

Antithesis, Chiasmus, and Symmetry in Shakespeare's Sonnet 105

by

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October, 2015



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### *Abstract*

In this article, I argue that Shakespeare might just as well have written sonnet 105 from its centre using a chiastic blueprint as a guide. Such a blueprint presupposes that the writing of a sonnet start with its line eight to then unfold line by line alternately about it. As to evidence, I first reconstruct sonnet 105 by way of its antithetical arguments and the chiasmi that articulate them. From this reconstruction, I then deduce a chiastic model that describes the emergence of equivalents of the Shakespearean sonnet's formal characteristics and the aesthetic and near-congruent symmetries that underlie and relate them. Informed by these findings, I offer a short, speculative, chiastic-orientated narrative analysis of sonnet 105 as a complement and supplement to traditional linear readings.

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A reconstruction of Shakespeare's sonnet 105 from the final line of its octet reveals an underlying pattern of textual relationships that by its coherency is unlikely to be due to chance. In this article, I explore the idea that this pattern is due to a recursive gesture, to the writing of a chiastic line of verse that presupposes the creation of the rest of the sonnet from the rhetorical and thematic elements of which it itself was constituted. Taking this idea as my point of departure, I present a detailed description of how sonnet 105 can be reconstructed from the constituent parts of its line 8, a description that includes as a corollary the development of the sonnet's formal characteristics. My findings thus assert the relevance of chiasmus to Renaissance poetics and would have us better readers of Shakespeare by heightening our sensibility to, and appreciation of, the role that it plays in his sonnet writing.

The transcription below of sonnet 105 from the 1609 quarto serves as the reference text for the discussion to follow:<sup>1</sup>

1. Let not my love be cal'd Idolatrie,
2. Nor my beloved as an Idoll show,
3. Since all alike my songs and praises be
4. To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
5. Kinde is my love to day, to morrow kinde,
6. Still constant in a wondrous excellence,
7. Therefore my verse to constancie confin'de,
8. One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
9. Faire, kinde, and true, is all my argument,
10. Faire, kinde, and true, varrying to other words,
11. And in this change is my invention spent,
12. Three theams in one, which wondrous scope affords.
13. Faire, kinde, and true, have often liv'd alone.
14. Which three till now, never kept seate in one.

I propose the following two criteria, one relating to the writing of the sonnet, and one to the sonnet as written, for judging the reasonableness of the idea of a recursive principle at work in the sonnet. First, if the sonnet was written from the final line of its octet, then that line's rhetorical and thematic constituents can be expected to recur line by line as the sonnet develops, resulting in self-similarity throughout. Second, if the final line of the octet was indeed intended as a blueprint for the sonnet, then the final written sonnet should reflect that line's chiasmic symmetries.<sup>2</sup> I shall describe these symmetries in detail below, but for now a start may be made by noting that 'symmetry' is an aesthetic as well as a mathematical category. As an aesthetic category, the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines symmetry as the "Correct or pleasing proportion of the parts of a thing; harmony of parts with each other and the whole; a regular or

balanced arrangement and relation of parts. Also, beauty resulting from this.” As a mathematical category, the *SOED* defines symmetry as “Correspondence...with respect to a central point, or one or more dividing lines or planes.”<sup>3</sup> I shall argue that the more the pattern of sonnet 105’s textual relationships approaches the *SOED*'s aesthetic and mathematical definitions of symmetry, be it only in affinity in the case of the latter, the more sophisticated the sonnet’s construction. I shall further argue that the more sophisticated the sonnet’s construction, the greater the weight to be accorded it in the sonnet’s interpretation. I argue this because I assume that sophistication of construction is evidence of intent on the part of the poet, and evidence of intent, evidence of meaning. The first criterion calls for evidence showing that the rhetorical and thematic constituents of each line of sonnet 105 develop symmetrically from its line 8. The second requires a e sonnet model describing symmetries that relate back to its line 8. I shall hold that the reciprocity of these criteria poses a sufficient and sound test of reasonableness of the idea of a recursive principle at work in the sonnet.

My initial task, therefore, is to describe how sonnet 105’s line 8 is made up and how its constituents unfold from it to make up the sonnet. On the basis of this description, I deduce a chiastic model of the Shakespearean sonnet that relates its symmetries back to its line 8. The article then closes with an assessment of the implications of these findings for sonnet 105’s meaning.<sup>4</sup> Discussion in the article is accordingly divided into three parts. In the first part, I describe how sonnet 105’s line 8 may be recreated by derivation from two simple antitheses and how each of the remaining lines of the sonnet can be developed stepwise from and about it. In the second part, I then deduce an identical model of both the Shakespearean sonnet’s formal characteristics and the underlying chiastic symmetry relating them. And in the third and

final part, I explore the implications of the findings for the interpretation of sonnet 105 in a brief, chiasmus-oriented narrative analysis.

Evidence from the scholarly literature is unfortunately limited by the absence of theories describing either Shakespeare's sonnet writing technique or the origins, development, and relatedness of the Shakespearean sonnet's formal characteristics.<sup>5</sup> Scholarship that is concerned specifically with sonnet 105, whether based on close readings, or the taking into account of cultural context, such as the extent of the influence of Trinitarian controversies on the sonnet's themes, or the sonnet's possible allusions to other sonnets and sonnet writers, falls outside the scope of my article since it responds to the written sonnet and not to its writing, which is my principal subject here.<sup>6</sup>

#### Part 1: Reconstruction of sonnet 105

Helen Vendler describes Shakespeare's sonnet writing as a form of "linguistic play."<sup>7</sup> One prevalent aspect of this play in sonnet 105 is that afforded by the rhetorical figure of *contentio*. This figure is likely to have been widely known among educated circles in Elizabethan England given the popularity of Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, published in 1553 and reprinted eight times over the subsequent thirty-two years. In his book, Wilson describes *contentio* under the heading *contrarietie* as follows: "when our talke standeth by contrary wordes or sentences together."<sup>8</sup> *Contentio* is the Latin analogue of the Greek figure *antithesis*, and Wilson's description echoes in one modern definition of the latter as "a juxtaposition of contraries."<sup>9</sup> However, as the terms *contentio*, *contrarietie*, and *antithesis* each describe not only contraries between individual words, but also contraries within an extended argument, I shall prefer the term *antithesis* in the description of the reconstruction of the sonnet that follows and

reserve *contentio* and *contrarietie* to describe a sonnet so written.<sup>10</sup>

To illustrate antithesis at play in sonnet 105, let me first reconstruct line 8 from four words embedded in it: *press*, *in*, *leave*, and *out*. I first sort these words into two simple antitheses arranged in parallel one above the other, as follows:

press	in
⇕	⇕
leave	out

Read linearly, these word pairs combine to create the antithesis *press in / leave out*.<sup>11</sup> I can now transform this parallel structure by derivation into the chiastic structure of the new, more complex antithesis *expressing / leaves out*:

	press in	leave out	
	↓	↓	
ex	pressing	leaves	out

When I enfold this antithesis into a second antithesis, *one thing / difference*, the result is the reconstructed diction of the sonnet's line 8: "One thing expressing, leaves out difference."

