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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

A READING OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS
IN THE LIGHT OF PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

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Danışman

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EK 2: TUTANAK

T.C. YAŞAR ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ JÜRİ SINAV
TUTANAĞI

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YEMİN METNİ

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Serkan KOÇ

ÖZET

Shakespeare'in soneleri içerdikleri gizemli karakterler ve öğeler sebebiyle cevapsız birçok soru ve tartışmaya açık çeşitli konular içermektedir. Bu sebeple birçok araştırmacı soneleri çözülmesi gereken birer bulmaca gibi görmüştür. Birçok sonenin atfedildiği "Dark Lady", aynı şekilde birçok soneye konu olan genç adam veya Shakespeare'in kendi özel yaşamı ve gerçek kimliğiyle ilişkili atflar bu bulmacada çözülmesi gereken sorulara birkaç örnek olarak sıralanabilir. Fakat bu tür sorulara şimdiye dek verilmiş cevapların birçoğu sadece yeni sorulara ve belirsizliklere yol açmıştır denebilir. Dolayısıyla tezimde bu gizemli öğelerden uzak durmanın ve sadece metinlerin üzerine yoğunlaşmanın daha sağlıklı bir çalışma doğuracağına inandım. Fakat yine de bu tür 'gerçek' kimlik arayışlarının fazla oluşu beni tezimde genel anlamda 'gerçeklik' ve 'kimlik' kavramlarının sonelerdeki yansımalarını incelemeye itti.

Dolayısıyla Shakespeare'in sonelerinde tartışılan 'gerçeklik' ve 'görünüş' gibi kavramların işlenişi ve bu kavramların birbirleriyle olan ilişkisi üzerine bir çalışma yapmaya yöneldim. Ardından Shakespeare'in yaşadığı dönemde bu tür kavramların algılanışı üzerine yöneldim ve bunun sonucunda Platon'nun bu tür kavramları ele alışının Shakespeare'in eserleri üzerinde önemli bir etkisinin olduğu sonucuna vardım. Bu bağlamda tezimi Shakespeare'in sonelerinde 'gerçeklik' ve 'görünüş' arasındaki temel çelişi ve bu çelişkinin farklı varyasyonlarını incelemek; Platon'un bu konudaki düşünceleriyle nasıl bağdaştığını açıklamakla sınırladım.

Bu düşünceden hareketle çalışmamda farklı temalar içeren birkaç farklı soneyi esas alan üç ayrı bölüm hazırladım. Bu bölümlerde yazarın temel aldığı soneleri dışında argümanlarımı destekleyecek farklı sonelerinden ve oyunlarından da yararlandım. Sonuç olarak tezimde vardığım yargı Shakespeare'in gerçeklik ve görünüş arasındaki çelişkiyle ilgili olarak Platon'un düşüncelerinden önemli ölçüde etkilendiği fakat bu görüşü basitçe tekrar etmediği tersine onu sorgulayıp yeni bir açıdan yorumladığı sonucuna vardım.

ABSTRACT

Due to the mysterious characters and aspects, Shakespeare's sonnets include debatable topics that are discussed by scholars. For this reason many scholars have approached the sonnets as if they are a puzzle. The mysterious "Dark Lady", the "young boy" or the details of Shakespeare's personal life are a couple of examples to the questions that need to be answered. However, the answers given to these questions have only led to new questions. Therefore, I believe that focusing on the texts and avoiding these inexplicable questions would be more appropriate for my thesis. However, the fact that there are so many studies focusing on the search for "real identities" of the characters motivated me to scrutinize the reflections of concepts like "reality" and "identity".

Thus, the main aim of my study is to focus on the concepts of "reality" and "appearance" and their interaction. What comes next is the analysis of the perceptions of these concepts in Shakespeare's time. As a result of this analysis I concluded that Plato's philosophy had a great influence on Shakespeare and his works. In this context the aim of my thesis is to reveal the conflict between "reality" and "appearance" in Shakespeare's sonnets and analyze different variations of the same conflict in relation to Plato's views of the same issue.

Therefore I wrote three main chapters that include different sonnets covering different themes. In these chapters I also used different sonnets and plays to support my arguments. In short, I came up with the conclusion that Shakespeare was influenced to a great extent by Plato's ideas concerning the conflict between reality and appearance. However, he did not simply replicate his ideas, but he rather questioned them and revised them with a new perspective.

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A Reading of Shakespeare's Sonnets
In the Light of Plato's Theory of Forms

Introduction

When Thomas Thorpe published the collection of William Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609, the poet was almost at the end of his life. Although Sonnets 138 and 144 were published before 1609, the cover of the first edition of the sonnets claims that the whole collection of the sonnets had never before been imprinted. Since they were published towards the end of Shakespeare's life the questions surrounding them constantly increased. However, the limited time between the publication of the sonnets and the end of Shakespeare's life is not the only reason for all these questions. They have been a source of mysteries and paradoxes for centuries since they embrace various questions concerning several issues. For instance, the young boy to whom the first seventeen sonnets were addressed is one of the major sources of the questions that have been discussed for centuries. The identity of the young boy and the poetic persona's homoerotic desires towards him are only two examples of these questions. Another inexplicable character of the sonnets is the "dark lady" whose identity and role have also been discussed and questioned by many scholars; however, the answers cannot be considered as satisfactory. In this context the persona is a matter of question since some argue that the persona is actually Shakespeare and others disagree with this assumption. Besides, even the poet's identity is questioned and it is claimed by some scholars that William Shakespeare was not the actual writer of the sonnets. Additionally the dating of the sonnets is not clear and is a matter of debate, just like the other enigmas of the poems mentioned above.

In addition to these questions the sonnets of Shakespeare are also discussed in order to reveal the secret parts of the writer's life. Since evidence of the details of the personal life of William Shakespeare is considered to be insufficient, every piece of information that leads us to his personal life is valuable. Therefore the collection of sonnets which are thought to carry many clues to Shakespeare's personal life have been examined meticulously by scholars who hoped to reveal the details of the unknown identity of the poet. However, these clues may be quite misleading since the persona and the addressee of the poems can be completely fictional and thus the debates surrounding all these questions are still going on and thus we can infer that the answers are not sufficient or satisfactory.

As an admirer of the sonnets I was also influenced by all these mysteries and wanted to be a part of these debates. My first intention was to take part in the debate that struggled to uncover the thick masks of the young boy and the dark lady of the sonnets and thus I focused on the identities of these two enigmatic characters. However, it soon became clear that the numerous studies and attempts to answer the questions concerning their identities have only created new questions to be answered. Therefore my study of the sonnets gradually changed its direction towards more specific questions that are detached from Shakespeare's personal life. This new route helped me focus more on the texts and started a process of close reading and thus the main concern of my study became the sonnets themselves not the secret lives behind them.

As I started my study with the intention of discovering the real identities of specific characters that are hidden behind masks I continued my studies by focusing on the idea of reality and appearances. Therefore I tried to concentrate on the sonnets in which the contradiction between reality and appearance is emphasized. This dilemma was echoed by

Shakespeare in many different sonnets like the Sonnet 20 or Sonnet 53; however, it was not the reoccurrence of the theme that caught my attention. It was the profound and intense details surrounding this age-old subject discussed by many thinkers and artists for centuries. The exceptional approach of William Shakespeare led me to compare his way of handling this theme to other approaches concerning the same subject.

In this context one of the most influential philosophers that discussed the question of reality is Plato since he dedicated an important part of his studies to the opposition between reality and appearance. His ideas concerning this theme have been a significant part of western philosophy; hence, his ideas can be considered as a base for most modern philosophers who have discussed the same issues. The age of Shakespeare and its philosophers were also greatly influenced by his arguments about the nature of real and unreal beings and things.

In order to understand the importance of Plato in Western philosophy one can examine the continual historical effect of his ideas on almost every era of European civilization. He and his pupil Aristotle and Plato influenced and shaped European thought for centuries. As Anna Baldwin and Sarah Hutton state in the preface to *Platonism and the English Imagination*:

Plato himself was a rich and diverse writer, and every age has rediscovered Plato in a different way, and reinterpreted Platonism to suit its different understandings of the world. (XIII)

Even though the influence of Plato did not give birth to similar or parallel thoughts or philosophies, the discussions surrounding basic principals of Platonism have created diverse and various philosophical approaches throughout the ages.

Most of these approaches were concerned with the concept of reality since the question of ‘what is real’ has been one main concern of philosophers. The answer of Plato to this question is so profound and vivid that his explanation has been the most essential part of his philosophy. The allegory of the cave clearly depicts Plato's perception of reality. As described in the allegory of cave the “prisoner” who sees only the “shadows” of things and beings is disillusioned and can only reach reality by walking towards the end of the “cave” and discovering the real forms of things and beings. As he describes this in the *Republic* Plato praises the world of ideas in which the objects and things are in their real form and do not change their forms. This world has a counterfeit, and in this counterfeit everything is considered to be the reflection or copy of the real things or beings. The world we observe is the counterfeit of the world of ideas, and thus in order to comprehend the real forms of the objects Plato differentiates them into two groups: the “sensible” and the “intelligible” objects. In the first group the objects are considered to be deceptive and temporary since they are only replicas and like all copies they have defects and misleading natures. In addition to this they may change through time and can alter their forms in different circumstances. Conversely, the intelligible objects or beings are permanent and real so to comprehend them is the only way to reach reality.

In addition to these assumptions Platonism is also essential for its perception of art and its variations. The role of art and artists is examined meticulously by Plato and his perspective concerning this subject has also been a controversial issue for thinkers and artists. The Platonic interpretation of art is based on his Theory of Forms and is closely related to the contradiction between the two worlds described above. The essential part of Plato’s theory about art is that Plato describes all forms of art as attempts at imitation since art can only

reflect the sensible objects that do not belong to the world of ideas. Therefore, according to Plato, art is only a process of imitation and the objects or beings that are imitated by artists are also copies. The natural consequence of these assumptions is that art can be misleading and deceitful and thus the concept of reality is “thrice removed” from all means of art. In this sense Plato approaches the subject of real and unreal in a diverse level. Platonic philosophy includes the question of art and to a certain extent defines and hence the assumptions of Plato are directly a matter of concern for the artists. This fact can be considered as a significant cause of the great influence of Plato’s philosophy on Western culture because it does not only address thinkers or philosophers but also embraces all artists and their works.

Another perspective concerning Plato’s perception of reality and appearance is that this argument can also be extended to the question of the source of reality. The true source of every single thing or being has been a controversial subject since the beginning of history. As a part of the universe we have always tried to find the ‘beginning’ of everything that we can comprehend through our senses or intelligence. In this context Platonism has a profound argument concerning the true source of things and beings. As mentioned above Plato describes the world of ideas as the world of realities and thus the source and beginning of reality completely belong to the world of ideas. According to Plato the intelligible things and beings are unique so they are the source of all variations that we reach through our senses. Therefore the world of ideas does not only hold the concept of reality but also reveals the source of everything.

In short Platonic philosophy offers clear answers for many questions that have been the concern of different philosophers, thinkers, and artists. Some of these answers can be

classified as more significant since Plato discussed these questions in detail and also these questions can be described as ever-green questions. The contradiction between reality and appearance, the source of reality and the true nature of beings and things are examples of these sorts of questions. In addition to these, the source and nature of art that is discussed by Plato is also another significant and strong argument of his philosophy because this argument had a great influence on artists like William Shakespeare and his works.

As we observe in most of his plays and poems William Shakespeare was greatly influenced by the Platonic approach to art and artists. However, in order to comprehend the effect of Platonic philosophy on William Shakespeare we should first comprehend the reception of Platonism before Shakespeare and before the Renaissance since Shakespeare was influenced by the ideals of the Renaissance and the Renaissance obtained its ideals by questioning and changing the ideals of the medieval era. Therefore a brief explanation of the historical analysis of Platonism may be helpful in comprehending Shakespeare's reception of Platonism. The explanation should be brief since a detailed historical background of Plato and his philosophy is entirely a different and sophisticated subject that should be discussed separately in a different work. Therefore explaining the perception of the Medieval Era and the Renaissance will clarify the development of Shakespeare's thought in relation to two main milestones of Western thought and culture.

