

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION OF
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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

COURSE WORK

On the theme: William Shakespeare and his play

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Content

1. Introduction

1.1. General aims and purposes of this course work

1.2. Some words about William Shakespeare and his play

1.3. Critical estimation of the play

2. Main Part.

1. Chapter 1. The genres of the play.

2. The idea of the play.

3. The introductory significance of the first act.

4. Theme of love and its interpretation in the third act.

2. Chapter 1. The methods of the play and characters.

2.2. The young lovers.

2.3. The language of William Shakespeare.

3. Conclusion.

3.1. The analysis of main themes.

3.2. The results and conclusions of course work.

3.3. Bibliography.

3.4. References.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The aims of this course work are to learn deeply and to understand several points of the poem Venus and Adonis which is written by William Shakespeare. The actuality of this work caused by several important points. We seem to say that Shakespeare always remains actual for us because his works, even written three centuries ago his immortal poems, tragedies, chronicles and comedies tell about the modern things and phenomena which are happen to be in our lives, such as humans' qualities, the problems of war and peace, love, revenge and etc.

If we say about the new information used with in our we may note that the work studies the problem from the modern position and analyzes the modern trends appeared in this subject for the last ten years. Mainly, newality is concluded in a wide collecting of internet materials dealing with the poem. The practical significance of the work can be concluded in the following items;

- a) The work could serve as a good source of materials for additional reading by students at schools, colleges and lyceums.
- b) The problem of difficult reading of Shakespeare's language could be

a) little bit easier to understand since our course work includes the chapter concerning the question mentioned.

c) Those who would like to possess a perfect knowledge of English will find our work useful and practical.

d) Our qualification work is our little gift to memory of the outstanding English writer.

Having said about the scholars who dealt with the same theme earlier we may mention T. Shcepkina-Kupernik and A. Lozinsky, who made a great input to the popularization of the great English in our country, A. Anikst, who prepared the first "Russian Folio" of Shakespeare's works, J. Coleridge, Dr. Jonson, Alfred Bates and many others. The newality of the work is concluded in including the modern interpretations of the play. The general structure of our course work looks as follows: The work is composed into three major parts: introduction, main part and conclusion. Each part has its subdivision into the specific thematically items. There are three points in the introductory part: the first item tells about the general characteristics of the work, the second paragraph gives us some words about the author of the play and the history of his work Venus and Adonis. The main part of our course work consists of two main chapters, which in their turn are subdivided into several

thematically paragraphs. The first chapter of the main part discusses the genres of the play, its plot and main idea. Here we also gave the particular attention to the description and further analysis of the most meaningful scenes in each act of the play. The second chapter of main part discusses the methods of the play. The second chapter of the main part observes the characters of their play and their interrelations in respect to the society, mental and age status. In conclusion to our work we gave our ideas got in the result of our investigation and appreciated the future perspectives of the latter. At the very end of our qualification work we supplied our work with the bibliography list and the internet materials.¹

1.2. William Shakespeare, born in 1594, is one of the greatest writers in literature. He dies in 1616 after completing many sonnets and plays. Modern readers associate the sonnet form with romantic love and with good reason: the first sonnets written in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy celebrated the poets' feelings for their beloveds and their patrons. These sonnets were addressed to stylized, lionized women and dedicated to wealthy noblemen, who supported poets with money and other gifts, usually in return for lofty praise in print He dedicated an earlier

set of poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*, to Henry Wriothesly, earl of Southampton, but it's not known what Wriothesly gave him for this honor. In contrast to tradition, Shakespeare addressed most of his sonnets to an unnamed young man, possibly Wriothesly. Shakespeare used his sonnets to explore different types of love between the young man and the speaker, the young man and the dark lady, and the dark lady and the speaker. In his sequence, the speaker expresses passionate concern for the young man, praises his beauty, and articulates what we would now call homosexual desire. According to some poems, lust causes us to mistake sexual desire for true love, and love itself causes us to lose our powers of perception. One of which is *Venus and Adonis*. *Venus and Adonis* is believed by some to be Shakespeare's first poem, and perhaps his first published work. Published in 1593, most scholars agree that the poem was written when playhouses in London were closed due to the plague. Evidence of the poem's popularity includes the fact that it was reprinted at least ten times in the twenty-five years that followed its 1593 debut. Love, adventure, such tale. Here's how it goes: Venus, the goddess of love, fell for the handsome hunter Adonis. Adonis, who was a bit of a snob, believed he was the best hunter in the world and that nothing could ever happen to

him. One day Venus dreamed that Adonis had an accident while hunting. She rushed to try to prevent him from going off to hunt, but Adonis ignored her. He thought Venus was crazy to believe in such dreams. Unfortunately, Venus's dream came true: during the hunt, a wild pig with large tusks killed Adonis. A heartbroken Venus had to watch her poor Adonis die because he did not listen to her warning. For modern readers who might forget that Venus is a goddess, it is easy to focus on Adonis as the uneasy object of desire by a matron. In its terms, however, the poem is a deliberately artificial retelling of a then-familiar myth, playing with the notion of what would happen if the goddess of love were refused. Although minor epics fell out of fashion long ago, Venus and Adonis commands appreciation for its dazzling verbal surface, as a piece of fine baroque art. It also lets us see the young Shakespeare exploring love in a way that later yielded his romantic comedies.