Seeing sonnet writing this way as a process whereby form and meaning evolve together in layers from simplicity to complexity results in a line of verse that is doubly antithetical, and chiastic.<sup>12</sup> As Patricia Lissner puts it, chiasmus presents a linear version of a graphic criss-cross and is often represented  $a b : b a$ .<sup>13</sup> In sonnet 105, each of the outer and inner pairs of a chiasmus,  $a a$  and  $b b$ , represents, as we shall see, either the same or different aspects of a single idea. And when the aspects are different, the difference is either relative or absolute. There are, then, three categories of comparison in the sonnet: relative difference, absolute difference, and absolute identity. I shall describe how these categories are represented both by the literal meaning of the poem's



diction and, crucially for an understanding of the poem's design, by the use of the rhetorical figures of antanaclasis for relative difference, and ploche and polyptoton for absolute difference and absolute identity.<sup>14</sup> One example of how literal meaning relates to the three categories is provided by the two aspects of the inner pair of line 8's chiasmus, *b b*, "expressing / leaves out." These aspects appear to be different in an absolute, either / or, sense since something expressed is not left out. A further example is the outer chiastic pair, *a a*, "one thing / difference." This pair, too, appears to be different in an absolute sense since the meaning of "difference" implies comparison and therefore the expression of something other than "one thing." An example of a chiastic pair that conveys identical ideas is provided by the outer pair of line 5, "kinde / kinde." In the same line, "to day / to morrow" offers an example of a chiastic pair that represents a relative difference, here, one of degree: Today can become tomorrow in a way that something expressed cannot be left out.

As the abstract representation of the inner and outer pairs of sonnet 105's chiasmi is helpful in clarifying the relationships between them and their role in the construction of the sonnet, I shall use a double-plus sign, ++, for pairs that emphasize the same idea, a double-minus sign, --, for those that emphasize mutually exclusive ideas, and the letter r doubled, r r, for those that differ relatively. For example, since I here interpret the differences between the individual elements of the inner and outer chiastic pairs of line 8, "one thing" and "difference", and "expressing" and "leaves out", as different absolutely, I represent each of the pairs by double minus signs, ' -- ' and ' -- ', one representing the inner, *b b*, and one the outer, *a a*, pair.

We shall see that this way of representing chiasmi shows how serious the poet was about enabling his readers to understand the way he plays with words and rhetoric

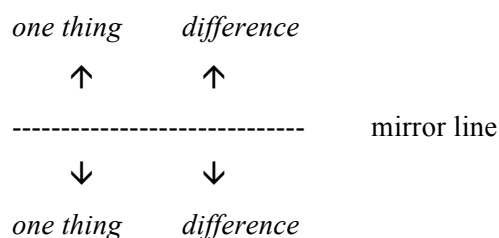
to create meaning in the sonnet. In his study of chiasmic design in Renaissance English literature, William Engel remarks on the importance to writers of having readers who understood the construction of their works:

My two-fold goal is to point out chiasmic features of style and then suggest how this aesthetic of chiasmus provided authors with a basis for composition and reflection....Of paramount importance to writers...was the active engagement of their readers in a game of hunting for and discovering clues about the obviously constructed quality of the work.<sup>15</sup>

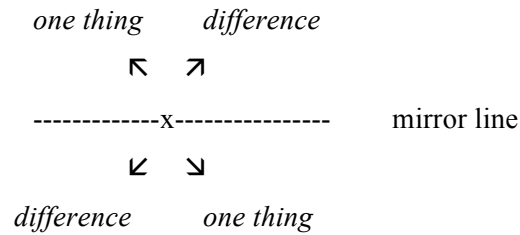
That Shakespeare favored this aesthetic is further evidenced by the many examples William Davis provides of the use of what he calls “complex chiasmus” in Shakespeare’s plays: “Shakespeare not only uses chiasmus as the foundation of short passages but also uses complex chiasmus as a structural blueprint for the dialogue in entire scenes and even for the structure of plays.”<sup>16</sup> Given the breadth of Davis’ evidence, it is not surprising to find that chiasmus as comparison also occurs frequently in Shakespeare’s sonnets.<sup>17</sup>

So far, we have seen how sonnet 105’s line 8 can be reconstructed from the initial parallelism of the simple antithesis *press in / leave out* to create a complex, chiasmic line of verse and, hence, “a basis for composition and reflection.” For the purposes of my argument, I shall consider these parallel and chiasmic arrangements of words in the sonnet as akin to the symmetry operations of reflection and inversion, as illustrated in the following schema:<sup>18</sup>

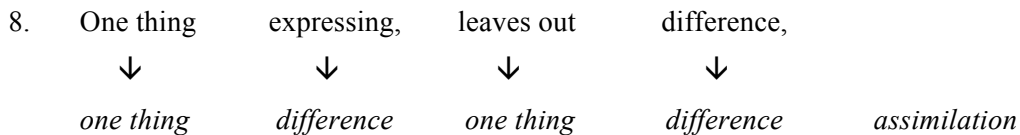
parallelism: reflection



chiasmus: inversion



“One thing” and “difference” are also important themes in the sonnet. Sometimes they are developed separately by the sonnet’s diction in each half of the sonnet’s lines and sometimes together, as shown in the schema below.<sup>19</sup> In order to also show the pattern of the evolution of these themes throughout the sonnet, I represent their distribution in any one line by the words *one thing* and *difference* when they are developed separately in each half of a line and as *assimilation* when they are developed together.<sup>20</sup> In the discussion to come, this distinction is shown on the right hand side of the thematic categorization of a line’s diction. For example, here in line 8, the attribution of the words “One thing” and “difference” to the themes *one thing* and *difference* is self-evident. I then attribute “expressing” to the theme *difference* by definition, and “leaves out” to the theme *one thing* for its absolute quality. Since the themes *one thing* and *difference* are developed together in each half of the line, line 8 represents an example of *assimilation* according to the definition just given:



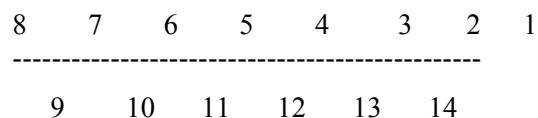
The terms *one thing*, *difference* and *assimilation* therefore have two functions in the discussion of the sonnet’s other lines that follows: first, they serve as criteria to categorize the sonnet’s diction thematically and, second, they serve as markers to trace the line by line evolution of those themes throughout the sonnet.

Before turning to a discussion of the make up of the other lines in the sonnet, I should briefly like to describe a second aspect of antithesis that is fundamental to the sonnet's thematic development: the complementarity of the ideas in an antithesis and the making of an argument that results. The linguistic research collaboration "Groupe  $\mu$ " succinctly defines this aspect of antithesis as " 'X' and 'X is not non-X' ".<sup>21</sup> Arthur Quinn describes the same idea more prosaically, and just as clearly:

Rather than saying something and then repeating it in other words, you both deny its contrary and assert it. The basic effect is the same; you have said the same thing in two different ways. Nonetheless, the antithesis does have the advantage of giving a sense of completeness with only two items.<sup>22</sup>

This sense of completeness can be seen at work in line 8. Read linearly, the line suggests that one thing is expressed by the exclusion of difference. This interpretation is contradicted by the antithetical argument that can be seen when the line is read chiasmically. "One thing expressed" is contraried by "difference" which in turn is denied by "leaves out" to assert that one thing is expressed by the inclusion of difference.<sup>23</sup> Chiasmus is thus potentially both a means to create a line of verse and, with its resulting antithesis, to make an argument.

Having reconstructed its line 8, here is the order in which I describe the reconstruction of the remaining lines of the sonnet:



Starting with line 8, this schema depicts the back and forth development of sonnet lines from line 8 to line 9, from line 9 to line 7, from line 7 to line 10, and so on, across an imaginary axis of symmetry, or mirror line, to end with line 1. By the completion of line 14, two times six lines will have been developed. These lines represent the equivalents

of two quatrains and two couplets: lines 8, 7, 6, 5, for the second quatrain; lines 9, 10, 11, 12, for the third; lines 4 and 3 for a first couplet; and lines 13 and 14 for the Shakespearean couplet. Finally, Lines 2 and 1 are developed to create, along with lines 4 and 3, the first quatrain, complete the octet, distinguish it from the sestet and realize the traditional three quatrain and final couplet Shakespearean sonnet. As I describe further below, this formal stanzaic division is articulated by the sonnet's chiasmi. For now, however, let us turn our attention to the reconstruction of the other lines of the sonnet from line 8, starting with line 9.

