



LOVE CONCEPTION IN “VENUS AND ADONIS” BY SHAKESPEARE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to show the reader about how Love conception is described and illustrated in Middle English with the help of the work Venus and Adonis by Shakespeare.

Love means feeling close to someone, having strong feelings for them, and being committed to them. Love means looking after, being close, keeping safe, liking someone, showing fondness, and having belief in them. People's feelings of love may become stronger or weaker and love can also be different from what it was before. It can make you feel very happy, excited, and satisfied. Sometimes it can even make you feel really good. But, it can also make you feel jealous or stressed out.¹

Love is an important feeling that some people think is very significant. Even though it has been studied a lot, we still don't know much about this behavior. Some scientists argue about whether love comes from our biology or our culture.²

Love is probably linked to both our body and the environment around us. Our own ideas about love can affect how we show and feel love, even though hormones and biology also play a role.

Researches are interested in ancient history because it helps them learn more about things they already know about. The idea of love is still important even after thousands of years. Love is related to stories from long ago, and it is also part of scientific studies. Long ago, people thought love made the universe. But now, we understand it in a different way. This thing caused many different and opposite ideas about love. This research papers shows how it is described love in Venus and Adonis

¹ Langeslag SJ, van Strien JW. [Regulation of Romantic Love Feelings: Preconceptions, Strategies, and Feasibility](#). *PLoS One*. 2016;11(8):e0161087. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0161087

² Karandashev V. [A Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love](#). *ORPC*. 2015;5(4):1-21. doi:10.9707/2307-0919.1135



In 1280, Jean de Meun wrote a story to teach men to stay close to the person they love. Most adaptations of the myth focused either on fate or the unusual gender roles, like Ronsard's version in 1563. Many writers noticed that it was interesting that Venus chased after Adonis because he seemed like a man with feminine qualities. Over time, people kept talking more about this idea, which resulted in the creation of Rachilde's Monsieur Venus in 1884. In that place, Adonis (a god) was shown as a man who looked a bit like a girl. This man was being chased by a woman who works in a shop that sells flowers. Adonis died and people in Elizabethan England found it interesting. Spencer wrote about it in Faerie Queene in 1590. The most well-known version of Venus and Adonis was written by William Shakespeare in 1593. People believe that Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis (1593) was his first published work.

The story about Adonis and Venus was very important for a long time. People made new versions of the myth after the classical period, and they used Ovid's version for ideas. Ovid said that Venus was kissing Cupid when an arrow accidentally hurt Venus's chest. Everyone knows that Cupid's arrows could make anyone fall in love, even the gods. When Venus was hit by the arrow, she saw Adonis and started to really love him. Venus left her old life and boyfriends to live in the forest with Adonis. "She chooses Adonis instead of heaven."

Venus knew that Adonis could die because he was not a God. They lived in the forest and hunted animals, but he could be attacked by dangerous creatures. Venus was scared of losing Adonis, so she told him to be careful of the dangerous animals in the forest. But Adonis didn't listen and tried to fight a wild boar that came at him. Venus was very scared and sad when she found out that her favorite Adonis was dead. Venus was very sad and shouted loudly because she missed her bellowed one. „Adonis, I will always remember my sadness for you. Every year, I will pretend that you have died again to show how much I mourn for you”. His blood will turn into a flower. Persephone, you made Menthe smell like mint by changing his body. Venus put nectar on the blood and made a flower that was the same color as Adonis' blood. This plant is called Anemone.

A long time ago, a woman named Myrrha was punished for not praying to Venus. A scholar named Apollodorus said that she was cursed to desire her own father. Three bad things happen: Venus is angry with Myrrha because she wants to have bad love with her own family, God Adonis is killed by a boar, and Venus is very sad about his death. These bad things make a triangle of pain. Myrrha was Pygmalion's granddaughter. Pygmalion had loved a statue. This is what Apollodorus said. Venus gave the child to Persephone, who promised to take care of and protect them. Adonis became very handsome when he grew up. Persephone loved him and did not want to give him back to Venus, even though she asked for Zeus' help. The leader of the gods said Adonis had to be in the Underworld with Persephone for three months, then he'd be with Venus for three months, and for the rest of the time, he'd be alone. But Adonis decided to spend his last moments with Venus.

This story was written in verse and it showed Adonis as a person who thinks he is better than others and doesn't want to talk to women. Venus likes Adonis' looks and wants him to be hers so much that she comes to earth. Adonis doesn't want to be with the goddess. She really wants to kiss him, but he won't let her. After some things happened, Adonis fell for Venus. Venus saw a vision that told her Adonis would die. She begged him not to go hunting. Adonis



went away despite warnings, and the following day Venus found him dead. Adonis bled on the flowers around him and a white and purple flower grew where he died. "By this the boy that by her side lay kill'd Was melted like a vapour from her sight, And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd, A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white, Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood."³

Many people have criticized this adaptation for making Venus seem like she only cares about relationship and is not a real person with feelings. A long time ago, some people in Greece thought that women could not control their desire to have relationship. This idea is still around today. Many smart people have supported Shakespeare's poem by explaining its most disputed sections in a new way.