1.3. Critical estimation of the poem. Most critics agree that Shakespeare relied on Ovid as a source for *Venus and Adonis*; Ovid's account of the couple appears in Book X of the *Metamorphoses*. Yet Shakespeare's version of the relationship is much different than Ovid's, as Shakespeare's Adonis does not return Venus's passionate advances. Shakespeare's depiction of Venus is the focus of many modern critical

analyses of the poem, as critics attempt to demonstrate Venus's development as a character. The poem's status as allegory is another area of scholarly study, as is its treatment of sexuality and desire. Venus is regarded unfavorably by some critics, who see the goddess as amusing, lusty, and overly aggressive. Adonis rebuffs Venus's sexual advances, and his decision to hunt the boar rather than linger with her results in his death. The critic examines Venus's growth as a character and her progression from "Lust" to "Love," concluding that Venus as "Love" represents "life in death" and offers the possibility of rebirth. Similarly, Lake tracks Venus's progress throughout the course of the poem, observing that a shift from comedy to tragedy occurs when Venus learns that Adonis will hunt the boar. Lake contends that following this transformation, Venus begins to develop into a "sincere and tender" individual. In examining Venus's character, the critic finds that Venus lives the human experience of what it is like to love in vain, and that allegorical possibilities presented by *Venus and Adonis* are also an area of critical interest. Sayre Greenfield (1998) notes that Shakespeare's poem, as well as the treatment of the Venus and Adonis myth in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* (1590), are often read allegorically in order to moralize the text or to establish the text's coherence. Another popular

topic of critical study is the poem's treatment of sexual desire. Catherine Belsey (1995) contends that *Venus and Adonis* generates desire and promises to provide a definitive portrayal of love, yet it ultimately fails to deliver.

MAIN PART.Chapter 1.The genres of the poem. With *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare launched his career as a poet. The poem is a minor epic, a genre that many poets in the 1590s chose for their first efforts. Characters in a minor epic usually come from the periphery of myth or legend; its interest is in eroticism, sophistication, and wit. Within this genre, *Venus and Adonis* was so successful that it was Shakespeare's most popular published work throughout his lifetime.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the boy hunter Adonis is the willing lover of Venus, the goddess of love, and dies accidentally.

2.2.The idea of the play.

Shakespeare has Adonis reject Venus—an ironic and comic development for early readers protests. It consists of 1,194 lines and is based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a piece with contrasting views about the nature of love.The story is set in ancient Greece during the age of mythology, when the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus interacted with earthly humans.When *Venus and Adonis* begins, Venus, the goddess of love, admires a young man named Adonis. Adonis, however, does not return her affection. Adonis was considered the perfect male; though he was young, he was strong and beautiful with no earthly equal.

His beauty was a delight to the sun and wind, but he had no interest in

love. Venus came down to Earth because she was so in love with Adonis. She pleaded with him and carried him in her arms trying to gain his love. She talked to him about what it means to love and told him she could do a number of things for him if he loved her in return. When Adonis looked at her with scorn, Venus fainted and fell to the ground. Adonis was afraid he'd killed her, so he kissed her for forgiveness. She asked him for a second kiss, which he gave her. Adonis would not agree to meet with Venus the following day because he wanted to go boar hunting. Venus had a vision that Adonis would be killed if he went boar hunting and begged him to meet with her instead. Adonis warned Venus about the difference between heavenly love and earthly lust and left her weeping.

2.3 The introductory significance of the first act.

EVEN as the sun with purple-coloured face
Had ta'en his last leave of the
weeping morn,
Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he loved,
but love he laughed to scorn;
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain
unto him,
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him. *Even as the sun –*
At the time that the sun. Presumably the time referred to is the early morning. The sun abandons the dewy dawn and climbs into the sky. *weeping –* drenched with dew. *Rose-cheeked Adonis* - With cheeks like roses, ruddy. Adonis is introduced as a handsome youth with rosy cheeks. *hied him* - made haste; sped along. *the chase –* the hunt. Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn; The theme of the poem. Adonis has no interest other than the the delight of the hunt. *Sick-thoughted* - Venus is already sick with love of Adonis. The idea of love as a sickness was common from ancient times. *makes amain –* approaches

