites and offering a further paradox that even in the two extremes of the pole (e.g. *day or night* (11)) the speaker's eye, deceived by his mind, sees only the Fair Youth. This juxtaposition supposes that everything in between will also look like the Fair Youth. This, I suppose, could be the reason for including the bad side of the extremes in the sonnet. Vendler too brushes on (but does not offer a solution to) this matter before quoting Booth's notion that the opposites of the sestet are arranged in a chiastic pattern (1999: 477). One possible explanation could be the tradition of depicting something perfect by what it is not, by something grotesque, as in *The Name of the Rose*.

114

Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague this flattery,
Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
4 And that your love taught it this alchemy?
To make of monsters, and things indigest,
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best
8 As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first, 'tis flatt'ry in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up.
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
12 And to his palate doth prepare the cup.
If it be poisoned, 'tis the lesser sin,
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

This sonnet takes the problem of the connections of bad and good further than the previous one. The speaker weighs two options: either his eye flatters reality because his mind is replete with the Fair Youth, or that his eye is true because that is love's nature, it actually (through *alchemy* (4)) can turn bad to good. The answer comes in the sestet: mind is in alliance with eye, both ready to accept bad things in the Fair Youth and see them as good when there is nothing good in them (through alchemy or anything).

Vendler (1999: 480) has a more precise structural division of 2-2-4-6, where the two options of Q_1 are seen as units of their own and also Q_2. For me Q_1 and Q_2 might be somewhat detached from each other, but the two options of Q1 are hard to separate. This because the second option always seems unlikely.

115

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer,
Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
4 My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning time, whose millioned accidents
Creep in ’twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp’st intents,
8 Divert strong minds to th’ course of alt’ring things.
Alas why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, ‘Now I love you best’,
When I was certain o’er incertainty,
12 Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe, then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow.

Q_1 and Q_2 do not form a clear octave. Vendler writes that: “Everyone has commented on the ungrammaticality of Q_2, unanchored as it is to the rest of the poem” (1999: 484). Still, the octave describes a fault in the speaker-poet’s prior sonnets: I thought my love was at its *most full flame* (4) but now it is even greater. The sestet is a defence against this fault: In the “now” of writing those sonnets I did not lie. Cormack (2011: 502) says it more eloquently: “Although the speaker concedes that his judgment, time bound and imperfect as it is, did miss the true content of his (present) sovereign love, the poem pursues the thought that, since the present is the place where, in tension with time, judgment happens, supreme excellence must be precisely that which judgment produces in time, in its own “crowning the present.”

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
4 Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering barque,
8 Whose worth’s unknown, although his height be taken.
Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle’s compass come.
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
12 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The description of true love proceeds from antithesis (Q_1) to thesis (Q_2) and back again (Q_3). Kerrigan writes about the couplet: “Sidney reminds us that ‘Grammar says (to grammar who says nay) | That in one speech two negatives affirm’, and Feste endorses this at *Twelfth Night* V.1.20-21, ‘your four negatives make your two affirmatives’. The point was, in any case, widely understood, and the confusions it gave rise to were a comic commonplace” (1986: 53). Grammar does not dictate such a cynical reading of the couplet; the overabundance of negatives only implies a slight possibility of irony. For the best analysis see Vendler, as usual (1999: 488–93). For an interesting theological analysis see Erne (2000: 293–304). For Q_1 and the compass emblem in Shakespeare’s time see Doebler (1964: 109–10) and Daly (1977: 515–6).

117

Accuse me thus, that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay,
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
4 Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day,
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchased right,
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
8 Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof, surmise accumulate,
Bring me within the level of your frown,
12 But shoot not at me in your wakened hate,
Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

Accuse me thus (1) and 11 lines of dictated accusations follow; *But* (12) begins the three-line couplet’s plea that the Fair Youth not take to action; accusations are enough because the speaker *did strive to prove* (13). The speaker has done what he can with what little evidence of *The constancy and virtue of your love* (14) he has found, he has striven to prove that the Fair Youth deserved something more than lines 1–11 describe.

Vendler, who sees an octave-sestet division of accusation-response, reads the last two lines as: “… My defence is that I did what I did as a test of the constancy and virtue of your love” (1999: 495). I could only get that reading if it read on line 13 “I but strove to prove”, whereas *I did strive to prove* sounds like “I tried desperately to prove that you love me as I do you, but the evidence was not there (so I could not write sonnets proving your love)”.

