

SONNET CXXXV

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*,
And *Will* to boot, and *Will* in over-plus,
More than enough am I that vexed thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine,
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine:
The sea all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store,
So thou being rich in *Will* add to thy *Will*,
One will of mine to make thy large *Will* more.
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill,
Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

The important thing is to recognize that this Sonnet is addressed by the poet to the Guide. The poet refers to the Guide as “no unkind” and to himself as “no fair”. Let’s recall that “fair, kind, and true” are the three parts of the evolutionary triad. In this way Shakespeare indicates that the poet remains an incongruent part of the triad. In his interaction with the Black Lady, the poet has breached proper conduct. Now, he pleads with the Guide for his forgiveness.

The poet starts to understand the difference between “her wish” and “thy Will”. There is a subtle but a significant difference. In the context of the Sonnet, the “wish” is expressed by her, i.e., the Black Lady. It applies to the poet’s sensual desires. The “Will”, on the other hand, applies to the supreme priority that is represented by the intention and the actions of the Guide (“whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will”). This meaning is further emphasized by the italicisation of the word “Will”. The Guide’s “will” is to make extra ordinary efforts that are compliant with the supreme priority (“and Will to boot, and Will in over-plus”). The poet admits that his behaviour was much below the Guide’s expectations (“am I that vexed thee still”). Now he asks the Guide for one more chance (“to thy sweet will making addition thus”). Namely, the poet asks whether it is possible to invoke the Guide’s evolutionary functionality and erase the poet’s previous mistakes (“wilt thou whose will is large and spacious, not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine”). How is it, asks the poet, that others’ actions seem to be acceptable, while his efforts are disapproved (“shall will in others seem right gracious, and in my will no fair acceptance shine”). The poet argues that even Nature, in her abundance, grants benefits to all (“the sea all water, yet receives rain still, and in abundance addeth to his store”). Therefore, the poet expects that the Guide should follow the example and override the poet’s free but misleading will, and in this way benefit himself (“so thou, being rich in Will add to thy Will, one will of mine, to make thy large Will more”). The poet implies that it is not right for the Guide to punish him (“let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill”). The poet hopes that the Guide’s mercy will allow him to continue the journey (“Think all but one, and me in that one Will”).

(Excerpt from “Shakespeare Sonnets or How heavy do I journey on the way” by Wes Jamroz)