9. Faire, kinde, and true, is all my argument,

The themes *one thing* and *difference* can be unravelled from their assimilation in line 8 into separate halves of line 9: "Faire, kinde, and true," is assigned to *difference* for its variety, "is all my argument" to *one thing* for its exclusivity:

8. One thing expressing	leaves out difference.	assimilation
		↙ ↘
9. Faire, kinde, and true,	is all my argument,	difference one thing

It seems reasonable to assign "is all my argument" to *one thing* due to the seeming plainness of "all." Is it reasonable, though, to assign "Faire, kinde, and true" to *difference* when the line's copulative "is" suggests that the three characteristics be considered collectively? I argue that it is reasonable for the following two reasons. First, each of the attributes "faire," "kinde," and "true" can be distinguished individually vis-à-vis any other characteristic of the same class such as "courageous," "tolerant," and "generous." Hence, they are also distinguishable from each other. In this sense, "Faire, kinde, and true," may very well be understood as *difference*. Second, why should the copulative not link each characteristic singly to the subject complement "all my argument" so as to simply count them out: "faire is all my argument"; "kinde is all my

argument”; “true is all my argument”? Hence, I assign the “Faire, kinde, and true” of line 9 to *difference* in the sense of *three-singly-from-all*.

7. Therefore my verse to constancie confin'de,

Line 7, like line 9, may be divided roughly into two halves with each half representing the categories *difference* and *one thing* separately. I assign “to constancie confin'de” by definition and by repetition of prefixes to *one thing* and “Therefore my verse,” for the variety implied by “my verse,” to *difference*. These attributions form, as we shall see, the basis for the chiasmic development of themes in the octet and sestet. Furthermore, a parallel relationship between line 7 and line 9 across line 8 follows, as shown in the schema below. These parallel and chiasmic relationships suffuse the sonnet, marking transitions between quatrains and lending the sonnet balance and structure:

7.	Therefore my verse	to constancie confin'de,	difference	one thing
			↑	↖ ↗
8.	One thing expressing	leaves out difference.		assimilation
			↓	↙ ↘
9.	Faire, kinde, and true,	is all my argument.	difference	one thing

10. Faire, kinde, and true, varying to other words

It is a rhetorical principle of sonnet 105 that repetition of diction either nuances meaning by the use of antanaclasis or emphasizes it by the use of ploche. When a word or phrase is repeated in different lines, antanaclasis is at play, when in the same line, ploche. If diction is varied instead of simply being repeated, for example by retaining its root and varying its grammatical categories, the root meaning of the word is being emphasized by the use of polyptoton. Here in line 10, the repetition of line 9’s “Faire, kinde, and true,” is as an instance of antanaclasis. The meaning of “Faire, kinde, and true,” in line 10 is therefore different from its meaning in line 9. Here, I contend, a

ternary group of attributes distinct from all other ternary groups of attributes is implied. By the use of antanaclasis, the development from line 9 to line 10 forms a part of what Helen Vendler describes in her critique of Jakobson and Richards' structural analysis of sonnet 129 as a sonnet's "indispensable sequence of emotional logic."<sup>24</sup> That is, by understanding the development from line 9 to line 10 as part of a broader development of the attributes "faire," "kinde," and "true" within the sonnet, namely, individually and successively in the octet, collectively and synthetically in the sestet, the basis for a sequence of emotional logic in a linear reading of the sonnet is set. Thus, "Faire, kinde, and true," designated as *three-singly-from-all* in line 9 develops in line 10 into *three-together-from-all*, which, by reason of the emphasis on its group aspect, I categorize thematically as *one thing*. The second part of the line, "varying to other words," I categorize by definition as *difference*. The result is a continuation of the chiasmic relationship between themes in the sestet.<sup>25</sup>

6. Still constant in a wondrous excellence,

Lines 8, 7, and 6 together constitute an anti-antithetical argument that supports the argument made in line 8 that one thing includes difference and rejects the alternative argument that one thing excludes difference. The latter is a blank assertion since no argument is made to support it. The sonnet, however, is replete with antithetical argument, as we shall see, and it would be most surprising to find a line that was not supported by it. Where then is the antithetical argument in lines 8 – 6? Lines 7 and 6 do not contrary the idea that one thing includes difference. Through their emphasis on oneness quite the opposite is the case. Where, moreover, is the denial of the contrary? We saw that chiasmus entails antithesis, and I shall contend that it is the chiasmic arrangement of themes across lines 8 – 6 that completes the argument. This arrangement

can be thought of symbolically as representing two intertwining strands of diction relating “one thing” (l.8), “constancie confin’d” (l.7) and “still constant” (l.6) to “difference” (l.8), “my verse” (l.7) and “wondrous excellence” (l.6). The two strands are symbolically tied-off contrariwise with “one thing” (l.8) assigned to “wondrous excellence,” (l.6) as signalled by the phonetic wordplay “one/won-drous,” and “difference” (l.8) assigned to “constant” (l.6). In this way, the standard form of an antithetical argument is playfully transformed into an anti-antithetical argument and completeness achieved not through contraries and denials but chiasmatically through affirmation and reaffirmation.

11. And in this change is my invention spent,

Line 11 forms part of an antithetical argument that runs throughout the sonnet’s third quatrain. The ironic self-irony of this line expresses the poet’s feigned loss as to how to continue his argument. I shall defer the reasons for this use of irony until the analysis of line 12 when the antithetical argument is complete and the relevance of the irony clearer. I class “Change” thematically by definition as *difference*, just as the absoluteness of “invention spent” marks it as an aspect of *one thing*. This classification is supported by the continuation of the chiasmic pattern of thematic development in the third quatrain.

5. Kinde is my love to day, to morrow kinde,

Once again, the poet does not simply say that his love is kind, he argues for it by antithesis. In the first part of line 5, love’s kindness is asserted, “kinde is my love today,” for it only to be contraried by the omission of “is my love” in the second part of the line. This contrariness is then itself denied by the assurance of the poet’s love in the future, “to morrow kinde,” to complete the antithesis and assert the argument: “Kinde is



my love,” today, as it will be always. The omission of “is my love” in the second part of line 5 is therefore not lacuna, but ellipsis: absent, “my love” is nonetheless present: “Kinde is my love today, to morrow (*my love is*) kinde.” This ellipsis provides further evidence along with the antithetical argument of lines 8, 7, and 6, that line 8 is to be read as inclusive and not exclusive: “One thing” is not expressed by leaving out “difference,” but rather by its inclusion. As we shall see, further support for this argument is provided by the use made of the line’s two chiasmi, “Kinde today, to morrow kinde,” and the antimetabole “is my love, my love is,” to reconstruct the diction of lines 3 and 4, and 1 and 2.<sup>26</sup> Line 5’s two chiasmi are shown in the following schema:

Kinde	to day	is	my love
↖ ↗		↖ ↗	
↙ ↘		↙ ↘	
to morrow	kinde,	(my love	is)

Thematic development in line 5 differs from that in lines 6 and 7. Rather than the separation of the two themes *one thing* and *difference* into each half of the line, here the themes are assimilated:

5.	Kinde	to day,	to morrow	kinde,	
	<i>one thing</i>	<i>difference</i>	<i>difference</i>	<i>one thing</i>	<i>assimilation</i>

As to line 5’s chiastic pairs, I categorize them as follows:

5 a.	<i>Kinde</i>	<i>today,</i>	<i>to morrow</i>	<i>kinde,</i>
	+	r	r	+
5 b.	<i>is</i>	<i>my love</i>	<i>my love</i>	<i>is</i>
	+	+	+	+

5 a’s outer chiastic pair, *kinde / kinde*, is an example of ploche as two identical words occur in the same line. Hence, the pair’s designation ++. The inner pair represents a

relative difference in degree of time, and hence its designation r r. As to the antimetabole, since both the inner and outer pairs are identical, they are both represented ++.