118

Like as to make our appetites more keen
With eager compounds we our palate urge,
As to prevent our maladies unseen
4 We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
8 To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t' anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assurèd,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
12 Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be curèd;
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

See analysis on pages 49–51 of this thesis.

119

What potions have I drunk of siren tears,
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
4 Still losing when I saw myself to win?
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessèd never?
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
8 In the distraction of this madding fever?
O benefit of ill, now I find true
That better is by evil still made better,
And ruined love, when it is built anew,
12 Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

See analysis on pages 32–4 of this thesis.

120

That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
4 Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, y' have passed a hell of time,
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
8 To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.
O that our night of woe might have rememb'red
My deepest sense how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then, tend'red
12 The humble salve, which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

See analysis on pages 35–7 of this thesis.

121

’Tis better to be vile than vile esteemèd,
When not to be receives reproach of being,
And the just pleasure lost which is so deemèd
4 Not by our feeling, but by others’ seeing.
For why should others’ false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
8 Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own;
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel.
12 By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown,
Unless this general evil they maintain:
All men are bad and in their badness reign.

Weiser (1978: 156) describes 121 well: “Rather than give a paraphrase, we can indicate the sonnet’s range of meanings by outlining its development of the speaker’s thought … The first quatrain contains a general, impersonal description of an evil-thinking environment … in such an environment, evil fares better than innocence … The second quatrain effects a transition from the abstract to the personal … The third quatrain is decisive in its personal and closely reasoned rejection of those who reveal their own sins by censuring others. As a corollary, the couplet adds that universal evil is an untenable assumption for the management of human affairs …”. Kenji Go notes that *I am that I am* is probably an allusion to St Paul the apostle’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:10 and not God’s words in Exodus 3:14 (2002: 241–2).

122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full charactered with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
4 Beyond all date even to eternity;
Or at the least so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist,
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part
8 Of thee, thy record never can be missed.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score,
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
12 To trust those tables that receive thee more.
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

Vendler reads this sonnet as an apology for giving away the Fair Youth’s gift, possibly a painting of him (1999: 518–20). That is the only way to make sense of the sonnet in my opinion, even if it makes it a rare case where such a concrete situation from their (probably fictive) lives is referred to. This serves to blur the line between the fictiveness of the sequence and Shakespeare’s life. Whichever the case, the apology/explanation eloquently reminds the Fair Youth that since the speaker is “replete with you” (sonnet 113 line 13) he does not need a *poor retention* (9) of him to remember him.

Or at the least so long as (5) is the least eloquent part of the sonnet (and possibly the sequence), as it sounds like the speaker is fumbling for words (momentarily) to explain something he probably still should not have done.

123

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change.
Thy pyramids built up with newer might
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
4 They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,
And rather make them born to our desire
8 Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wond’ring at the present, nor the past,
For thy records, and what we see, doth lie,
12 Made more or less by thy continual haste.
This I do vow and this shall ever be:
I will be true despite thy scythe and thee.

This sonnet tries to put Time in its place, and in doing so to elevate the speaker above it, as something permanent instead of limited. The speaker has greater knowledge of Time’s qualities than the average person.

The couplet basically modifies the first line’s strong denial. In the couplet the statement “I do not change” has become the more lenient “I will be true”. Perhaps even the speaker himself does not quite belief in the long body of the poem which explicates his special relation to Time; so, where the sonnet started becomes untenable. The speaker has been waving his fist to a giant.

Vendler analyses the tenses of the poem and notes that the body of the poem switches between present and past, while l.1 and ll.13–14 are in the future (1999: 523).

124

If my dear love were but the child of state
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfathered,
As subject to time's love, or to time's hate,
4 Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gathered.
No, it was builded far from accident,
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrallèd discontent,
8 Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls.
It fears not policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
But all alone stands hugely politic,
12 That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with show'rs.
To this I witness call the fools of Time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

The quatrains are quite distinct as they go: If it were … But it is far from that … This is what it really is … epigram via couplet. The sonnet has in it the curious idea that the speaker's love *was builded far from accident* (5), as if it were a structure he had purposefully built. This differs from the idea of Cupid with his bow (sonnets 153 and 154) striking love between unexpecting couples. This *builded* structure *stands hugely politic* (11), so not only is it a built piece of architecture but also a steadfast thought-system.

Vendler analyses the last line's near paradox at length and suggests that it might be a lost proverb (1999: 528). It might also refer to people being baptised to Christianity in their deathbeds (see, e.g. *Confessions* by St. Augustine), but I am unsure whether this was relevant in 1609.