To comprehend medieval thought one should certainly try to understand the Christian perceptions concerning philosophical questions. Although Christianity cannot be classified as a philosophy, it had a great impact on the interpretations of different philosophical approaches. As Julian Marias states in *History of Philosophy*:

Christianity marks the most profound division in the history of philosophy; it separates the two great phases of Western thought. However, it would be wrong to

think of Christianity as a philosophy; it is something quite different-a religion. (105)

In this sense the relationship between Christian thought and Platonism is essential in order to comprehend the parallelisms between these two views. In general it can be claimed that Christianity was highly influenced by the ideas of Plato since as a philosophy Platonism had the potential to enrich the Christian theology. As Frank Thilly asserts in *A History of Philosophy*:

To Christianity, when it sought to make its message intelligible and reasonable to the educated Roman world, it became a treasure-house of thoughts. Its idealism, its teleology, its conception of a system of ideas as patterns of the world, its dualism, its mysticism, its contempt for matter and the world of sense, its ethical State, its proofs for the immortality of the soul, its doctrine of the fall of man, all these teachings, and many more besides, were welcome gifts to those who wished to justify the new faith to reason. We shall have occasion, later on, to point out how much Christian theology owed to the Greeks, and how profoundly the greatest thinker of the early Church, St. Augustine, was influenced by Plato. And what a vital force his idealism has remained in the philosophy of the entire European world, down to the present, will be seen at every step. (223)

It can be claimed that the Neo-Platonic thoughts firstly contributed a lot to combine Plato's views and Christian theology as the Neo-Platonic perception was a new approach which attempted to revise Plato's thoughts from a different perspective. Neo-Platonism can be described as an attempt to establish a philosophy embracing both the Greek thought and Christian theology. As Frank Thilly states in the same book:

The attempts to construct a religious philosophy on the basis of Greek thought culminate in Neoplatonism. Plato's system becomes the framework for a religious

world-view, Neoplatonism or theosophy, which utilizes whatever seems valuable in the other theories, especially in Peripatetic and Stoic speculation, in an independent manner. God is conceived as the source and goal of everything; from him everything comes, to him all things return ; he is the alpha and omega, the beginning, middle, and end. Communion with God or absorption in God, therefore, is the real object of all our strivings, and religion the heart-beat of the universe. (224)

Therefore it can be claimed that the close relationship between Plato's philosophy and Christianity starts with the contemplations of Christian thinkers on the Neo-Platonic philosopher's thoughts. Before the Medieval era Neo-Platonism had a great impact on Christian thought and thus it was thinkers like Plotinus and Porphyry who introduced Plato's philosophy. As Julian Marias emphasizes in *History of Philosophy*, the Church Fathers, who were early Christian theologians and formed the basics of Christian thought, were greatly influenced by Neo-Platonists:

But the major philosophic source which nourishes the Fathers is, of course, Neo-Platonism, which is to influence the Middle Ages so Greatly, especially until the thirteenth century...The Fathers come to know Plato (in a rather imprecise way) through the Neo-Platonic philosophers (Plotinus, Porphyry, etc.), and they look for analogies to Christianity in Platonic thought. (105)

This influence started the interaction between Platonism and Christianity, and this interaction continued constantly throughout the medieval era. The main parallelism between Platonism and Christianity was that they both assumed a world beyond this world and claimed that the world that is unfamiliar to our senses is the true source of everything. In this context the world of ideas was interpreted as the spiritual world of God that Christians believe to reach at the end of their lives and, just like the world of ideas, the only way to comprehend God and his 'world' is through intelligence. The various claims and arguments concerning the Platonic

perception of Christian thinkers are mainly based on this assumption. However there was an important difference between Platonic and Christian perception of reality in terms of the fact that unlike Plato's world of ideas, in which there was a real source for every single object or being, Christian's put God in the center of all realities and existences. As Frank Thilly clearly states in *A History of Philosophy*:

God is the source of all existence, of all oppositions and differences, of mind and body, form and matter, but is himself devoid of all opposition and difference, absolutely one, one in the sense of excluding all plurality and diversity. He is the One that contains everything, infinity, the first causeless cause, from which everything is produced, from which everything emanates; for plurality always presupposes unity; unity is prior to all being and beyond all being. He is so transcendent that whatever we say of him merely limits him ; hence we cannot attribute to him beauty or goodness or thought or will, for all such attributes are limitations and really imperfections. We cannot say what he is, but only what he is not. We cannot define him as being, for being is thinkable, and what is thinkable implies subject and object, and is, therefore, a limitation. He is higher than beauty, truth, goodness, consciousness, and will, for all of these depend on him. We cannot conceive him as thinking, because this implies a thinker and a thought; even a selfconscious being, who thinks himself, divides into subject and object. To say that God thinks and wills is to limit him by what he thinks and wills, and, therefore, to rob him of his independence. (224)

The difference between Plato's philosophy and Christian thought is the Christian emphasis on God as an ultimate source of all realities. Therefore the Fathers tried to clarify the significant similarity between the philosophy of Plato and those of Christianity. This resemblance served as a proof for the Christians of the existence of the eternal world, the world that lighted our

world which is surrounded by sensible objects. Thus it was easy for the early and medieval Christians to comprehend the source of truth and reality. The eternal world of God, just like the world of ideas, was the true source of every creation and thus in this world there was a creator reflecting his different appearances on our world. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel states in *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*:

The peculiarity of the Platonic philosophy, is precisely this direction toward the supersensuous world, -- it seeks the elevation of consciousness into the realm of spirit. The Christian religion also has set up this high principle, that the internal spiritual essence of man is his true essence, and has made it the universal principle.

(108)

To sum up, the Christian interpretation of Platonic philosophy is mainly based on the contradiction between reality and appearance because the world of ideas is the true source of every being and object. In this context it can be claimed that the Christian explanation of reality is very similar to that of Platonism. The beginning, middle and end of all things is described as God in Christianity and this source is spiritual thus it cannot be reached through our senses.

The end of Christian hegemony over Western philosophy began to fade away with the emergence of a social and cultural revolution named as the Renaissance. The birth of a new class named as middle class and the long-lasting oppression of scholastic hegemony of Catholic Church forced the society to alter the economical, social, cultural and religious structure of Europe. This alteration created a domino effect on every single element of European society and thus the existing ideals that had been accepted as truth began to lose their effect on people. The pure of the change accelerated very quickly since the corruption of social institutions and Catholic Church was beyond imagination. The scientific developments that occurred at the end of the Middle Ages also marked the beginning of a new era since the

Catholic Church's restrictions on scientific studies gradually disappeared. In addition to this, new scientific developments proved that many of the claims of the Catholic Church were faulty and misleading. Therefore, the authority of Church began to fall apart and the center of the universe started to change. Bertrand Russell says in *A History of Western Philosophy*:

The period of history which is commonly called "modern" has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the Church, and the increasing authority of science. The period of history which is commonly called "modern" has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the Church, and the increasing authority of science. (491)

This period of history and its effects have been so intense and enduring that even today the ideals of the Renaissance are accepted by many. The ideals of the Middle Ages underwent a dramatic change and many ideas that belong to that era were altered by the society. Therefore, the new era put the individual in the center of the world and annihilated the chain of being which was enforced by the Catholic Church.

As a result of this search for alternative forms of cultural and intellectual authority, the followers of the Renaissance turned their faces towards the works of ancient Greek and Rome. The Italian Renaissance, which can be described as the pioneer of the Renaissance that affected the whole continent mainly, reinterpreted and admired the works of ancient Greece and Rome. Therefore, the works of Plato once again gained importance and served as a base for the prominent thinkers of the Renaissance. As mentioned above, the ideas of Plato were reread and reinterpreted by many different scholars in different eras and hence his philosophy was discussed again from a completely different perspective. Unlike the medieval interpretation of Platonism, the thinkers of the Renaissance did not focus on the existence of a

world of ideas that was very similar to the Eternal World of the Catholic Church. The main concern of the Renaissance thinkers was human and, thus as mentioned above, the center of all universe became the human. Therefore, the rediscovery of Plato was accompanied by an interest in Stoicism which had a great deal of influence in the interpretation of Plato. As Julian Marias emphasizes in *History of Philosophy*:

This was not what was interesting about the ancient world. Of greater interest was Plato, who permitted one to speak of the soul and of love, and who wrote in such beautiful Greek. But there was something still more interesting: Stoicism. The Stoics had all the advantages: they preferred to concern themselves with man—and this conformed with the interests of humanism and the general preoccupation of the Renaissance—in writings that were full of dignity and nobility: they offered examples of a quiet and serene life that was full of moderation and removed from the frenzy of the close of the Middle Ages... (46)

On the other hand, scientific developments changed the way people thought and created the concept of rational thinking and thus the human mind depended more on the sensible and observable beings and objects. Therefore the concept of the material world gained importance and thus the philosophical interpretation of Platonism differed from the earlier one. For the thinkers and philosophers of the Renaissance another significance of Plato was his emphasis on the relativity and temporary nature of the beings and objects. As a result of this emphasis the idea of questioning even the most obvious ‘truths’ or ‘realities’ began to be an important characteristic of the era. The dogmas of the Catholic Church were being challenged one by one because of the brave and skeptical thinkers of the Renaissance.

In short it can be claimed that the Renaissance was greatly influenced by the Platonic perception of the universe. However, this influence can be interpreted as a combination of Plato’s philosophy and the criticism of its medieval interpretation. Therefore the aspects of

Platonism that the followers of the Renaissance focused on was quite different from the aspects that the thinkers of the Middle Ages.

As the subject of this thesis is William Shakespeare's sonnets, the interaction between the poet and the Renaissance should be clarified to comprehend all aspects of the thesis. The first significant point to make is that William Shakespeare was not merely influenced by the ideals of the Renaissance and its literature but was one of the most prominent poets who also shaped the literature of the era. In this sense he introduced many innovative concepts to European literature and practiced them on the stage. For instance Shakespeare created characters that were quite different from the simple and stereotypical characters of the previous eras. The complexity and depth of the characters created a momentous affect on the stage and altered the concept of characterization in literature. Hamlet for example can be seen as an ideal representative of the influential characters of William Shakespeare with his deep and profound psychological complexity. In connection to this the characters of Shakespeare were also striking since they were carefully formed regardless of their social status, religious beliefs, races, or genders. They are all pictured with their weaknesses and strengths. In other words Shakespeare saw all of his characters as independent individuals or humans. In addition, the plays of Shakespeare were mostly based on Greek and Roman classics that were previously suppressed by the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, as mentioned above, William Shakespeare was one of the few poets who actually helped to form the ideals and concepts of the Renaissance. Besides, William Shakespeare was also under the influence of Plato's philosophy. As mentioned above throughout the Renaissance Platonism was discussed and reread by the thinkers and artists of the era to emphasize the position of human in the universe. The emotions, feelings and psychological structure of human were handled by the

followers of the Renaissance in connection to Platonic philosophy.

In order to prove the assumptions above the best way is to quote from Hamlet, one of the most prominent plays of Shakespeare. In Act 2 Scene 2 Hamlet reveals his feelings about the nature of human and his emotions about this nature in a very vivid way. The dialogue is significant in two aspects: firstly, the ideas revealed by Hamlet are echoes of the ideals of the Renaissance concerning the nature of humans and secondly the dialogue also questions the same nature through a Platonic perception by using strong metaphors related to the stage and theatre:

I have of late—but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. (51)

The first striking point in these lines is that it is a kind of manifesto to explain the perception of the human in the Renaissance. The nobility and uniqueness of the human are strongly emphasized and its different features are praised meticulously. As stated above these expressions are all proofs that Shakespeare put the human in the center of the universe unlike the previous dogma of the Middle Age which had a God-centered perception of the universe. The dialogue can also be considered as exceptional because of its resemblance to the lines of

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola who is considered to be one of the most important Renaissance philosophers. His work *Oration on the Dignity of Man* written in 1486 is considered as the “Manifesto of the Renaissance” and in this work, just like Hamlet, Mirandola reveals his thoughts about human nature:

Most esteemed Fathers, I have read in the ancient writings of the Arabians that Abdala the Saracen on being asked what, on this stage, so to say, of the world, seemed to him most evocative of wonder, replied that there was nothing to be seen more marvelous than man. And that celebrated exclamation of Hermes Trismegistus, 'What a great miracle is man, Asclepius' confirms this opinion.

The obvious resemblance between these lines and Hamlet’s words clearly proves that William Shakespeare was a man of the Renaissance and followed the ideals of the era concerning human nature as the great miracle of the earth is praised by both Hamlet and Mirandola.

In addition, Hamlet’s speech also reflects an important aspect of Platonic philosophy from a different perspective. The perception covers Plato's ideas concerning the conflict between reality and appearance. Throughout the speech of Hamlet there are some specific words that can be associated with theater and stage. For instance, Hamlet describes the earth as a 'frame' which can be considered as a reference to the structure of a stage and also the sky is above us is pictured as a canopy covering the upper part of a structure. In addition, roof or canopy of this structure is fretted, which means that there is a hand that decorates the parts of this structure. All these metaphors are obvious references to the theater and stage and can be interpreted as an interpretation of Plato's views about the concept of reality. As Plato suggests the sensible world that surrounds us is only a copy or reflection of another world that embodies the truth, the stage or theater can be interpreted as a replica of this

conceptualization because, just like the sensible world, the theater only contains copies or reflections of another world. There are several sonnets that William Shakespeare echo the very same idea which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters of my thesis.