directly. *like a bold-faced suitor* - Venus clearly takes on the male role in courtship. Bold-faced is not a description that would normally be given to Venus suitor - lover, wooer. *'gins* - begins. *'Thrice-fairer than myself,' thus she nymphs, more lovely than a man, More white and red than doves or roses are; Nature that made thee, with herself at strife, Saith that the world hath ending with thy life. Thrice-fairer* - Many times more beautiful. One need not insist on the mathematical exactness of the statement. *As call it winter, which being full of care, Makes summer's welcome, thrice more wished, more rare. A torment thrice three-fold thus to be crossed. field's* – meadow's; open spaces. *Stain* - his beauty, contrasted to that of the nymphs, made them look ugly and besmirched. *nymphs* - woodland goddesses; female companions of Venus; maidens in general. *white and red* - white applies to the doves, red to the roses. *with herself at strife* – perhaps Nature was doubting the wisdom of creating something so beautiful as Adonis. Or it could be implied that she had fallen in love with him. *Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting Saith that the world hath ending with thy life* - Similar ideas are used in the 'procreation' Sonnets. *Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee, .And threescore year would make the world.'*

Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed, And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow; If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know: Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses, And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses; Vouchsafe - Grant,

permit. *to alight thy steed* - to dismount from your horse. This is a technicality of horsemanship. Presumably the rider, after dismounting, ties the reins to the saddle bow so that the horse's head is pulled downwards thus request (to dismount). *A thousand honey secrets* - all the secret delights of love *where never serpent hisses* – i.e. the place is entirely safe. Venus presumably would have powers to keep undesirable creatures away. set - seated. 'And yet not cloy thy lips with loathed satiety, But rather famish them amid their plenty, Making them red and pale with fresh variety, Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty: A summer's day will seem an hour but short, Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.' *cloy*. – cause weariness or dislike by over abundance. *furnish them* - provide yet more (delight for your lips). Venus claims that her varied ways of kissing will give him endless delight. *amid their plenty* - in the midst of the superabundance of kisses. Perhaps Shakespeare is thinking of Catullus' poem, *Vivamus, mea lesbia Da mi basia mille, deinde centum, dein mille altera, dein secondacentum, deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum, dein, cum milia multa fecerimus, conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus aut ne quis malus invidere possit, cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.* Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, Then another thousand, then second hundred, Then yet another thousand followed by a jumble them all up, so that we cannot know, And no malign evil-wisher can envy us When he knows how many kisses we have enjoyed. *an hour* the goddess of love, would not consider

time thus spent as 'wasted time' in the modern sense. *time-beguiling* – using up time; being so enchanting that the passage of time is unnoticed, hence time is beguiled, or cheated. *sport* - sexual activity. Cf. Ben Johnson's Ode to Celia: *Come, my Celia, let us prove, While we can, the sports of love. Time will not be ours for ever, He, at length, our good will sever.* With this she seizeth on his sweating palm, The precedent of pith and livelihood, And trembling in her passion, calls it balm, Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good: Being so enraged, desire doth lend her force Courageously to pluck him from his horse. sweating palm - evidently recognised as a sign of manliness, as implied by the following line. precedent - that which foretells; an indicator of. pith - essential quality; innate goodness and strength. livelihood – spiritedness. balm - i.e. his sweating palm is as a soothing lotion. ssovereign salve - an all powerful cure or balm. enraged - fired up with passion. lend her – bestow upon her. Over one arm the lusty courser's rein, Under her other was the tender boy, Who blushed and pouted in a dull disdain, With leaden appetite, unapt to toy; She red and hot as coals of glowing fire, He red for shame, but frosty in desire. Over one arm etc. - This is descriptive of the goddess. She holds the rein in one hand, wrapping it round her arm, and pulls Adonis from the horse makes him appear soft and tender, although his hunting pursuits obviously make him quite tough. *pouted*. - Merriam-Webster gives for *pout*: a). to show displeasure by thrusting out the lips or wearing a sullen expression b). sulk. *dull disdain* – sullen contempt. *leaden appetite* - with no desire to respond to her caresses *unapt to toy* – unwilling and unsuited to engage in the sport of

love-making. *red for shame* *The studded bridle on my coy disdain* - my rejection of him with feigned modesty, (which Mars evidently found sexually very attractive) *for mastering* - to be taken with *brag not*. 'Do not brag of your power to overpower me.' *foiled* - defeated, outwitted. The term probably comes from fencing, meaning to make a thrust at one's opponent with a fencing foil. *'Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,--Though mine be not*
What seest thou in the ground? hold up thy head:Look in mine eye-
balls, there thy beauty lies;Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?
not so fair - Venus insists that his lips are more beautiful than her own.
The kiss shall be thine own etc. - Since a kiss is a shared experience, it may be considered as belonging to both parties. *What see'st thou in the ground?* - Adonis continues to look at the ground, avoiding her gaze. Elizabethan poets enjoyed playing with the idea of lover's being reflected in each other's eyes. Compare this for example with the elaborate conceit of *Sonn 24*. *Then why not etc.* - Venus's logic is amusing, but not very convincing, since Adonis does not wish to have any physical contact with her, whether with eyes or lips or any other part. *'Art thou ashamed to kiss? then wink again,And I will wink; so shall the day seem night;Love keeps his revels where they are but twain;Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight:These blue-veined violets whereon we leanNever can blab, nor know not what we mean.Art thou ashamed* - Do you feel embarrassed; does it offend your modesty?*wink again* - close your eyes

once more. This sense of *wink* is common at the time. E.g. Sonn 43.

