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القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : مدخل الى الادب

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : **An Introduction to Literature**

اسم المحاضرة السابعة باللغة العربية: سوناتات شكسبير : سونت رقم 18

**SHAKESPEARIAN SONNETS
SONNET - 18**

اسم المحاضرة السابعة باللغة الإنكليزية :

Sonnet 18 is devoted to praising a friend or lover, traditionally known as the 'fair youth', the sonnet itself a guarantee that this person's beauty will be sustained. Even death will be silenced because the lines of verse will be read by future generations, when speaker and poet and lover are no more, keeping the fair image alive through the power of verse

SHAKESPEARIAN SONNETS

SONNET - 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,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
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.**

Analysis Of Sonnet 18 Line by Line

Sonnet 18 is devoted to praising a friend or lover, traditionally known as the 'fair youth', the sonnet itself a guarantee that this person's beauty will be sustained. Even death will be silenced because the lines of verse will be read by future generations, when speaker and poet and lover are no more, keeping the fair image alive through the power of verse.

• □ The opening line is almost a tease, reflecting the speaker's uncertainty as he attempts to compare his lover with a summer's day. The rhetorical question is posed for both speaker and reader and even the metrical stance of this first line is open to conjecture.

Is it pure iambic pentameter? This comparison will not be straightforward. This image of the perfect English summer's day is then surpassed as the second line reveals that the lover is more lovely and more temperate. *Lovely* is still quite commonly used in England and carries the same meaning (attractive, nice, beautiful) whilst *temperate* in Shakespeare's time meant gentle-natured, restrained, moderate and composed.

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• □ The second line refers directly to the lover with the use of the second person pronoun *Thou*, now archaic. As the sonnet progresses however, lines 3 - 8 concentrate on the ups and downs of the weather, and are distanced, taken along on a steady iambic rhythm (except for line 5, see later). Summer time in England is a hit and miss affair weather-wise. Winds blow, rain clouds gather and before you know where you are, summer has come and gone in a week. The season seems all too short - that's true for today as it was in Shakespeare's time - and people tend to moan when it's too hot, and grumble when it's overcast.

• □ The speaker is suggesting that for most people, summer will pass all too quickly and

they will grow old, as is natural, their beauty fading with the passing of the season.

• □ Lines 9 - 12 turn the argument for aging on its head. The speaker states with a renewed

assurance that *'thy eternal summer shall not fade'* and that his lover shall stay fair and

even cheat death and Time by becoming eternal.

• □ Lines 13 - 14 reinforce the idea that the speaker's (the poet's) poem will guarantee the

lover remain young, the written word becoming breath, vital energy, ensuring life continues.

Literary Devices in Sonnet 18

With repetition, assonance, alliteration and internal and end rhyme, the reader is certainly

treated to a range of device that creates texture, music and interest.

Note the language of these lines: *rough, shake, too short, Sometimes, too hot, often, dimmed, declines, chance, changing, untrimmed.*

• □ Assonance and repetition. There are interesting combinations within each line, which

add to the texture and soundscape: *Rough/buds, shake/May, hot/heaven, eye/shines, often/gold/complexion, fair from fair, sometimes/declines, chance/nature/changing, nature/course.*

Life is not an easy passage through Time for most, if not all people. Random events can

radically alter who we are, and we are all subject to Time's effects.

In the meantime the vagaries of the English summer weather are called up again and again as the speaker attempts to put everything into perspective. Finally, the lover's beauty, metaphorically an *eternal summer*, will be preserved forever in the poet's immortal lines.

And those final two lines, 13 and 14, are harmony itself. Following twelve lines without any punctuated caesura (a pause or break in the delivery of the line), line 13 has a 6/4 caesura and the last line a 4/6. The humble comma sorts out the syntax, leaving everything in balance, giving life.

Perhaps only someone of genius could claim to have such literary powers, strong enough to preserve the beauty of a lover, beyond even death.