12. Three theams in one, which wondrous scope affords.

Line 12's chiasmus concludes the third quatrain's antithetical argument that began with line 9's assertion of *three-singly-from-all* and continued with the contrary to the assertion, *three-together-from-all*, in line 10. The irony of line 11 alerts the reader that the poet is fully aware of the antithetical transgression he is about to commit. Line 12 should, technically, deny line 10's contrary to assert line 9's *three-singly-from-all*. But that would be incoherent in a linear reading of the sonnet where a progression of "emotional logic" is required. So, instead, the poet has line 10's *three-together-from-all* symbolically transcend in line 12 into *three-in-oneness*: "Three theams in one". I categorize line 12's chiastic pairs as follows:

Three theams	in one,	which wondrous	scope affords
–	r	r	–

The outer pair, – –, reflects the absolute difference between a discrete and a continuous category. The inner pair is more complex. The pun one/won-drous creates what can be thought of as a phonetic polyptoton, *one/one-drous*, suggesting emphasis and, hence, the designation ++. The graphical difference in the words' roots, however, one/wondr-, implies an absolute difference between discrete and continuous categories and, contrariwise, the designation – –. The poet appears to be symbolically uniting the related acts of speaking and writing to convey the transcendence of "Three theams" into *three-in-oneness*. For this reason, I designate the inner chiastic pair r r.

With regard to the classification of the line's diction according to the themes of *one thing* and *difference*, the repetition in this line of the word "wondrous" from line 6

presents an instance of antanaclasis. Since “wondrous” in line 6 was understood thematically as *difference*, here it would be understood thematically as *one thing*, irrespective of its specific meaning. I shall attribute “in one” to *one thing* by definition and the outer pair, “three theams” and “scope affords,” again by the contrast of discrete and continuous categories, to *difference*:

12. Three theams in one, which wondrous scope affords  
*difference one thing one thing difference assimilation*

Thematic development between lines 5 and 12 is summarized on the right hand side of table 1 below:

Table 1 Symmetry in thematic development, lines 5-12

5.	Kinde is my love to day,	to morrow kinde,		assimilation
				↗ ↖
6.	Still constant	in a wondrous excellence,	one thing	difference
				↖ ↗
7.	Therefore my verse	to constancie confin'de,	difference	one thing
				↖ ↗
8.	One thing expressing	leaves out difference.		assimilation
				↙ ↘
9.	Faire, kinde, and true,	is all my argument.	difference	one thing
				↙ ↘
10.	Faire, kinde, and true,	varying to other words,	one thing	difference
				↙ ↘
11.	And in this change	is my invention spent,	difference	one thing
				↘ ↙
12.	Three theams in one,	which wondrous scope affords.		assimilation

The chiasmic symmetry between the lines within the equivalent of each quatrain and the parallel symmetry between corresponding pairs of lines across line 8 contribute to the creation of aesthetic symmetry in the sonnet. The chiasmi in lines 5, 8, and 12 taken by themselves reveal instead an affinity to mathematical symmetry, as shown in

the following schema. Here, the inner and outer chiastic pairs are symmetrically opposed about a mirror line passing between them. Different gradations of relativeness between the inner chiastic pair in lines 5a and that in line 12 are assumed by dint of their different categories:

	outer	inner	outer	
5.a	+	r	r	
5.b	+	+	+	
	-----			mirror line
8.	-	-	-	
12.	-	r	r	

4. To one, of one, still such and ever so.

Stanzaic division is not only marked by chiasmus but also by a change from a chiastic development of themes in the second quatrain to their parallel development in the first, as can be seen by comparing the relative position of themes in line 4 and line 6.<sup>27</sup> This change necessarily breaks the parallel relationship between corresponding pairs of lines across line 8, as can be seen by the chiastic arrangement of themes between lines 4 and 11. Regarding the reconstruction of the first quatrain’s diction, lines 3 and 4 are developed from line 5’s chiasmus *kinde to day, to morrow kinde*, as mentioned above:

lines:	5	4	4	5
	Kinde			kinde
	↘			↙
	To one,		of one,	
	still such,		and ever so.	
	↗			↖
	to day			to morrow

The repetition of “kinde” in line 5 is paralleled by the repetition of the word “one” in

line 4, as the temporality of line 5's "to day" and "to morrow" is paralleled by line 4's "still such and ever so." As the repetition of the word "one" preceded by different prepositions suggests emphasis via polyptoton, I classify the first part of the line thematically as *one thing*. Due to the change over time implied in "such" and "so," underscored by "still" and "ever," I assign the second part of the line to the theme *difference*. Line 4 is rhetorically part of an antithetical argument that extends throughout the first quatrain, and for this reason I shall defer discussion of it until after the reconstruction of the remaining lines of the sonnet have been described.<sup>28</sup>

13. Faire, kinde, and true, have often lived alone,

The change from chiastic to parallel development from the second to the first quatrain is reflected in a similar change from the third quatrain to the couplet, again reinforcing the back and forth creation of symmetry in the sonnet's development. Line 13's diction appears to develop from line 12's chiasmus, as line 4's appears to develop from line 5's. To show this development more clearly, I have moved the words "in one" from the first part of line 12 to the end of the line in the schema below in order to show how "Three theams" may be expanded naturally into "Faire, kinde, and true," how "which wondrous scope affords" is determined and actualized in "have often lived," and how "in one" resolves into "alone":

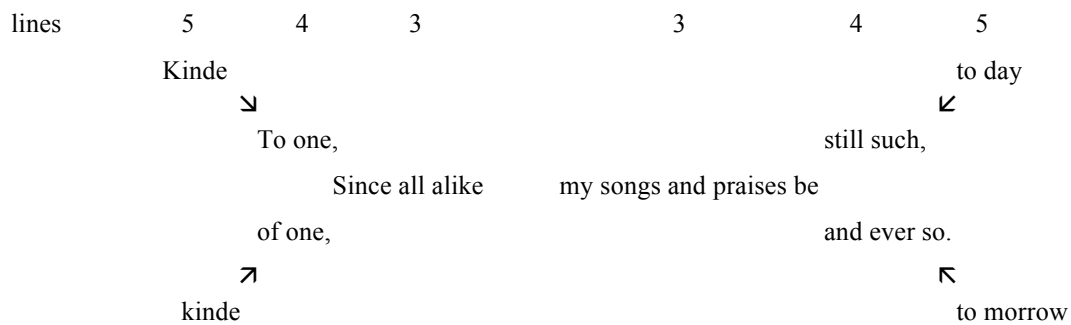
(12.)	Three theams	which wondrous scope affords	in one
13.	Faire, kinde, and true,	have often lived	alone

Thematically, as in line 4, *difference* and *one thing* are each developed in separate halves of the line. I categorize "Faire, kinde, and true," as *difference*, first, by elimination, since "alone" suggests that the second part of the line be assigned to *one thing* and, second, by the plural form of the auxiliary verb which emphasizes the

separateness of the three attributes. “Alone” is attributed to *one thing* by definition. In the development of the antithetical argument in lines 12 – 14, “Faire, kinde, and true, have often lived alone” represents a denial of line 12’s assertion of *three-in-oneness*.

3. Since all alike my songs and praises be

Line 5’s chiasmus, “kinde to day, to morrow kinde”, can be further developed synthetically from line 4 to develop line 3, as illustrated here:



“To one, of one” develops into “all alike” just as “still such, and ever so” develops into “be.” I shall defer discussion of the word “since” and the phrase “my songs and praises” until the quatrain’s antithetical argument is complete.<sup>29</sup> The development of the themes *difference* and *one thing* continues in parallel from lines 4 to 3 and chiastically between lines 3 and 13.<sup>30</sup> I classify “Since all alike” by definition as *one thing* and “my songs and praises be” for the same reason to *difference*.