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see. Love keeps his revels –
Love enjoys himself and celebrates his rites and *sport is not in sight –*
Our sexual activity is not witnessed by anyone else. *Never can blab - will*
never be capable of telling what they have seen. nor know not what we
mean - Nor do they know what the significance is of our actions. They
are innocent observers of our love-play. *'The tender spring upon thy*
tempting lip Shows thee unripe; yet mayst thou well be tasted: Make use
of time, let not advantageslip; Beauty within itself should not bewaste. Fair
flowers that are not gather'd in their prime Rot and consume themselves
in little time. The tender spring - Your soft beard, which is like the fresh,
tender growth of spring. *Shows thee unripe -* indicates that you are not
yet sexually mature. *yet mayst thou well be tasted -* even so a lover
might enjoy congress with you. *Make use of time etc. -* Cf Herrick's
famous poem 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may'. *Beauty within itself*
etc. This is similar to the sentiment expressed in the 'procreation sonnets
1 - 20. E.g *Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend/ Upon thy self thy*
beauty's legacy? Sonn. 4. 1-2. *in their prime –* when they are at their
best. *consume themselves -* eat themselves up as they decay *in little*
time - in a short time; quickly. *'Were I hard-favoured, foul, or wrinkled-*
old, Ill-nurtured, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice, O'erworn, despised,
rheumatic and cold, Thick-sighted, barren, lean and lacking juice, Then

mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee But having no defects, why dost abhor me? *hard favoured* - having an ugly face *wrinkled-old* – with wrinkle features such as an old person has *churlish* - quarrelsome and spiteful *harsh in voice* - An undesirable characteristic in a woman, according to the mores of the time. Cf. *Her voice was ever soft, Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.* Lear V.3.314-5 *O'erworn* worn out. Past my best. *Thick sighted* – with age-clouded eyes. *barren* presumably as the goddess of love Venus is always fecund. *lean* - skinny and unattractive. *lacking juice* - not having the vital sap of existence. One suspects that there is also a sexual meaning, suggesting that she is ready for intercourse. She is not lacking juice, she is well lubricated.

4. Theme of love and its interpretation in the third act.

However the Elizabethans did not discuss such matters in the detail that is available in modern literature. This rather horrific list of the evils that beset old age simply underlines the fact that Venus possesses none of these qualities, for she is immortally young, forever an object of desire.

Then mightst thou pause – Then you might have reason for holding back. *why dost abhor me?* - why do you regard me as hateful? *Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow; Mine eyes are grey and bright and quick in turning: My beauty as burning; My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt, Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.* *one wrinkle in my brow* - there is not a single line in my forehead *Mine eyes are*

grey - grey eyes were a sign of beauty. Malone suggests that the colour grey was in fact blue for the Elizabethans. *quick in turning* - lively, always alert. *My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow* - Venus's beauty and youth were eternally renewed. *my flesh is soft and plump* - softness and plumpness were considered to be sexually attractive features, more so than perhaps they are in modern times. *my marrow burning* - marrow was considered to be a sort of inward essence. It is used by Sh in four of the plays. In AWW it means semen. The implication here is of sexual desire. *He wears his honour in a box unseen, That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home, Spending his manly marrow in her arms, Which should sustain the bound and high curvet Of Mars's fiery steed.* AWW.II.3. 1181-5 *My smooth moist hand* - this also seems to imply sexual craving. *were it with thy hand felt* - this is obviously what Venus desires, but Adonis is reticent. *'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear, Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green, Or, like a nymph, with long dishevelled hair, Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen: Love is a spirit all compact of fire, Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.* *Bid me discourse* - Command me to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. In the former the fairies spend the days and nights in entertainment on the green (the meadow), and in the latter Prospero invokes the nymphs who dance on the sands and leave no trace: *Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves, And ye that on the sands with printless foot Do chase the*

ebbing Neptune and do fly him When he comes back; Tempest V.1.34-7. *a spirit all compact of fire* - a spiritual being made of fire. All things were supposedly made up of proportions of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water. Cf. also *Are of imagination all compact:* MND.V.1.7-8. *Not gross to sink* - not heavy, making it fall to downwards to earth. *will aspire* capable of heavenly aspirations and yearnings. *'Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie;* These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me; Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky, From morn till night, even where I list to sport me: Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee? Witness - Bear witness; testify. She cites as evidence the flowers on the bank on which she is lying, which are not crushed by her weight, for she is a spirit made only of fire. forceless - having no strength. doves - Venus's chariot was traditionally pulled by doves, emblems of love and peace. As such, they were distinguished from the more usual animals harnessed to chariots, and required no strength since her chariot was as light as air. where I list - wherever I desire. to sport me - to entertain myself. Is thine own heart to thine own face affected? Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left? Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected, Steal thine own freedom and complain on that Narcissus so himself himself forsook, And died to kiss his shadow in the brook. *affected* - in love with *Can thy right hand etc.* - Does your right side love your left? i.e. are you in love with yourself? *be*