As stated above the ideas of Plato were interpreted and read in a different way by various philosophers. The ideas of Plato were not simply repeated in different eras of history and thus there are concepts like Renaissance or Medieval perception of Platonism. In this context William Shakespeare repeats the philosophy in some aspects; however, he also produces a crisis in Plato's philosophy concerning the dualism between reality and appearance. Plato's precise distinction between the world of ideas and the sensible world is not simply echoed in William Shakespeare's works. As it will be discussed in detail in the following chapters of the thesis Shakespeare broadens the Platonic perception of reality and appearance by questioning the concepts of Platonism that belong to the world of ideas and are considered to be the real and source of all appearances. The aim of this thesis is to analyze some sonnets of William Shakespeare to reveal the Platonic references concerning the dualism between reality and appearance and point out the fact that the poet did not only repeat Plato's philosophy but also produced a crisis that created a different reception of Platonism.

The crisis that I would like to focus on is mainly about the concept of reality and its source described by Plato. As mentioned above the world of ideas contain the realities and we can actually reach these realities as they are intelligible; however, considering the sonnets and plays I studied in this thesis, Shakespeare implies that the way to reach reality can be much more complicated than Plato described since the concept of reality is as relative as other concepts that are related to copies or appearances. In the cave allegory of Plato the unchained prisoner first sees the fire behind the prisoners and discovers the source of all shadows and then he is drifted away through the dark cave by following the light coming from the entrance of the cave and finally goes out. After discovering the world beyond his dim and dark cave he

sees the sun, the source of all realities. At that point the prisoner discovers the fact that he was detached from reality and was living in a world of reflections. It is here that we see the distinction between Shakespeare's thoughts or perception and Plato's thoughts since in some of his works the poet implies that there is not a simple path leading us to the ultimate reality. The best support for this argument can be found in the famous speech of Jacques from *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage". This quotation, which will be analyzed in detail in the following chapters, clearly suggests that we are living in a world of roles and acting. Therefore all the objects, beings or concepts are parts of a big, ever-lasting play that renews itself through time. In this sense we are all actors and actresses with specific roles and there is no way to escape from this play since "all the world" is used to perform our roles and unlike the cave of Plato in this world there is no path leading us to reality. In other words the crisis produced in Shakespeare's works about Plato's theory of forms is that from Shakespeare's perspective we cannot be sure whether there is an object or being that can be considered as real or permanent since all the objects, beings, and/or concepts are relative and can be questioned. In this sense if one analyzes Shakespeare's perception about reality and appearance it becomes obvious that the absolute distinction that Plato draws between reality and appearance vanishes. Therefore in some sonnets and plays of Shakespeare even the concepts that were conventionally thought as indisputable objects like gender identities or permanent means of value are questioned and considered to be relative and temporary.

In order to clarify the assumption above there are three main chapters in the thesis. These chapters mainly discuss the same dualism from different angles and try to reveal the crisis mentioned above. The sonnets and plays that are discussed in the chapters have different themes and thus have different references to Plato's philosophy. In every chapter there is one main sonnet that is discussed in relation to its connection to Platonism but some other sonnets and plays are also examined to support my assertions. However, the common point that binds

them together is the fact that they all discuss certain concepts like; reality and appearance, temporary and permanent, source and reflection, which are associated with Plato's theory of forms.

In the first chapter I analyze Sonnet Fifty-Three in order to clarify the assumption above. The first chapter mainly deals with the conflict between reality and appearance by questioning the true nature of the addressee of the poem. The parallelisms between Plato's theory of forms and Shakespeare's reception of this theory constitute the main concern of this chapter. I chose this sonnet for the first chapter since there are obvious references to the allegory of cave in which Plato clearly describes his theory of forms. Certain verbs used in the sonnet such as "shadow", "substance" or "imitated" have obvious parallelisms to Plato's cave allegory and it can be claimed that with the help of these concrete references the argument of my thesis may be introduced more clearly. This sonnet is also significant for my thesis since it questions the concept of art and artists in relation to Plato's reception of the same concepts. These concepts are considered to be important aspects of Platonism and also closely related to the previous conflict between the sensible and intelligible objects and beings.

The second chapter mainly focuses on Sonnet Twenty, which discusses the same dualism from a different perspective. In this sonnet the main concern is the question of gender as a form of identity and this question is discussed in connection to Plato's theory of forms. Just like the previous sonnet in this sonnet, there are certain references to the theory of forms and these references are at the center of the sonnet. The significant idea that should be discussed in this chapter is that William Shakespeare does not repeat the philosophy of Plato by using these references. He raises a question about gender identities which were considered to be taboos in his age and implies that even the most essential part of a human can be an appearance and deceitful. The sonnet describes the gender as a "role" that we play and thus it becomes a sort of reflection that is far from reality. In this sense this sonnet includes a crisis

concerning Plato's philosophy.

The last chapter of the thesis examines Sonnet Eighty-Seven which includes several economic terms that are related to different forms of values. The reason I chose to examine a sonnet that includes financial terms is that these terms are considered to have values and are related to the concepts of permanent and temporary. These two concepts are closely related to Plato's theory of forms because in his theory Plato differentiates the real and unreal objects or beings by referring to their permanent or temporary natures. Therefore the permanent and temporary means of value is related to the conflict between reality and appearances. In this context William Shakespeare questions the concept of value by using clear references to different forms of this concept and the significant aspect of this sonnet is that the poet not only questions the deceitful nature of temporary means of value like banknotes or bonds but also challenges the opposite forms of value like precious stones, or metals that are considered to be unchanging and permanent. In this chapter the main argument is that Shakespeare implies all forms of value can be seen as temporary since they are created by various elements which are also relative and changeable.

In short the chapters discuss the same dualism by using different references from different works by William Shakespeare. Although the main works I focused on are the sonnets of Shakespeare I also refer to specific plays of Shakespeare to strengthen my arguments. I tried to prove my assumption by using different works of the poet in order to assure the reader that the connection between Plato's theory of forms and Shakespeare's views are not arbitrary. In all chapters I have used relevant references to support the idea that William Shakespeare's view of Platonism is based on a historical and social era that was shaped by different variations. Therefore all chapters also include some historical information concerning the period that the sonnets or the plays were written.

Chapter 1

As mentioned in the introduction there are many other philosophers who have had a great impact on western thinkers of different ages like Plato's mentor Socrates and his pupil Aristotle; however, Plato's effect on western philosophy has been much deeper. Bertrand Russell states in his *History of Western Philosophy*:

Plato and Aristotle were the most influential of all philosophers, ancient, medieval, or modern; and of the two, it was Plato who had the greater effect upon subsequent ages. I say this for two reasons: first, that Aristotle himself is an outcome of Plato; second, that Christian theology and philosophy, at any rate until the thirteenth century, was much more Platonic than Aristotelian. It is necessary, therefore, in a history of philosophic thought, to treat Plato, and to a lesser degree Aristotle, more fully than any of their predecessors or successors. (104)

Among his philosophical concerns Plato's theory of forms can be seen as the most important matter in Platonic philosophy since this theory can be defined as an attempt to the conflict between the reality and appearance. In order to comprehend his theory of forms firstly Plato's world of ideas should be clarified since the world of ideas is the world of realities and in a sense the source of all appearances. According to Plato the world of ideas embodies all the realities which are timeless and eternal and which therefore do not change or end and are unique. However, in the sensible world everything is illusory and temporary. The sensible world can only be defined as a reflection of the world of ideas and, like all other reflections, it is quite different from its real source, and Plato assumes that if the world of reflections or the sensible world is an illusion, our senses are under the influence of this illusion, too. The only way to overcome this delusion is through the intellect.

In short Plato's perception of the sensible and intelligible worlds can be defined as a

clear attempt to uncover the mask of all appearances. In his *Republic* Plato discusses the true nature of reality and asserts that the non-material world or the world of ideas has the most fundamental kind of reality; however, the objects of the material world, in other words, sensible objects or beings, are only likenesses of the real ones that exist in the world of ideas. Thus as Bertrand Russell again states in the same book: “Plato's philosophy rests on the distinction between reality and appearance.” (119)

One of the philosophical connections between Platonism and the Renaissance also rests on the same matter. Just like Plato and his contemporaries, the thinkers of the Renaissance also discussed the distinction between reality and appearance. After the end of the God-centered Medieval Period the idea of reality began to be seen as more ambiguous and more deceptive than ever. As Sarah Hutton states in *Platonism and the English Imagination*:

In the Renaissance the philosophy of Plato was read and valued more than at any time since the closure of the Athenian Academy by the emperor Justinia in AD 529.

In the Middle Ages, Plato had been known through at most a handful of dialogues, but in the fifteenth century Plato's entire extant oeuvre became known in Western Europe. (67-68)

Philosophers like Marsilio Ficino and Francis Bacon questioned the concept of reality and ways to reach it by rereading the ideas of Plato and other ancient philosophers. However, philosophers were not alone in their questioning of the nature of reality. Russell states in his *History of Western Philosophy*:

(Plato's ideas) with various modifications, influenced most of the great philosophers, down to and including Hegel. But not only philosophers were influenced by Plato.

Why did the Puritans object to the music and painting and gorgeous ritual of the

Catholic Church? You will find the answer in the tenth book of the *Republic*. Why are children in school compelled to learn arithmetic? The reasons are given in the seventh book. (120)

In other words Plato's philosophy has influenced different social and cultural elements of the western world.

Renaissance literature was also influenced by Plato's philosophy. Some Renaissance philosophers like Marsilio Ficino revived Platonic ideas and influenced many poets and writers of the period; however, Plato's philosophy was so strong that it had affected and still affecting many thinkers like Ficino. Therefore, Platonism's influence was not only felt on the thinkers of the Renaissance. As Sears Jayne states in *Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance*:

Any work of literature in the English Renaissance involving theological or cosmological Platonism would probably have had all the marks of Neo-Platonism even if Ficino had never lived. (216)

Therefore it can be said that Renaissance Literature was directly and profoundly under the influence of Platonic ideas.

Like most of his contemporaries William Shakespeare also revived Plato's ideas in his plays and poems. Throughout his age the order of things, our place in this order and the actual forms of all these things were discussed and reinterpreted in many different literary works. William Shakespeare also questioned all these issues in his works. Therefore Platonism, which provided invaluable answers to all these questions, became one of the sources for his questions. For instance *Venus and Adonis* (1593), considered to be one of the masterpieces of Shakespeare, embraces different elements of Plato's philosophy. In *Platonism and English*

Imagination John Roe offers a detailed interpretation of the parallelism between *Venus and Adonis* and Platonism. In his article he argues that Shakespeare uses Platonic ideas in several parts of the poem. He states that:

Shakespeare makes use of the Platonic in order to bring greater delicacy to the terms of opposition acted out by *Venus and Adonis* in their frustrated love match. (110)

However, as mentioned above, *Venus and Adonis* is not the only work of William Shakespeare that includes Platonic ideas. These ideas are also echoed in some other plays and in the sonnets of Shakespeare. In particular the conflict between reality and appearance which is another concern of Platonism and Plato's theory of forms can be seen in some of his plays and sonnets. Theodore Spencer claims in *Appearance and Reality in Shakespeare's Last Plays*:

The conflict (the conflict between reality and appearance) between these two views of man's nature is an important element in Shakespearean tragedy... We might even say that this conflict lies behind all Elizabethan drama and that drama-the literary form to which conflict is essential-was the natural expression of the age because the character of the age was determined by this conflict-a conflict which had been smoldering for centuries, as, in different ways, it is always smoldering, but which at the beginning of the seventeenth century burst into flame. (267)

The sonnets of Shakespeare also embrace the same conflict in relation to Plato's philosophy and his theory of forms and the aim of this chapter is to analyze some sonnets, especially Sonnet Fifty-Three, in connection with Plato's theory of forms. In Sonnet Fifty-Three William Shakespeare questions both the perception of reality and Plato's world of reflections. At the very beginning of the poem the poet questions the nature of the addressee

by asking his true substance, and by asking this he raises the issue of the true nature of our identity.

