

31. Time in Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*

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APA: Alkan, H. (2021) Time in Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (Ö9), 389-400. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.985605.

Abstract

The sonnet which is originated in Italy is a highly structured poetic form. It flourishes in the Elizabethan period in order to write love sonnets about a beloved and idealized lady. This study focuses on the theme of time in both Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, and William Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Spenser's *Amoretti*, which covers New Year's Day celebrations, reflects on Spenser's past forty-one years of life. In *Epithalamion*, Spenser records the hours of the day from pre-dawn to wedding night, including the passage of a year in 365 long lines which also correspond to days in a year. Its content moves from the excitement of youth to the anxieties of the middle age, beginning with high hopes for a happy day and ending with record of the speaker's legacy for future generations. Spenser tries to prevent the passage of time by freezing it in his verses. Shakespeare's *Sonnets* begins with the narrator's begging the fair lord to find a woman who will bear his child so that his beauty can be assured for posterity. The poet complains about the ravages of time and its harmful effects on the beauty of the fair lord, and tries to fight the inevitable by forcing the fair lord to convey his perfection to a child. The poet defines time as a dimension of suffering, and asks the fair lord to leave him. In conclusion, time is described as unmanageable power of unforeseen changes and chances as well as a non-personal ominous determinant.

Keywords: Time, *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, Shakespeare, *Sonnets*.

Spenser'in *Amoretti and Epithalamion* ve Shakespeare'in *Sonnets* eserlerinde zaman

Öz

İtalya'da ortaya çıkan kısa ve yüksek düzeyde yapılandırılmış şiirsel bir biçim olan sone, Elizabeth döneminde sevilen, idealize edilmiş bir bayana aşk soneleri yazmak için gelişir. Bu çalışma, Edmund Spenser'in *Amoretti ve Epithalamion* ve William Shakespeare'in *Sonnets* eserlerinde zaman temasını ele alır. Spenser *Amoretti* eserinde son kırk bir yıllık yaşamını yansıtan yılbaşı kutlamalarını ele alır. Spenser *Epithalamion* eserinde şafaktan düğün gecesine kadar günün saatlerini, bir yıldaki günlere karşılık gelen 365 uzun satırlarda bir yılın geçişini kapsayan bir kayıt tutar. İçeriği, gençliğin heyecanından orta yaş endişelerine doğru ilerler, mutlu bir gün için büyük umutlarla başlayıp konuşmacının gelecek nesillere bıraktığı miras kaydıyla biter. Spenser mısralarında zaman akışını dondurarak engellemeye çalışır. Shakespeare *Sonnets* eserinde, anlatıcının, güzelliğinin gelecek nesiller için güvence altına alınabilmesi amacıyla güzel efendiye çocuğunu doğuracak bir kadın bulması için yalvarmasıyla başlar. Şair, zamanın tahribatından ve güzel efendinin güzelliği üzerindeki zararlı etkilerinden şikayet eder ve güzel efendiyi mükemmelliğini bir çocuğa aktarmaya zorlayarak bu kaçınılmaz sonuçla savaşmaya çalışır. Şair, zamanı, ıstırapın bir boyutu olarak tanımlar ve güzel efendiden kendisini terk etmesini ister. Sonuç olarak zaman,

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hem öngörülemeden deęişim ve fırsatların başa çıkılmayan bir gücü hem de kişisel olmayan kaygı verici bir etken olarak tanımlanır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Zaman, *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, Shakespeare, *Sonnets*

Introduction

Being defined as a 'rebirth', the Renaissance is a cultural movement between the 15th century and the 17th century which began in Italy. The Renaissance comes to England by the spiritual and intellectual orientation which is known as humanism. Renaissance humanism challenges medieval scholastic education which emphasizes pre-professional, practical, and scientific studies. During this period, musicians and artists display individualism and artistic freedom in their works. Due to a desire for knowledge, world view changes from after life to human life. Artists are amazed by the human body. They use a natural and realistic style in order to celebrate its beauty. Among popular themes are human potential, courtly love and unrequited love (Quizlet, 2021).