125

Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
4 Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all and more by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savour,
8 Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
12 But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborned informer: a true soul
When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

Vendler (1999: 531) states that this sonnet is about the preference for the simple, and that its Latinate phrases are either immediately modified or "translated". *Obsequious* ***in thy heart*** (9), *oblation,* ***poor but free*** (10), *mutual render, only* ***me for thee*** (12). These are among some of the Latinate phrases that give way to phrases deriving from Old English. Vendler writes that: "The final 'foot' pun, *impeached*/*stands*, shows how quickly, and how deftly, the speaker can 'disarm' and 'Anglicize' any word thrown at him by the corrupt Latinate court and its canopied ceremonies" (ibid. 532). She is referring to the etymology of *impeached* which goes back to Latin (*pēs-pĕdis*=foot, Simpson 2000: 445). Q_2 differs from Q_1 as it expands l.4. Q_3 is a celebration of the simple and pure. C's meaning falls the victim of aforementioned wordplays.

126

O thou my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
4 Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st.—
If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)
As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
8 May Time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure:
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure!
Her audit (though delayed) answered must be,
12 And her quietus is to render thee.
( )
( )

See analysis on pages 59–62 of this thesis.

127

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
4 And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
8 But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her brows so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
12 Sland'ring creation with a false esteem.
Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

Vendler describes this as a myth of origin and writes: "… A devotee has arisen to mourn this bastardizing of beauty; this devotee has black eyes to symbolize mourning. She mourns because the natural order of creation has been slandered by those who, though not fair by birth, have acquired all beauty by art. The woe of the mourner is so becomingly expressed by her black eyes that public opinion has now seen how beautiful 'dark' beauty can be, and therefore the type of the beautiful has been entirely revised: the new archetype is the 'black' form of beauty" (1999: 540). The sestet is where this "mythical" creature enters and begins a new sub-sequence (often called the Dark Lady sequence).

Burrow (2002: 634–5) emends Quarto's *eyes* to *brows* on l.10.

128

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st
Upon that blessèd wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
4 The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
8 At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.
To be so tickled they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
12 Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

It might be beneficial here to look at key-phrases instead of dividing the sonnet by lines. The main idea is that the speaker would wish the same (and more) physical proximity with the Dark Lady as the musical instrument enjoys. This is expressed as a wish juxtaposed to what the reality is. Despite all the sexual innuendo the reality is best described on line 8 *by thee blushing stand*, which deflates the speaker's advances towards the woman. There is a possessive quality in the speaker's wishes: *thou, my music* (1) implies (ever so gently) ownership, *should* (7) portrays the speaker as the rightful kisser and l.14 is semi-imperative. The reality on l.8 is something very different.

The instrument in question is the virginal; for this and a great gender analysis see Trillini (2008: 1–17).

129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and, till action, lust
Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
4 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait
8 On purpose laid to make the taker mad,
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
A bliss in proof, and proved a very woe,
12 Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

This seems to be a sonnet that shifts in the couplet. After the body of the poem has described lust in all its temporal phases the speaker laments in the couplet that it cannot be avoided. But there is so much more to this sonnet than this basic surface. For a complete analysis see Vendler (1999: 549–55).

One way to describe this sonnet is through its aspects: before action, in action, after action, as Brinton (1985: 447–59) does in a detailed manner. The aspects, Brinton shows us, are sprinkled throughout the sonnet (ibid. 450), respecting no quatrain limits or other structural demands. These three phases (of lust) are really the sonnet's structuring principle. Intertwined as they are in the sonnet, the sonnet at once describes the entirety of lust's lifespan. The sonnet would be inferior to what it is if it did this logically quatrain by quatrain.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
4 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight
8 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go:
12 My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

The principal structure of this sonnet is 12 lines of mockery of the clichés of love poetry, proved a mockery by the last two lines. Vendler, however, points out that the quatrains differ slightly: Q_1 offers four different antitheses; l.1 *nothing like*, l.2 *far more*, l.3 opposite, l.4 metaphoric wires-literal wires; Q_2 is half personal observation and half impersonal observation; in Q_3 "affect at last enters" with the personal *I love to* and reaches its climax in C (1999: 557). That taken to account, and the fact that the sonnet always seems ironic from the first quatrain (even before the couplet) it could as well be argued that the sonnet's structure is a 4-4-4-2 with shifts. The first impression, however, is 12-2.

Burrow (2002: 640) reminds us that *reeks* (8) as in "stinks" is not found until the 18th century, but chimney smoke and blood did *reek*.