“What is your substance, whereof are you made” (53.1)

The word “substance” is particularly important because the word mostly refers to concrete objects and it is closely related to sensible objects. Therefore the word ‘substance’ is also strongly related to Plato’s theory of forms since Plato asserts that any sensible object is constantly changing and temporary. They are only the reflections of the form that are their prototype. This assertion can be clarified more easily if we remember the couch example from Plato’s *Republic*. According to Plato there are basically three different couches:

...one that is in nature, which we would say, I suppose, a god produced...one that the carpenter produced ... and one that the painter produced... (279)

Therefore Shakespeare questions the substance of the addressee and by doing this he also implies that the nature of the addressee might be illusory and deceptive.

The Speaker’s skepticism concerning the true nature of the addressee can also be interpreted as a denial of the visible world since the speaker refuses to accept the appearance of the visible body of the addressee and tries to reach his true identity. The second part of the line addresses the same question in different terms: “whereof are you made”. This question has two important implications.

The first implication is that the speaker implies that the addressee ‘was made’ by another being and this assertion strengthens the argument that he was created or came into existence with the help of a presumably superior being. The idea of a maker can be associated with Plato’s theory of forms since Plato also suggests that every object or being in the world of ideas is unique and is created by god. However, the maker of the addressee is not merely

related to a god or a deity. The poem also raises the question of the maker as art, artist and actor. This assumption can be justified by looking at the following lines of the sonnet:

That millions of strange shadows on you tend?

Since everyone hath every one, one shade,

And you, but one, can every shadow lend

In these lines some specific words like ‘millions’, ‘shadows’ and ‘shade’ can be interpreted as implications of theatre or acting since they remind us of the relationship between the actor and the audience. In addition to that, the lines also reflect the interaction between the audience and the actor since the correlation between the shadows and the one shade is an implication of the link between the actor and the audience. Thus the question of the creator or the maker of the addressee can also be answered in terms of art or theater since Plato defines art and theatre as one of the means of creation. Although he suggests that art is only an imitation he sees it as a source of creation. The important matter about art and theatre concerning Plato’s theory of forms is that according to Plato art is three times removed from reality since it only imitates the imitations of the ideas and thus its creations can be described as illusory and even misleading for us.

The second implication of a maker is that the addressee is made and anything that is made by something else can also be interpreted as a fabricated being or object. Therefore the speaker also implies that the body of the addressee may be the result of a fabrication and thus the real identity of the addressee is hidden under this sensible body. This assumption can also be interpreted as an echo of Plato’s theory of forms since Plato asserts that every sensible object or being is the effect of their ideas which can be reached only by intellect. This argument suggests that all the objects and beings are fabricated or produced by their ideas and

these objects and beings are only reflections covered with false identities.

The quoted lines above can also be discussed from a different perspective in relation to Plato's theory of forms. Plato's well known allegory of the cave is a very clear explanation of his theory of forms and the lines above are closely related to this allegory. In these lines the word 'shadows' is the first word to analyze since it is a clear echo of the shadows of the prisoners in Plato's cave. The ignorant prisoners of the cave are clearly evoked by Shakespeare. First of all, the word is plural which means that the reflections of the addressee are more than one and this assumption again reminds us of Plato's cave allegory –in which there are “some” prisoners- and his theory of forms in general. The relationship of singular and plural creates a clear parallelism between Plato's ideas and the sonnet. In addition to this the strange shadows and the source of them can also be considered as a reference to the audience of the theatre since the prisoners of the cave are in a sense watching the “performance” of the shadows without knowing the difference between reality and appearance. If we look at Plato's cave allegory from a different perspective we will clearly notice that the description of the cave and the prisoners is quite similar to a theatre and its audience.

Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets. (193)

These particular metaphors of puppets and puppet-handler are obvious references to theatre or stage about which Plato also has much to say in *The Republic* and Plato continues his description by adding another important element of theatre which is sound.

...and what if the prison also had an echo from the side facing them? Whenever one

of the men passing by happens to utter a sound, do you suppose they would believe that anything other than the passing shadow was uttering the sound? (194)

In addition, the idea of oneness and plurality can be considered as another reference to the audience and the theatre.

On the other hand, the poet asserts that “everyone has every one, one shade”(l. 6) which can both mean that every person or object has only one reflection and also perhaps that everyone has everyone in his/her own reflection. This double meaning may rest on a problematic pun, but if we consider the poem as a whole it becomes clearer that the poet tries to highlight the deceptive nature of reality. In other words, with the triple echoing of the word “one” Shakespeare creates a mirror effect on the reader. Imagine two mirrors facing one another and an object between them. The multiple reflections will both reflect only one object and also many different visions of the object.

The other line also contributes to this illusion by asserting that the addressee is the only one who can ‘lend’ his reality to the others. Although the addressee is only one single person or ‘being’ he can lend his reflection to millions and thus become the true source of every reflection or shade. However if we go back to the first line of the poem the true substance of the addressee is still unknown and also the word ‘lend’ reminds us of the temporary nature of the reality. Thus it seems impossible to find the real source of the complex web of the reflections. Therefore the simple and cozy cave of Plato becomes a cold room covered with numerous mirrors reflecting millions of shades with no real source in it.

If we analyze the lines from another perspective, we can see that the concepts of many and one are also related to the roles of actors, and audience. The complicated nature of the lines creates an illusion in which the distinction between the audience and stage becomes

indiscernible and unclear. Also, the thirteenth line of the poem makes a direct reference to the same theme. "In all external grace you have some part." In this line the word 'part' needs to be analyzed very carefully since it has two primary meanings related to the theme of identity. The first meaning of the word 'part' can be defined as a 'portion or division of a whole that is separate and distinct' and this meaning is closely related to Plato's theory of forms. As mentioned above his theory asserts that every sensible object or being is an imitation of its original form, which exists in the world of ideas. Therefore, the objects or beings can be interpreted as a partial reflection of the original whole or ideas. Although Plato assumes that the sensible objects and beings are only imitations or reflections of the original form these objects can also be considered as parts of their ideas since a reflection or imitation cannot exist without its original form or idea. Hence the word part can also be related to the words reflection or imitation since the speaker asserts that every beauty embraces a part of the addressee and thus the addressee can be interpreted as the original form of beauty that has many reflections in every beautiful object or being.

The word 'part' is also the synonym of role, and thus it can be interpreted as another allusion to the theater, acting, and actors. These allusions are also related to Plato's theory of forms since an actor's part or role is directly related to the themes of identity and may be a reference to the conflict between reality and appearance. As mentioned above Plato's theory of forms suggests that art represents the imitation of imitations since art imitates the reflections of the ideas and thus it is three times removed from the original forms. Therefore, line thirteen is a clear reference to Plato's perception of art since the speaker's attribution may also be a reference to the actor who performs many different roles for the audience. In order to strengthen this assumption we should turn back to the concepts of one and many that are

mentioned in lines three, four and five. As stated above, the lines are related to the concept of acting, actors and audience; however, the role of the audience is not clear since the audience or -as Shakespeare puts it “the shadows” -shares a part with the “one” and the one or the actor is also a part of the shadows because he is the one, who has a part in every one. In other words, the shadows and the addressee are in a sense connected through a complicated net. Secondly, the actor who imitates reality with his act can also be considered as the creator or producer of different realities and these realities are, in fact, only appearances. Thus, the addressee is both reality and appearance just like the actor who has a real identity and many different appearances and roles. However, the poet also implies that the one is shared by many and the one itself is a part of the many. In other words, the audience looks at the stage and sees the one and the many at the same time, while the actor or the one is not only unique but also a part of many. If we consider the nature of art and theatre in general, the assertion made above becomes particularly important because in the theatre the actor plays the role of different people and different lives.

In addition to this, the actor also has a ‘real identity’ which can also be interpreted as another role since our identities are mostly determined by various elements such as gender roles, social classes, cultural norms or religion. Therefore the identity that is considered as a reality is in fact an appearance that hides the true nature of the person. The quotation below will help to make this assumption clearer. Judith Butler in her “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” argues that gender identities as roles that are far from reality and states

As a young person, I suffered for a long time, and I suspect many people have, from being told, explicitly or implicitly, that what I ‘am’ is a copy, an imitation, a derivative example, a shadow of the real. Compulsory heterosexuality sets itself up

as the original, the true, the authentic; the norm that determines the real. (20)

In short Butler suggests that heterosexuality is considered as the original identity of people; however, she continues to question this assumption and asserts in her discussion of gender that:

...imitation carries the meaning of 'derivative' or 'secondary', a copy of an origin which is itself a ground of all copies, but which is itself a copy of nothing. Logically, this notion of an 'origin' is suspect, for how can something operate as an origin if there are no secondary consequences which retrospectively confirm the originality of that origin? (22)

Butler's point is significant since it questions different kinds of identities just like the speaker of Sonnet Fifty-Three. Therefore, the real identity of the addressee can also be considered as an imitation and this assumption is another echo of Plato's philosophy concerning theory of forms. Shortly it can be said that in these lines Shakespeare questions the identities or roles that we perform by highlighting the relation between one and many and this theme is repeatedly connected with the concepts of theatre, acting and actors.

In the following four lines Shakespeare continues to question the philosophy of Plato by using the images of Adonis and Helen which are mostly considered to be the representatives of beauty.

Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit

Is poorly imitated after you.

On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,

And you in Grecian tires are painted new

Considering Plato's theory of forms, the lines above are quite significant since they both question the reality and appearance and the importance of art concerning reality and

imitation. As mentioned above, the concept of art and its function is discussed and described meticulously by Plato. The distance between art and reality are clear stated in his theory of forms. According to Plato, the objects of art are only imitations of reality and cannot reflect the true identity of their real counterparts. Thus, the picture or statue or picture of Helen and Adonis are simply imitations of their original ideas. If we remember the allegory of the cave these statues or paintings can be described as shadows, for they are the perceptions of an ignorant prisoner who is not aware of the real world. In other words, the reflections of Adonis and Helen are only poorly imitated forms of reality, and the addressee in Shakespeare's poem cannot be identified with these reflections or shadows because the addressee is described as a superior being who represents the true nature of beauty. The artist who will attempt to create a reflection of the addressee is nothing but a shade. It can be said that Shakespeare tries to highlight the inadequacy of art for it cannot reflect reality by any means. In order to support this argument, some words like "tint" and "painted" can be examined. These words are closely related to the contradiction between reality and appearance since clothes and colors can be seen as means to change or cover reality by different means.

However the lines also mirror Plato's theory of forms from a very different perspective, and the speaker's perception can be interpreted as an upside-down version of the theory of forms. First of all the fifth and sixth lines are quite striking for the reader since they present a thoroughly new idea for the Platonic interpretations. In these two lines the addressee is described as a better being than the counterfeit and the original form of Adonis, and this assertion contradicts Plato's theory of forms because Plato suggests that the original is always superior to the copy. However, the sonnet advocates the opposite by claiming that an attempt to create a counterfeit of Adonis or even the original form of Adonis can only be described as

a poor imitation of the addressee.

The seventh and the eighth lines echo the very same idea by asserting that Helen is only a bad counterfeit of the addressee in disguise. The painted tires of the Grecian beauty are very weak and unreal compared to the addressee of the poem. Therefore the addressee is once more described as a superior being compared to Helen who is considered to be the representative of beauty.

A copy which is better than the original may seem paradoxical not only for the followers of Platonic ideas but also for many different philosophical approaches since the concept of reality is based on the relationship between the original and the reflection or copy and it would be a very challenging job for any philosophical approach to assert that a copy is more real than the original. In this sense Shakespeare redefines Plato's philosophy and carries it to a new dimension. Although his assertions or assumptions are mostly based on Plato's theory of forms he turns them upside down and reinterprets them from a very extraordinary point of view. The significance of his perception is that he makes the reader question the concept of reality from a reversed angle. Therefore all explanations concerning reality and appearance become blurred and their places in our minds lose their bases.

In short it can be said that Shakespeare's ideas are closely related to the mimetic theory of Plato, which asserts that arts like poetry or theatre do not reflect the truth or reality. In his *Republic* Plato clearly states that:

An easy way enough; or rather, there are many ways in which the feat might be quickly and easily accomplished, none quicker than that of turning a mirror round and round --you would soon enough make the sun and the heavens, and the earth and yourself, and other animals and plants, and all the, other things of which we were just

now speaking, in the mirror. ...and the painter too is, as I conceive, just such another
--a creator of appearances. (Book X)

Therefore like all other works of art, poetry and theater can only be described as reflections of the world of ideas. Therefore, the references to Adonis or Helen remind us of the unreal nature of art and the theatre. As mentioned above the second, third and fourth lines of the poem, also highlight the nature of art and theatre, and thus it can be said that for Shakespeare and Plato theatre and/or art do not reflect the reality, but unlike Plato Shakespeare also asserts that the realities that we experience can also be the reflections or shadows.