Elizabethan literature includes order and pattern united with an interest in the heart and mind. Allusion to classical myths and elaboration of language are the features of English poetry in the later 16th century (W. W. Norton, 2021). The Elizabethan period may be called the period of the sonnet because this structured poetic form is introduced into England during this period. The sonnet form which is used firstly by Dante and Petrarch is originated in Italy in the 13th century. Henry Howard and Sir Thomas Wyatt introduce this form in England in the 16th century. It becomes popular in England about writing love sonnets to a beloved and idealized lady like Petrarch's sonnets that he has written to his mistress, Laura. Sonnets become sequences in time and express falling in love, running after the beloved and celebrating the beloved's beauty. The poets of the Elizabethan age begin to write a sonnet sequence to the lady whom he admires. Later, the sonnet becomes a form to express not only love and passion but also liberty, social criticism, and alienation in the 16th century. The poets of the Renaissance become in love with human beauty, considering a sign of the spirit which strives for perfection (Cormick, 1963: 89).

A sonnet consists of 14 lines of iambic pentameter, which is five two-syllable feet, and each foot consisting of an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable. As a metrical foot, an iamb consists of one stressed syllable and one unstressed syllable such as dah-DUM, dah-DUM dah-DUM dah-DUM dah-DUM. Due to its restrictions on meter and length, for the poet the sonnet is a difficult form (Miller, 1976: 133). As for their rhyme scheme, sonnets can be divided into two groups such as Petrarchan and the Shakespearean or English sonnet. The Petrarchan sonnet is named after the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch because he has perfected the form and written extensively in it. Being a two-part poem the Italian sonnet which is rhymed abbaabba/ cdecde, consists of eight lines and six lines, respectively. These two parts are performed against each other in an endless variety of ways. The latter part sometimes narrows or extends the first or it sometimes reverses or opposes it. Presenting a four-part structure the Shakespearean or English sonnet which is rhymed abab/cdcd/efef/gg develops an idea or theme in three stages in terms of extension, variation, alternation, etc. and then brings to a conclusion in the fourth part. This last couplet might have variety of functions such as summarizing, emphasizing, suddenly narrow focusing, or even pulling a surprise reversal. It becomes most effective when it leaves the reader with a tragic reminder or a comic twist of emotional impact.

English poet Edmund Spenser uses the Spenserian stanza in his several works. The stanza's main meter consists of iambic pentameter with a last line in iambic hexameter. This meter has six feet or stresses which

is known as an Alexandrine. Its rhyme scheme is ababbcbcc (Wikipedia, 2021). The Spenserian sonnet is a combination of the Shakespearean sonnet and the Petrarchan sonnet. It resembles the Shakespearean sonnet because of its quatrain and a couplet; however, it is more similar to the Petrarchan tradition because the conclusion is the result of the discussion which is set up in the previous quatrains.

As sonneteers, Spenser tries to admit the desire to and of the beloved. Whether the sonnet's subject is the desiring lover or the desired beloved avoids a precise definition. The phrase of the "self as desiring entity" is an essential component of the sonnets (Spiller, 1992: 125). Elaine Baruch claims that "it would be well to remember that in love, the object, meaning the person longed for, is sometimes more important than the subject, more important than life itself for many a male lover, in literature and sometimes in life" (1991: 3). Spenser develops a new discourse in which the beloved is valued more than the male lover. In the same way, Margaret Homans also claims that "quite often the feminine object of desire is portrayed as more powerful than the masculine speaking self which proves nothing more than that as an object she is subject to his figuring" (1985: 571). In order to stay virtuous, a woman should not consent to courtly love because courtly love is "frankly sensual, ... extramarital and does not contemplate matrimony as its object" (Parry, 1941: 4). Philippa Berry asserts that "while the lady of courtly love was usually depicted as only temporarily unavailable, the female object of Petrarchan and Renaissance neo-platonic love was defined as unequivocally chaste" (2003: 18). The man's desire for sensual (extra-marital) love and at the same time for a chaste woman continues the woman's status as a 'subject' to the other. By continuing her chastity, she reinforcing the lover's yearning and eventually leads her to curse him (Aspinall, 1998: 7). Spenser locates the woman as a powerful authority over the male lover in order to use this position later to defeat her as Eugene Goodheart expresses "power is oppressive and needs to be resisted" (1991: 17). Lover shows how he works in the labyrinth of various loves-courtly, Petrarchan, and neo-platonic (Johnson, 1990: 99).