14. Which three till now, never kept seate in one.

Line 14 completes the antithetical argument begun in line 12 by denying line 13’s contrary of line 12’s assertion: “Three theams in one,” (l. 12), may have “lived alone” (l. 13), but only “till now” (l. 14). Line 12’s “Three theams in one” is not only thereby asserted, it is also actualized in the sonnet’s final words, “in one.”

Line 14’s chiasmus thematically assimilates the themes of *one thing* and *difference* as follows:

14. Which three till now never kepte seat in one  
*one thing difference difference one thing assimilation*

I attribute “Which three” and “kepte seate in one” thematically to *one thing* due to my interpretation of “three” here as *three-in-oneness* and “till now” and “never” to *difference* as they represent mutually exclusive categories of time.

As to the chiasmic pairs, I assign them to the following categories:

Which three till now never kepte seat in one  
 r - - r

The outer pair represents the relative difference between *three-in-oneness* and *three-in-oneness in one*. The inner pair’s designation as absolute results from the exclusiveness of the temporal categories “till now” and “never.”

In lines 13 and 14, we reach the limit of being able to distinguish clearly between chiasmus and parallelism in the construction of the sonnet’s lines:

13. Faire, kinde, and true, have often lived alone  
 ↓ ↓ ↖ ↗ ↓ ↓  
 ↙ ↘  
 14. Which three till now never kepte seat in one

Whilst the ‘three’ and ‘one’ parallelism between the beginning and end of the two lines is evident, the relationship between the center elements is not. Two parallelisms are plausible: the synchronous word pair, *have / till now*, and the antithetical, *often / never*, as is the chiasmus, *have / never : often / till now*.

1. Let not my love be cal'd Idolatrie
2. Nor my beloved as an Idoll show,

As lines 4 and 3 are developed from the chiasmus “kinde to day, to morrow kinde” in line 5, so lines 1 and 2 are developed from line 5’s antimetabole, “is my love, (my love is)”:

1.	my love	be	
			↖ ↗
			↙ ↘
5.	is	my love	
			↖ ↗
			↙ ↘
5.	(my love	is)	
			↖ ↗
			↙ ↘
2.	be	loved	

Line 1’s “my love be” and line 2’s “beloved” develop chiasmically from line 5’s “is my love” and “my love is,” respectively. The poet’s love and his beloved are then contrasted with “Idolatrie” and “an Idol,” to develop the second part of lines 1 and 2. The word “be” in “my love be” and “be-loved” develop further into “be cal’d” and “as...show,” respectively, to complete the second parts of the lines.<sup>31</sup> Finally, negated by “not,” and “nor,” with the former preceded by the optative “Let,” the result is two lines with the first and second parts of each treated as separate units. Differently to the construction of the final couplet where parallelism and chiasmus were superposed, here the construction obscures the point where parallelism ends and chiasmus begins, as shown in two of several possible segmentations of the lines:



1.	Let	not		my	love	be	cal'd	Idolatrie
		↑		↑	↑	↑	↖	↗
		↓		↓	↓	↓	↙	↘
2.		nor		my	beloved	as	an Idoll	show

and,

1.	Let	not	my		love	be	cal'd	Idolatrie
		↑	↑		↖	↗	↖	↗
		↓	↓		↙	↘	↙	↘
2.		nor	my		be	loved	as an Idoll	show

This blending of chiasmus and parallelism underscores symbolically the singularity of the poet's love with his beloved. "My," like the repetition of "kinde" in line 5, and "one" in line 4, is insisted on by ploche and, preceded by the polyptoton "not / nor," is further emphasized. For these reasons, I assign the first parts of the two lines to the theme *one thing*. In the chiasmus, the polyptoton "Idolatrie / Idoll" emphasizes rather than differentiates meaning in the same way as the polyptoton "constant / constancie" did in lines 6 and 7, and I class it accordingly as *one thing*. "Cal'd" and "show" as different aspects of perception are classed as *difference*. The resulting assimilation into a chiasmus is shown here:

1.	be cal'd	Idolatrie	as an Idoll	show	
	<i>difference</i>	<i>one thing</i>	<i>one thing</i>	<i>difference</i>	<i>assimilation</i>

In line with these arguments, I assign the chiastic pairs of the chiasmus as follows:

be cal'd	+	Idolatrie	+	as an Idoll	+	show
r						r

As lines 2 and 1 originate here in line 5's antimetabole, the limit of being able to trace the sonnet's thematic development continuously from one line to the next is reached. This limitation is signaled by the omission of arrows between lines 3 and 2 in table 2 below, which summarizes thematic development in the sonnet:

Table 2 Thematic development, lines 1-14

1.	Let not my love	be cal'd Idolatrie	one thing	assimilation
2.	Nor my beloved	as an Idoll show,		
3.	Since all alike	my songs and praises be	one thing	difference
4.	To one, of one,	still such, and ever so.	one thing	↑ ↑ difference
5.	Kinde is my love to day,	to morrow kinde,		↖ ↗ assimilation
6.	Still constant	in a wondrous excellence,	one thing	↗ ↖ difference
7.	Therefore my verse	to constancie confin'de,	difference	↖ ↗ one thing
8.	One thing expressing	leaves out difference.		↖ ↗ assimilation
9.	Faire, kinde, and true,	is all my argument.	difference	↙ ↘ one thing
10.	Faire, kinde, and true,	varying to other words,	one thing	↙ ↘ difference
11.	And in this change	is my invention spent,	difference	↙ ↘ one thing
12.	Three theams in one,	which wondrous scope affords.		↙ ↘ assimilation
13.	Faire, kinde, and true,	have often liv'd alone.	difference	↙ ↘ one thing
14.	Which three till now,	never kept seate in one.		↙ ↘ assimilation

It is hard to see a really clear principle of construction for the sonnet in this table until its thematic information is separated into its non-chiastic and chiastic aspects, as shown in tables 3a and 3b below:

Table 3 non-chiastic and chiastic thematic development, sonnet 105 lines 1-14

3a)	non-chiastic			3b)	chiastic			
3.	one thing	difference			outer	inner	outer	
4.	one thing	difference		1 & 2.	r	+	+	r
6.	one thing	difference		5 a.	+	r	r	+
7.	difference	one thing		5 b.	+	+	+	+
	-----		<i>mirror line</i>		-----			
9.	difference	one thing		8.	-	-	-	-
10.	one thing	difference		12.	-	r	r	-
11.	difference	one thing		14.	r	-	-	r
13.	difference	one thing						

Each table shows the importance of symmetry to the sonnet's thematic development whether it be chiastic or non-chiastic. In table 3a, the parallel symmetry between lines 7 and 9, and 6 and 10, and crosswise symmetry between lines 4 and 11, and 3 and 13 results from the change from crosswise to parallel development from the second to the first quatrain and from the third quatrain to the final couplet that we saw in the line-by-line discussion of the sonnet above. I have omitted lines 1 and 2 in table 3a only in order to underscore the tendency towards mathematical symmetry in the sonnet. In table 3b, the inner and outer chiastic pairs oppose each other diametrically across the mirror line. These tables suggest then the possibility of applying symmetry to deduce a more general sonnet model for a class of sonnets that both unfolds chiastically from its center and exhibits the formal characteristics of the Shakespearean sonnet, an idea that I now explore in the second part of the discussion.