The four lines mentioned above are also significant in terms of gender roles and identities since Adonis and Helen are both used for the same addressee, who is supposed to have only one gender. These references are used to highlight the fact that, just like all other identities or roles gender is a part of the world of appearances and thus the common assumption that being a male or female is a constant and unquestionable fact becomes debatable for the readers. If we consider the gender of a person as a part of his identity or reality then the addressee of the poem again becomes a person carrying different reflections of different realities. Therefore gender as an identity and part of our reality can also be described as a mask or facade that deceives us.

Furthermore, the idea of having two different gender identities is another echo of the theatre and acting since in the theater all kinds of identities, including gender, are simple appearances and can be easily changed by the same actor or actors. The world of theater is the world of appearances, reflections, masks and copies. Indeed, most of Shakespeare's plays, like *Twelfth Night* include elements like disguises, gender roles and appearances.

Beginning with the ninth line Shakespeare continues to question reality from a

different perspective. In these lines spring and fall are described as imitations of the beauty and 'bounty' of the addressee.

Speak of the spring and foison of the year;
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear

In these lines the beauty of the addressee is described in terms of the seasons and elements of nature. According to Plato's theory of forms, nature is also an appearance and it is as decisive as any sensible object. Just as in the previous lines the poet again alludes to the fact that nature can also be regarded as an imitation. In addition, the cycle of seasons is also related to the changing and temporary nature of reality. Just like all appearances, nature is also not stable and her appearance can change just like all other forms we observe. However, the addressee is again claimed to have some part in nature which is an echo of the idea that in every grace he has a part. Not only this idea but also a specific word 'shadow', is also repeated in these lines. The word is again closely related to the cave allegory of Plato since the beauty of spring is depicted as an imitation or shadow of the addressee.

The last three lines of the sonnet continue to question the idea of reality and appearance in terms of Platonic ideas. The speaker once more states that the addressee is the unique and constant being and every beautiful being or object has a part from him.

And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

These lines remind us of Plato's ideas about the sensible world and world of ideas since the addressee is described as a unique being that is reflected by many other beings or objects

around us. The reflections or imitations of the addressee do not embrace the true nature of the addressee. In this sense it can be claimed that the addressee of the poem is described as a part of the world of ideas but it is not his body or gender or any other sensible part of the addressee that makes him an idea. It is the constancy of his heart that is considered as unique and unchangeable.

To sum up, Sonnet 53 clearly embraces some significant elements of Platonic philosophy concerning the conflict between reality and appearance. The poem clearly puts emphasis on the relativity of specific concepts that can be associated with Plato's theory of forms. Shakespeare questions the concept of identity by focusing on the deceitful features of the appearances. The poet also puts emphasis on the fact that the source of appearances can also be deceitful and temporary.

Chapter 2

In some sonnets of Shakespeare the dualism between reality and appearance is discussed from a different perspective. For instance Sonnet Twenty questions the same conflict by focusing on gender identities. Sonnets like Sonnet Twenty can be considered as significant for this thesis since they help us to reinterpret the same conflict with a specific and different theme. In this context one can comprehend Shakespeare's view of Platonism more easily and can discuss this reception at different levels. The fact that Shakespeare deepens the perception of Plato's ideas concerning the conflict between reality and appearance cannot be comprehended without considering the era he had experienced. As a historical era and cultural movement the Renaissance created an environment to question almost every conventional philosophical, political, and artistic assumption that was produced throughout history. The Renaissance's effect on these views was so strong that it not only questioned them but also altered or turned them upside down. The era can be best described with a scene from William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* which is considered as one of the most significant works of the era. The first scene of Act One depicts a terrible dark storm in which a ship is almost lost amidst the wind and the waves. The ship has very "important" people on board like Alonso, King of Naples, and Gonzalo, a noble lord; on the other hand, there are also ordinary people working as servants or crew. However, as the boatswain of the ship tells Gonzalo angrily the tempest cannot be commanded whether the commander is a King or a simple boatswain:

“GONZALO

Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

BOATSWAIN

None that I more love than myself. You are a councilor. If you can command these elements to silence and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a

rope more. Use your authority. If you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap.—Cheerly, good hearts!—Out of our way, I say.” (Act 1 Scene 1)

It can be clearly seen that this scene is an excellent depiction of the Renaissance since the Renaissance was a storm so devastating for the whole of Europe that no commander was able to control its consequences. It challenged every aspect of the social, political, religious and cultural structures. The alteration that the Renaissance created was inescapable like the tempest that ruined the ship of the noble and ordinary people. In this sense it can be said that Shakespeare did not simply repeat the ideas of Platonism and avoided artificial one sided interpretations of the philosophy. The poet, like other thinkers of the Renaissance, established his diverse and profound views on this philosophy and challenged the conventional perceptions of it. Considering the subject that Sonnet Twenty deals with, one can infer that William Shakespeare questioned the topics that were considered as taboos in the society. In this context Shakespeare implied that like all other social identities our gender is also a matter of debate and can be questioned. In addition to that the sonnet even implies that these identities can be as deceptive as all other appearances. Therefore Sonnet Twenty should be examined in detail to comprehend these assumptions

Most curious scholars and critics considered Sonnet Twenty as a key to open the doors of William Shakespeare’s personal life and his real identity since there is limited information about him. Although he wrote a lot of plays and poems there are only a few works that are thought to conceal the mysterious identity of Shakespeare and Sonnet 20 can be considered as one of these few works. It has raised many questions about William Shakespeare’s personal life and identity, yet the answers to these questions have not been very satisfying for skeptical scholars; on the contrary they have raised new questions to be answered. In this context

Sonnet Twenty is like a treasure for those who try to discover the personal life and gender identity of William Shakespeare since questions regarding the true identity of William Shakespeare have always been difficult to answer since his biography is not very clear, and we have little information about his life. However, the significance of the poem lies not in the assumption that it contains some answers regarding the poet's personal life. It is the fact that the poet clearly questions the idea of identity, and in particular that of gender identity. In the poem the concept of gender as an identity has been established on a unique base. In addition, the conflict between reality and appearance is questioned throughout the poem, and thus there are obvious parallelisms between the poem and Plato's theory of forms. The sonnet not only interprets gender roles but also attempts to identify the relationship between reality and appearance.

As mentioned in the first chapter, just like Plato, William Shakespeare also deals with the nature of sensible and intelligible objects, but in this poem the emphasis is mainly on gender roles and its qualities. The lines in which the illusionary and deceptive nature of gender is questioned point out the difference between reality and appearance through different images and themes. Although, unlike Sonnet Fifty Three, in this sonnet there are not so many direct references to Plato's theory of forms, one can clearly find the influence of Platonism on the sonnet by considering the philosophy of Plato. For example, unlike Sonnet 53, in Sonnet 20 there are no direct references to the allegory of cave; however, throughout the poem the reader can easily see the traces of Plato's theory of forms through different allusions.

The theme of sexual ambiguity is at the center of the poem, and this ambiguity can obviously be observed throughout the poem since a considerable number of scholars agree on the idea that the addressee of the sonnet is a young man and Shakespeare clearly admires the

young boy both emotionally and sexually. However, the sonnet is beyond a simple admiration poem since it profoundly questions the gender roles and highlights the deceitful nature of reality and appearance. The first line of the poem provides clear evidence for this assumption:

“A woman’s face, with nature’s own hand painted”

The word painted is significant since it can be regarded as a reference to the conflict between reality and appearance. The poet asserts that the face of the addressee has been painted, which means that it conceals reality and creates a deceitful outer shell for the young man. Besides, in line 7, the addressee is described as “a man in hue”, and it is implied that he can control other hues as well. One may come to two different conclusions: The first one is that the addressee is defined with an identity other than his own, which is an echo of the theme of concealed identity. Considering these two lines, we can understand that Shakespeare hints at the fact that the addressee has a different identity, and that it is quite different from his looks and only the poetic persona is aware of this fact, which is a reflection of Plato’s allegory of the cave. One can conclude that the boy’s admirer is on the same level as the prisoners chained in the cave. Furthermore, Plato's ideas concerning the painter and paintings as developed in *Republic* are also reflected in these lines. As mentioned in the first chapter Plato defines paintings as an imitation that are thrice far from reality and thus according to him all paintings are deceitful and unreliable. As Socrates states in the *Republic*:

-Now let me ask you another question: Which is the art of painting designed to be--an imitation of things as they are, or as they appear-- of appearance or of reality?

-Of appearance.

-Then the imitator, I said, is a long way off the truth, and can do all things

because he lightly touches on a small part of them, and that part an image.

(Book X)

The quotation clearly indicates that according to Plato the nature of painters, of paintings of or of colors are parts of appearances. However, the significance of the first line of Sonnet 20 can only be revealed by clarifying the role of the painter since Shakespeare's 'painter' is far beyond the conventional interpretation of Platonic dualism concerning the theory of forms. Considering Plato's theory of forms thinking of nature as a painter is not only radical but also confusing in terms of the philosophical understanding of reality and appearance. In order to make this clearer one can again analyze Plato's ideas about the painter and his position as a creator. Socrates again agrees in the *Republic*:

-But would you call the painter a creator and maker?

-Certainly not.

-Yet if he is not the maker, what is he in relation to the bed?

-I think, he said, that we may fairly designate him as the imitator of that which the others make.

-Good, I said; then you call him who is third in the descent from nature an imitator?

Certainly, he said. (Book X)

Plato clearly defines the painter as a deceitful imitator who is thrice removed from nature and therefore he can never be a maker or in other words a creator of reality. However, the dualism between reality and appearance is very close to the dualism between natural and artificial and thus nature as a painter turns everything upside down in terms of Platonic ideas. Nature as a

creator -the only source of natural and the anti-thesis of artificial- directly creates the very artificial identities that are thrice far from reality can surely be defined as a deconstruction of Platonic ideas, since the line clearly suggests that reality and appearance cannot be separated very easily and the source of all realities may be an imitator. The only maker of all reflections and appearances can also be far from reality and thus the existence of an ultimate reality can also be a matter of dispute.

Plato clearly states in *Republic* that there is a maker of all makers with these lines:

Let us take any common instance; there are beds and tables in the world-- plenty of them, are there not?

Yes.

But there are only two ideas or forms of them--one the idea of a bed, the other of a table.

True.

And the maker of either of them makes a bed or he makes a table for our use, in accordance with the idea--that is our way of speaking in this and similar instances--but no artificer makes the ideas themselves: how could he?

Impossible.

And there is another artist,--I should like to know what you would say of him.

Who is he?

One who is the maker of all the works of all other workmen.

What an extraordinary man!" (Book X)

This ultimate maker that Plato praises can be described as the source and true creator of all

things and as it is the source of everything. It is not deceitful and cannot be changed by any means. However as mentioned above the line of the Sonnet questions this ultimate maker as well. In short the first line of Sonnet 20 not only has clear implications of Plato's theory of forms but also opens up new dimensions of that theory that can be described as a deconstruction.

If we look at the same line from a different perspective, the words “paint”, and “hue” may also be a reference to the world of theater and actors. As a playwright, William Shakespeare used the concepts of theatre and acting in order to question different identities and to point out the deceitfulness of appearances. The famous lines of *As You Like It* clearly reveal his view that the identities that we have are all unreal and far from reality. In fact the quotation below questions the concept of reality as well.

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;

And one man in his time plays many parts (Act 2 Scene 7 [Jaques])

Thinking of the whole world as a stage and all of life as a play can be considered as an explicit criticism of reality and identities that we carry throughout our lives since theater or stage are believed to embrace the unreal or artificial events and characters and they are only counterfeits of the world surrounding us. The parts that the actors have are only masks that conceal the real identity of the actor and thus like all the masks they are deceitful and untrustworthy. However, William Shakespeare indicates in *As You Like It* that 'real' life and people can also be questioned as they also bear false identities and lead lives that are changeable and temporary. This assumption is also related to Plato's theory of forms since

Shakespeare rejects the idea that the material or sensible world around us is the pure source of reality.

In this sense, Sonnet 20 also embraces the same assumption by implying that the painted face of the addressee merely reflects a false identity just like the other identities performed on the stage, and if we think about the assumption that all the world is a stage then it can be claimed that the addressee is only acting his part. His life and all people around him are only a part of a play and they are all playing their parts as well. The following lines of the poem also strengthen this supposition.

A man in hue all hues in his controlling,

Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.