of thyself rejected - experience what it is like to be rejected *Steal thine own freedom etc.* - It is not entirely obvious what this means. Venus seems to be urging him to experience the pains of loving. By falling in love he would lose his freedom, but if he were in love with himself, as he seems to be, the theft of his freedom would be his own choice, and the suggestion is perhaps that he is making himself ridiculous by complaining, since he is the author of his own woes. *Narcissus* –

Narcissus was a youth in ancient Greek mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. According to Ovid's account of the tale, he was transformed into a flower, but popular tradition thought that he wasted away with gazing at his own beautiful image. Venus here implies that he drowned as he tried to kiss his own reflection (shadow) in the brook. *himself himself* - one of the pronouns is superfluous, but the use of two helps to emphasise Narcissus' absorption in himself. *forsook* neglected, abandoned. *'Torches are made to light, jewels to wear, Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use, Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear: Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse: Seeds spring from seeds and beauty breedeth beauty; Thou wast begot; to get it is thy duty. Torches; jewels; dainties etc.* - The main thrust of the stanza is that objects exist in the world to fulfil their proper function. Venus urges Adonis that since he is so beautiful, he should make a copy of himself by breeding. The thought is similar to that

expressed in the sonnets, 1 - 20, where the youth is urged to marry and procreate. Venus's arguments are biased in favour of her own desires, but they have no independent validity. *made to light* - made to provide light. *Dainties* - sweetmeats, confections. *show*. *Use* has a sexual meaning - intercourse. *sappy plants* - plants with lots of sap, and hence vigorous. *Thou wast begot* – You were begotten. *To get it is thy duty* - It is your duty to beget a child. *'Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed, Unless the earth with thy increase be fed? By law of nature thou art bound to breed, That thine may live when thou thyself art dead; And so, in spite of death, thou dost survive, In that thy likeness still is left alive.'* *increase* - harvest; produce. The idea springs from the increase in produce gained by breeding or sowing. One sheep might produce three lambs or one seed a hundred flowers. *law of nature* - the law which dictates that animals and plants should reproduce. *thou are bound* – you have an obligation to. *Thine* – Your children *thou dost* - you *likeness* - a copy of you *still* - always. The stanza contains many of the ideas used in the sonnets in relation to the beautiful youth, who is urged to breed so that a copy of him is left for succeeding generations, in which he himself may continue to live. By this the love-sick queen began to sweat, For where they lay the shadow had forsook them, And Titan, tired in the mid-day heat, With burning eye did hotly overlook them; Wishing Adonis had his team to guide, So he were like him and by Venus' side. *By*

this - By this time, at this point. *began to sweat* - apart from the heat of the sun, she is probably overheated by desire. *Titan* - the god of the sun. He drives the chariot of the sun which is pulled through the sky by radiant horses, *tired*. pronounced as two syllables. The sun god is exhausted by his own heat, just as the goddess of love is sick with love, her own attribute. *tired* can also mean 'attired, dressed in'. *burning eye*

Cf. Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines. Sonn. 18.5. *overlook* – look down upon. *his team* - the team of horses that pull Titan's chariot. Titan is the subject of wishing. He wishes that Adonis were in his place driving the chariot, so that he could be beside Venus. *So he were like him* - So that he, Titan, could be like him, Adonis, etc. And now Adonis, with a lazy spright, And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye, His louring brows o'erwhelming his fair sight, Like misty vapours when they blot the sky, Souring his cheeks cries 'Fie, no more of love! The sun doth burn my face: I must remove.' *lazy sprite* - spirit, which does not wish to be stirred (by sexual passion). *disliking eye* - an eye which does not like what it sees. *louring* - ominous, threatening. *o'erwhelming* - shadowing oppressively. *his fair sight* – his handsome face; his eyes. *Souring his cheeks* - putting a sour expression on his face. *remove* - depart. 'Ay me,' quoth Venus, 'young, and so unkind? What bare excuses makest thou to be gone! I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind Shall cool the heat of this descending sun: I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs, If they burn