131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel,
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
4 Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet in good faith some say, that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan;
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
8 Although I swear it to myself alone.
And to be sure that is not false I swear
A thousand groans but thinking on thy face
One on another's neck, do witness bear
12 Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander as I think proceeds.

Each Q modifies the Dark Lady's beauty: in Q_1 we have the speaker's evaluation *the fairest*; in Q_2 *some say* different; in Q_3 the speaker provides as evidence of her beauty his *thousand groans*; C expands on the first line's *Thou art as tyrannous*, already near forgot. Lines 12–13 seem to propose a paradox, as at once *Thy black is fairest* and a line later *In nothing art thou black*. This can, of course, be read as l.12 *black*=hair colour l.13 *black*=inner quality, but at the same time the literal meaning of "thy black deeds are fairest in my judgements place" exists. Vendler thinks that *slander* on l.14 refers to *some say* on l.5, i.e. they will keep saying that if she does not change her behaviour (towards the speaker) (1999: 560). Here too, another meaning co-exists: the speaker will continue to slander the Dark Lady in the following sonnets.

132

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
4 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
And truly not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
8 Doth half that glory to the sober west
As those two mourning eyes become thy face.
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
12 And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

Paradoxically the Dark Lady's eyes and heart are personified and seem to have minds of their own differing from each other. The gentle eyes have pity on the speaker and perhaps therefore imply a possibility of willingness. The cruel heart has nothing but disdain and proves an impossible barrier between the speaker and her. The speaker pleads on line 10 for the heart to take heed from the eyes so lovable and in return he will swear beauty black. The speaker claims to see pity in her eyes but knows (possibly through her actions) that her heart knows no pity; there is then at best a glimmer of hope (in the Dark Lady's eyes) for the speaker.

Vendler analyses the meter of the sonnet with care and notes how its changes from trochees and spondees back to the normal iambic meter and then to trochaic reversals distinguish parts of the sonnet from each other (1999: 563–4).

133

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me.
Is ’t not enough to torture me alone,
4 But slave to slavery my sweet’st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engrossèd.
Of him, myself, and thee I am forsaken,
8 A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossèd.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom’s ward,
But then my friend’s heart let my poor heart bail,
Whoe’er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
12 Thou canst not then use rigour in my jail.
And yet thou wilt, for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

The pitying eyes of the previous sonnet have now become the *cruel eye* (5) of this sonnet (as the slander proceeds, see sonnet 131). The speaker knows he can handle the dark side of the Dark Lady just as he fears that the Fair Youth cannot. Q_1 reveals the (love)triangle, Q_2 expands on it, Q_3 is a plea (now a much more desperate one than in sonnet 132) for sparing the Fair Youth, C remembers that since he and the Fair Youth are one she cannot release one without releasing the other. Or described more accurately, “even if the speaker’s heart is the guard or prison warden of the Fair Youth’s heart (since l.11 abandons the thought of freedom) he cannot protect the Fair Youth since they are one–the Dark Lady can hurt the Fair Youth by hurting the speaker”. Vendler equates the model of thought in this sonnet to a small replica of a torture chamber (1999: 568).

134

So now I have confessed that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will;
Myself I’ll forfeit, so that other mine
4 Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still.
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous, and he is kind.
He learned but surety-like to write for me,
8 Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer that put’st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake:
12 So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost, thou hast both him and me;
He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

The sonnet, as Vendler too notes, ends where it began (1999: 570). The strict legal language of the middle section suggests that whatever type of a triangle this is it is not a love triangle. The Dark Lady has (metaphorically) legal bonds over both the speaker and the Fair Youth. Out of the kindness of his heart the Fair Youth has begun an affair with the Dark Lady (to save the poor speaker). The speaker would *forfeit* (3) himself to free the Fair Youth of this bond. She has not needed lawyers to write these bonds, just her *beauty* (9). Such is her beauty that neither male has a free will. They are champions of each other and simultaneously the helpless victims of the Dark Lady. All of this, of course, turns a blind eye to the active agency of the males. Justice is blind (=impartial) whereas the speaker is blinded by his love of the Fair Youth.

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I that vexed thee still,
4 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
8 And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
12 One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.
Let ‘no’ unkind no fair beseechers kill:
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

Kerrigan explains (1986: 365): “Here and in the following poem Shakespeare quibbles compulsively on six senses of *will* ... : (1) what is wanted (*thou hast thy Will* 135.1); (2) lust, carnal desire (*thou being rich in Will* 135.11); (3) shall (*Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love* 136.5); (4) penis (*hide my will* 135.6); (5) vagina (*thy sweet will* 135.4); (6) *William* (*my name is Will* 136.14)”. If the Fair Youth sequence was about true love (among other things), this sonnet is about something else.