## Part 2: Modelling the Shakespearean Sonnet

Deducing from the findings in Part 1, the chiasitic model described in table 4 on the next page describes equivalents of the Shakespearean sonnet's formal characteristics developed from and related back to the model's line 8. The final placeholder, or variable, in each line reflects equivalents of the formal rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet;<sup>32</sup> stanzaic division in the model is articulated by the chiasmus equivalents occurring in lines 1 and 2, 5, 8, 12, and 14; the continuous back and forth development of the first thirteen lines of the sonnet about an axis running between lines 8 and 9 marks this axis as equivalent to the sonnet's *volta*, which traditionally occurs in lines 8 or 9;<sup>33</sup> and isometry, or the regular number of stresses per line of verse, is reflected in the equivalent regular number of placeholders in each line of the model:

Table 4 Model of the connection between the formal characteristics of the Shakespearean sonnet and line 8's chiasmus

				final placeholder	Shakespearean rhyme scheme equivalent
Q1	1.	<b>a</b> b    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	a
		x			
	2.	<b>a</b> b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	b
		x			
	3.	b a    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	a
		x			
	4.	a b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	b
		x			
Q2	5.	b a    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	c
		x			
	6.	a b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	d
		x			
	7.	b a    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	c
		x			
	8.	a b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	d
		x			
	<i>volta</i>	----- x -----			
Q3	9.	b a    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	e
		x			
	10.	a b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	f
		x			
	11.	b a    a <u>b</u>		<u>b</u>	e
		x			
	12.	a b    b <u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	f
		x			
Couplet	13.	b a    a <b><u>b</u></b>		<u>b</u>	g
	14.	b a    a <b><u>b</u></b>		<u>b</u>	g

The model also shows how the sonnet's rhyming couplet and fourteen line length result from the logic of its chiasmic design. The relationship between the pairs of lines

from lines 8 to 9, 7 to 10, 6 to 11, 5 to 12, and 4 to 13 is chiastic, whilst that from lines 9 to 7, 10 to 6, 11 to 5, 12 to 4, and 13 to 3 is parallel. There is subsequently a change to parallel development from line 3 to line 14 without which there would be no equivalent of a rhyming couplet. There is then a change back to chiastic development from line 14 to line 2. This change perhaps highlights a pendant to the couplet's rhyme in choice of "not" and "nor" at the start of lines 1 and 2. The corresponding placeholders are in bold type in the table. A final balance is maintained between the model's parallel and chiastic developments by the part parallel, part chiastic lines 1 and 2, which complete the equivalent of the traditional Shakespearean rhyme scheme and tie off the sonnet to fourteen lines.

If the model in table 4 describes equivalents of the aesthetic symmetry of the sonnet as characterized by its formal characteristics, a different aspect of the same model shown in table 5 below describes equivalents of the quasi-mathematical symmetry of the sonnet as characterized by its underlying chiastic pattern. Enclosed by the near symmetry of lines 1 and 14, the chiastic correspondence between pairs of lines from 7 and 8, 6 and 9, 5 and 10, through 2 and 13 is reflected in self-similarity at the sonnet level in the form of the Greek letter *chi* ( X ):

Table 5 Model of the connection between the formal characteristics of the Shakespearean sonnet and its underlying chiastic pattern <sup>34</sup>

1.	<u>a b</u>		<u>a b</u>
2.	a b		b a
3.	b a		a b
4.	a b		b a
5.	b a		a b
6.	a b		b a
7.	b a	a b	
		x	
8.	a b	b a	
9.	b a	a b	
10.	a b	b a	
11.	b a	a b	
12.	a b	b a	
13.	b a	a b	
14.	(b a)		<u>a b</u>

The identical constituents of the model shown in tables 4 and 5 is good evidence that the class of sonnets described, of which sonnet 105 is a special case, may be categorized as Shakespearean not only for its formal characteristics, but also for the underlying chiastic design that relates them.

Returning now to the first quatrain’s antithetical argument, line 4’s assertion that the poet’s love is one and forever with his beloved, “To one, of one, still such, and ever so,” is contraried in lines 1 and 2 by the labelling of the poet’s love as “Idolatrie” and his beloved as “an Idoll.” This contrary is then denied in line 3: The poet’s love cannot be idolatry since his songs and praises are all alike and one with him and his beloved, whilst an idol and an idolater are by definition separate categories. Thus, line 4’s assertion, “To one, of one, still such, and ever so,” is reasserted by antithesis and the argument of the first quatrain rhetorically complete. It is this description of the unity between the poet and his beloved in the first quatrain that I understand as the “faire” of

line 9, just as I understand line 9's "kinde" and "true" to refer to his "kinde love" and the "constancie" of his "verse" in the second quatrain.

In the third quatrain, as remarked above, "faire," "kinde," and "true" are no longer considered singly, but rather developed collectively; initially, in line 9, as individual attributes apart from all others, or, *three-singly-from-all*, then together and apart from all others in line 10, that is, *three-together-from-all*, before transcending, symbolically, into *three-in-oneness* in line 12. Finally, this *three-in-oneness* is actualized in the final two words of the sonnet, *in one*. This logical and linear progression of the sonnet's argument from individual attributes to complex personality, veiled in a linear reading, is uncovered by a chiasmic reading from the final line of the octet. Lines 1–4, and lines 13–14 present antithetical arguments stemming from lines 5 and 12, respectively. The sonnet may thus be understood rhetorically as a fabric of antitheses, a *contentio*, a *contrarietie*. Sonnet 105 may additionally be understood as a *chiastic poem* unfolding from and about its line 8: the rhetorical and thematic constituents of which can be developed stepwise line by line about it to reconstruct the sonnet, just as the model of the sonnet's underlying chiastic pattern reflects the underlying chiastic pattern of the sonnet's line 8. As such, the self-similarity and related symmetries reasonableness criteria set out at the beginning of the discussion appear adequately satisfied.

### Part 3 A Chiasmus-oriented Narrative Analysis of Sonnet 105

How then does this chiastic perspective on the sonnet's construction help us better understand the sonnet's meaning? In his criticism of Plett's separation of Renaissance poetics into "form" and "content," Deitz issues a general censure of the distinction: "Jamais aucun lettré n'a essayé de séparer de force les deux aspects, et c'est commettre un sérieux anachronisme que de vouloir nous suggérer que la division opérée par M.



Plett et tant d'autres est valide: elle ne l'est pas."<sup>35</sup> (No one well-versed in literature has ever tried to force a separation of the two aspects, and it is to commit a serious anachronism to want to imply that the division made by Mr. Plett and so many others is valid: It is not.) In Deitz' view, the problem with the distinction is the assumption at its root that rhetorical principles guided "form," whilst poetological principles guided "content." Renaissance poetry is instead, he insists "un phénomène unique — l'art de bien s'exprimer à l'intérieur de catégories données." (... a unique phenomenon—the art of expressing oneself well within given categories). This view of Renaissance poetry as "un phénomène unique" is supported by the findings presented here: the rhetorical and thematic unfolding of the sonnet from its center and the related symmetries that result reveal an organic development that a presupposed distinction between form and content only occult.