The sonnet has survived because it does so much in little space. Due to its discipline, it forces the writer and awards the reader. The strictness of the form attracts both writer and reader; however, the form is enjoyable because it shapes and conveys remarkable experience. The Elizabethans' high literary achievement is proved by the number of both sonneteers and the sonnets they have produced in England. The spontaneity, freshness, and beauty with that Elizabethan sonnet poets matched words and feelings could not be surpassed by any group (Pooley, 1957: 68). The sonneteers emphasize with happiness the trouble of the lover, who enjoys his rejection.

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) is considered as the most complete representative of the English Renaissance (Bush, 1952: 38). Spenser is known as a pastoral writer, a love poet, and a restorer of the native language among his fellow Elizabethans. Spenser creates new poetry in language, in verse forms, and in genre. William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is considered England's national poet. His surviving works include two long narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and several other poems. Shakespeare's sonnets are love lyrics, growing from the erotic, social, and literary contexts of his age (Literariness, 2021). He examines the nature of human love, and there is a weight of insight and rhetorical power (Reisman, 2012: 193).

This study deals with the theme of time in Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, and Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. In this sense, this study analyses sonnets 4, 60, 62, 68, 87 of *Amoretti*, stanzas 6, 15, 16, 18 of *Epithalamion*, and sonnets 2, 15, 18, 60, 62, 73, 90, 97, 98, 116 of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

The passage of time in Spenser's *Amoretti and Epithalamion*

Spenser's *Amoretti* is a sonnet cycle including the sequence of 89 sonnets. *Epithalamion* is a series of short poems dealing with a public poetic celebration of marriage. The poem progresses through the couple's wedding day, starting from the groom's impatient pre-dawn hours on to the night's late hours after the couple has completed their marriage. It commemorates Spenser's courtship with Elizabeth Boyle, and their wedding in June 1594. In *Amoretti*, Spenser immortalizes his bride's name through word play. In *Amoretti*, Spenser's sequence imitates Petrarchan courtship and neo-platonic conceits. Beside neo-platonic conceit of conflict between spiritual and physical love, Spenser uses metaphors and images in order to portray love itself or the beloved as cruel tormenter. *Amoretti* breaks with traditional love poetry in several ways. The speaker longs for a sexually unavailable lover in the Petrarchan tradition. Beside a conflict between spiritual and physical love, there is an adulterous love. Spenser dedicates a sequence to a lady he can honourably win. The love affair between Spenser and the unmarried Elizabeth Boyle eventually ends in marriage.

In *Amoretti* which is set on the New Year, sonnet 4 quoted below makes a comparison between old and new, winter and spring, and death and life. While the speaker focuses on the change of the whole world from old to new, in context he may easily be paving the way to actualize the passion of his beloved for himself. The speaker notes seasonal change which is brought by the New Year, and then pays attention to the beloved. As his world passes from winter (death) to spring (life), he hopes that the heart of his beloved will turn toward him from coldness to warmth:

NEw yeare forth looking out of Ianus gate,
 Doth seeme to promise hope of new delight:
 and bidding th'old Adieu, his passed date
 bids all old thoughts to die in dumpish spright.
 And calling forth out of sad Winters night,
 fresh loue, that long hath slept in cheerlesse bower:
 wils him awake, and soone about him dight
 his wanton wings and darts of deadly power.
 For lusty spring now in his timely howre,
 is ready to come forth him to receiue:
 and warnes the Earth with diuers colord flowre,
 to decke hir selfe, and her faire mantle weaue.
 Then you faire flowre, in whom fresh youth doth raine,
 prepare your selfe new loue to entertaine. (Spenser, 1997: 70)

