

Sonnet XX

*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
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,
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,
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.*

The sonnet belongs to the Shakespeare's collection of 154 sonnets.

It is divided into three quatrains and a rhyming couplet; the rhyme scheme is ABAB CBCB EFEF GG.

The first line is also the title of the sonnet. The first quatrain starts with the image of a woman's painted by the nature with its own hands. The reader can mentally create a image of beauty and joy. In addition, the image suggests the peace and the joy the narrator feels looking at this face. Since the whole collection is addressed to the Fair Youth, the reader wonders if the person the narrator is talking about is he.

In the second line, the reader finds the answer. Indeed "thou" refers to the Fair Youth and it's obvious he is handsome as women are. Moreover, using "master mistress" the reader can understand the poet is completely led in his action by this man. Using the word referring to the female gender (mistress) introduces the comparison with the figure of a woman in the following lines.

Indeed, the third line underlines the Fair Youth is more or less like a woman but the characteristics are much better since he has "A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted with shifting change, as is false women's fashion". The comparison. The first quatrain has the function to state the Fare Youth is as nice looking ad the face of a woman is. The quatrain ends with a column: the reader expects to be given an explanation about the statement.

The second quatrain adds other information about the comparison between the Fair Youth and the woman indeed, the man is less false in rolling.

The fourth line underlines the effect of the man on men and women: indeed every woman wants him since he is handsome and he steals every man's eyes which is another reason why the speaking voice is captured by his beauty.

In the third quatrain, the reader can understand the Fair Youth was thought by Nature to be a woman, but he was so good looking and she fall in love with the person giving him male characteristics.

This quatrain has the function to explain the feeling of the speaking voice

In the rhyming couplet the speaking voice creates a difference between the feeling in front of the Fair Youth. Women would have felt satisfaction indeed the narrator would just have felt love.