

*A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
 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,
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth:
 A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
 Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
 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.
 *But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.**

If there is a real break in the sequence, it is more likely to be seen as coming after Sonnet 19. The speaker's battle with time disappears (for the time being), and his attention turns to the youth, who is now seen as a sensual attraction, not as someone needing a prod to marry a woman and beget children. The new strength of this relation is evident in the controversial description of the youth as "the master mistress of my passion." The exact meaning is doubtful; the strength of the bond is not. What is also clear is that the male addressed is feminine of face and gentle of heart, and he is not fickle like the false women of the world. His eye is brighter but not given to flirtatious glances; it enhances whatever it looks upon. He is masculine in complexion and physique ("hue," l. 7); he commands the gazes of men and stirs women's hearts. By the end of the octave, the eye is established as a dominant thread drawn from Sonnet 1 (l. 5). As the sonnets progress, the eye will be associated more and more with false appearances as opposed to the truth of the heart.

The sestet tells a miniature tale of the youth's creation: he was first intended to be a woman by Nature, but she fell in love with him and added a penis to him "for woman's pleasure" (l. 13). There is an obvious pun in "pricked thee out" (l. 13), which would not be

offensive to Elizabethans. The tone here is quite comic: the speaker says that the new addition of the penis "defeated" (l. 11), that is, defrauded him of any sexual connection.

And so for the speaker the matter is settled; he has the love of friendship, the women have the youth's sexual ability to give them physical pleasure. It should be noted that the word *treasure* (l. 14) was used at the time to signify the genitalia. By the end of this sonnet, sexuality has become a thread of major importance. The speaker has come to admit to himself and to the youth what his real feelings are. His behavior is another matter.