The organic development described in the reconstruction of sonnet 105 suggests then that in the writing of his sonnet, Shakespeare might well indeed have been guided by an aesthetic of chiasmus and, in particular, by its antithetical and symmetrical properties. This conclusion raises the rather speculative but unavoidable question as to whether the poet intended a double register of reading for the sonnet: a traditional linear reading supplemented and complemented by a chiasmus-oriented reading. A start may be made in exploring this idea by considering a brief line by line, chiasmus-oriented narrative analysis of the sonnet following the same order of discussion of the sonnet's lines as in the second part of the article. That is, I will commence the analysis with line 8 and continue in back and forth fashion about it between the sestet and the octet to finish with lines 2 and 1. As the sonnet's capitalization and punctuation only have

meaning in a linear reading, I have omitted them in the following chiasmus-oriented schema of the sonnet, which serves as the reference text for the analysis:

1. let not my love be cal'd Idolatrie
2. nor my beloved as an Idoll show
3. since all alike my songs and praises be
4. to one, of one, still such, and ever so
5. kinde is my love to day, to morrow kinde
6. still constant in a wondrous excellence
7. therefore my verse to constancie confin'de
8. one thing expressing, leaves out difference
9. faire, kinde, and true, is all my argument
10. faire, kinde, and true, varrying to other words
11. and in this change is my invention spent
12. three theams in one, which wondrous scope affords
13. faire, kinde, and true, have often liv'd alone
14. which three till now, never kept seate in one

Line 8 “casts the peril,” that is, describes the conundrum that the sonnet will treat.<sup>36</sup> The conundrum arises from the ambiguity of the line which, as we saw above, can be interpreted as meaning either that one thing is expressed by excluding difference or, contradictorily, by reconciling difference within it. This contradiction is given a further twist by these interpretations being contradictory within themselves. If one thing is expressed by excluding difference, then one thing depends on difference, that is, if there were no difference, then there could be no one thing. Therefore, one thing cannot be expressed by excluding difference, a first apparent contradiction. If, on the other hand, one thing is expressed by reconciling difference within it, then the difference between the categories one thing and nothing is also reconciled, from which

it follows that one thing and nothing are the same, a second apparent contradiction. This contradictory contradictiveness, the chiasmic vehicle of which was discussed in part one, furnishes the poet with the conundrum that his sonnet sets out to treat: how can difference be one thing and one thing difference? Or, in terms of the sonnet's themes, how can a lover and his beloved be one even though they are two, or *faire, kinde, and true* three, yet one?

Line 9 presents these latter motifs and the order in which they are to be developed. The poet writes *faire, kinde and true is all my argument* in line 9, and only the deictical *my* begins explicitly to convey to the reader some sense of a narrator, of a story to be told, and an argument to be made. But what is it about the poet's argument that is *faire, kinde, and true*? And if *faire, kinde, and true* is his argument, to what, or to whom, do these attributes refer? Or are they rather to be understood, say, self-reflexively as moral absolutes? As discussed in the second part of the article above, line 9 establishes the order of development of the attributes singly in the octet and collectively in the sestet. With lines 8 and 9, then, the broad structure of the sonnet, its theme and motifs, the means to develop them and the order in which they are to be developed, have been set in place. This greatly facilitates the construction of new lines of verse. This is immediately apparent in the next line developed, line 7. Here, the poet develops *true* qua *constancie*, formulates it as part of an antithetical argument, makes it an attribute of *my verse*, thereby linking it back to *all my argument* in line 9, and in this way informs the reader that the poem will be about the relationship between the poet and his sonnet writing. This interpretation is supported subsequently, and successively, by line 10's *varrying to other words*, the further description of the poet's verse in line 6 as being *constant in a wondrous excellence*, and the reference in line 11 to the poet's *invention*. This

interpretation of the first six lines of a chiasmus-oriented reading from line 8 therefore amounts to the poet letting the reader know that the sonnet is going to be about his relationship to his verse, and that his verse is *true*. At the same time, with each new line, questions are raised in the reader's mind that can only be satisfied by further reading, most immediately perhaps, given the assertion of his verse as *true*, the questions as to what then is *faire*, and what *kinde*.

In line 5, the poet settles the latter question by introducing *my love* as that which is *kinde*, making it thus the subject of *kinde* in *faire, kinde, and true* in the sestet. But is the poet referring to the manner in which he loves or is loved? Or both? And whom or what is it that he loves, or is loved by? Line 12 suggests the transcendence of the poet's love *in one*, while the prepositional objects *to one, of one* in line 4 reinforce the impression that the poet's *kinde love* and *true verse* are intended for someone in particular. Yet there are no personal details of look or manner in the sonnet, no persuasive suggestion of a figure outside of it. Here again, tracing the development of the sonnet's symmetry is instructive: line 4 marks a change from chiastic to parallel development in the first quatrain, a change reflected in a change from chiastic to parallel development in the couplet, suggesting that they both fulfil similar aesthetic functions beyond the articulation of stanzaic form marked by the chiasmi in lines 5 and 12. But what might that function be? Line 13's *Faire, kinde, and true, have often lived alone* epitomizes the order of development of the three attributes singly in the octet. Line 14 then subsumes this summary of the octet under the linguistic anaphora *which* and juxtaposes it with a reprise of line 12's *three*, a line which summarizes the collective development of *faire, kinde, and true* in the third quatrain. Line 14 finally draws together and actualizes the collective and individual development of the attributes

represented by line 12's *in one* and line 13's *alone* in the last two words of the sonnet, *in one*. Moreover, the line-by-line analysis above showed how, across lines 13 and 14, a parallelism and chiasmus were superposed and flanked by two parallelisms to construct the couplet.<sup>37</sup> These parallelisms represent then the evolution of *Faire, kinde, and true* from *three-singly-from-all* to *three-in-oneness* and, finally, to *three-in-oneness in one*. They can be thought of symbolically as two vertical mirrors facing each other, each reflecting infinitely between them the process whereby *Faire, kinde, and true* becomes *three-in-oneness in one*. It is this process that is represented by the superposing of the chiasmus and parallelism in the couplet. Thus, the change to parallel development in the first quatrain and couplet has, aesthetically speaking, a recursive function, reiterating previous development to bring the sonnet to its climax in its closing words, *in one*.

This recursive function is also evidenced in the first quatrain. With *my songs and praises* and *still such, and ever so*, lines 4 and 3 echo the idea from lines 6, 7 and 8 of the poet's *verse* as *true*. Similarly, the *my beloved* and *my love* of lines 2 and 1, contrasted with *Idoll* and *Idolatrie*, take up the theme of *my love* as *kinde* introduced in line 5. Thus, just as the poet's *love is kinde* and his *verse true* in the second quatrain, their commingling in the first is that which makes it *faire*. In this way, the first quatrain fulfils the same function as the final couplet in that it is both a précis of development in the octet and, through the blending of the attributes *faire, kinde, and true* within it, of the sestet. The first quatrain and the final couplet are thus related in the same symbolic way as the parallelisms at the beginning and end of the final couplet: they serve symbolically as two mirrors facing each other at either end of the sonnet creating a *mise en abîme* infinitely reflecting between them the sonnet of which they are a part. In so doing, they emphasize the sonnet's center and its central theme, the nature of the

relationship between the poet and his poem. The obscuring of the distinction between parallelism and chiasmus in the opening two lines and in the final couplet underscores this reading. In the former, it distances the poet's love and his beloved from idolatry. In the latter, it symbolizes the process by which the poet's love and his beloved unite. It is perhaps in this sense then that both the poet's love and his beloved may be understood as one, and the poet's answer to his conundrum found, in the sense, that is, that his *love*, his *songs and praises*, his *verse*, his *argument*, and his *invention* unfold in one together with his *beloved*, his *faire, kinde, and true*, sonnet.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is a vast scholarship devoted to the research of the punctuation of Shakespeare's sonnets. See in particular the works of MacD. P. Jackson, "Punctuation and the Composers of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, 1609," *The Library* 30.1 (1975):1-24, and Theodore Redpath, "The Punctuation of Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *New Essays on Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Hilton Landry (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 217 ff. As I could find no reference that specifically questioned the punctuation of sonnet 105, I have preferred the quarto text as being closest to the original. For ease of reading, I have modernized the long s, changed *u* to *v*, and the capitalization of *E* to *e* in the first word of the sonnet; otherwise, I have kept to the quarto's punctuation.

<sup>2</sup> The blueprint metaphor is from William L. Davis, "Structural Secrets: Shakespeare's Complex Chiasmus Style," *Style* 39.3 (2005): 237-58 (251), quoted below.

<sup>3</sup> "Symmetry," *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *SOED*), 6th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a discussion of the influence of these two aspects of symmetry on creative development since antiquity, see Edmund Thomas, "Chiasmus in Art and Text," *Greece & Rome* 60.1 (2013): 50-88 (55-57).