First of all the word 'hue' should be analyzed carefully since it is closely related to concepts like theater, acting and stage. The man in hue can be interpreted as an implication of disguise and fake identity. A man in hue conceals reality and manipulates it for 'the other hues' which may be a reference to the audience. This is because an actor actually controls the audience by making them believe what they see on the stage and this theatrical control pushes the audience into an illusion. This assumption can simply be supported by the following line which implies that the souls of the men and women are deluded by the hue. "Which steals men's eyes and women's souls", the actor also steals the audience's attention and amazes their souls with his brilliant acting. The word soul is also significant again since the soul is the thing that is close to reality and is the opposite of material or artifice. In this sense the two lines are again related to Plato's views regarding the dualism between reality and appearance.

There is no space more effective than theater when one wishes to discuss the issue of the ambiguities of identity, because the theater is a place where everyone loses his or her own

identity and wraps him or herself in another one. Also the audience loses its sense of reality and enters the world of masks, make up, costumes, and disguises and thus it becomes very difficult to differentiate reality and appearance. In addition, the audience is always in a kind of trance in which it is fascinated by the deceitful nature of the stage and the actor. As stated in the sixth line the eye of the addressee just like the actor is: “Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth”, and by “gilding” all the objects he conceals the actual identity of the objects. All these assumptions are also related to Plato’s theory of forms since Plato also asserts that art is nothing but an imitation of the world of ideas. According to Plato, art cannot reflect the true nature of the objects or beings and creates an illusion for its observers.

In addition, the first line also questions gender roles since a woman’s face which was painted on a man’s face is a kind of mask that conceals the true identity of the addressee and the ambiguity of gender roles is repeated in many different lines throughout the poem. For instance, in the ninth line the sonnet clearly repeats this ambiguity:

And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

Although nature intended to create the addressee for a woman she then changed the role of the addressee and, created an appearance contrary to reality and this role created nothing but pain for the poet because he cannot reach the real identity of the addressee because of this inauthentic appearance. As Plato suggests the knowledge of reality can cause pain and suffering since the one who gets this knowledge feels lost and alone among the others and the lines above show that the poet is suffering because although he sees the real identity of

addressee he cannot reach it:

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him? (Book X)

The lines above are also significantly striking since they reflect the Renaissance views of women and explicate the gender roles and identities. In order to clarify this assumption a short explanation of the Renaissance views of women is needed. Although there is not a concrete definition or explanation of women's role throughout Renaissance, there is still a general perception concerning this subject. As Catharine R. Stimpson states in the introduction of *Women of the Renaissance*:

No matter what her class, and class did matter intensely, a woman was the sinful daughter of Eve, a carrier of the viruses of lust and licentiousness. Church, state, father, and husband had to control her. (IX)

The quotation clearly reveals the perception of women throughout the Renaissance and it can be said that compared to men, women were thought to be closer to the concepts of artifice, disguise, costume and fakery and thus women were considered as copies or shadows of men. As a result of this perception women were considered to lack many aspects of men or human being. The imperfect nature of women was associated with the idea of nothingness or negation.

The following lines of the poem also reveal the above mentioned view:

Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;

The poet identifies the qualities of the addressee by revealing some characteristics of gender roles. 'Women's fashion' or nature is described as false and misleading; however, the addressee only has the gentle heart of a woman and does not embrace the misleading nature of women. In other words, he is a combination of two opposite genders and thus, the poet tries to describe the ambiguous nature of the addressee. As mentioned above this is also closely related to the Renaissance view of women since throughout the era women were held to have a misleading nature and their 'fashion' was unpredictable and deceitful despite the fact that they carry a delicate heart. However, by combining the qualities of two genders Shakespeare again challenges the conventional assumption about the characteristics of two sexes. In this sense the poem again does not accept gender roles as fixed norms or unchangeable facts.

The above mentioned lines of Sonnet 20 explicitly introduce the views of women throughout Renaissance; however, the sonnet once again alters and in a sense opposes this prejudice. In the twelfth line of the sonnet the word "one thing" is a reference to the penis and since it is called as 'one' thing or an 'addition' in line eleven it is considered to be the tool to make a human whole or complete. However, in the following lines of the poem the reader sees that this 'one thing' in fact makes the addressee 'nothing' which means that rather than one this addition is in fact a zero or a negation of existence. In this sense the sonnet challenges the conventional view of gender roles and identities and Shakespeare questions the gender roles by reversing them and creating an ambiguity concerning the roles of men and women.

However this ambiguity cannot be interpreted as a way of degrading or upgrading one of the two genders. On the contrary Shakespeare in a sense disavows all kinds of gender roles assuming that they are only a way of concealing our true identities or natures. In *Imitation*

and Gender Insubordination Judith Butler clarifies the same assumption by exploring heterosexual and homosexual identities:

As a young person, I suffered for a long time, and I suspect many people have, from being told, explicitly or implicitly, that what I 'am' is a copy, an imitation, a derivative example, a shadow of the real. Compulsory heterosexuality sets itself up as the original, the true, the authentic; the norm that determines the real implies that 'being' lesbian is always a kind of miming, a vain effort to participate in the phantasmatic plenitude of naturalized heterosexuality which will always and only fail. (20-21)

The conventional perception that Butler underlines, is significant since it has very close links to the views of women in the Renaissance. In the Renaissance women were the imitation, the copy or the derivative example of the real. However as Butler proceeds in her argument she clearly states that the idea of a 'proper' gender identity should be denied and, as mentioned above, it can be said that the sonnet also embraces the same denial.

Drag is not the putting on of a gender that belongs properly to some other group, i. e. an act of expropriation or appropriation that assumes that gender is the rightful property of sex, that 'masculine' belongs to 'male' and 'feminine' belongs to 'female'. There is no proper gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another, which is in some sense that sex's cultural property. (21)

In this sense the sonnet also denies that either the male or female identities can be considered as a norm, or a true form of identity. By questioning these identities Shakespeare once again questions the natures of the imitation and the original and, as mentioned above, this suspicion again takes us to the result that the dualism is in fact an illusion. As Judith Butler again states

in the same article: "...it seems, there is no original or primary gender that drag imitates, but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself."

(21)

Once again the lines of the poem that are discussed above also echo another dilemma regarding gender roles:

Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion

A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted

With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;

The "master-mistress" of the poet's passion or love undoubtedly carries an ambiguity since the words have different meanings according to the gender roles. These two words are also related to the opposite roles of two genders since the master reminds us of dominance and supremacy and the word mistress refers to the ideas of subordination and obedience. These references clearly imply that the addressee carries two opposite roles in one identity and this ambiguity is another echo of the issue of sexual ambiguities found in the poem. Accordingly if we go back to line 7, we find another implication of the theme of dominance and subordination since the man in hue "controls" all other hues with his appearance.

The final lines of the poem are quite interesting since they embrace almost all the themes that are discussed above. Actually these final lines can be considered as the densest part of the poem.

But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,

Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

First of all, the lines echo the role of the nature as a creator. Once again the poet

reminds us that nature itself is creating false identities and thus as stated above nature is also unpredictable and cannot be regarded as the source of reality. She not only paints the face of the addressee to create a false identity but also manipulates the same identity by adding “one thing” to him. In this sense the penis is no longer a sign of the real identity of the addressee and if we remember the above mentioned argument about the deceitfulness of gender identities we can claim that Shakespeare restates his denial of the conventional norms about gender identities.

Secondly, the lines also explicitly reflect the true feelings of the persona which are quite distant from sexual desires or lust. In fact these desires are left to women, who are and degraded by the persona. These feelings also have close links to Plato's understanding of true love and the nature of relationships. In order to comprehend Plato's views about love and relationships the appropriate reference would certainly be the *Phaedrus*. In the *Phaedrus* Plato clearly defines love and the motives behind all sexual and emotional desires. In order to justify the correlation between Sonnet 20 and Plato's views on love and relationships we should first relate Plato's definition of love:

So how shall we tell a lover from a non-lover? We must next bear in mind that in each of us there are two ruling and guiding forces whose lead we follow: one is our innate desire for pleasures, and the other is an acquired mode of thought, which aims for what is best...So when irrational desire rule's one's reasoned impulse to do right and is carried towards pleasure in beauty, and when this irrational desire has also been powerfully reinforced in its attraction towards physical beauty by the desires that are related to it, and has gained the upper hand thanks to this power, it is named after that very strength, and is called

love. (17)

The two forces that lead us can be described as the main impulses of our lives since as humans we are ruled by these impulses in different situations. The problem with these forces is that one of them only follows the desire for pleasure and ignores the reason. As a result of the acts of this impulse we cannot control our emotions or feelings and lose our senses. This loss of control is degraded by Plato since according to him true love is far more than sexual or irrational desires. That is the reason that Plato clearly suggests that we should gratify a non-lover to a lover since these desires and feelings are temporary and deceitful and thus they are far from reality. As Plato again states in *Phaedrus*, the lover who is ruled by the desire for pleasure is released after he satisfies his desires. Then he comprehends his real feelings towards the beloved. He understands that the thing that he sought was only sexual pleasure and thus he does not really love the person and this unpleasant awakening is described thoroughly in the *Phaedrus*:

And not only while his love continues is he mischievous and unpleasant, but when his love ceases he becomes a perfidious enemy of him on whom he showered his oaths and prayers and promises, and yet could hardly prevail upon him to tolerate the tedium of his company even from motives of interest. The hour of payment arrives, and now he is the servant of another master; instead of love and infatuation, wisdom and temperance are his bosom's lords; but the beloved has not discovered the change which has taken place in him, when he asks for a return and recalls to his recollection former sayings and doings; he believes himself to be speaking to the same person, and the other, not having the courage to confess the truth, and not knowing how to fulfil the

oaths and promises which he made when under the dominion of folly, and having now grown wise and temperate, does not want to do as he did or to be as he was before. And so he runs away and is constrained to be a defaulter; the oyster-shell has fallen with the other side uppermost—he changes pursuit into flight, while the other is compelled to follow him with passion and imprecation, not knowing that he ought never from the first to have accepted a demented lover instead of a sensible non-lover...(11)

In short it can be said that Plato does not appreciate the person that is completely controlled by the innate desires for pleasure. According to him this desire creates a kind of mask that conceals the true feelings and thoughts of the person. In this sense sonnet 20 also degrades the lovers that are under the control of lust and sexual desires. The final lines of the poem clearly reflect the view mentioned above.

But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,

Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure

The addressee who was created or painted by nature's hand only served for women's pleasure but the love that he deserves is concealed in the poet's soul. Therefore considering Plato's thoughts about love it can be claimed that the love of the poet is true love whereas the feelings of women are only controlled by their innate desires for pleasure.

In addition to that, the poet also reveals the fact that his love towards the addressee is a secret and this fact is also closely related to Plato's view of true love since in *Phaedrus* he states that a non-lover should be grateful to a lover since a relationship between a lover and his beloved should be experienced openly which is degrading for both sides.

Moreover a lover is bound to be found out. He will be seen by many people

trailing along after his beloved and making this his chief business, and so when he and his beloved are spotted talking to each other, people think they are together at that time because they have just satisfied their desires or are just about to. But it never even crosses their minds to criticize non-lovers for spending time together, because they realize that conversation is inevitable between friends or people enjoying themselves in some other way. (9)

However, the feelings of a non-lover cannot be spotted easily and thus according to Plato this fact should be gratified rather than an open relationship. The poem also gratifies this view by praising the secret love of the poet.

Chapter 3

It can be claimed that the sonnets which were discussed in the previous chapters included important implications concerning the deceptive nature of appearances and the realities that are hidden behind them. In this sense some of Shakespeare's sonnets clearly reflect an important aspect of Platonic philosophy; however, the contradiction between reality and appearance is only one side of Plato's profound philosophical ideas. Another important aspect of Platonic philosophy is that it also questions the concepts of permanent and temporary. These two concepts are closely related to the Platonic perception of reality and appearance since according to Plato unlike the sensible world, in the world of ideas everything is permanent. The reflections or copies of the intelligible objects or beings are all temporary and can easily change their false nature. Plato asserts that an important characteristic of the intelligible objects is that they are all permanent and do not change. But objects and beings do not change depending on different variations like time and space; however, their copies are easily affected by those variations. In other words the value of the objects and beings is also determined by their nature. A temporary or changeable object or being has less value than a permanent and unchangeable one, and while the value of the former may be contingent, the value of the latter is essential.