In sonnet 60 (Spenser, 1997: 92), the speaker focuses on his anguish and impatience about time that will take for their wedding day. He meditates on time it takes for the various planets to turn around the sun by saying that "Mars in three score yeares doth run his spheare" (line 4), but earth takes one year only. In the same way, one (earthly) year has passed since "the winged God his planet...began in me to moue" (lines 5-6), but this one year of courting the beloved seems longer to the speaker than "al those fourty which my life outwent" (line 8). From this he infers that one revolution only of Cupid's "planet" takes forty years of his own life, and he also hopes that his "loues fayre Planet" will shorten its own orbit "this yeare ensuing," (lines 13-14), or else will shorten his own life. From this poem it seems that the date of their wedding has been set about a year before, and the speaker already becomes very impatient and is looking forward to marrying this woman whom he has been courting for the past year. The fact that he gives the biographical information

that he is forty while writing the poem justifies his haste: He is not a young man anymore, and he is in a hurry to get married before he will be too old to take pleasure in it.

Amoretti's second New Year's poem, sonnet 62 which is quoted below uses an apostrophe when appealing to the speaker's love to encourage him to "cheare you your heauy spright" (line 14). Just as the seasons change from winter to spring, so the speaker should revive his energy for the enthusiasm he feels for his beloved. Here again, New Year refers to the Elizabethan calculation of March 25th, not January 1st because in March the cold winter is replaced by spring:

The weary yeare his race now hauing run,
The new begins his compast course anew:
with shew of morning mylde he hath begun,
betokening peace and plenty to ensew.
So let vs, which this change of weather vew,
change eeke our mynds and former Hues amend:
the old yeares sinnes forepast let vs eschew,
and fly the faults with which we did offend.
Then shall the new yeares ioy forth freshly send
into the glooming world his gladsome ray:
and all these stormes which now his beauty blend,
shall turne to caulmes and tymely cleare away.
So likewise loue cheare you your heauy spright,
and change old yeares annoy to new delight. (Spenser, 1997: 93)

Sonnet 68 (Spenser, 1997: 95-96) celebrates the day that the "most glorious Lord of lyfe... didst make thy triumph ouer death and sin" (lines 1-2). The speaker asks his "deare Lord" to "Grant that we for whom thou didest dye" may live "for euer in felicity" (lines 5-8). Setting aside to celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead (marking God's victory over sin and death), even this day is adopted by the speaker in order to seek a happy life for both himself and his beloved. Then he addresses his beloved, encouraging her "let vs loue, deare loue, lyke as we ought / loue is the lesson which the Lord vs taught" (lines 13-14).

Sonnet 87 (Spenser, 1997: 103) laments the absence of the beloved; however, the words "since I did leaue the presence of my loue" (line 1) expresses that the speaker has gone away, not his beloved. He wants the time would pass faster, implying that this separation is not an interruption in their relationship, but a mandatory duty. He spends time hoping to reunite this beloved, but he finds the time "maketh euery minute seeme a myle" (line 12). Finally, he compares how sorrow "doth seeme too long to last" while the desired happiness flies "away too fast" (lines 13-14).

In *Epithalamion*, stanza 6 (Spenser, 1997: 110-111) states that the bride finally wakes up and her eyes are likened to the sun with their "goodly beams / more bright then Hesperus". The groom calls the "daughters of delight" to accompany the bride, but he also invites the hours "of Day and Night", the seasons, and the "three handmayds" of Venus to participate as well. He encourages the latter to do for his bride the same thing they do for Venus, singing to her while helping her wedding's dress. There is a sunrise when the "darksome cloud" is taken from the bride's face to let her eyes shine in glory. The "daughters of delight" who are the nymphs are still forced to accompany the bride, but Spenser here presents the personification of

time making up Day, Night and the seasons. Here, he considers time itself attending the marriage ceremony as do "handmaids" of Venus and the nymphs.