<sup>4</sup> I am grateful to Helen Vendler for drawing my attention to sonnet 105 with her observation that it is the only sonnet "in which Shakespeare *doubly* repeats a KEY WORD in each of the four units of the sonnet: Here the KEY WORD (ONE) occurs graphically and phonetically *twice* in each member: Q1: to *one*, of *one*; Q2: *wondrous*, *one* thing; Q3: in *one*, *wondrous* scope; C: *alone*, in *one*." Vendler, *The Art of*

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*Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1997), 446. Professor Vendler's observation suggested the likelihood of the symmetrical construction of sonnet 105 from its center and hence its potential suitability for the type of analysis carried out here.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Hobsbaum lists the following five characteristics for the form in English: fourteen lines; an octave and sestet; a volta; five-stress lines; and a rhyme scheme, to an extent alternating; Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form* (London: Routledge, 1996), 154-55.

<sup>6</sup> Despite the numerous commentaries on Shakespeare's sonnets, including those by contemporary literary critics including Harold Bloom, Stephen Booth and John Kerrigan, there appears to be little consensus regarding the interpretation of sonnet 105; Bloom, *Shakespeare's Sonnets and Poems* (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999); Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1977); Kerrigan, *The Sonnets; and, A Lover's Complaint* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986). See, among those scholars focusing directly on the sonnet, for example, Rhema Hokama for the view that in sonnet 105 the poet expresses "his purest love for his beloved" and Jane Roessner for an alternative interpretation of the speaker in the sonnet as "latrous lover"; Hokama, "Love's Rites: Performing Prayer in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.2 (2012):199-223 (212); Roessner, "Double Exposure: Shakespeare's Sonnets 100-114," *ELH* 46.3 (1979): 357-78 (362). For a study of the trinitarian controversies, see Paul C. H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). See Katherine M. Wilson on sonnet 105 as a possible parody of the sonnets of Constable, Daniel and Spenser; *Shakespeare's Sugared Sonnets* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 286.

<sup>7</sup> Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Wilson, *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, 1560*, ed. G. H. Mair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 17.

<sup>9</sup> *The New Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Alex Preminger and TVF Brogan (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 79.

<sup>10</sup> "Antitheton" is another term to describe "a proof or composition constructed of contraries."

"Antitheton," *Silva Rhetoricae*, Brigham Young University (accessed April 4, 2015),

<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>.

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<sup>11</sup> “Press” here in the sense of “push forward, thrust, come, go boldly” as in “Julius Caesar” Act II, Scene ii, lines 88-89: “..., and that great men shall press For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.” David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare’s Words: a glossary and language companion* (London: Penguin, 2008 (accessed April 4, 2015), <http://www.shakespeareswords.com>.

<sup>12</sup> The idea of complex systems evolving from simple origins is from Murray Gell-Mann, “Let’s call it plectics,” *Complexity* 1.5 (1996): 3.

<sup>13</sup> Patricia Ann Lissner, “Chi-Thinking: Chiasmus and Cognition,” Ph.D. dissertation: University of Maryland at College Park, 2007, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> In sonnet 105, when the same words are repeated in different lines a difference of meaning is implied, an example of the use of antanaclasis. When the same words are repeated in the same line, the literal meaning of the words is emphasized rhetorically by ploche. And when a word is repeated in a different form, by the use of the same cognate in different grammatical categories, for example, then the literal meaning of the cognate is once again being emphasized by the use of polyptoton. We shall see that antanaclasis describes relative difference, whilst ploche and polyptoton describe absolute difference and absolute identity. Whether absolute difference or absolute identity is implied depends on the literal meaning of the diction used in the comparison. For more background on these terms see the Brigham Young University website on rhetorical terms ‘Silva Rhetoricae’ <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>.

<sup>15</sup> William E. Engel, *Chiastic Designs in English Literature from Sidney to Shakespeare* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 13.

<sup>16</sup> Davis, “Structural Secrets,” 251.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the final line of the octet in sonnets 17, 27, 29, 45, 64, 66, 93 and 133.

<sup>18</sup> Reflection of letters in a mirror line produces opposite congruence, of course, for example, b | d. I use positive congruence for ease of reading here.

<sup>19</sup> I understand “half of a sonnet line” broadly. It may mean as few as one-and-a half iambic feet, as in the first part of line six, or as many as three, as in the first part of line 5. It mainly encompasses two metrical feet of the iambic line.

<sup>20</sup> Assimilation always results in chiasmus.

<sup>21</sup> *The New Princeton Encyclopaedia*, 79.



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<sup>22</sup> Arthur Quinn, *Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase* (Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, 1982), 67.

<sup>23</sup> Line 8 may also be described rhetorically as an “enthymeme,” or truncated syllogism. As the other arguments in the sonnet more closely reflect the definitions given here, I shall prefer the term “antithesis.”

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by David M. Bethea in *Realising Metaphors: Alexander Pushkin and the Life of the Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 94, from Helen Vendler, “Jakobson, Richards, and Shakespeare’s Sonnet CXXIX” in *I.A. Richards: Essays in His Honor*, eds. Reuben Brower, Helen Vendler and John Hollander (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 179-98 (198).

<sup>25</sup> Thematic development between lines 5 and 12 is summarized graphically in table 1 on page 16.

<sup>26</sup> There is some lively and entertaining controversy over the reason for preferring the more recent term chiasmus over the more ancient antimetabole. See, for instance, J. Wesley Miller’s letter preferring the latter term and Thomas Mermall’s reply in favor of the former in “Antimetabole and Chiasmus,” *PMLA* 105. 5 (1990): 1127-28. Here, I use antimetabole for a chiastic rendering of identical words and chiasmus for all other instances.

<sup>27</sup> The change from chiastic to parallel development in the sonnet is summarized in table 2 on page 23.

<sup>28</sup> For discussion of the antithetical argument made in the first quatrain see page 28.

<sup>29</sup> The discussion may be found on page 28.

<sup>30</sup> The parallel development from lines 4 to 3 and 13 to 14 is shown in table 2 on page 23.

<sup>31</sup> There is a hesitation in segmenting these two lines that suggests the reaching of a limit in a clear-cut distinction between parallelism and chiasmus in the sonnet. Alternative segmentations might see chiasmus between “love be / be loved”, or “be” (l. 1) and “as” (l. 2) added to the parallelism. The former however goes against the clear organization of the sonnet’s other lines into two intelligible parts and it would violate the natural scansion of the line. The latter would still retain the distinction between parallelism and chiasmus that I make.

<sup>32</sup> In the “final placeholder” column in the table, “a” and “b” reflect either change or no change in end rhyme from one line to the next. For example, in the couplet, the “b” at the end of line 13 and the “b” at the end of line 14 signal that there is no change in end rhyme from lines 13 to 14.

<sup>33</sup> Hobsbaum, *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form*, 154.

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<sup>34</sup> The axes in the table are to be understood as perpendicular.

<sup>35</sup> Luc Deitz, book review of *Renaissance-Poetik/Renaissance Poetics*, by H.F. Plett, ed., *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 57.3 (1995): 760-64 (760). All translations are my own.

<sup>36</sup> George Puttenham in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) describes the trope Aporia, as: "...called the *doubtfull* because oftentimes we will cast perils and make doubt of things when by a plaine manner of speech we might affirm or deny him..." (234). I have preferred the term conundrum in the sense of the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* definition: "a question or problem having only a conjectural answer."

<sup>37</sup> See page 20.

<sup>38</sup> I would like to thank William E. Engel for reading an earlier version of this paper and for his many helpful comments and suggestions. My sincere thanks also go to Reid Barbour at *Studies in Philology* for his encouragement and to the readers at *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare*, and *Connotations* for their considered and often considerate responses. I also should like to recognize and thank in particular the staff and librarians of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Gray Herbarium, Harvard College Library and Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, for their professional and sympathetic support during my research for this article.