

TARTU UNIVERSITY NARVA COLLEGE
DIVISION of FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Sophia Yarkovskaya

**THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN ELIZABETH BARRET
BROWNING'S POEMS: SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE**

Bachelor's thesis

Supervisor: Niina Raud, *PhD, Lect.*

Narva 2013

PREFACE

Poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is a bright illustration of Victorian's era literature. The poetess is a distinctive example of a profound creative individuality. The topicality of the present research is explained by the significant influence of the "Sonnets from the Portuguese" on the Victorian English poetry. Up to the present day the *Sonnets* occupy one of the most considerable positions in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's art, and they are vivid examples of the reflection of the love story between Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning.

The aim of the present thesis is to reveal the meaning of the concept of love and its place in the *Sonnets* by analyzing the use of such lexical stylistic devices as metaphor and epithet.

The research paper consists of four parts: the Introduction, two chapters, and the Conclusion.

The Introduction is devoted to the history of writing of the collection of poems "Sonnets from the Portuguese", to their place in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry. A reference is made to the love story between two poets: Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning to support sonnets' analysis. The object of the analysis is described in the introduction and the choice of the poems for the analysis is justified.

Chapter I comprises a brief overview of critics' reviews with regard to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese." Moreover, the critical analysis of the sonnets is represented in this chapter. Chapter II is focused on the analysis of the selected poems from the *Sonnets* to present various aspects of the concept of love. The Conclusion sums up the results of the poems' analysis and the research.

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INTRODUCTION

"The sonnet is a highly compressed, constrained form which reflects Barrett's growing investment in silence both as inhibitor and sustainer of her art ".(Billone,2001: 533).

The conciseness and continence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnet afford "a slow arm of sweet compression", granting her art with a metaphor of quiet and sorrow. The *Sonnets from the Portugese* which were written in 1844, Elizabeth Barrett Browning inverted to wordless grief and a miss of "of women's voices in the British lyric tradition" (ibid).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning completely lives up to the first outstanding place among the poetess of England. The *Sonnets from the Portugese* have the same significance in the literature, as Shakespeare's Sonnets and Rossetti's sonnet cycle - *House of Life*. Browning's art is a peer of the utmost (Smith Manning, 1939:829).

The influence of Elizabeth's love for Robert was unavoidable. Her love should modify her life way and her poetry. *Sonnets from the Portugese* is only one work whose quality is excellent and value is a constant and inestimable. The poetess invited them during her courtship with Robert Browning, and first he knew about them when "one morning, early in 1847, Mrs. Browning stole quietly after breakfast into the room where her husband worked, thrust some manuscript into his pocket, and then hastily withdrew." An amazing reveal shown him the force of her deepness love (Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 2013: para 2).

The form of the sonnet had aided Browning to avoid redundant extravagancy. However, the rapture of her passion helped to indemnify her against the plane of the triteness. Firstly, the *Sonnets from the Portugese* were published privately as "Sonnets by E.B.B.", and just three years later they were released as the *Sonnets from the Portugese* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. "These forty-four sonnets, unequal as they are, make Elizabeth Browning's title to fame secure and go some way towards explaining, if not also justifying, the esteem of her contemporaries for her poetry" (Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 2013: para 3)

The *Sonnets from the Portugese* were written as a love story between young girl and the Portuguese poet- Luis Vaz de Camoëns. Browning did not desire to show her private feelings, that's why she hides her face behind a girl, who felt in love with a poet. Elizabeth did not wish to publish the Sonnets, but later she was agree to print them, when her husband insisted on it. Her first *Sonnets from the Portugese* started from the

distrust that the middle-aged woman could find the real love with a young and well-known poet. She was afraid of the marriage with him, she supposed that the woman who was invalid so long time, could not change her life so swift. She set a question to herself, could this young man perform all her needs. Her acceptance of his love and her adoption in a new emotions are reflected in her 43th sonnet, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." (Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Major works, 2005: para 1).

The love story between Barrett and Browning was started in 1845 from those famous correspondence. It was uncommonly, the letters do not make the perception of sentimental reading. This is a complicated, pensive and deeply emotional correspondence, in which both poets disassemble the hesitation and indecision that prevent to their closeness.

Elizabeth has the biggest single fear to be exorcised. She felt that Browning could be misleading himself, that he could fantasize his love to her, and this delusion of love is not enough for the middle-aged, invalid, and not so beautiful woman. She was older than he, it embarrassed her. When Browning could break up this wall of dubiety, their letters started to burn with a bright flame of passion (Hawlin 2002:22).

The result of the poet's correspondence was their first meeting on 20th of May in 1845. They married stealthily on 12th of September in 1846, at St. Marylebone Church. Those marriage took place after a year and three months of those correspondence, which consist of 572 letters, and 91 meetings (ibid:20).

Newlyweds took up one's residence in Florence in Casa Guide, which was their the base of life. The Brownings travelled a lot in Europe, especially in Italy and France. In 1849 those only son- Robert Wiedemann was born (Elizabeth Barrett Browning-née Barrett, 2013: para 7).

In these time Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Mrs. Martin about her only lover, her husband: "I admire such qualities as he has—fortitude, integrity. I loved him for his courage in adverse circumstances which were yet felt by him more literally than I could feel them. Always he has had the greatest power over my heart, because I am of those weak women who reverence strong men." (Esther Lombardi, Love and the Brownings: Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 2013: para 3).

The marriage between Barrett and Browning was entirely happy. Perhaps, they were different in "spiritualism", in which Elizabeth had trust, but no disagreement ever interrupted their ideal attachment and happiness. Elizabeth Barrett Browning died on the 30th of June 1861. Later, in 1866, her husband published a volume of selections of Elizabeth's works (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 2012: para 10).

The two significant poets had fallen in love, those marriage was full of a vivid of emotional colors, and they both wrote the better part of those poetry. This love depended on the emotional dynamic of those writing in 1850s (Hawlin 2002:20).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning is one and only poetess in English Victorian's era literature. Her vital spark was predictable and unenlivened till the acquaintanceship with the poet - Robert Browning. It seemed impossible, but a miracle burst into her "loveless room" like a spring's flavor with the first breath of a tender wind. This love story is unique in literary world. The "Sonnets from the Portuguese" are the fruits of this immortal love. It was a splendid gift to her husband; it was the greatest present for the romantic literature.

This is the reason to choose the present topic for the research. This research paper is dedicated to the concept of love by dint of analysis of selected sonnets. How the poetess perceives love and how she reflects it in her *Sonnets from the Portugese* – these are the research questions.

The love story between two famous poets: Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in this research is the most significant aid for the analysis and aim's achievement. The *Sonnets from the Portugese* were written during the Browning's marriage, in the ages of sunshine and love in her fate.