Sonnet 18 Language and Tone

Note the use of the verb shall and the different tone it brings to separate lines. In the first line it refers to the uncertainty the speaker feels. In line nine there is the sense of some kind of definite promise, whilst line eleven conveys the idea of a command for death to remain silent.

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The word beauty does not appear in this sonnet. Both summer and fair are used instead.

Thou, thee and thy are used throughout and refer directly to the lover, the fair youth.

And/Nor/So long repeat, reinforce

Rhyme Scheme and Iambic Pentameter in Sonnet 18

Sonnet 18 is an English or Shakespearean sonnet, 14 lines in length, made up of 3 quatrains and a couplet. It has a regular rhyme scheme: abab cdcd efef gg. All the end

rhymes are full, the exceptions being *temperate/date*.

Metrical Analysis

Sonnet 18 is written in traditional iambic pentameter but it has to be remembered that this is

the overall dominant metre (meter in USA). Certain lines contain trochees, spondees and

possibly anapaests.

• □ Whilst some lines are pure iambic, following the pattern of daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM, no stress syllable followed by a stressed syllable, others are not.

Why is this an important issue? Well, the metre helps dictate the rhythm of a line and also

how it should be read. Take that first line for example:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

There's no doubting that this is a question so therefore the stress would normally fall on the

first word, Shall. Say it quietly to yourself and you'll find the natural thing to do is place a little

more emphasis on that opening word, because it is a question being asked. If the emphasis

was on the second word, I, the sense would be lost. So it is no longer an iamb in the

first

foot, but a trochee, an inverted iamb.

Shall I / compare / thee to / a sum / mer's day? (trochee, iamb x4)

• □ But, there is an alternative analysis of this first line, which focuses on the mild caesura

(pause, after *thee*) and scans an amphibrach and an anapaest in a tetrameter line:

Shall I / compare thee / to a sum / mer's day?

Here we have an interesting mix, the stress still on the opening word in the first foot, with the

second foot of non stressed, stressed, non stressed, which makes an amphibrach.

The third

foot is the anapaest, the fourth the lonely iamb. There are four feet so the line is in tetrameter.

Both scans are valid because of the flexible way in which English can be read and certain

words only partially stressed. For me, when I read this opening line, the second version

seems more natural because of that faint pause after the word *thee*. I cannot read the

opening line whilst sticking to the daDUM daDUM iambic pentameter beat. It just doesn't ring

true. You try it and find out for yourself.

Lines That Are Not Iambic Pentameter in Sonnet 18

Line 3

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Again, the iambic pentameter rhythm is altered by the use of a spondee at the start,

two

stressed single syllable words:

Rough winds / do shake / the dar / ling buds / of May,

This places emphasis on the meaning and gives extra weight to the rough weather.

Line 5

Again an inversion occurs, the opening trochee replacing the iamb:

Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,

The stress is on the first syllable, after which the iambic pattern continues to the end. Note

the metaphor (eye of heaven) for the sun, and the inversion of the line grammatically,

where *too hot* ordinarily would be at the end of the line. This is called anastrophe, the

change of order in a sentence.

Line 11

Note the spondee, this time in the middle of the line. And a trochee opens:

Nor shall death brag thou wand' rest in his shade,

The emphasis is on *death brag*, the double stress reinforcing the initial trochee to make quite

a powerful negation.

Conclusion

Sonnet 18 is the best known and most well-loved of all 154 sonnets. It is also one of the most straightforward in language and intent. The stability of love and its power to

immortalize the subject of the poet's verse is the theme.

The poet starts the praise of his dear friend without ostentation, but he slowly

builds

the image of his friend into that of a perfect being. His friend is first compared to summer in the octave, but, at the start of the third quatrain (9), he *is* summer, and thus, he has metamorphosed into the standard by which true beauty can and should

be judged. The poet's only answer to such profound joy and beauty is to ensure that his friend be forever in human memory, saved from the oblivion that accompanies death. He achieves this through his verse, believing that, as history writes itself, his friend will become one with time. The final couplet reaffirms the poet's hope that as long as there is breath in mankind, his poetry too will live on, and ensure the immortality of his muse