too, I'll quench them with my tears. *Ay me* -Alas. quoth – says. *bare* – inadequate. Venus launches into an extensive plaint to Adonis. She mentions how Mars, the god of war, had once wooed her and had essentially become her slave, giving her the chance to teach him to be more light-hearted. Still, Adonis had somehow mastered her. She looks him in the eyes and asks once more for a kiss, saying that if he feels ashamed, he can always simply close his eyes. She says his youth and beauty should not be wasted in want of romance, and since she has no defects of person, physical or psychological, why should he refuse her company? She has her own youth (of an immortal kind, of course) and beauty and merely in speaking with him she would transport him to a wonderful place. Love itself is deemed something "light," such that she herself can be supported by mere flowers and doves. She eventually wonders if he is simply infatuated with himself, like Narcissus, and thus incapable of love. She concludes that as a living creature he is obliged to reproduce, particularly so that his beauty can be passed to his offspring. As the sun passes overhead, Adonis declares that he must give no more thought to love and remove himself from the heat. Venus assures him that with her immortal powers she can cool him, and regardless, the heat of the sun is no stronger than the passion that he inflames her with. She laments his hard-heartedness and again begs for kisses, eventually declaring that he must not be a man if he has no romantic inclinations. Venus then can speak no more, as she is

overwhelmed by her tears. Venus is beside herself, gazing and clutching at Adonis, while he tries to free himself from her grasp. She compares herself to a park, him to a deer, imploring him to graze wherever he will, as he will need live or roam nowhere else. Still, Adonis smiles disdainfully, producing dimples in his cheeks that nevertheless only enchant Venus further. As she pleads, he hastens toward his horse. Just then, a lusty young female horse emerges from a nearby copse, provoking Adonis's horse to break free from his reins, which were tied to a tree. Adonis's horse leaps and bounds about, breaking his saddle straps and crushing his iron bit in his throes of passion. The stallion's display seems intended to exhibit his strength to the mare, and indeed, the horse appears fitter than any a painter might conceive: he is perfectly proportioned and, as the narrator states, lacks only a "proud rider." The stallion continues frolicking about, neighing to the mare, while the mare, herself proud, resists his courtship. At length he grows agitated—and the mare finally relents and grows kinder toward him. When Adonis, then, tries to recapture his stallion, the two horses run off together. Thoroughly angered and sorrowed, Adonis sits down and curses his horse—perhaps leaving him ripe to finally be courted by Venus and her sweet words. Indeed, she approaches him and he is emotionally revived, although he lowers his hat to hide his anger and pretends not to notice her. She kneels before him, raises his hat and strokes his cheek. Still, he resists her wooing looks, leading her to again shed tears. She takes him by the

hand. Venus resumes entreating Adonis, offering him solace, but he asks her to release his hand—and so she asks him to release her heart. He then grows agitated himself, blaming her for his lost horse and declaring that he can think only of how to get the stallion back. In turn, she advises him to learn something from his stallion and give priority to matters of love; indeed, the stallion was inspired to free himself from confinement at the sight of the beautiful mare. Venus cannot understand Adonis's coldness, but he affirms that he simply does not intend to "know love," which he understands to mark the end of the youthful, adventurous hunting life he treasures. He beseeches her again to release his hand. She laments that his words would be so unkind, especially in that his voice is yet so melodious to her. She adds that she would need but any one of her five senses to appreciate and love him. Adonis opens his mouth to speak, and in anticipation Venus feels the sting of his words even before they emerge; in fact, his look alone causes her to fall to the ground. Believing she has actually died, Adonis softens at heart and claps at her cheek; he even kisses her to revive her, but she remains cunningly still. At length, she opens her eyes, and only his vexation clouds the shining of their met gazes. Venus exclaims that she has been brought back from death by Adonis's kiss and begs for more, declaring that she would essentially sell herself for his affection. She goes so far as to detail the number of kisses that will purchase her heart. Still, he declares that he simply cannot love until he knows himself; he believes

himself metaphorically too unripe to be eaten. As it is late, he suggests that they finally part, offering one last kiss—and in kissing, they fall back to the ground together.

2.Chapter.1.The methods of the play and characters.

Venus and Adonis is a **narrative poem**, or a poem that tells a story, written by William Shakespeare from 1592-1593. It consists of 1,194 lines and is based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a piece with contrasting views about the nature of love. The story is set in ancient Greece during the age of mythology, when the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus interacted with earthly humans. When *Venus and Adonis* begins, **Venus**, the goddess of love, admires a young man named **Adonis**. Adonis, however, does not return her affection. Adonis was considered the perfect male; though he was young, he was strong and beautiful with no earthly equal. His beauty was a delight to the sun and wind, but he had no interest in love. Venus came down to Earth because she was so in love with Adonis. She pleaded with him and carried him in her arms trying to gain his love. She talked to him about what it means to love and told him she could do a number of things for him if he loved her in return. When Adonis looked at her with scorn, Venus fainted and fell to the ground. Adonis was afraid he'd killed her, so he kissed her for forgiveness. She asked him for a second kiss, which he gave her. Adonis would not agree to meet with Venus the following day because he wanted to go boar hunting. Venus had a vision that Adonis would be killed if he went boar hunting and begged him to meet with her instead. Adonis warned Venus about the difference between heavenly love and earthly lust and left her weeping. *Venus and Adonis* comes from Ovid's [*Metamorphoses*](#), Book 10, known to Shakespeare in the translation by [Arthur Golding](#) (1567, with subsequent revisions). Ovid told