The present paper basing on critical reviews reveals extent to which Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portugese* and the concept of love has been analyzed. On the whole, the research is aimed to verify the hypothesis that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portugese* reveal the concept of love as "a universe of its own where lovers are one inseparable thing" by using metaphors and epithets.

CHAPTER I

"SONNETS OF THE PORTUGUESE" IN CRITICAL REVIEWS

The English love poetry in majority is associated with the words from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." The collection of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* could be represented differently; it depends on a pearl of lyrical oratory, a sentimental extravagancy, or a weary cliché. They went through a full cycle of literary reception; they were Elizabeth Browning's masterwork. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* were glorified as "the noblest [sonnets] ever written," and were accepted as a main work. Despite critics' opinions *Sonnets from the Portuguese* took the place of one of the foremost collections in English love poetry (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Critical Evaluation, 2011: para 1).

The criticism of sentimentalism has some reasonableness prosecutions. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* were written during Elizabeth's passionate courtship with Robert Browning. William Wordsworth suggested that poetry should be calm, but not in a case of Browning's sonnets, which were in impact of her emotions, because of her love and restless, which were mirrored in her art. She never planned to publish her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, that's why they were brightly opposite to the sonnets those of later time. In 1860 review in *The Southern Literary Messenger* evidenced that poetess was writing in a style which was against poetic display of emotions. Eventually, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are unique among love sonnets, because they were written in emotional freedom of language, by a poet to a poet (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Critical Evaluation, 2011: para 2).

"Critics have said her rhymes are "inadmissible", "eccentric", "illegitimate", "slovenly false", "vicious", "feeble and commonplace", "careless and perverse", "painful", "really shocking", and that "few, if any, poets have sinned more grievously or frequently against the laws of metre and rhyme" (Smith Manning, 1939:829).

In the early *Sonnets from the Portuguese* we could track the ambivalence of emotions and feelings through the Elizabeth's anticipation of Death rather than Love and through incredulity about Love. As a wonder the love becomes to the speaker, as it surprised poetess when Robert Browning suggested to her in 1845. In the second sonnet, the poetess objects that to agree the man's marriage offer would be to go against God's will. The third sonnet is mirrored the rejoinder is to the many differences between them, these theme was in a letter to Robert Browning, dated in March 1845.

The last lines of this sonnet referred to Death as her anticipation. "The chrism is on thine head,—on mine the dew. And Death must dig the level where these agree", - wrote she to the poet. Robert was younger Elizabeth, he was a famous poet, full of ambitions and viability. Elizabeth saw herself as a middle-aged lady, who was uncomplaining to the idea to live with her lone loneliness forever. The first sonnets reflect this spirit of her reality, they are further of idealizations of love (*Sonnets from the Portugese*.Critical Evaluation, 2011: para 6).

The sixth sonnet commences with the same theme, "Go from me," and is no less persistent, now she feels "not a softening of her conviction that the love is wrong, but a resignation to the inevitability of the suitor's presence in her life". This sonnet is the main cross ing in changing of her life. "Yet I feel that I shall stand... Henceforth in thy shadow,"- the depiction of loneliness in the sonnet sixth splits into the two-in -one contradictions of love: "Nevermore/ Alone," "pulses that beat double," "within my eyes, the tears of two."(*Sonnets from the Portugese*. Critical evolution, 2011:para 7).

The theme from the sixth sonnet continues in the ninth sonnet, where the poetess stresses the discrepancy in the "in the exchange of "gifts". In the next sonnet Elizabeth recognizes that love is "beautiful indeed/ And worthy of acceptation" and finally she says with certainty: "I love thee!" In the eleventh sonnet the poetess oversees: "I am not all unworthy". In the twelfth sonnet the poetess asserts :“Indeed, this very love,” “Doth crown me with a ruby.”(*Sonnets from the Portugese*. Critical evolution, 2011:para 8).

The sonnet No 14 is one of the famous, where Elizabeth considers the psychology of love, she is certain that it will be a mistake, if the lover's love will be focused on any one quality of the beloved: "If thou must love me let it be for nought but love's sake only." The anxiety, that the poetess could not to accommodate her love into the words, its shown in sonnets thirteenth and fifteenth. The sonnet No 21 "reminds her wordier lover "To love me also in silence, with thy soul."(*Sonnets from the Portugese*. Critical evolution, 2011:para 9)

With the every sonnet the speaker grows more confident with her love, but she is frightened in idealizing of love. In the sonnet No 22 Barret Browning writes about her soul "erect and strong" with her lover's, in the end she put the accent on earthly love. The twenty fourth sonnet says : "The world's sharpness," which before had threatened her, is now more like "a clasping knife", which closing safely. The *Sonnets from the Portugese* No 27, here the love rises on the levee with a death- "as strong as Death". The later *Sonnets from the Portugese* shows the tears, because the love could not end the sadness in her soul. In the sonnets No 32 and No 38 the poetess looks back, how

those love began and their thirst kisses. The sonnet forty eight is the most famous "How do I love thee?" In 1953, the critic William Going commented: "the poem is abstract and enumerative. Its intention is to conclude and summarize the whole sequence, and each of the eight ways of loving echoes a previous sonnet. Though long beloved as an individual sonnet, it gains even more luster as the capstone of the entire series" (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Critical evolution, 2011:para 10 -11)

This overall critical review aids us to understand the general position and meaning of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. This review puts together different critical reviews, using the consideration of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are masterpieces, which occupy the outstanding place in the English love literature. They are restless, in opposite with the sonnets from that time, The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are to a fault exposed. This review underlines the uniqueness, which is concluded in writing from the poetess to her lover-poet. Firstly, the meaning of love shows a distrust to this feeling, the poetess is afraid of doing any mistakes, she thinks that the love can be just a fantasy, a dream of the young poet. The review stresses on waiting the death, not the love. The conception, which traces in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* are neither any idealization. However, the love changed the Browning's life, now she is obsessed from this feeling, and in mirrored in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The consideration of every sonnet, the critical review traces a conscious variation in relation to love. Speaker's love means an anxiety and uncertainty. But critical review shows us that with every *Sonnets from the Portuguese* the meaning of love and certainty grow inside of the Elizabeth's soul. Now the poetess avows the worldly love, which is the strong as the death. The critical review ends with an underlining that Browning's masterpiece it is a long way to the awareness herself and a true feeling of love.

1.1 Critical Review by Kathryn Burlinson

In the critical review of Kathryn Burlinson a substantial place is occupied by the citations from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. It aids to denote especially the position of love.

In the sonnet No X "I love thee ..."mark! ..."I love thee"- runs impulse that articulates and note emphatically the speaker's right to address. Kathryn Burlinson pays her critical attention to exclamatory, she writes that "confidence is complemented on

other occasions when the other is unequivocally commanded and instructed." The XIVth sonnet critic assesses that the poetess refuses to become the subordinate object of patriarchal construction: "Do not say I love her for her smile - her look - her way of speaking gently, - for a trick of thought/That falls in well with mine,!" Burlinson excretes the concept of love in Browning's XXII th sonnet "for love's sake only,"the poetess invokes to the equality of soul and sexual relations. (Kathryn Burlinson, *Sonnets from the Portuguese: Overview*", 1991: 1).