In terms of Platonic philosophy the value of any object is closely related to its distance from reality and permanence or durability since any object or being that is far from reality is temporary and thus it is considered as worthless. Therefore it can be claimed that the Platonic perception of value has very close links to the modern perception of the same concept. In fact throughout history most economic and social systems benefited this simple perception to create a system of value. The common usage of enduring metals like gold or silver may

provide a clear example to prove this assertion. The main reason for the widespread usage of gold or silver is that as metals they strongly resist the deterioration caused by time and/or external factors. These metals continued to be the primary representative of unchanging value for centuries but, as the interaction between different economies and cultures intensified and economic systems became more complicated a dramatic change in value systems occurred. The rise of the middle class in Europe started an irreversible change in social and economic lives that consequently formed a new system of values. The new economic system introduced new representations of value like contracts, notes or cheques; however, these new vehicles of values were quite different from their previous equivalences. First of all they were mostly papers and thus compared to gold or silver they were more fragile. Secondly they simply represented the promises of people which meant that their value was mainly dependent on the will of a single person or an institution. Therefore the value of these contracts or notes could only be meaningful if the relevant person or institution kept their promises. Lastly and most importantly they were considered as the representation of the traditional means of value like gold or silver. In other words they were only the copies of gold or silver. As a result these new representations of value could be associated with deception or the notion of the temporary. In this regard the alternative means of value could easily change since they were dependent on different contingencies and in Platonic terms they can be considered as the reflection of the “real” means of value like gold or silver.

In connection with this, the concept of value was also an important matter of debate for Shakespeare. In many of his sonnets Shakespeare questioned the concept by using terms related to economic and financial system of the era. All the questions concerning the idea of value are also related to Platonism and its perception of value since, just like Plato,

Shakespeare also focuses on the changing and unchanging nature of means of value. Therefore it can be claimed that another aspect of the sonnets that has parallelisms with Platonic philosophy is the concept of value. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the different concepts of values that are questioned in some of Shakespeare's sonnets and to the parallelisms between the sonnets and Plato's ideas.

In Shakespeare's sonnets the idea of permanent and temporary value is the key to revealing the parallelisms between Shakespeare's and Plato's views. As mentioned above, metals such as gold and silver can be associated with the permanent values and in some of the sonnets there are clear implications of this assumption. In Shakespeare's sonnets the intrinsic or permanent means of value is symbolized by different terms like "jewels" or "treasure". For instance the word "jewel", which will be discussed in detail in the following pages of this chapter with other examples of the unchangeable means of values, is repeated in several sonnets and it is clearly associated with objects with permanent values. Similarly the concepts that are related to temporary means of value are also discussed and questioned in relation to Platonic perceptions. The new economic terms of the Elizabethan England which were being replaced with the conventional means of values such as bonds or contracts can be found in many different lines of different sonnets.

The remarkable point concerning questions and implications related to the intrinsic and extrinsic means of value is that Shakespeare does not merely point out the differences between these two contrasting concepts. In most of the sonnets the poet also deepens the argument by questioning the arbitrary nature of all means of value. Therefore Shakespeare does not simply echo Platonic ideas concerning the concept of value. In this sense the poet challenges both the conventional and new means of value and reveals the relativity of the

concept of value.

In this context the economic and social structure of the Renaissance also embraced different forms of value and the new representatives of value could be classified as the ones that had a temporary nature. As mentioned in the previous chapters the Renaissance was a period of turbulence and dramatic changes and thus the economic means of value also underwent a dramatic change and throughout the period the concept of value lost its old meaning and like every other concept it was questioned by different sections of the society.

In order to comprehend the differences between the conventional and new means of value that developed during the Renaissance, an overview of the economic structure of the era may be useful. As mentioned above, in the Renaissance the economic structure of Western Europe underwent a dramatic change; however, the important point about this change is that the change was not an abstract or theoretical one. The transformation affected the practical lives of ordinary people and the whole market gained a new face that was quite different from the old one. Therefore the economical terms became a part of the social lives of ordinary people and this may be one of the main reasons that Shakespeare used so many economical terms in his sonnets and plays. The change in the economy of the Europe is closely related to social and political turbulence that lasted for hundreds of years. One of the most important factors that triggered the collapse of the economic system can be the sudden decrease in the population of Western Europe. One of the main reasons for the depopulation was plague. As Harry A. Miskimin states in *The economy of later Renaissance Europe, 1460-1600*:

Foremost among the catastrophes that Europe had suffered in the century prior to 1450 was massive depopulation. Perhaps a third of the total population had perished as a result of the Black Death, or bubonic plague, whose first appearance in 1347-50

was reinforced and intensified by persistent recurrences at the national and local levels for more than a century. Normal demographic recovery through enhanced birthrates was impossible until the virulence of the plague subsided and immunity increased. As a result there is little doubt that the overall population of Europe was considerably smaller in the middle of the fifteenth century than it had been at the beginning of the fourteenth. (21)

The effects of this dramatic depopulation on the economy were quite harsh and influenced all segments of the society deeply. In economic terms the results were even more striking since the market lacked essential elements of a functional economy. In the same work Harry A. Miskimin clearly depicts the general panorama of the economy in the following lines:

Loss of close to one-third of the population of Europe during the latter half of the fourteenth century could not fail to cause severe economic problems and major dislocations. Population decline led naturally to a reduction in demand for basic foods, but because farmers could concentrate their efforts on the best and most productive land, the output of agricultural commodities did not decline in proportion to the reduction in demand. Prices for food grains fell as bread became relatively more plentiful and the earlier pressures on agricultural resources abated. Land grew cheap as labor to work it became scarce and as the bullion price of the product declined. Finding that they paid relatively less for necessities, consumers enlivened their diets with luxuries; meat, butter, fish, wine, and more exotic spices were consumed at ever lower levels of the social scale. Landholders everywhere attempted to adjust their production to the new market conditions. Land-extensive forms of agriculture such as sheep raising became more prevalent as labor prices rose, and specialized cash crops

such as dyestuffs, barley for brewing, and livestock both for dairy production and for direct meat consumption were substituted for bread grains in an effort to meet the realities of the altered demands of a depopulated Europe. (21)

The depiction of Mikinin obviously reveals some of the several reasons for the revolutionary change of European economy.

After the end of this decline in the population, a period of recovery began and this period embraced a positive momentum in the economy. The industrial and technological developments, urbanization of the population, and the sudden expansion in mining are some important factors that accelerated the momentum mentioned above. However, one of the most important factors of this momentum can be considered as the discovery of the riches of the New World. The discoveries did not only mean a sudden influx of precious metals and stones but also triggered a chain of social and political events. Concepts like colonization, and the beginning of an organized slave trade gained new dimensions. However the arrival of huge amounts of precious metals and stones was obviously the most significant element of the recovery of European economy. Mikinin states that:

The combined output of the central European and new American mines quickly ended the prolonged silver famine of the later middle ages, and when the depleted stocks were replaced, the phenomena associated with that depletion waned and long-established trends were reversed. The secular price decline of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries changed course and prices began to recover. (36)

This sudden rush for precious metal and stones had a profound impact on the different segments of society and the reflections of this impact can be found in many different literary works. The reflections mostly had negative connotations since the impact of this change was

mostly negative for society. The abundance of resources resulted in a perception of widespread greed and selfishness and thus there are several examples of literary criticisms concerning the selfishness and greed of people. For instance in *Utopia* Thomas Moore depicts an alternative system of value which can be described as the anti-thesis of our system. In this system the value of gold or silver is not determined by humans but by nature:

Man's folly hath enhanced the value of gold and silver because of their scarcity; whereas nature, like a kind parent, hath freely given us the best things, such as air, earth, and water, but hath hidden from us those which are vain and useless.

Furthermore the Utopians use precious metals such as gold or silver only for practical purposes:

They (the Utopians) eat and drink from earthen ware or glass, which make an agreeable appearance though they be of little value; while their chamber-pots and close-stools are made of gold and silver; and this not only in their public halls, but in their private houses. Of the same metals they also make chains and fetters for their slaves; on some of whom, as a badge of infamy, they hang an ear-ring of gold, and make others wear a chain or a coronet of the same metal. And thus they take care, by all possible means, to render gold and silver of no esteem. Hence it is, that while other countries part with these metals as though one tore-out their bowels, the Utopians would look upon giving-in all they had of them, when occasion required, as parting only with a trifle, or as we should esteem the loss of a penny.

The quotation clearly questions the system of value which was gradually shaping the society by, as Moore sees it, degenerating most of the moral values. Just like Thomas Moore, Shakespeare also questioned the system in the *Tempest*. Gonzalo's vision of a utopian island

also rejects the dominance of artificial values on society:

And were I king on't, what would I do?...
I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all:
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty,--...
All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour; treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people...
I would with such perfection govern, sir,
To excel the golden age.

Gonzalo's speech is considered to be a clear reference to Michele de Montaigne's essay named "Of Cannibals" and Montaigne is also another important writer of the era. Therefore it can be said that the utopian or ideal society that were imagined by thinkers or writers like Montaigne, Shakespeare and Moore proposed alternative means of values and rejected the conventional meaning of the same concept; however, as mentioned above another important matter of debate was that the existing means of value like the precious metals or stones were also being replaced with artificial alternatives like contracts and letters. Therefore the debate on the means of value was carried into a new platform and the meaning of the new concepts was also discussed in several literary works.

In his sonnets Shakespeare does not merely discuss the means of value as a defective concept that brings about the deterioration of our moral lives. The concept of value is discussed from different perspectives and these multiple perceptions embrace both the question of the general meaning of value and also concentrate on the differences between various forms of it. Although Gonzalo's utopia rejects all means of value that people use, in several sonnets Shakespeare considers them as a significant element of our lives. For instance in Sonnet 146 the reader can find a term that is related to the concept of value in almost every single line. The constant occurrences of economical or financial terms in the sonnet can be interpreted as the reflection of Shakespeare's intense concentration on the meaning and function of value. The sonnet is also significant since it embraces the conventional terms related to economy and finance to discuss the 'value' of our soul or inner qualities. The first four lines of the sonnet have clear implications concerning the terms related to economical values and the value of human soul.

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
These rebel pow'rs that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay

The terms like poor, costly, or dearth are noticeable references to economical terms of value and, as mentioned above, they are used to frame the qualities of persona's soul. However the first important implication of this assumption is that these lines echo Platonic ideas concerning the conflict between reality and appearance. The soul of the poet is considered as the true source of reality covered by a deceitful body. The persona questions this deceitful shell and points out that the effort to conceal your identity behind an unreal camouflage is

useless since our body is temporary. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapters the word ‘painting’ plays a significant role concerning Plato’s ideas about reality and appearance. These lines also suggest that our true identity can be “painted” and thus create an untrustworthy image that is far from reality. Therefore it can be claimed that Sonnet 146 has also clear parallelisms with Plato’s ideas; however, as mentioned above the distinctive mark of this sonnet is that the parallelisms are reflected with some economical and financial terms. These terms also carry implications of the concepts of temporary and permanent. For instance the fourth line indicates that the body is painted and covered with a ‘costly’ gay appearance but in the first line the soul of the poet is described as ‘poor’. Therefore it can be claimed that the sonnet clearly implies that the soul which is permanent and real is far from a temporary bearer of value but the body which is temporary and far from reality is covered with impermanent means and value and thus has an ‘expensive’ outlook. For this reason it can be assumed that Shakespeare discusses the Platonic perception of the conflict between temporary and permanent by using economical terms of value which constitute a perfect base to question the conflict.

The following lines of the poem also raise the same argument using different economical terms of value.

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body’s end?

The repetition of the word ‘cost’ is the first point to focus on since the word is again used to describe the value that has been spent on the body. The value that has been wasted on this

fading mansion is seen as useless and unnecessary in view of the fact that the body is fading like all other temporary appearances. By using the word 'fade' Shakespeare once again puts the emphasis on the momentary nature of the body and also strengthens this argument by using the word 'lease' which can also be considered as an economical term. This specific word strengthens the assumption above because something that is leased has definitely a temporary and unstable character. In addition to that in the eighth line of the poem, the poet also emphasizes the temporary nature of our body by questioning the end of it and continues the poem by indicating that the soul has a lasting and permanent nature.

Another example of the same argument can be found in Sonnet 4 which also focuses on the temporary nature of the body.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And, being frank, she lends to those are free.

First of all the abundance of economical terms in these lines clearly indicates that the sonnet deals with the idea of value since there are at least one word that can be associated with economy in every single line. For instance the word "unthrifty" in the first line and the word "spend" have economical connotations. In addition to that the following lines also include words like "legacy" or "bequest" to express that just like economical values the beauty is also lent by nature. In this context just like in the Sonnet 146 this sonnet also implies that our body is temporary and thus has a limited time. As stated in the third line our body is only lent from nature and the word "lend", which has a similar meaning with lease, is also a financial term. The rest of the poem also embraces some specific terms related to economy. For example the

seventh line of the poem includes a word which directly reminds the reader of financial issues.