of how Venus took the beautiful Adonis as her first mortal lover. They were long-time companions, with the goddess hunting alongside her lover. She warns him of the tale of [Atalanta](#) and [Hippomenes](#) to dissuade him from hunting dangerous animals; he disregards the warning, and is killed by a [boar](#). Shakespeare developed this basic narrative into a poem of 1,194 lines. His chief innovation was to make Adonis refuse Venus's offer of herself. It has been argued (by [Erwin Panofsky](#)) that Shakespeare might have seen a copy of [Titian's](#) *Venus and Adonis*, a painting that could be taken to show Adonis refusing to join Venus in embraces. However, Shakespeare had already shown a liking for activist heroines, forced to woo and pursue an evasive male. The other innovation was a kind of observance of the action takes place in one location, lasts from morning till and focuses on the two main characters. Venus the goddess of love and beauty. Voluptuous and fiercely passionate, she is greedy for the love of young Adonis and immodestly thrusts her attentions on him. His shyness and sullenness increase her desire. She is a master of Renaissance rhetoric and delivers a stream of oratorical debate to convince Adonis of the importance of fertility. Her knowledge of the English countryside and hunting makes for particularly graphic and poetic descriptions. Her grief at the death of Adonis is as passionate as her love. There have been some scholarly arguments that hold her to be an allegorical Platonic figure rather than the erotic creation she appears to most readers to be. Adonis a shy, handsome young hunter. Venus' lavish wooing drives him into sullen obstinacy. He too is well trained in rhetoric and carries his side of the debate with rebukes for her lustful behavior. He is, however, tenderhearted and softens considerably when she swoons. He does not yield completely to her importunities and stubbornly goes ahead with his plans to hunt the boar. His death results. Those who hold that the poem is an expression of the Renaissance ideal of love compare Adonis with the fair young

man of the sonnets and indicate that his death is justly the result of his rejection of love and beauty and his consequent failure to reproduce his kind.

2.2. The young lovers.

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2.3. The language of William Shakespeare.

While William Shakespeare's reputation is based primarily on his plays, he became famous first as a poet. With the partial exception of the *Sonnets* (1609), quarried since the early nineteenth century for autobiographical secrets allegedly encoded in them, the nondramatic writings have traditionally been pushed to the margins of the Shakespeare industry. Yet the study of his nondramatic poetry can illuminate Shakespeare's activities as a poet emphatically of his own age, especially in the period of extraordinary literary ferment in the last ten or twelve years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare's first publication, *Venus and Adonis* (1593), was dedicated to the eighteen-

year-old Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton. The dedication reveals a frank appeal for patronage, couched in the normal terms of such requests. Shakespeare received the Earl's patronage and went on to dedicate his next dramatic poem, *Lucrece*, to the young lord as well. *Venus and Adonis* was printed by Richard Field, a professionally accomplished printer who lived in Stratford. Indeed, *Venus and Adonis* flirts with taboos, as do other successful works of the 1590s, offering readers living in a paranoid, plague-ridden city a fantasy of passionate and fatal physical desire, with Venus leading Adonis "prisoner in a red-rose chain." In its day it was appreciated as an erotic fantasy glorying in the inversion of established categories and values, with a veneer of learning and the snob appeal of association with a celebrated aristocrat. Modern readers associate the sonnet form with romantic love and with good reason: the first sonnets written in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy celebrated the poets' feelings for their beloveds and their patrons. These sonnets were addressed to stylized, lionized women and dedicated to wealthy noblemen, who supported poets with money and other gifts, usually in return for lofty praise in print.

Shakespeare dedicated his sonnets to "Mr. W. H.," and the identity of this man remains unknown. He dedicated an earlier set of poems, *Venus and*

Adonis and Rape of Lucrece, to Henry Wriothesly, earl of Southampton, but it's not known what Wriothesly gave him for this honor. In contrast to tradition, Shakespeare addressed most of his sonnets to an unnamed young man, possibly Wriothesly. Addressing sonnets to a young man was unique in Elizabethan England. Furthermore, Shakespeare used his sonnets to explore different types of love between the young man and the speaker, the young man and the dark lady, and the dark lady and the speaker. In his sequence, the speaker expresses passionate concern for the young man, praises his beauty, and articulates what we would now call homosexual desire. The woman of Shakespeare's sonnets, the so-called dark lady, is earthy, sexual, and faithless—characteristics in direct opposition to lovers described in other sonnet sequences, including *Astrophil and Stella*, by Sir Philip Sidney, a contemporary of Shakespeare, who were praised for their angelic demeanor, virginity, and steadfastness. Several sonnets also probe the nature of love, comparing the idealized love found in poems with the messy, complicated love found in real life.