The critic says that the poetess is neither consistently passive and active. "Although he acts as a muse, he is also a poet, with a poet's need for inspirational aid, and the speaker frequently expresses her willingness to transform herself from writer to muse for his benefit"- writes Burlinson. The critic emphasizes that permutability breaks the classic traditional structure of amorous verse, as both participants become lovers and love ones. (ibid:1)

Kathryn Burlinson characterizes the speaker as the object of another's perceptions; speaker's attitude is complex. "Self-deprecation jostles against proud affirmation, melancholy runs hand in hand with joy,"- writes the critic, gives an examples in the sonnet XXIX, where the poetess appeals to her lover "Renew thy presence," the speaker stresses sensitively that her dreamed projections could obscure him. The trans-subjective awareness forces the speaker to view herself as an object. In the sonnet No XXII Burlinson sees "the effect that the turbulence of emotional commitment has on her physical appearance" in lines : "this very love ..."when rising up from breast to brow,/Doth crown me with a ruby large enow/To draw men's eyes." In the XVIIIth sonnet critic pays attention on a feminine self-awareness, that the aging woman does not conform to culturally set reference of beauty.(ibid:2)

The most best-known is "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways" the critic appreciates as "central to the sequence as a whole"; in her opinion the "ways" are "multiple possibilities" in the love story of Browning's that constitutes the achievement in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The poetess explores her emotions honestly, she discovers her ways of love, and such a freedom depends on the revision of a long-standing poetic tradition. Burlinson ended her critical overview with the words:"In the best of the Sonnets the poet neither simply conforms to nor straightforwardly resists conventional figurings of subject/object, female/male relations. Rather, she destabilises them, depriving any one amatory structure of absolute or final authority (ibid:2).

Kathryn Burlinson companions her review with the citation from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, it helps the critic to make the inference, that the speaker's relation

with the love is very sophisticated. Burlinson does not see the activity or passivity in the Browning's art. The conception, which marks the critic is concluded in woman's consciousness and self-understanding of love, in which the poetess is sure should be a beauty and youthfulness. The main idea in Burlinson's review is that she sees, that the poetess is ready to express the love and herself through the poetry.

1.2 The Critical Review by Marianne Van Remoortel

Marianne Van Remoortel in her book "(Re)gendering Petrarch: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* uses for her analyzing a comparison with Petrarch sonnet. It aids to find her own critical way which is directed on *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The critic touches on the place of metaphor.

Marianne begins her critical review, writing that early critics reveal the consistency's autobiographical roots and "praised the poet for the sincerity with which she had put into verse her unhoped-for encounter with love and subsequent rescue from isolation and certain death." In 1862 Blackwood's critic annotated: "What a drama is unfolded in these exquisite love-poems," and Edward Y. Hincks commented the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* as the key to the Barrett Browning's life: "Whoever wishes to know Mrs. Browning should study carefully these beautiful and artless poems, which tell the most sacred feelings of a woman's heart with such simplicity and truthfulness and freedom from false shame that the most fastidious taste cannot be offended by their recital" (Marianne Van Remoortel, (Re)gendering Petrarch: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 2006: 247)

In accordance with Mary B. Moore, the accusing self-portrait makes the speaker " a looker-on, not a participant" because " she cannot offer the brighter eyes that emit light and fuel the Petrarchan lover's desire. She is an outsider". In the 14th sonnet the speaker does not wish to be loved for outward appearances, she puts her status of passive looker. The poetess tries to stop her lover from aphorizing her physical appearance, she demonstrates herself as "an active participant in her fate as beloved and muse." (ibid: 253)

Van Remoortel pays our attention that Barrett Browning stresses that she is on the bottom from her lover literally as well as in the question of love. She claims that he is a better on professional field and lover. The poetess projects metaphorically him and herself onto vertical pins of social class deference.(ibid: 254)

Petrarchan poetry commonly reflects and adopts the metaphor of sickness to pass the emotional state of the lover, and *Sonnets from the Portuguese* also borrow this. "Typical symptoms of the lovesick Browning was sighing, fainting, turning pale, turning red." "Frequent tears have run/The colors from my life", the speaker warns her lover in the sonnet No 8. In the sonnet No 23 she wonders "Can I pour my wine,/ while my hands tremble?" In the eleventh sonnet, her cheeks are pale and her 'trembling knees' fail. "Such writing was typical in Victorian's era, the courtship rituals characterized the couple as a real Victorian lovers: those correspondence, exchange locks of hair, flowers, which conveying messages of love and devotion, and awkward kisses. (ibid: 255)

The poetess is voicing the middle-class domesticity rather than poeticizing the exciting state of temerarious, the critic reviews the examples in the sonnet No 44 "close room" and in the sonnet No 35 like "A bee shut in a crystalline". (ibid: 256)

As a due Victorian woman, the speaker is ready to perform every wish of her lover confirming this in the eleventh sonnet: " O Beloved, it is plain/ I am not of thy worth not for thy place!" In the sonnet No 28, the speaker rereads her love letters, where her lover controls the relationship and decide when it should reborn from friendship to love and marriage. In the sonnet No 12, his love coronets her "with a ruby large enow/To draw men's eyes" (ibid: 257)

Van Remoortel describes the Browning's sonnet as a mid-century views on nature of love and marriage. The poetess uses patriarchal metaphors of matrimony to emphasize a social and economic obligatoriness. In the sixth sonnet the lover's pulses "beat double": "with "enclasped hands" they share a "mutual kiss" (Sonnet 36), while their "two souls stand up erect and strong..." ,Sonnet 22". (ibid: 258)

Marianne Van Remoortel also allocates the theme of Love and Death in Browning's Sonnets: "represents love and death as genderless, clearly separated entities. She unmasks the ambiguity of death and love by eliminating the one element that threatens to smother her speaker's budding subjectivity - death." Critic continues that the speaker has sufficient opportunity in the forty-three sonnets "to confront her search for subjectivity through engagement with the Petrarchan sonnet tradition and its liberalizing cross-currents in literature and society" (ibid: 261)

The critical review Reemortel ends with the words of Victorians era critics about Elizabeth Barret Browning art: "She simultaneously holds a plea for the romance of marriage, by which her contemporaries were so charmed, and, as pointed out recently by feminist critics, for a healthy cross-fertilization between the two lovers who are at

the same time each other's lover and muse, subject and object, and also between masculine and feminine literary traditions in general."(ibid: 262)

Marianne Van Reemortel in her review compares Browning's Sonnets with Petrarch's, finding the typical features in her poems. The critic allots the place of metaphor, which helps to describe a new unknown feelings and emphasize the conception of love in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The speaker, in Reemortel's opinion, is an "outman" in this novel emotion, but the sincerity, which she gives to the them -its a really rated very highly. The conception of love, which the critic found in the investigation of herself with the aid of love, the requirement of candidness from the lover, and love for the sake of love. Love for the poetess as a respect of her lover, as a poet and as a lover. Van Reemortel stresses the place of exalting.