Profitless usurer, why dost thou use

So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?

The poet defines the addressee as a profitless 'usurer' because the investment of the addressee is simply based on a temporary and deceitful body. In short in certain sonnets Shakespeare expands the argument of Platonic perception of reality and appearance by using economical and financial terms and some means of value.

However, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter in some of Shakespeare's sonnets this argument is deepened by categorizing the means of value. In the first category there are terms that can be considered as the echoes of conventional means of value such as precious stones or metals and the second category consists of terms that are considered to be the reflections of these conventional means of value like contracts or bonds. For instance in Sonnet 87 the reader can find several terms that belong to the latter category and considering the theme of the poem it can be claimed that these terms are related to the temporary and deceitful values since the poem points out a problem of false value. In the first three lines of the poem the poet makes a clear implication with reference to the extrinsic means of value:

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,

And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.

The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;

The touching farewell of the poet plainly indicates an imbalance between the values of the couple and the 'estimate' of the beloved's value is identified with the 'charter' of her worth.

The charter, which can be associated with a contract, reflects the value of the beloved and thus

it is only a copy of the real value. The contract, which ‘releases’ the beloved, is only a piece of paper that can easily be manipulated by different variables. In these three lines Shakespeare clearly questions the extrinsic terms of value that are introduced by the new economic system and the lines clearly imply that the estimate of people or other things is determined by deceitful or arbitrary concepts like charters or contracts. The following lines of the poem strengthen these assumptions since there are similar financial terms indicating the same perception:

My bonds in thee are all determinate.

For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,

And for that riches where is my deserving?

The first significant indication of the lines above is that the value of the poet is determined by bonds and this supposition is a clear reference to the deceitful means of value. In addition to that it is also an allusion to the relativity of a person’s value because the addresser’s value is decided by another person’s value which is also subjective and illusory. Therefore it can be claimed that in the lines above Shakespeare is questioning the concept of value by using references to temporary and extrinsic forms of value and indicates that these means are questionable since they are representatives of permanent or intrinsic values. Besides the value of former means like bonds or contracts attain their value from another subjective source like the sign or seal of a person. In short the addresser of the poem does not deserve the riches of the addressee because his value is less than her value but the value of the addresser is granted by the addressee and this clearly suggests that all means of value discussed in the poem are quite subjective and relative.

The final lines of the poem support the assumptions above because in these lines the

persona again refers to extrinsic instruments of value by using similar concepts:

Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:

In sleep a king, but waking no such matter

The significant point in these lines is that it describes a dream and a dream is considered to be the opposite of reality therefore the value attributed to the addresser can be considered as unreal and illusory. This illusory perception causes a serious misjudgment and an awakening or reconsidering process has proved that the estimations about the value of the addresser were not correct at all. Therefore it can be claimed that these lines of the sonnet also point out an overvaluation and indicate the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic means of value.

The sonnets that discuss similar questions by using intrinsic means of value are also significant since they not only compare two opposite types of value but also question the concept of value from a broader perspective. As mentioned, above, terms that can be associated with permanent means of value generally refer to precious stones or metals. For instance in the first lines of Sonnet 52 Shakespeare uses the term “treasure” to indicate the intrinsic means of value since treasure is generally considered to be a collection of precious stones and metals. The lines clearly point out the value of the treasure:

So am I as the rich whose blessed key

Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,

The which he will not every hour survey,

For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.

Although the key that the poet holds can open the lock of the treasure he does not unlock the treasure frequently because he does not want to ruin this rare valuable fortune. One of the most important implications of the treasure is that it is considered as the source of a rare pleasure since this connotation indicates that treasure, which is an intrinsic term of value,

cannot be easily obtained and is a lasting and permanent means of value. The following lines of the poem strengthen this assumption by using several similes referring to rare things or events.

Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placèd are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.

Seldom and rare nature of the feasts are used to restate the significance of permanent or intrinsic terms of value and the following lines once again echo the same means of value by using metaphors of precious stones and jewels.

To sum up it can be claimed that Plato's philosophy concerning the nature of reality and appearance was reinterpreted by William Shakespeare in a different context. Shakespeare questioned these concepts by discussing the meaning and nature of value in some of his sonnets and plays. The discussion leads us to the idea that there are basically two different terms of value that Shakespeare focuses in his sonnets. These values can be classified as permanent and temporary instruments of value. In Platonic terms these two concepts are the extensions of reality and appearance since the temporary values have a deceitful nature and change just like the appearances but on the contrary, permanent values are associated with reality as they resist to time, space and/or different variables that change the nature of things or beings. In this context Shakespeare, just like Plato, argues these terms in relation to their distance to reality because objects that are closer to reality are more valuable whereas the ones that are far from reality are considered as worthless. In this context these sonnets that are discussed in this chapter introduce some important concepts that are related to economic

terms of value and these concepts are related to the permanent and temporary means of value. Among these terms there are conventional instruments of value like precious stones and metals and there are also some terms that were new and introduced with the new economic system that Shakespeare witnessed. In this sense Shakespeare implies in different sonnets that new terms of values are all temporary and deceitful. In addition to that he also discussed that the intrinsic forms of value are also relative and can be questioned, since their values are determined by subjective circumstances. In short Shakespeare put the emphasis on the relativity of every single form of value that we use in our lives and tried to imply that they are all created by other relative and temporary conditions.

Conclusion

To review what has been discussed in the thesis a general review of the chapters will be useful. In the first chapter of the thesis I tried to reveal the connection between the sonnets Plato's philosophical ideas concerning the conflict between reality and appearance. The main purpose of this chapter can be described as an attempt to show the parallelisms between Plato's theory of forms and Shakespeare's views about this theory. In order to point out these parallelisms one of the best sonnets can be considered as the Sonnet Fifty-Three since the sonnet embraces clear references to the allegory of cave in which Plato explained his theory of forms. Specific words like “shadow” or “painted” are related to the allegory of cave since they refer to the story from different aspects. The true nature of the addressee is the first thing that is questioned in the sonnet and this question can be interpreted as an implication to Plato's theory of forms since Plato also questioned the true “source” of objects or beings in order to find the true or real object or being. There are also various implicit arguments to Plato's theory and all these implications prove that Shakespeare was greatly influenced by Plato's philosophy; however, the distinctive part of this sonnet is that there are some lines which point out to the fact that Shakespeare's perception about reality and appearances is different in some aspects from Platonic perception. The main difference is that Shakespeare also questions the “substance” of the addressee and does not consider it as an unchanging and permanent phenomenon. Especially the implication that the substance of the addressee may come from a deceptive source like an artist or theater can be a good example for Shakespeare's perception of Platonic views.

The first chapter also dealt with the nature of art and artists in relation to Plato's ideas about the same subjects. The concepts of art and artists are also an essential aspect of Plato's

philosophy and his theory of forms and thus the parallelisms between Shakespeare's and Plato's views about art and artists. In this context Shakespeare again questions the ideas of Plato concerning this subject and reflects his thoughts about the same topic.

The second chapter of the thesis mainly discusses the same subject from a different perspective. The main concern of this chapter is the question of gender identity and its parallelisms to Plato's theory of forms. Like the previous chapter this chapter also focuses on the same conflict, the conflict between reality and appearance, but in the center of this chapter the concepts of male and female identities are questioned. Questioning these identities is quite significant since before and during the Renaissance the concepts are considered to be unchangeable and permanent aspects of human identity and were hardly discussed as questioning them was considered as a taboo. However, William Shakespeare challenged this conventional perception and implied that all identities can be deceitful and misleading.

In order to prove this assumption the second chapter discussed Sonnet Twenty which included many references to gender identities. The implications concerning the natures of different genders proved that Shakespeare viewed them as appearances that are not permanent and implied that they were created by social norms which are relative and temporary. Throughout the second chapter there are also other implications in different lines or works of Shakespeare that can be associated with Plato's theory of forms; however, the core of this chapter is the idea that just like all other “sensible” objects or beings our genders include ambiguities. These ambiguities lead us to the fact that Shakespeare implied that our gender can be considered as a “role” that we play throughout our lives.

The final chapter dealt with a different concept but once again focused on the same conflict between reality and appearance. In this chapter I mainly focused on the Sonnet

Eighty-Seven since the sonnet embraces some financial terms that are related to different forms of value. The different terms of value were discussed in relation to their references concerning Plato's theory of forms. At the beginning of the chapter the forms of value that are considered to be temporary and the ones that are thought to have permanent values were explained and discussed separately and then I tried to reveal the implications of Shakespeare about the relative nature of all means of value. This assumption showed us that Shakespeare did not simply repeat Plato's theory of forms but raised a different question because Plato put a precise distinction between the temporary and permanent objects or beings. However Shakespeare implied in this sonnet that all forms of value can be considered as deceptive and temporary because they are the production of different variations that are also temporary and relative.

Although these chapters discuss different subjects from various perspectives, they have a common concern that binds them together. The question they deal with is as old as human history and as I have stated in the introduction part it has been a matter of debate for many thinkers and philosophers. However in these chapters I tried to reveal the well-known ideas of Plato, whose answer to this old question is still being discussed, and tried to reveal the bridge between Shakespeare's sonnets and his Philosophy since in different sonnets Shakespeare handled the concepts of reality and appearance and its variations with specific references to Plato's philosophy. Therefore it can be claimed that the discussion surrounding the concept of reality is also echoed in these chapters.

The aim of using different sonnets with different subjects is to show that Shakespeare's reception of reality is quite profound and not limited to conventional subjects. For instance in the second chapter the discussion of gender identity and its various aspects shows us that Shakespeare challenged a concept that is considered as a taboo by many people. The third

chapter also proves that the poet was able to point out to the fact that even the most solid terms of value can be deceitful and temporary. In addition to that Shakespeare did not limit himself to Plato's view about reality and appearance when he challenged these topics and constructed his own views which can be considered as revolutionary since they discussed the topics that are still considered as impermissible by some segments of the society.

Throughout the chapters there are also some parts of Shakespeare's plays that share relevant parts to the topics discussed in the sonnets. Therefore it can be claimed that the topics that are questioned in my thesis are an essential part of Shakespeare's works and not limited only to some specific sonnets. This interaction between the sonnets and the plays of Shakespeare reveals that the discussion was a major concern for the poet throughout his life as an artist.

The idea that all beings and things have masks that cover their true natures can be considered as the core of this thesis, and this subject is questioned in all the chapters. Therefore the reality and its various appearances are discussed in different parts of my thesis. The first main assumption about this topic is that appearances are mostly deceitful. The “sensible” objects or beings are far from their real or true identities and thus they mislead us with their false nature. All three chapters include specific objects or beings that are hidden behind some sort of a mask.

The second assumption about the same subject is that all appearances are temporary and thus their nature may change depending on different variations. This fact strengthens the idea that the appearances are unreliable and thus one should try to reach or understand the true nature of these appearances in order to comprehend the hidden realities. As explained in all chapters even the most concrete or durable object or being may have a temporary nature and

alter its appearance through contrasting variations.

Considering these two assumptions one can infer that the opposite of appearances, which is considered to be realities, are permanent and trustworthy; however, as discussed in all chapters William Shakespeare challenged this assumption to a certain extent and implied that realities can be a result of different appearances. Unlike Plato, Shakespeare questioned the concepts that are considered as the 'source' or 'true nature' of beings or objects. By questioning these concepts Shakespeare implied that the concepts of reality and appearances are relative and they may both be a matter of debate. As a result of this, the sonnets that are discussed in my thesis include implications that both question the appearances of objects or beings and realities that are hidden behind them.

In this context the sonnets contain clear references to Plato's philosophy concerning the theory of forms. Some of the references were so clear that they included specific words that are used in Plato's works. For instance the word "shadow" is used in different parts of the allegory of cave which is a major part of Plato's well known work the *Republic*. The references clearly prove that William Shakespeare was influenced by the ideas of Plato and carried this influence into his works. However, the sonnets that are discussed in my thesis prove that Shakespeare also questioned the ideas of Plato and had a different perspective from Plato. Unlike Plato, Shakespeare also questioned the idea of an intelligible object or being that is the permanent source of different temporary appearances or reflections.

One of the main reasons that Shakespeare challenged Plato's philosophical thoughts about the true nature of forms can be the fact that he was a man of the Renaissance. As discussed in the introduction to my thesis the Renaissance was a search for alternative forms of cultural and intellectual authority and thus the conventional ways of explaining different

phenomenon became a matter of debate for the thinkers of the era. William Shakespeare was also a skeptical poet who broadened the conventional concepts or debates by asking or evoking new questions.

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