In Venus and Adonis, love is shown as being like lust, which is a strong and natural feeling that people can't always control. One can think of love and lust as alike, and say that love is just as irrational as lust. In the story Venus and Adonis, love doesn't make sense.

Venus and Adonis is a poem about love and desire. To make sense, love needs some amount of thinking. Freud said that people like things because it makes them feel good, and they don't always think about what might happen later. One can say that liking someone's body doesn't have a logical reason because it happens automatically without thinking. Since Venus is a human, it makes sense to think she follows this too. It seems like she only loves Adonis in a way and doesn't admit to loving him in any other way. This may mean her love is not reasonable. She tries to make him interested in her but doesn't hold back, even when he doesn't seem interested. She pushes him around and seems very passionate, but it doesn't necessarily mean she loves him. After Adonis died, Venus could only see that he looked different and was sad that he was not attractive anymore. She didn't think clearly and tried to get him to sleep with her, even though he didn't want to. The poem is very structured and disciplined with iambic pentameter. This is different from Venus' speech which is not structured and disciplined. So, it seems like she doesn't think about her love for Adonis carefully. Sheidley thinks that when the words are not put together well and the writing has a clear structure, it makes fun of Ovid's work and looks like satire. This is shown in the funny and enjoyable way that Venus gets more and more annoyed and talks a lot about many different things. After Adonis dies from the boar, Venus starts to speak more clearly. When she talks about how the death has changed how she sees the world, even though she sounds sad, it's obvious that she has put a lot of deep thinking into it. This means that in lines 1141-1164 of the story,⁴ Venus is angry with herself and the world because Adonis is gone. This shows that Venus loved Adonis for more than just his looks, but she only realized it after he died. Adonis is a regular person who thinks about things carefully. He doesn't want to be with Venus because he cares more about intelligence than physical appearance. He thinks if he finds someone smart, he will also be attracted to them physically. This means that Adonis

³ [Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis 1165-70](#)

⁴ Freud, Sigmund, *On Metapsychology: The theory of psychoanalysis: Beyond the Pleasure Principle The Ego and the id and Other Works*. (Penguin, Hamondsworth, 1984)



loves in a logical way, while Venus, even though she is the Goddess of love, loves in an illogical way throughout the story. Love between Venus and Adonis doesn't fully make sense.

This essay talks about how love in "Venus and Adonis" is related to nature and how it affects the way Venus and Adonis feel about love. Copplia believes that wanting to have relationship is very important for humans. Because Adonis is not a god, we can assume that Venus also feels this way, since one of them follows these natural rules. Sheidley thinks Adonis was killed for not having babies with Venus. He said that Adonis said "no" to Venus and this is like saying "no" to nature. Because he did not have babies, nature punished him by killing him. Some people think that Adonis would have died anyway, even if he had slept with Venus, because he had already fulfilled his purpose. We can think that love makes sense if it helps follow natural rules. So, we can guess that the love between Venus and Adonis makes sense only when it follows the rules of nature.

Venus is shown like an animal while Adonis is quiet and careful. Venus acted very upset and tried to make Adonis like her, which makes it seem like she is more like an animal than Adonis. Venus says she is like a hunter who needs to eat or hunt until there's no more prey left, meaning love is just a basic need to live and have babies. Rebhorn says that pain can become beauty and a dead body can turn into a flower. He thinks that Adonis's death has brought new life, which was his purpose.⁵

In Venus and Adonis, love is shown as a strong desire, which is natural and cannot be controlled. We can think of love and lust as being the same. This means that love is also not rational, just like lust. The person telling the story says that Venus can't help but love. Venus talks about having relationship as if it's just a game, hoping to make Adonis like her. Saying that Venus thinks they are alike. This means that Venus represents having relationship and love, but she shows that love can be impulsive and reckless. Ovid's idea of love is different, as he sees it as logical, heavenly, and gentle. This shows us that the love between Venus and Adonis doesn't make sense.

Love and nature are linked, so love can be seen as smart and reasonable. Adonis shows that he loves himself a lot. He didn't want Venus to disrespect him, so he respected himself and didn't let her. When someone loves themselves too much, they might make choices that don't make sense. Even if someone tells them not to do something, they might still do it because of their self-love. This can cause them to see themselves in a way that isn't really true and make choices that are not smart. Adonis showed that he loves himself by saying "I am sad, but I need to leave now." This shows that Adonis wants to protect himself and stay alive. Dobler thinks that Adonis loves himself a lot. He says that Adonis may only love himself and not anyone else. Dobler also thinks that Adonis and Venus have a non-romantic love for each other. This is because Adonis only loves himself, so their love can't be romantic. We all need to love ourselves to survive. This means that loving yourself might make sense, but loving someone romantically might not always make sense. So, there are different types of love and some of them may be more reasonable than others.

⁵ Rebhorn, Wayne A., *Mother Venus: Temptation in Shakespeares Venus and Adonis*, (1978), 11.1



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