One way to read this is: “You were once with me–why not again now?–you are with others so why not with me too?–say yes to everyone (as long as that includes me). Vendler notes that Shakespeare has cleverly used *will* 13 times in a fourteen-line poem and that the lack of that one *will* (comp. l.14) suggests that the Dark Lady has possibly always denied the speaker (1999:574).

136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there:
4 Thus far for love my love-suit sweet fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove
8 Among a number one is reckoned none;
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
12 That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me for my name is Will.

Vendler has a great analysis of this sonnet's structure: "There are, then, several overlapping ways of representing the structural divisions of the sonnet: 1. By *will*/*love*, 6-6-2 (the inner six lines have no *will* or *love*). 2. By speech acts, 4-2-2-5-1 adjuration (1–4), promise (5–6), proposition (7–8), plea (9–13), result-conclusion (14). 3. Pronominal, 6-2-6, *I* (1–6) *we* (7–8), *I* (9–14) These overlapping structures are sensed as 'turns' in the poem and therefore as moments of emotional change in the speaker. For each 'turn' the reader is prompted, therefore, to invent a motivation explaining why the speaker has veered, now this way, now that." (1999: 577–8). Another "turn", if we forget the speaker's possible emotional states, is the turn from *soul*+*love* of lines 1–5 to the arithmetic's of lines 6–12 and then C returns to the conceit of l.2.

137

Thou blind fool love, what dost thou to mine eyes
That they behold and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
4 Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks
Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forgèd hooks,
8 Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot,
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
12 To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
And to this false plague are they now transferred.

This sonnet goes from the speaker's eyes blinded by love, to the Dark Lady's eyes of *falsehood* (7), to the speaker's heart and eyes (both with two lines) and C phrases Q_3 in a different way, like a miniature mirror image of Q_3 (Q_3 is about eyes erring in seeing bad as good, C about seeing good as bad, like on l.4). Burrow (2002: 654) says that it is unclear to whom the *eyes'* (7) belong. If the Dark Lady's, then Q_2 would imply that she has a habit of seducing all men (by looks) and the speaker laments that "why must I be among the seduced". If read as the speaker's eyes, then the sense is that the speaker's eyes fail him not because of blinding love (as Q_1 says) but for carelessness (l.5 *over-partial*) and that she has taken advantage of this lack of care and taken his heart with it. Both senses are possible either by design or accident.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutored youth,
4 Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue.
8 On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed:
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
12 And age in love loves not to have years told.
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

The rhetoric structure of this sonnet is 4-4-4-2 (with shifts) *When … Thus … But … Therefore*. Vendler points out that readings of this sonnet usually either see it as a description of a cynical and depraved couple or as a near comical rendition of how lovers flatter each other (1999: 586). She says that the cynical-couple reading comes from the octave and the comical from the sestet (ibid.). She herself, however, sees as "the dynamic mainspring of the sonnet" the gradual change in the speaker's view (ibid.). This is one of the (many) sonnets where Vendler discusses structure but does not explicitly state a numeric formula for it. Perhaps because there are so many things going on in the sonnet. The change in the speaker's view and therefore in the sonnet is indeed gradual and subtle. Therefore, I think that what stands out, if we think in terms of "turns" (or "shifts" here because of subtlety) are the differences between quatrains.

139

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

The speaker, sick in love, cannot bear the looks of the Dark Lady, but even less can he stand it if they are directed at others. A tormented situation, because the Dark Lady cannot go about life blindfolded. Of course, there are looks and then there are *looks*. In this sonnet the Dark Lady seems only to have *looks* which portrays her as a hyperactive seducer; wherever she looks men fall. This all comes from the speaker really; it is his interpretation of her. He is the one with the problem. His solution is that even though lovesickness become terminal he would prefer that to her casting those deadly *pretty looks* (10) somewhere else. I think that this final solution is the sonnet's turn, towards which the sonnet has worked for. Vendler points out the macabre nature of the couplet as the speaker gets one last pretty look while she gets rid of him (1999: 590).

140

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain,
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
4 The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so,
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
8 No news but health from their physicians know.
For if I should despair I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee.
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
12 Mad slanderers by mad ears believèd be.
That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.