In stanza 15 which is quoted below, the groom re-declares that this day is divine and invites everyone to celebrate in return for the bells' ringing. He takes pride in the sun's brightness the day's beauty, then he regrets when realizing that his wedding is occurring on the summer solstice which is the longest day of the year, and therefore his nuptial night will be postponed all the longer, but last only for a short time. By determining the wedding's exact day (June 20, the summer solstice), Spenser adapts the poetic portrayal of this ceremony into a historical context. A day's timeline placed on the verse structure of the poem leads to a description of various astronomical events (the position of stars, sunrise, sunset):

Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,
 And leaue your wonted labors for this day:
 This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,
 that ye for euer it remember may.
 This day the sunne is in his chiefest hight,
 With Barnaby the bright,
 From whence declining daily by degrees,
 He somewhat loseth of his heat and light.
 When once the Crab behind his back he sees.
 But for this time it ill ordained was,
 To chose the longest day in all the yeare.
 And shortest night, when longest fitter weare:
 Yet neuer day so long, but late would passe.
 Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,
 And bonefiers make all day.
 And daunce about them, and about them sing:
 that all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring. (Spenser, 1997: 115)

In stanza 16 (Spenser, 1997: 115), the groom maintains about the long lasting day, but his hope rises as evening finally arrives. When the evening starts in the East, he says "fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of loue", encouraging it to speed up the time for newlyweds to complete their marriage. The speaker focuses again on time and becomes hopeful because of the approach of twilight. He is impatient to be left alone with his bride, so he calls the evening star to take the bride and groom to their bedroom.

In stanza 18 which is quoted below, night has finally come, and the groom wants Night both to cover and protect them. He draws a comparison with mythology such as Zeus' relationship with Alcmena and his relationship with Night herself. Spenser makes a classical reference to Zeus and mentions both the woman who has intercourse with Zeus and their children. Alcmena is Pleiades' daughter and becomes Hercules' mother through Zeus. The attention has almost passed from the bride or the nuptial night to the potential child coming from this intercourse:

NOw welcome night, thou night so long expected,
 that long dales labour doest at last defray.

And all my cares, which cruel loue collected,
Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye:
Spread thy broad wing ouer my loue and me,
that no man may vs see,
And in thy sable mantle vs enwrap,
From feare of perrill and foule horror free.
Let no false treason seeke vs to entrap.
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
the safety of our ioy:
But let the night be calme and quietsome,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray:
Lyke as when loue with fayre Alcmena lay.
When he begot the great Tirynthian groome:
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie,
And begot Maiesty.
And let the mayds and yongmen cease to sing:
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring. (Spenser, 1997: 116)

The ravages of time in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*

In *Sonnets*, Shakespeare provides two contrasting dramas: on the one hand there is an uncontrollable lust for a dark-skinned married woman, the "dark lady"; and the other hand, there is a conflicted love that is felt for a young man. It is not clear whether these figures stand for real individuals, or whether the authorial "I" that addresses them stands for Shakespeare himself. Shakespeare deliberately reverses traditional gender roles as portrayed in the Petrarchan sonnets to create a potentially disturbing and more complex portrayal of human love. He also breaks many sonnet rules strictly followed by his fellow poets: He changes with gender roles, speculates on political events, talks about human evils unrelated to love, plays a joke on love, he parodies beauty, speaks openly about sex. The sonnets are glorified as a deep meditation on time, love, sexual passion, reproduction, and death.

