ANALYSIS OF SONNET LXXIII

The sonnet I'm going to analyze is sonnet LXXIII, written by William Shakespeare. Reading the title, one can understand that the poem takes part in a collections of sonnets.

Afterwards, considering the layout, you can notice that the text is arranged into four stanzas, three quatreins and a rhyming couplet: From this, the reader may realize that the poem is a Shakespearean sonnet. Therefore, he or she may expect that the quatreins will tell about the three different aspects of the problem or situation the speaking voice is going to explain, while the last two lines will propose the possible solution. The layout is highlighted by the rhyme scheme: In fact, even if in all the text the rhymes are alternating ( apart from the last two lines, where there are rhyming couplet), they are different from stanza to another ( for example, in the first quatrein they are ABAB, in the second one CDCD, and so on). This aspect helps the reader to make the reader realize that the problem the speaking voice is going to explain has three defined qualities.

The sonnet tells about the desperate and bad situation in which the speaking voice is. All he describes is in decay: The effects of autumn in nature ( first stanza); the advance of the night in the speaking voice's soul, perceived by himself as "death's second self" ( second quatrein); the topic of the death as a fire which burns in the poet's spirit and all it produce is only ashes ( third quatrein). The last two lines of the poem sound like a warning to the spokesman: The speakingvoice knows that him/her, aware of his bad situation, loves even more him, but, in a desperate way, he warns him/her to go away from him, if no he/she will fall in the well of his soul. To sum up, the speaking voice wants to warn his spokesman to leave him as soon as possible, because his bad situation is so irreversible that it is also able to drag him/her in it.

If you consider the semantic level of the sonnet, you can notice that "thou" and "in me" are repeated several times: This suggests the reader that the characters of the poem are the speakingvoice (who has an inert role), and the spokesman (who has an active one). The beginning of the sonnet directly introduces the reader in the setting of time of what the speaking voice is going to tell: In fact, the first line started with "That time if year" and the second one ( which specifies the period of the year the poet refears) with "When".You can easily realize that the poet used lots of words to underline the decline of his soul, his inner torment. The decay of the poet's soul is reflected in the nature with the advance of autumn: "yellow leaves", "boughs which shake against the cold", " bare ruined choirs" give the reader the feeling of decay, and he/she perceive a sad atmosphere. In the second quatrein, by the expression "In me" which introduce it, the reader understands that the decline described in the first stanza refears to the speakingvoice's soul. Also here, " twilight", "sunset fadeth", "black night" and, at the end, "Death's second self" underline the poet's mood. In addiction, these words, in this order, suggest a developing worsening of his situation. In the third stanza, which also starts with "in me thou see'st the" (creating a link between the second one), the speakingvoice asserts that the glowing that the spokesman sees in him, is a mistake, is only the fire which destroys his soul, is not a positive thing as it may seem. The theme of trick is highlighted by the use of words like "lie" and by the contrast between words which have opposite meanings (oxymorons), like "glowing" and "ashes", "consumed" and "nourished". The death assumes here an oppressive importance: The speakingvoice, in fact, asserts that the end of his worsening of his inner situation is the death, which he cannot oppose himself against . The tragical atmosphere becomes stronger in the last two lines: In fact, even if, on one side, all the three bad aspects of the inner problem of the speakingvoice (introduced by the expression "this thou perceiv'st", which linked this stanza with the last ones) induce the spokesman to love even more him, on the another the narrator is aware of being damaging for him/her, hence he warns him/her to leave him. The words "well", "must leave", "ere long" emphasised the urgency of the problem described. "More strong" and "ere long" are linked, because the increase of deeping of love need, for the speaking voice, an urgent moving away by the spokesman.

Considering the synctatical level of the text, you can notice that there are a lot of deviations, which have the function of underlining the words at the beginning of the phrase: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold" (line 1), "where late the sweet birds sang" (line 4), "In me thou see'st" ( line 5), etc...

Regarding the figures of speech, one can notice that there are anaphoras ( in particular, of the words "in me", "thou", "such", "by", "death", "love"), alliterations (that is, for example: That, thou (line 1); by, by, black (line 7); second self, seals (line 8); youth, doth (line 10);etc...), metaphores (like "twilight", "black night", "fire", "ashes", etc...).