3. Conclusion.

3.1. The analysis of main themes.

In the VENUS AND ADONIS, the first and most obvious excellence is

the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant. The delight in richness and sweetness of sound, even to a faulty excess, if it be evidently original, and not the result of an easily imitable mechanism, I regard as a highly favourable promise in the compositions of a young man. The man that hath not music in his soul can indeed never be a genuine poet. Imagery,--(even taken from nature, much more when transplanted from books, as travels, voyages, and works of natural history),--affecting incidents, just thoughts, interesting personal or domestic feelings, and with these the art of their combination or intertexture in the form of a poem,--may all by incessant effort be acquired as a trade, by a man of talent and much reading, who, as I once before observed, has mistaken an intense desire of poetic reputation for a natural poetic genius; the love of the arbitrary end for a possession of the peculiar means. But the sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination; and this together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learned. It is in these that "poeta nascitur non fit." Modern readers associate the sonnet form with romantic love and

with good reason: the first sonnets written in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy celebrated the poets' feelings for their beloveds and their patrons. These sonnets were addressed to stylized, lionized women and dedicated to wealthy noblemen, who supported poets with money and other gifts, usually in return for lofty praise in print. Shakespeare dedicated his sonnets to "Mr. W. H.," and the identity of this man remains unknown. He dedicated an earlier set of poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*, to Henry Wriothesly, earl of Southampton, but it's not known what Wriothesly gave him for this honor. In contrast to tradition, Shakespeare addressed most of his sonnets to an unnamed young man, possibly Wriothesly. Addressing sonnets to a young man was unique in Elizabethan England. Furthermore, Shakespeare used his sonnets to explore different types of love between the young man and the speaker, the young man and the dark lady, and the dark lady and the speaker. In his sequence, the speaker expresses passionate concern for the young man, praises his beauty, and articulates what we would now call homosexual desire. The woman of Shakespeare's sonnets, the so-called dark lady, is earthy, sexual, and faithless—characteristics in direct opposition to lovers described in other sonnet sequences, including *Astrophil and Stella*, by Sir Philip Sidney, a contemporary of Shakespeare, who were praised for their angelic demeanor, virginity, and steadfastness. Several sonnets also probe the nature of love, comparing

the idealized love found in poems with the messy, complicated love found in real life. The poem is aimed at a sophisticated, aristocratic and intellectual audience and presents contrasting ideas about love. Both characters speak in aphorisms as does the narrator. It exhibits a characteristically Ovidian blend of irony and pathos. It utilizes many rhetorical devices: parison (parallel phrases), isocolon (phrases of equal length and grammar), antimetabole (phrases repeated in inverted order), epanalepsis (phrases repeated at the beginning and ending of the line), etc. General comments on some of these subjects follow. A word of caution is in order first. One can readily identify possible subjects for essay questions, and you should be prepared to answer on any of these. This is not the same as writing out an essay you have prepared before the exam (always a foolish idea). Questions will be worded so as to make this difficult, and to make it obvious if you do it: examiners like organized answers but dislike the "prepared essay". Take your time to read both alternative questions carefully. It is very often the case that a question which looks hard, because of its wording, is straightforward in reality while a question which looks simple, rarely is! Order and disorder is a favourite theme of the playwright. In this play the apparently anarchic tendencies of the young lovers, of the mechanicals-as-actors.

Shakespeare, like many sonneteers, portrays time as an enemy of love. Time destroys love because time causes beauty to fade, people to age, and life to end. One common convention of sonnets in general is to flatter

either a beloved or a patron by promising immortality through verse. As long as readers read the poem, the object of the poem's love will remain alive. In Shakespeare's Sonnet 15, the speaker talks of being "in war with time" (13): time causes the young man's beauty to fade, but the speaker's verse shall entomb the young man and keep him beautiful. The speaker begins by pleading with time in another sonnet, yet he ends by taunting time, confidently asserting that his verse will counteract time's ravages. From our contemporary vantage point, the speaker was correct, and art has beaten time: the young man remains young since we continue to read of his youth in Shakespeare's sonnets. Through art, nature and beauty overcome time. Several sonnets use the seasons to symbolize the passage of time and to show that everything in nature—from plants to people—is mortal. But nature creates beauty, which poets capture and render immortal in their verse. Sonnet 106 portrays the speaker reading poems from the past and recognizing his beloved's beauty portrayed therein. The speaker then suggests that these earlier poets were prophesizing the future beauty of the young man by describing the beauty of their contemporaries. In other words, past poets described the beautiful people of their day and, like Shakespeare's speaker, perhaps urged these beautiful people to procreate and so on, through the

poetic ages, until the birth of the young man portrayed in Shakespeare's sonnets. In this way—that is, as beautiful people of one generation produce more beautiful people in the subsequent generation and as all this beauty is written about by poets—nature, art, and beauty triumph over time.

3.2Bibliography.

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