As in Petrarch's sonnets, the love plays the role of the disease, the critic affirms this giving the metaphorical examples from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Moreover, Van Reemortel considers that using of metaphors underline the economic and social responsibility. The conception is shown in sacrificing poetess the usual life for the real love.

1.3 Critical Review by Dorothy Mermin

Dorothy Mermin starts her review from the words of Coventry Patmore who found *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. "lofty, simple, and passionate - not at all the less passionate in being highly intellectual, and even metaphysical."(Dorothy Mermin. *The female Poet and the Embarrassed Reader: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese*. , 1981: 351) The review of Dorothy Mermin takes a main place in the critical works. With the aid of her review it was written many articles about Elizabeth Barrett Browning's love poems - *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. They are Browning's most popular work, critics divert their eyes in embarrassment, wrote Mermin(ibid)

In the classic English love poetry the love words are talking by a man, a poet, who loves the woman, who keeps the silence. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, are unique in Victorian's era love literature. Here the amorous confession are written by a middle-aged woman, who could not be quite any more.(ibid:352)

In the third sonnet Mermin allots the attention to obscure of sexual roles, which fantasized the true love as a gorgeous court musician «looking from the lattice-lights" at the speaker, who is just a "poor, tired, wandering singer, singing through..(ibid:353)

The poetess exalts her lover, whom she described as "royal, whose color is purple, whose merit knows no bounds", because the images are close to literary.(*ibid*: 354)

" Yet love, mere love, is beautiful indeed and worthy of accept ion. Fire is bright...", - the sonnet No 10, her sonnet work if she is submissive and modest, but not if she is cold, writes Mermin. The critic suggests that the speaker in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* commences and writes her own poems. The poetess does not decide to answer to her lover's speech, to be deserted, calm, or to die. The attraction and the power in her poems is merely her own wish, what after all, does a lyric lover traditionally suggest as an motivation to love except his love itself? She should be an object dignified of desire, if the wish confers an erotic value. (*ibid*: 356)

The later *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. evolve the realization of the precedence of desire, his and her own. In the 14th sonnet, the speaker asks- love me , "for love's sake only"- she sees herself through her lover's eyes, but it is her own bright flame of love, which praises her, and she says "Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth"(*Sonnets from the Portuguese No16*)

Mermin wrote that the poetess compares her thoughts of her lover " to entwined vine-leaves that hide a palm tree, asking him yo "renew" his "presence" in terms that suggest a Bacchic rite".(*ibid*: 356)

Alethea Hayter is the most shrewd and sympathetic critic of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's says about the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* that "The are emotionally...naked", the critic refers to self-descriptions or incidents, not feelings: her pale cheeks, the lock of hair, the pet name, his letters and kisses" (*ibid*: 358)

Barrett Browning describes her lover in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, as more younger and more emotionally passionate and energy, than she. Her lover has a freedom, but she is in a prison of her life and sadness. He hales her from her loneliness back to the life. (*ibid*: 362)

In the first *Sonnets from the Portuguese* the poetess wants to talk just with a reader, she hides her true feelings from her lover. She is quiet and impervious for her lover. The poetess lacks the mystery and beauty- the fatal woman's guile. The self-analysis and an obligation to lyric self-expression eliminate duality.(*ibid*:363)

Dorothy Mermin finished her critical review with the words:"*Sonnets from the Portuguese* is organized around the double discovery that love's seeming illusions are realities, still accessible, and that one can be both subject and object of love, both poet and poet's beloved".(*ibid*: 364)

Dorothy Mermin published her critical review in 1981, and opens the door to the covert world of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The critic found the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* as emotionally nude, poems are overly outspoken. Mermin emphasizes that the poetess conceals her true feelings from her lover, it appears that she speaks just with a reader. Such a way of writing aid the poetess be free in her masterpiece. The critic sees that the meaning of love is expressed differently, as embarrassment, desire, exalting of the lover to the throne of the feelings using metaphorical way of speaking. The critic stresses that the poetess shows us her own wish to love and be loved, she wants to be an object of her lover desire. Here Mermin affects the intim side of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The love is worthy to be acceptance. Also Mermin found the conception of love in belief that illusion of love could be a reality. The critic ends that poetess understood the possibility to love as a poet, and as a woman. This review is addressed to the frankness of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's art.

CHAPTER II

ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING'S POEMS "SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE" AS A MIRROR OF HER LOVE

A sonnet is a poetic form which originated in Italy; the Sicilian poet Giacomo da Lentini is credited with its invention. The term *sonnet* derives from the Italian word *sonetto*, meaning "little song", and by the thirteenth century it signified a poem of fourteen lines that follows a strict rhyme scheme and specific structure. Conventions associated with the sonnet have evolved over its history (Sonnet 2013: para 1).

The present chapter is dedicated to the analysis of sonnets from Elizabeth Barrett Brownings's collection "Sonnets from the Portuguese". The analysis is based on detailed interpretations of the sonnets. Firstly, the analysis is aimed at revealing the meaning the poetess encloses in the sonnet. Secondly, the analysis focuses on the love concept the way it is presented in the poems of the collection. Thirdly, in the analysis considers the using of such lexical stylistic devices as metaphor and epithet the poetess employs to express her emotions and feelings.

For the analysis and comprehension of the signification of love in the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning through her sonnets, the following lexical stylistic devices were used:

Metaphor- a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to a person, idea, or object to which it is not literally applicable. It is an implied analogy or unstated comparison which imaginatively identifies one thing with another. This device is used by an author to turn or twist the meaning of a word. Metaphors are the most often used figure of speech. While not required in poetry, they are universally used there (Metaphor 2000: para1).

Epithet – a figure of speech denoting a permanent or temporary quality of a person, thing, idea or phenomenon and characterising it from the point of view of subjective perception (Lehtsalu et al. 1971).

Simile - a figure of speech in which two things, essentially different but thought to be alike in one or more respects, are compared using "like," "as," "as if," or "such" for the purpose of explanation, allusion, or ornament (Simile 2000:para 1).

Repetition as a stylistic device is a direct successor of repetition as an expressive language means, which serves to emphasize certain statements of the speaker, and so possesses considerable emotive force (Repetition 2013: para 1) .