There is a defiant and threatening tone in this sonnet, as if the speaker really were on the verge of the madness he warns of in Q_3. The endgame for the threatening sonnet is as weak as wanting the Dark Lady to lie that she loves him; to merely hear the words even if he knows deep down it not true. Line 9 says *For if I should despair* but the speaker already sounds desperate enough. There is a change from the previous sonnet where looks were more serious than words. Now all he is asking is words. Burrow notes that the primary sense of *Bear thine eyes straight* (14) is to seem honest (2002: 660). Eyes (much to do with looks of course) are now only mentioned as a metaphor for skilful lying. It seems the speaker was not ready to be killed with a look after all and turns to the (interestingly) weaker medium of love that is language.

141

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note,
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
4 Who in despite of view is pleased to dote.
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted,
Nor tender feeling to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
8 To any sensual feast with thee alone;
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unswayed the likeness of a man,
12 Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be.
Only my plague thus far I count my gain:
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

This sonnet is structured on the five senses and the "sixth sense" of the heart. Heart trumps eyes, the rest of the senses do not drive the speaker towards the Dark Lady either, i.e. heart is lord of all the senses. The couplet's *gain*/*pain* paradox opens itself up to many interpretations, but it still returns solely to heart (literal pain can be excluded even though other type of masochism is implied). One reading the couplet clearly has is that if the speaker is feeling pain, he must still be alive. This might not seem like much of a gain, but the two previous sonnets did say *Kill me outright …* (sonnet 139, line 14) and *… when their deaths be near* (sonnet 140, line 7). Another reading would be that the pain is a just cause since he sins, although this sounds a bit Christian for the sequence.

Vendler calls *she … makes me sin* the excuse of Adam (1999: 596).

142

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving.
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
4 And thou shalt find it merits not reproving,
Or if it do, not from those lips of thine
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,
8 Robbed others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee as thou lov'st those,
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee.
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows
12 Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self example mayst thou be denied.

The first two lines would have us believe that the Dark Lady is a saint to be and the speaker the only sinner, until the interjection *O* emphatically turns the sonnet on to different tracks. The turn is made starker by the near pleonastic line 2 which seems to create an unbreakable loop of the first two lines: "my love is sin which you virtuously hate–you virtuously hate my sin which is loving". Vendler (1999) is an expert at noticing chiasmus but does not remark on it here (1999: 598–9). Technically, ll. 1–2 might be closer to an antimetabole. In any case the grammatical construction foregrounds the lines and separates them from the rest of the sonnet where both of the two are shown to be sinners.

There is an argument for another turn on line 9 where the tone changes to imperative and the logic to reciprocity instead of comparison.

143

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
4 In pursuit of the thing she would have stay,
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
8 Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind.
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me
12 And play the mother's part: kiss me, be kind.
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will,
If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

A very clear simile (as a … So runn'st thou) is formed of the octave and the sestet. Here, not only is love a babe (sonnet 115, line 13) but the speaker is a baby (in love). The almost comical image carries with it something serious. The speaker has genuine emotions towards her, he knows this intimately–if only she knew it as intimately and did not chase people who lack this depth of emotion. But of course only the person with the feelings can ever know their depth. The comedy of the in-love baby could also be read as a self-critique (something the speaker is most familiar with).

Vendler sees a shift in sentiment on line 10 where the Dark Lady catches her hope; she reads this as a concession from the speaker that he will accept other affairs as long as the Dark Lady then return to him (1999: 602–3).

144

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still.
The better angel is a man right fair;
4 The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.
To win me soon to hell my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
8 Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turned fiend
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell,
But being both from me, both to each friend,
12 I guess one angel in another's hell.
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

The first quatrain is like a prologue to a play: the setting and the main characters are introduced. Q_2 furthers the plot: The Dark Lady (now *female evil*) is wooing the Fair Youth (for no other reason but to hurt the speaker apparently). In Q_3, as Vendler (1999: 606) notes although she speaks of the whole sestet, the speaker loses the certainty he had in the second quatrains clear narrative. He can but suspect what the outcome will be. The couplet shifts again in the sense that it becomes even more uncertain as the speaker *shall* (*I*) *ne'er know* (13). The couplet has a miniature turn as *ne'er* becomes *Till* on the next line. *Till* the Dark Lady fires the Fair Youth out of her hell, the speaker will not know better.

Tobin (1999: 226) says that Shakespeare "borrowed from Nashe" in his plays and he thinks that this sonnet has features of *Christ's Tears*.