In sonnet 2 which is quoted below, time is a major foe, surrounds the youth's forehead, wrinkles his face, and ruins his good looks. Beauty is considered a rotting treasure if there is not marriage and childbearing through love. By showing him his future, the speaker tries to frighten the young man in order to get him married and have children. The speaker takes an active role as an older man who gives advice to a younger, as experience to innocence, as disciplined desire to overpowering beauty (Smith, 1991: 251). By the time the young man is forty, he will only be a "tottered weed" (torn clothes) "of small worth held" because he will be all alone without children. He will look back on his selfish "lusty days" because he has not his own children on earth. This infertility of old age is symbolized in the last line of the sonnet:

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now
Will be a tottered weed of small worth held:
Then being asked, where all thy beauty lies,

Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
 To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes
 Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
 How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
 If thou couldst answer, "This fair child of mine
 Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse,"
 Proving his beauty by succession thine.
 This were to be new made when thou art old,
 And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold. (Shakespeare, 1997: 52)

In sonnet 15 (Shakespeare, 1997: 107), the speaker explores in the first eight lines how objects decay in progress of time: "Every thing that grows / holds in perfection but a little moment". That is to say that life is temporary and constantly changing. Even the beauty of youth fades in progress of time, but since the speaker knows that this transformation is inevitable, he appreciates even more strongly the beautiful appearance of the young man for now. Ironically, the beauty of youth is both temporary and permanent: It is temporary in the sense that everything in nature decays in progress of time, and it also is permanent as the inevitable process of aging, of which the speaker is fully aware of, reinforces the current beauty of the young man.

In sonnet 18 which is quoted below, the speaker asks if he should compare "thee" to a summer day. He expresses that his beloved is more beautiful, and then he makes a list of why summer is not so great: The wind shakes the buds which come up in spring, the sun can get very hot, the clouds can obscure the sun, and summer ends very quickly. He also says that all that is beautiful eventually fades either by chance or by the inevitable changes of nature. He argues that her/his summer (beautiful years) neither will go away nor her/his beauty will fade. Furthermore, as the beloved comes into being in eternal verses (in the sense of poetry), death can never take the beloved. The speaker resolves that so long as human beings are in existence and can read, the poem he wrote will live on, letting the beloved also continue live:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed:
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
 Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (Shakespeare, 1997: 119)

Sonnet 60 which is quoted below tries to explain the passage of time and its impact on human life. The speaker expresses in the first quatrain that the minutes replace one another like waves on the "pebbled shore", each replacing the one before it in an orderly sequence. He tells in the second quatrain the story of a human life through comparing it to the sun: At birth ("nativity"), it arises above the ocean ("the main of light"), then creeps towards noon ("crown" of "maturity"), and is ruined at once by "crooked eclipses" that struggle against the glory of the sun and defeat it. Time is described in the third quatrain as a destructive beast that stops the growth of youth, wrinkles the forehead of beauty, devours the beauties of nature, and cuts down everything that stands. The speaker sets his verse in the couplet against the ravages of time: he expresses that his verse will survive to glorify the beloved's "worth" in contrast to time's "cruel hand":

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end,
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity, once in the main of light,
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
 Crookèd eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand. (Shakespeare, 1997: 283)

In sonnet 62 (Shakespeare, 1997: 291), the speaker considers himself a young man and denounces his own narcissistic vanity. Unfortunately, though he may think of narcissism as a worthless quality, nevertheless "it is so grounded inward in my heart". In lines 9 through 12, his youthful image is suddenly shattered, starting with the typical "but", when the speaker sees in a mirror his true self "beated and chopped with tanned antiquity". The narcissistic self-love of the speaker, who oscillates between the contradiction of youth and old age, makes him guilty of the fault of his young friend: "Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise / Painting my age with beauty of thy days". He admires arrogance in himself despite condemning it in the youth. The expression "for myself" means that he has undertaken the identity of youth, and its problem remains a question of arrogance.