2.1. Sonnet 6. Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore -
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1998)

The Concept of Love Rejection

In spite of the fact that Elizabeth Browning is not alone any more, the mood of depression and melancholy is perceived in this sonnet. The first words "Go from me..." are like a sign of renunciation, like a command to her lover: go away and live your life, without any dependency and relation... It seems that she could not reject her loneliness. She tried to turn out -of -doors her new feelings, her lover. The speaker is confused; she is totally in dread. Anxiety surrounds her. She is afraid to open a new page of her life book; however she knows that there is no way back. She banished him, but she does not want to lose him. The speaker is tangled in her feelings and thoughts, but she knows it would not be ever like it was before-"Yet I feel that I shall stand henceforth in thy shadow..." She comprehends that now he is always to be with her and she will always be near him, and she compares it with a metaphorical "stand henceforth in thy shadow". The speaker declares that He permeated in her life, and now she could not ever leave Him:

"...Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand"

The next lines demonstrate us that the speaker accepts him into her loneliness life, she writes "nevermore" - this is a strong word for her, this is like a condemnation to her prisoner life, that now she leaves her long durance. "...upon the threshold of my door" - the author uses this metaphor to emphasize the significance of all her life. It was like a sky-high dungeon, no one could visit her. She is a prisoner with her thoughts, illness and a ream of the papers. "Threshold of a door" - it means a place, where one step can separate her from a prison and show her a true life, which is overfilled with events and experiences of human's senses.

The speaker tells her lover that now she is defenseless, she left her "threshold of a door", she could not more command her life, she feels that her soul does not come to heel with her:

"Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore--
Thy touch upon the palm..."

These lines clearly show that all around in this world stays as usual: the same pure natural things as the sky, the sun, the grass, the wind...Nothing talks to her about the love which she was losing during her loneliness. Nothing will remind her ex-life. Now she is full of him, she is scared to be obsessed with him, but love opens the door from her prison and gives her another chance to feel life.

"...The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double..."

The epithet "the widest (land)" means the world with all the rules, prejudices, talk, damnation and all of mundane anxieties. These lines are like sodden with the fear "Doom takes to part us..." - the fate does not want to keep us together, it is not right - the speaker again misdoubts. But with the next lines, she says bravely, "...leaves thy heart in mine with pulses that beat double...", which sounds provoking as if she wanted to say here, "no one and nothing could separate us. Our love was born in our hearts, and your heart is with mine. Our pulses will beat together. Forever." How strong is her desire to save this Love, metaphorical description of the real feeling, of a new, unknown feeling of the speaker. These lines prove to us that the young but strong feeling like love could make a person braver and more confident in front of the face of the world and the fate. Nothing could destroy this proximity between two people who opened their hearts for a real love:

"...What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes...."

The speaker's lover is everywhere. She avowed that her lover is everything for her: "...what I do and what I dream include thee...". She compared this love with grapes and wine, "...as *the wine* must taste of its own grapes" (simile). The integrity is traced in these lines, all borderlines are wiped off. Now the speaker says, "I am like a wine, and you are my grape. We could not be apart; we are a part of each other. The vernal grape ripens on Southern fields. Day after day it becomes juicier and vehemently red. The sunshine gives it all the care and warmth, and the grape grows. The color of this berry is dark-blue with a red tone and when it becomes wine it is dark-red; may be not

by chance the author used this description to stress affinity with love. Here the color of feelings is clearly shown - it is red. We associate this color with love which is passion, desire, misery and pleasure. It is dissolution in the other person - in the lover. It means to be together all the time, at day or at night, with thoughts, or sitting near him... The grape sacrifices everything to give a new life, but it will stay forever in this wine, its taste and color and the grape will be rewarded. It will become immortal. This love will be immortal, because the lovers permeated to each other with their souls, and the speaker says, that all "include thee":

"...And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two."

The last lines of this sonnet are addressed to God. She prays for the life of her lover: "...I sue God for myself, He hears that name of thine..." It is the most heartfelt orison, when the woman prays for the man whom she loves. She confides in her feelings, in him, and she talks to God to give her faith and force for this love. Religion and literature were very important in Browning's life. Sitting alone in her room, she was always writing and praying. She believed in God. She was a truly religious person, and she could save it during her life. She did not have a true friend who was always with her, but God was. These last lines show that at the end of her hesitations she went to her true friend - God, to ask him to give a hand. She prays not to leave her because being alone she could not bear all new emotions which surround her. The speaker feels certain, that God could see these two people, whom he coupled and he will always stand sentinel over them. With "the tears of two" she prays for two, she is sure that God has gave her this magical meeting with love, and together with her lover they are scared to lose this feeling, and in her eyes they pray together...

During this sonnet the author guides us to her thoughts and emotions, which are really outspoken. It is like a way through the dense forest, where the poetess used language means to draw clearly the painting of her emotional mood. Her love here is unexpected, sometimes frightening and unacquainted for her.

2.2. Sonnet 14. If thou must love me, let it be for nought

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
I love her for her smile--her look--her way
Of speaking gently,--for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of ease on such a day--
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,--and love, so wrought,

May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheek dry,--
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1998)

The Concept of Love as Exhortation

These fourteen lines are addressed to Elizabeth's lover Robert. In this sonnet the poetess starts her allocution monologue. She talks about love; she talks about her comprehension of genuine love. The author talks to her lover explaining how she wants he loves her. It sounds oddly that she gives him such instructions, but it is evident, the real significance is concealed in Elizabeth's reveal, which she opens in this sonnet.

"If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only..."

She starts her speech with certainty: love should be free. The speaker does not want an unreal love, she asks her lover for love which is bestowed on them by God and destiny. In this sonnet Elizabeth describes a real miracle of love. She is forty-year old woman; she spent her life in her small room by writing poems and praying to God. She could not fancy or hope that her life could be changed just after one letter from a young poet - Robert Browning. It was fate, the un contemplated gift from Heaven, for the middle-aged woman, who had never loved before and had never been loved. Her soul's entity is sophisticated; otherwise she could not be a poetess. Literature was for her the only faithful friend forever. That is why she expressed her request to Robert through this sonnet. Literature taught her how to love without being in love. Love for her is a sense which braids a subtle lace inside of her virgin soul. The tracery is diaphanous and delicate. It twines feelings, words, sensations and reminiscence. Elizabeth's love is pure and heartfelt. She asks her lover to love with soul's senses, without any worldly thoughts: "...except for love's sake only...".

"...Do not say
I love her for her smile--her look--her way
Of speaking gently,--for a trick of thought..."

These lines unfold the speaker's wish: not to be materially-minded in love. Elizabeth requests her lover to understand that she is familiar with all human's justifications which they grant to this society. She does not want to hear anything like this from her lover when he talks to her or to his friends. The speaker insists that all these causes to love are void and nonsensical. The metaphor "a trick of thought" accentuates the emptiness of words which a person uses to preach for the lover. She

stresses that mostly a man loves a woman for her appearance, but she does not want such kind of primitive love.