145

Those lips that love's own hand did make
Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate'
To me that languished for her sake;
4 But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
Was used in giving gentle doom,
8 And taught it thus anew to greet:
'I hate' she altered with an end
That followed it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who, like a fiend,
12 From heaven to hell is flown away.
'I hate', from hate away she threw
And saved my life, saying 'not you.'

This is really a turn that takes ten and a half lines. After the initial *But* on line 4 a long and somewhat eloquent definition of what the turn means to the speaker follows. *Saying 'not you.'* (14) is always to be expected but only appears at the very end. Vendler (1999: 608) calls this a "preposterous syntactic stringing-along". She also notes that the sonnet is in tetrameter and she thinks it is more like a madrigal then a sonnet (ibid. 608–9). The sonnet is indeed almost hopelessly naïve, but I still think it fits the sequence. It is not wrong in a love sonnet sequence to describe naïve love, or a naïve phase of love. A phase where everything might at times hang on one word from the beloved, or one phrase in this case. The stringing along can then be seen as an image of the moment between *I hate* and *not you* which is like a small eternity for the speaker.

146

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Spoiled by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
4 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
8 Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
12 Within be fed, without be rich no more.
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

I think this sonnet turns 180 degrees between the octave and the sestet. The octave laments why the soul *pine(s) within* and materialism rules and the sestet turns the idea of pining upside down. There the soul is directed to let the body pine. *Let that pine* where the *pine* is completely different from the octave. My reading is the traditional Christian one which leads me to wonder what I have missed since the sequence is always worldly, never Christian. Scoutham (1960: 67–71) comes to my help and lays out brilliantly the unchristian innuendo of the sestet. *Aggravate*, he shows us, is usually a pejorative in Shakespeare (ibid. 70). Body should be soul's servant, but now it is like a slave; the distortion of Christian values continues on line 11 with its "simonious" transaction (ibid. 70–1). *Within be fed* (12) closes the deal laconically (ibid. 71).

147

My love is as a fever, longing still,
For that which longer nurseth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
4 Th' uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
8 Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now Reason is past care,
And, frantic-mad with evermore unrest,
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
12 At random from the truth vainly expressed.
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

There is definitely a 4-4-4-2 structure here, but the couplet's message is strong enough that it can be argued to turn the sonnet. An argument against this could be that the couplet is the actual madman's discourse (l.11) rather than a genuine expression by the speaker. With that reading a 4-4-4-2 structure with shifts could well be argued for.

Vendler (1999: 619–20) perceptively notes that the diction of the sonnet is clear about the condition of the speaker (and therefore unlike a madman's discourse) and that *Reason is past care* and ***as** madmen's* are also mild enough expressions to signal culpability rather than a madman who can be excused because of his mental state. The idea that the couplet were a madman's discourse need not be abandoned, but it is more of an implication that throws the shadow of ambiguity on the couplet and thus makes it slightly less stark.

148

O me! what eyes hath love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight,
Or if they have, where is my judgment fled
4 That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
8 Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O, how can love's eye be true
That is so vexed with watching and with tears?
No marvel then though I mistake my view:
12 The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.
O cunning love, with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

Vendler analyses this sonnet at great length (1999: 622–8) and states: "In the emotional tonality of 148, the agitated self-judging questions and exclamations give way, after the invoking of the world's judgment, to an apparent critique of the unreliability of love's eye. This wonderful 'turn' is marked in a number of ways: 1. by the odd Quarto punctuation of line 8; 2. by the potential phonetic pun on *no* and *eye* [*aye*]; 3. by defensive exact reiteration: "*No*, / *How can it? O how can* …"; 4. by the spondaic *is so vexed*; 5. by the grammatical 'mistake' in paralleling a gerund (*watching*) to a 'true noun' (*tears*)—instead of [*with watching and with weeping*]. Shakespeare's turn in mid-sonnet to pathos and helplessness (*O how can*) will be remembered by Yeats in 'Leda and the Swan' …". The turn starts atypically with l.8's last word.

149

Canst thou, O cruel, say I love thee not
When I against myself with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee when I forgot
4 Am of myself, all tyrant for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
Nay, if thou lour'st on me do I not spend
8 Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in myself respect
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
12 Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind:
Those that can see, thou lov'st, and I am blind.