In sonnet 73 (Shakespeare, 1997: 333), the speaker expresses his feeling that he does not have much time to live the imagery of the dying embers of a fire, the afterglow of twilight, and wintry bough. All images show the approaching death. Although the speaker likens in the first quatrain himself to death leaves (autumn leaves), he is unable to identify how he fades fast, nor can he determine their exact number: "When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang / Upon those boughs which shake against the cold". He speaks in the second quatrain about "twilight / As after sunset fadeth in the west" which is a traditional metaphor that implies death. In this second quatrain, the speaker is close to death because he envisions death twice such as a "black night" and "death's second self" (sleep). The speaker compares in the third quatrain his desire about the young man to purging fire. Now, his fire is dying embers which are fed by his love for his youth, a "death-bed / Consumed with that which it was nourished by".

In sonnet 90 (Shakespeare, 1997: 390), the speaker who is already troubled by “the spite of Fortune” forces the youth not to delay his separation from him. He wants him to do it all at once if that is his intention. Therefore, the speaker requests: “Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now”. His call for a quick and determined action shows how serious the speaker’s crisis is. Expressions like “if thou wilt leave me” and “loss of thee,” show the overt anxiety, grief and resentment that have been felt by the speaker. Being afraid of everyone and everything that is against him now, the speaker is most afraid of the youth which will “overthrow” him: “And other strains of woe, which now seem woe / Compared with loss of thee will not seem so”.

In sonnet 97 (Shakespeare, 1997: 415), the speaker has been obligated to bear a separation from his beloved, and he likens this absence to the solitude of winter. By painting a picture of winter, the speaker cries out a comparison in the first quatrain: “How like a winter hath my absence been / From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year! / What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen! / What old December’s bareness everywhere!”. However, he expresses in the second quatrain that the season in reality is late summer or early autumn when nature bears the fruits of summer’s blooming. He rejects in the third quatrain the “wanton burthen of the prime” that means summer’s generosity - as unrealistic as the “hope of orphans”. Summer cannot be the father of it since “summer and his pleasures” await the beloved, and even the birds are quiet when he is gone. The speaker expresses in the couplet that the birds can sing with “so dull a cheer” when the beloved has gone away, implying that the leaves, which are listening, are afraid of the coming winter.

In sonnet 98 (Shakespeare, 1997: 418), at the beginning of the second quatrain the typical reversal appears with the word “yet”. This change of fate so early highlights how hopeless the speaker is when left by the young man. Both birds and flowers do not help him get rid of the depression because he compares the youth’s beauty with objects of beauty in spring and summer and resolves that they are faulty images of his friend’s appearance: “They were but sweet, but figures of delight / Drawn after you, you pattern of all those”. The speaker reconsiders his parting from the young man as the solitude of winter.

In sonnet 116 which is quoted below, the first quatrain expresses that love is unchangeable, the second quatrain expresses that love is an unshakable guiding star, the third quatrain expresses that love does not change in progress of time, and the couplet emphasizes the speaker’s certainty. The speaker applies space and time concepts to his ideal of true love. In this sense, love has an immortal essence that defeats destructive time. In comparison to longevity of love, time is brief:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments; love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove.
 O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
 It is the star to every wand’ring bark,
 Whose worth’s unknown, although his heighth be taken.
 Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle’s compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved. (Shakespeare, 1997: 487)

Conclusion

Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti*, which covers New Year's Day celebrations, reflects on past forty-one years of Spenser's life. In *Epithalamion*, Spenser makes a record of the day's hours from pre-dawn to wedding night, including the passage of a year in 365 long lines which also match up with the days in a year. As for its content, it moves from the excitement of youth to the anxieties of the middle age, starting with great expectations for a happy day and ending with record of the speaker's legacy for next generations. Spenser freezes the passage of time in verses of his poetry. William Shakespeare's *Sonnets* begins with the narrator's requesting the fair lord to get a woman who will bear his child so that his beauty can be assured for posterity. The speaker complains about the ravages of time and its harmful effects on the beauty of the fair lord, and tries to fight the inevitable by forcing the fair lord to convey his perfection to a child. The speaker defines time as an aspect of suffering and asks the fair lord to leave him. Time is described as unmanageable power of unforeseen changes and chances as well as a non-personal ominous determinant. Time is remembered as a devastating experience that cannot be coped with.

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