The poetess uses such words as "smile", "look", "speaking", "thought" to emphasize the idea of what is feasible to love. The individuality is lost in these words.

*"That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of ease on such a day-..."*

Lines five and six of the poem show that the author accepts that all descriptions she gave before could be collated with her, she admits such description of earthly ordinary love, it could be one of the reasons to love, but not the main interpretation of love. She gives a clarification, why it could not be in the following three lines:

"For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,--and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so..."

The speaker explains to her lover that such things as beauty, a voice and the way of thinking-intellection, could and would change. It is an irreversible way with time passing by quickly. Here Elizabeth involves the concept of time. Nothing will be the same, time binds all on its pathway. Any physical object could not be forever, everything become aged and reshaped. She pays attention to another aspect of love which is more profound and rich, which is kept inside of us.

The poetess uses the metaphoric epithet "wrought / unwrought love" not by a chance. "Wrought" here is connected with metal for which the lover's hand did a shape. Metal is red-hot, it is a peak of amorousness and passion; it is time when love is born and strengthened. Overnight metal will grow strong, and the shape which it has will be saved. It will be love. If something could be changed, metal is transformed again into a red-hot mass, and the shape of love will disappear forever. Such comparison proves the author's way of feeling, which is out of the ordinary.

"...Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheek dry,--
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!"

From line nine till twelve, Elizabeth elevates the theme of regret. For her love and pity are not in the same vase. They are the diver's flowers and being together means the poisoning each other. She claims she does not need pity from her lover. The speaker says overtly: "I do not need in a solace from you, I do not need any sacrifice." She is elate. The metaphorical "pity's wiping my cheek dry..." means she does not want that he will be with her, just for saving her from loneliness, just because he spares her and could not leave her alone after their long-time correspondence:

"A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!"

The tears could not fuel, save or hold love. They could separate two lovers, because one of them will sense desperation in pity and compassion of the other. Such wise the speaker evidences to her lover that any demonstration of compassion inevitably leads to the death of love.

"But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity."

In the last two lines of this sonnet Elizabeth reverts to the beginning. She accentuates the lover's attention to the true and honest value of love - to love for love, to love with an inexpressible sensations and emotions.

2.3. Sonnet 15. Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;
For we two look two ways, and cannot shine
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.
On me thou lookest with no doubting care,
As on a bee in a crystalline;
Since sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine
And to spread wing and fly in the outer air
Were most impossible failure, if I strove
To fail so. But I look on thee--on thee--
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,
Hearing oblivion beyond memory;
As one who sits and gazes from above,
Over the rivers to the bitter sea.
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1998)

The Concept of Love as Acceptance

This sonnet voices a plea, which Elizabeth turns to Robert. In these lines she discloses the theme of otherness between them. The mood of the sonnet is sorrowful and confusing. The poetess reveals her hesitance about this love. She talks about dissimilarity between them and describes all what truly flusters her, and she begins:

"Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;"

In the first two lines the speaker pleads to her lover: "Accuse me not..." She starts her speech from these words not by chance; she wants to tell Robert that his accusations will make her weaker. She knows her blame and she does not reject it. She avows that they are very different, she always bears with her all dolor of her life, and it

doubtlessly influences her. Elizabeth uses such words as "calm" and "sad" to show the lover, that she is not an emotionally expressive person. Her temper is restrained and quiet; her melancholies explain her withdrawn life. Her life experience like in the mirror reflects her. She spent her days with her family; her father was a despot, who did not want his daughter to leave a parental home one day. Elizabeth did not have the first youth love. Her reality made her judicious, and as a result - mournful. In these lines she entreats her lover to understand that it is not her flaw, she wants him to accept her, as she is, without any accusations. She is not like others, she is otherwise, absolutely otherwise...

"For we two look two ways, and cannot shine
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair..."

Lines three and four pay lover's attention to the fact that they are entirely different. Elizabeth wants to stress those two different realities which they had before and to say that the two untouchable worlds will never merge. She expresses no doubt that he, a young and engaging man, has plenty of love affairs, his life was glaring and impregnated with a lot of events. Elizabeth uses this metaphorical sentence, "...and cannot shine with the same sunlight on our brow and hair..." as if she says to him: we could not ever be resembling, we are detached by our worlds. The poetess uses the word "sunlight" to express the feelings which they have as assuredly different. She compares her feelings with "sunlight" as they have purity and flamboyance as sunlight.

"On me thou lookest with no doubting care,
As on a bee in a crystalline;"

In the next lines the poetess describes the attitude which her lover has to her. "No doubting care" - the precise epithet implies that she describes Robert's veritable respect to her. Real love contains solicitude which does not demand anything instead. For her it is irrefragable evidence of his heartily love. It is not a coincidence that Elizabeth uses in these lines a simile: "as on a bee in a crystalline". She draws an analogy with a bee that is in a crystalline, like she was sitting for years in her pent room. She has her own kingdom, where she was a queen of her rules, emotions and comprehensions, and now she sees how Robert tries to protect her carefully. For him she is a dilly, and she understands it:

"Since sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine..."

Here Elizabeth discloses the gist of her "being in crystal" - it is like in a conch which she has been during all her life. This is her dungeon, birdcage, membrane which protects her from life's emotions. These lines are clearly metaphorical. She says, "Since

sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine"- this crystal - her shield against all disenchantment, it protects her from vain ambitions of love. The crystal protects her tender heart from pain which could wear down her.

"And to spread wing and fly in the outer air
Were most impossible failure, if I strove
To fail so..."

From line eight till ten, the poetess narrates that she attempted to break away this crystal-cover "to spread wing and fly in the outer air"- to gain strength and leave this duration, metaphorically Elizabeth tries to explain that she assayed not just once to alter her actuality, but all was of no earthly use. "Were most impossible failure, if I strove..." – she met with a baulk; she lost certitude to vary her vital spark.

"But I look on thee--on thee--
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,
Hearing oblivion beyond memory;"

Elizabeth makes use of repetition: "But I look on thee - on thee..."– to punctuate that now in her life only one influential person – Robert – presents. She says that all her attention is for him. All her feelings and poems lines are directed to him. She sees only love in him, "Beholding, besides love, the end of love..." – and here the perception of scarcely perceptible anxiety is expressed. She knows he only one whom she loves. This divine love is sole, she confesses - her love is just for him, and if it disappear, it will disappear forever. In relationships with Robert she sees, "besides love, the end of love...".

But the speaker also feels fear in front of the end of this miracle love.

"As one who sits and gazes from above,
Over the rivers to the bitter sea."

Last lines conclude that the poetess compares herself with a wayfarer, who "gazes from above" - with all her consciousness of her feelings and fortune's plays. It seems that she does not believe in feasibility of this love.