The quatrains do shift slightly, but I think that the couplet differs enough from the rest of the sonnet to turn it. To do a terrible disservice to lines 1–12 they say *That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.* (sonnet 88 line 14). The couplet says something different. The Dark Lady *lov'st* those with sight, i.e. she loves those who are not in love with her, or she loves, as the speaker words it, *One of her feathered creatures broke away,*/ (sonnet 143 line 2). In modern language "she is turned off by someone in love with her" or perhaps specifically by the speaker's love. Vendler sometimes likes to imagine an anterior utterance to which the sonnet then replies, as with this sonnet where apparently the Dark Lady has said "You do not love me" (1999: 630). I think making the sonnet into a part of a dialogue narrows its sense too much.

150

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

The first quatrain seems to repeat something familiar from the sequence, i.e. eyes being deceived by the in-love heart (e.g. sonnet 137). The second quatrain, however, introduces something new; the idea of being attracted to bad. The third quatrain shifts to a darker tone than Q_2 as *ill* (4) and *worst* (8) become *hate* (10) and *abhor* (11, 12). C tries to find the positive side of being aroused by something evidently so abhorrent.

Vendler sees the word *whore* flickering through the sonnet through phonemic play referring especially to *abhor* (1999: 634). I think that sometimes an interpretation tells us more about the interpreter than the poem. Here, however, since there is a rare repetition of the word *abhor* in a sinister quatrain, it might be difficult to keep one's mind out of the gutter. But I, at least, had my mind on the street level before reading Vendler.

151

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
4 Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
For thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason.
My soul doth tell my body that he may
8 Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,
But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
12 To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her 'love', for whose dear love I rise and fall.

Vendler does not beat around the bush with her forward reading of this sonnet; she sees a middle section (a type of octave in the middle) acting out tumescense and detumescence; this is "bordered fore and aft by the speaker's reformulation of the woman's reproach" (1999: 638–41). She, again, likes to imagine an anterior utterance to which lines 1–4 and 13–14 are a response or a reformulation (ibid.). I, again, think that the sonnet works just as well without imagining it as a part of a dialogue. Otherwise, her analysis is hard to reject because the sonnet does deal with a *gross body's treason* (6). Should the contents be noble and pure if there is such a topic, surely not. For this sonnet's innocent opposite partner see sonnet 145. Here we have *flesh* (8) and the *rising*(s) (9) and *falling*(s) (12) of the midway octave. And *conscience* (see ibid.).

152

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing:
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn
4 In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjured most,
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
8 And all my honest faith in thee is lost.
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,
And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness,
12 Or made them swear against the thing they see.
For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured eye,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie.

At the Dark Lady sequence's close the speaker seems to finally gain the same type of introspection he sometimes had in the Fair Youth sequence. He is not a helpless victim (like in sonnet 133) but an active oathbreaker in this sonnet. The turn to this "confession" comes at line 5 with the familiar conjunction *But*, and the *For*'s beginning lines 7, 9 and 13 tie the long end section together as they offer reasons to lines 5–6. The speaker is *perjured most* (6) because he has committed the ultimate sin of a writer: misdescription: this (Dark) Lady is no lady; she is not all those fair things I swore she was. Vendler writes that the speaker inhabits at once sexual obsession and the clarity to analyse it, he can lie freely while acknowledging the truth and that this paradoxical nature is "the victory of Shakespeare" in this subsequence (1999: 645).

153

Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep,
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
4 In a cold valley-fountain of that ground,
Which borrowed from this holy fire of love,
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
8 Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye love's brand new fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast.
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,
12 And thither hied, a sad distempered guest,
But found no cure; the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire: my mistress' eyes.

Harper (2015: 114–38) argues strongly that this is the rewritten version of sonnet 154 and that Shakespeare may have marked 154 to be excluded from the sequence, making this the actual end of the *Sonnets*. Harper laments that sonnet 153 has been mistreated in analytic commentary because of this possible mistake in printing which effectually repeats an inferior version of 153 where it should have just read *Finis* (ibid.). I would argue that (whether by accident or design) 154 fits the sequence even if some eloquence is lost by the repetition. 154 is Shakespeare *dressing old words new* (sonnet 76, line 11), this time his own. It expands the possible readings of the end and adds ambiguity so prominent in the *Sonnets* anyway. I also think that since Shakespeare began the *Sonnets* with a structural experiment (4-10-2) he would end it with an experiment too. Sonnet 153, on the other hand, is one of the clearest 8-6 structures of the *Sonnets*.

154

The little Love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs, that vowed chaste life to keep,
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire,
Which many legions of true hearts had warmed,
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarmed.
This brand she quenchèd in a cool well by,
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove:
Love's fire heats water; water cools not love.

See analysis on pages 63–5 of this thesis.