Elizabeth tries to look into the future. She does not want to be under any delusion; that is why she uses the epithet "bitter sea" to describe a possibility of lingering sobbing. Many bitter tears will be compared with the waters of a sea.

Again Elizabeth Barrett Browning gives voice to disbelief. It is accessibly that the middle-aged woman could not open a door for this new life; she is scared to be derelict and disillusioned in love. She senses that this love could kill her and she will stay alone again. That is why her face is sad, she is always in cogitation. This sonnet's

aim is to explain to her lover that she needs time, an understanding and adoption from him; that she is suchlike she is.

2.4. Sonnet 25. From year to year until I saw thy face

From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart. Than *thou* didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing
Which its own nature doth precipitate,
While thine doth close above it, mediating
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1998)

The Concept of Love as Thankfulness

This sonnet reflects the mood which is full of wistfulness and sadness. The melody of these fourteen lines is serene and pensive. In spite of this, the sonnet expresses gratitude to Elizabeth's husband.

"From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place..."

The poetess again reverts to her past. The speaker tells her lover that before him her life was full of woe, heartsore, tears and hopelessness. In this lines Elizabeth purports all her life time, "And sorrow after sorrow took the place..." - her brother's sudden death, her illness without any chance to keep on accustomed time, her mother's death and years in durance with books and religion.

"Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time..."

The lines from three till five are really beauteous and superb in use of metaphors and epithets. The poetess metaphorically compares her life with "stringed pearls". She represents her childhood as pearls - expensive and precious, white with a subtle light-rose tone and a pollination of gold. Pearls are midget and brittle, like the world of a small girl - Elizabeth. Observing the universe, which surrounded her, she pictured to herself this world being on her neck, like "stringed pearls". She says that to live is so simple, to derive pleasure from an every day is "natural joys". The epithet "a beating

heart" means the heart, the girl who wants to live joyfully and sunny, she is in a hurry, perhaps she felt subconsciously that her life will freeze after her fall from a horse, and a dance-time will never come again: " ... the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn...at dance-time..."

"...Hopes apace
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart..."

These lines of the sonnet describe what was after the tragedies. The poetess continues to tell to her lover what was before his forthcoming. "...Hopes apace was changed to long despairs..." - she affirms that she understood reality soon, she lost all hopes that something could be changed, she accepted her fate.

She always believes in God, "...till God's own grace could scarcely lift above the world forlorn my heavy heart...". She was christened still in infancy. Since that time religion played a substantial role in all her life. These metaphorical lines with epithet "world forlorn" and "heavy heart" open the secret avowal that religion could not help her to remain the same. She sensed this world as "the world forlorn" - nothing could raise her again, she could not spread her wings and take a wing, her "heavy heart" is a despaired, diseased heart which could not be rescued and lifted up to the clouds.

"Than *thou* didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being!"

Next lines describe the emerging of "thou" – Robert; now life plays with colors. He stole her heart and "bid me bring and let it drop adown". He could conquer her heart and carry it to another reality, which the poetess named as "calmly great deep being!"- metaphorically, she realizes that with him her heart will be drowned in the boundless ocean of senses. She understands that it might be the end, but she encouraged him to take her heart.

"...Fast it sinketh, as a thing
Which its own nature doth precipitate,
While thine doth close above it, mediating
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate."

The last stanza says that her heart is defensively "fast in sinketh", this "heavy heart" is full of sadness and sorrow, which the poetess calls as "precipitate". She said her heart was sunk, she confesses that now she is powerless in front of the face of her lover. Her heart has moved down to another level of being. She does not resist the unbeknown feeling - Love. He is a "mediator", she said it so, and he guides her through the

unfamiliar world full of senses of love. It is like a journey to a magical country, where everything will be different. The poetess describes this way as a deep fall and as a high flight, she writes, "Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate." Now she is sure that her life will begin from another way, the way of love, she used the epithet "unaccomplished fate", which proves that she sees the light inside this dark, dark tunnel. There are no more loneliness and illness. Her glim is her love, and she is grateful to Robert that he could give her a chance to her fate, to continue a renewed route with him.

In this sonnet Elizabeth expresses thankfulness to Robert, that he could wake her heart and move it to another reality, reality of love. Perhaps, the string of pearls could be again on her neck, and it would not be severed.

2.5. Sonnet 35. If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessings and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me--wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning 1998)

The concept of Love as Abdication

The sentiment of this sonnet is concluded in abjuration of the familiar life, Elizabeth writes that she is ready to sacrifice everything for the love of Robert. Nevertheless, emotionally this sonnet is restless and anxious. The poetess takes the liberty to allow the thought, that later, when the voile of amourness will subside, may be the sadness will permeate through their relationship. Again she brings to mind sadness and sorrow which are always around her. This is the sonnet where Elizabeth talks to Robert about the complexity to love her. She asks him if she should donate her erstwhile life for a new one, which is unbeknown. Undoubtedly, she is awaiting of an assertive answer from the lover.

"If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me?..."

The poetess asks the most important question for her: If I leave all, could you leave all for me too? During all that correspondence time she was always asking herself: could he give me all from him, as I gave him. Asking these questions, she wants to obtain an answer which is so indispensable for her.

She uses the pronoun "thee", like in the previous sonnets, to stress that she asks him - her lover. One more detail should be mentioned - she never named him as Robert, she always uses pronouns "thee" and "thou" to emphasize intimacy of these sonnets, which the poetess did not intend to publish. It was a gift for her husband, which later he published and presented to the literature's world.

"...Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessings and the common kiss..."

The second and the third lines describe speaker's usual life: her home and family. Her home was a dungeon for her, but it was a place where she was safe and where all accepted her with her sorrow and illness.

The epithet "common" in "common kiss" includes all her family members. By using the word "kiss" the speaker wants to show the most heartwarming and affectionate senses which she has to them.

The poetess shows that this part of her life has a significant importance for her. With these lines she asks herself to give reasons for her to miss her home, her family, her past life. Evidently this question troubles her.

"That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,

In this line the speaker says that homesickness is an inherent part of life for every human being.

"When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?"

Lines five and six say that her love demands a lot of changes from her, it demands sacrifices of what was dear to her. "To drop on a new range of walls and floors..." - with this metaphorical line Elizabeth draws a parallel with her room, where she was in duress. However, this room becomes very dear to her. It is connected with the emotional mood, psychological and physical condition she once had. Her room was the keeper of her soul's revelations, prayers and dreams. It was her own small world - naive and inoffensive. She could not imagine another place which could interchange her faithful for years room. She wants to say that she sacrifices all this in the name of love.

"Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?"

The speaker is ready to quit all what she has forever, if her lover is with her. She is bountied with his love; she believes that being together with Robert will help her cope with everything. The poetess uses the epithet "dead eyes too tender" - to accent again that loneliness which she lived with for such a long time, gave her wistfulness and mourning. Her eyes mirrored the death of her soul and heart, but with the emerging of love, they tried to see the light, tried to be tender.

"That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside."

The lines from nine till eleven tell about the complexity "to conquer love." The speaker starts a discourse which has a deep philosophical meaning with a rhetorical tone. She says it is hard to open the heart for love; it is difficult to let another person in your life, to let him depend on her emotional feelings. It is not too easy to evince love to another person, to have strong faith that this sense is true and pure. But the speaker says that it is much harder "to conquer grief" - this is a metaphor of her soul. The poetess again shows to her lover that all what surrounds her is "grief"- deep and bitter. It is like a wall between the lovers, and love like a gentle flower tries to grow under this wall, but could not. The wall should be shattered, and then the flower could feel the sunshine's warm and see the sky, and grow up, passing into a gorgeous flower.

However, Elizabeth's reasoning leads her to grasp that "for grief indeed is love and grief beside"; she comes to the conclusion that these two senses have something that unifies them. Love brings not only happiness, but sadness too. If it could find a way to your soul, it could present you different emotional senses. Here the poetess scrutinizes love from different sides. She says that the sense of love for her is felt by her soul and analyzed by her mind.

"Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me--wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove."

In these last lines the speaker confirms that it is difficult to love her, because the sadness of her life will be with her for ever - "I have grieved". She asks with an expectancy "Yet love me--wilt thou?" She wants to know that sadness and grief of her live do not scare her lover, she is awaiting for reaffirmation of his love. She feels certain that a real love could transcend all.

"Open thine heart wide" - the command is heard in this line. She is brave, she understands that his love is so great and strong, he could protect that love from

everything. She believes in her lover, in her only one lover forever. She says: Open your heart! She is bold, for her it is necessary to counter all her doubts and hesitance.

"Dove" is the symbol of bravery, it is the yen of sky and freedom, and the poetess names as "dove" something which is inside her, something which is close to the potential to love.

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Barrett Browning is one of the most remarkable poetesses in the Victorian Era. Her life way was exceptional, her long loneliness seemed to be endless, but the fate presented her a gift – a meeting with the poet Robert Browning. This relationship completely changed her routine life. The love story between the two poets is incredibly wonderful. It changed not just a life of the poetess, but her art too. During this courtship *Sonnets from the Portuguese* were written, which are the genuine treasure in the English love poetry. This masterpieces hold a high position in literature till nowadays.

The present research was aimed to explore the meaning of the concept of love and its place in the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* by analyzing the use of such lexical stylistic devices as metaphor and epithet. The examination of the love story of two poets Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning showed that this love influenced on the writing. Some biographical facts aid to understand the true apprehensions of love, which the poetess expresses in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

In the Introduction the history of writing the collection and the Browning's love story is considered. The information on the private life of the poetess aided to understand how some life facts are mirrored in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Chapter 1 presents the critical reviews of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. The first review helped the author of the thesis to designate principal positions of different critics when speaking about Browning's collection. Critical reviews by Kathryn Burlinson, Marianne Van Remoortel and Dorothy Mermin are in the focus of the analysis. The most recognized of which is the critical work by Dorothy Mermin. After publishing of her critical book, many critics accentuate exceptional understanding of Browning's emotional life, which Mermin could perceive from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

The critical reviews reflect the concept of love in lacking of idealization; in conscious variation to love; in sincerity; the expression of love as a sickness and being as an object of desire. The critics give us the examples from the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* to support their views. The most remarkable conclusion which all critics underline is that they are acutely emotionally nude.

Accordingly, in Chapter 2, the empirical part of the research consisted in analyzing of five sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The analysis shows that every sonnet reflects the sophisticated way of acceptance and comprehension of love. The poetess used many metaphors and epithets to discover her conception of love and to send the reader a vivid description of her feelings in new life accepting. With every *Sonnet from the Portuguese* she reasons the liaison with her lover will be inseparable.

Each sonnet mirrors the conception, thus the sonnets which were analyzed have such conceptions of love as rejection, exhortation, acceptance, thankfulness and abdication.

Accordingly, the conception of love as rejection expressed by such metaphors as "stand henceforth in thy shadow", "...upon the threshold of my door", "...leaves thy heart in mine with pulses that beat double..." , and epithet "the widest (land)" Suchwise, the analysis of the Sonnets showed that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* reveal the concept of love as "a universe of its own where lovers are one inseparable thing" by using metaphors and epithets, therefore, the hypothesis was proved.

Accordingly, the concept of love as "a universe of its own where lovers are one inseparable thing" was expressed by such metaphors and metaphorical expressions as "stand henceforth in thy shadow", "...upon the threshold of my door", "...leaves thy heart in mine", "pulses that beat double", "a trick of thought", "pity's wiping my cheek dry", "cannot shine with the same sunlight on our brow and hair", "to spread wing and fly in the outer air", "stringed pearls", "calmly great deep being", "to conquer grief", and "to drop a new range of walls and floors". And such epithets as "the widest (land)", "wrought/ unwrought love", "love's divine", "no doubting care", "bitter sea", "beating heart", "world forlorn", "heavy heart", "unaccomplished fate", "common (kiss)", "dead eyes too tender".

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Käesoleva uurimuse eesmärk oli analüüsida Elizabeth Barrett Browning'i sonetti ja tõestada või tagasi lükata esitatud hüpoteesi, mis seisneb selles, et igas sonnetis autor sõlmis erinevaid armastuse mõiste metafoori ja epiteeti abiga.

Uurimises on sissejuhatust, kaks peatükki ja järeldus.

Sissejuhatuses autor arvestab sonetti kirjutamise ajalugu ja armastuslugu Browning'i ning Barrett'i vahel. See osa aitab aru saada, kuidas Elizabeth Browning'i armastus mõjutas tema loomise. Selle osa abiga analüüsimine näitas kuidas sonetti kirjutamine arendas tema armueluga.

Esimeses peatükis on puutub kriitiline kirjandust, mis näitab meile, kuidas kriitikud hindasid Elizabeth Browning'i poetiline loomine ja armastuse mõiste koht tema sonettides. Siin on arutatud nissugused kriitikud nagu K.Burlinson, M. Van Remoortel ja D. Mermin. Nende tööd näitavad kõige olulisemaid aspekteid kriitiku ülevaadest.

Teises peatükis uurimuse autor valis viit sonetti ja teostas analüüsi püstitatud eesmärkide kohaselt. Siin on ka esitatud uurimuse vajaliku terminoloogia ülevaade.

Sonetti analüüs näitas, et Elizabeth Barrett Browning'i sonetid koosnevad erinevaid armastuse mõjutased metafoori ja epiteeti abiga. Seega hüpotees oli edukalt tõestatud.

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