



Immortalizing Affinity Towards His Beloved in the Poem “One Day I Wrote Her Name upon the Strand” by Edmund Spenser

G. Chandu¹, P. Sushma², B. Janaki³

¹Assistant Professor, Sri Vasavi Engineering College, Tadepalligudem, Andhra Pradesh

²Assistant Professor, Vishnu Institute of Technology, Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh

³Lecturer, SKR Government Degree College (W), Rajamahendravaram, Andhra Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) one of the greatest Elizabethan English poets, is well known for his sonnets. He was the Non-Dramatic poet of the Elizabethan age. He wrote 88 sonnets. He was best known for Faerie Queene an epic poem and fantastical allegory and was recognized as one of the premier craftsmen of nascent modern English verse and is often considered as one of the greatest poets in the English language. Spenser is an early modern English writer. Spenser's period at the University of Cambridge was undoubtedly important for the acquisition of his wide knowledge not only of Latin and some of the Greek classics. But also Italian, French, and English literature of his own and earlier times. His knowledge of the traditional forms. And themes of lyrical and narrative poetry provided foundations for him to build his own original compositions. The patterns of meaning in Spenser's poetry are frequently interlaced out of the traditional interpretations developed through classical times and his own pagan myth, divinities, and philosophies and out of an equally strong experience of faith and doctrines of Christianity. Spenser's religious training was the most important part of his education. He couldn't have avoided some involvement in the bitter struggles that took place in his university over the path the new church of England was to run between Roman Catholicism and Extreme Puritanism and his own poetry repeatedly engages with the opposition between Protestantism and catholicism. His early work The Shepheardes Calender can be called the first work of the English literary Renaissance. In this paper, I would like to discuss the poem “ One day I wrote her name upon the strand” which is the 75th sonnet among the 88 that makeup “ Amoretti “ and the symbolism that took place in it.

Keywords: Mortal, waves, Immortalize, symbolism, reunion

**One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:**

The speaker is in deep thinking and recalls a day in the past when he was at the seashore with his loved one. They are sensing and enjoying their intimacy. He writes her name in an attempt to immortalize her existence. This is the common propensity that we can see in all human beings. There a man attempts to make his love immortal. As he wrote her name, after a moment the wave of the sea comes to the shore and wiped out the name. The wave could be the suggestive and destructive force and power of nature. This implicates the conflict between an insignificant man and powerful nature and this becomes the theme of the poem. “Immortalizing the power of poetry”.

**Again I wrote it second-hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.**

The desire to be immortal continues and this reflects in his re-attempt of writing the name. The words second hand here imply ‘second-hand writing’ but the result was just the same. Again the high tide came and affected it.

The poet personified the waves and tide as a dominant person. He (the tide) made the speaker's labor of writing his prey. Therefore, the name of the speaker's lady love on the sand becomes an object of hunting to that powerful tide. As such we see the hungry tide in one hand and the speaker's effort to write his beloved name on the other. In the end, nature wins over man.

**"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,**



And eke my name be wiped out likewise."

The recurrence of the letter "V" in the words "rain man" and "vain assay" emphasizes the speaker's futility of such an action. His beloved's name can be a metaphor for all those things. That a man wants to make an attempt to eternalize the things or eternalize the existence of love. In the second line of the above stanza the phrase "A mortal thing" refers to the name of the speaker's lover. Thus, he is trying to immortalize the name of a mortal being.

So, Here we can sense the entry of his beloved in this stanza: she came up with a logical mind and made a comment on his actions that no matter how many times he may write her name but it will not last. It clearly emphasizes the supreme or ultimate power of nature over man and his creation. She holds a realistic view of the world. She is very clear on the point nothing is immortal in this transitory world. Everything including her love, their love and even herself will lose over time.

**"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:**

After receiving this undigested comment from his lover, He denied her statement. But one amazing thing we could sense here, he denied her statement but he did not deny the truth. He knows the transitory nature of this world. Hence, he responds to his lover's statement. "Let baser things devise/To die in dust," meaning fewer things will decay. Here, we can sense the classical turn in the tone of the subject. So far the poem has been all about mortality. We thought nothing could live forever in this transitory world. But now we can see some things can. Let us see how it could be.

**My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name:**

The above two lines are very substantial and highlight the power of poetry. His verse will eternize her virtue. He wants to write a poem on her virtues in a place where it will not be affected by time. By celebrating her nature, he would write her name in heaven. Heaven suggests a place of immortality. Heaven contrasts with the sand.

**Where when as death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renews."**

The lover will write his beloved's shining name in the poetic firmament. He states that death may conquer everything but it couldn't able to do anything to their love. Even if things and people may disappear under the cruelty, and cruel clutches of time, his poetry will endure forever. Time cannot erase their love as now it is immortal.

The poem is full of symbolism. Symbolism is the use of symbols to represent ideas or meanings. They are inculcating certain qualities often only interpretable through context. One of the most important things to remember about symbols is that their meanings usually depend on the context. It is up to the writer to make sure that the setting, character, and circumstances all match up with the writer's perception of what they want their symbol to convey. One aspect that a writer may not be able to control and which may throw ones well crafted written ideas out the window is the outlook a reader can bring out to a poem or a prose work. Symbolism is the use of a symbol which can be a word or an image to communicate a distinct idea. Symbolism in literature works the same way. It is a language, writers use to communicate messages visually, even when their work is not illustrated within a text, symbolism works visually as pieces of imagery that create a picture in the reader's mind. Symbolism is one of the many literary devices writers use to make their work more vivid. In a way, symbolism illustrates a piece of writing by creating a picture in the reader's mind. In fact, some other literary devices like metaphor and allegory are often considered to be types of symbolism. Literary devices are the techniques that are used by writers to communicate ideas and themes beyond what they can express literally.

When the complete work is symbolic, it's all known as an allegory. Animal Farm by George Orwell is one of the most well-known modern allegories. If not symbolism is often worked into a story or other type of creative work that's meant to be read literally. We can recognize symbolism when an image in a piece of text seems to indicate something other than its real or literal meaning. Symbolism is used when literal language is not strong enough to express what the author needs to express. Symbolism is used in every kind of creative writing you may read it in poems and stories as well as creative non-fiction works. This poem is full of symbolism "One day I wrote her name upon the strand". Spenser revealed poetic beauty to his generation. He is the master of the language.

The waves or tides in the poem "One day I wrote her name upon the strand" symbolize the passing or leaving time. As we have seen how waves erase the evidence and labor of the speakers writing by washing the shoreline, time also destroys human beings and erases their identity in this world. And in kind, the problems and sufferings that are being in lifeline also will be washed away one day. Speaker writes his beloved's name on the sea shore but the waves wash it away. He writes it again but in vain it makes the speakers attempt unproductive to immortalize his beloved's name.



Similarly, death is inevitable. The speaker cannot stop death from approaching. As a matter of fact, every object in this world whether it is living or nonliving will be erased with the passing of time. In fact, the writer made an attempt to write his beloved's name on the sand.

“A stone is heavy, and the sand is weighty” – Bible KJV (Proverbs 27th chapter 3rd verse) though his attempt is on a great weight (sand) he failed to make it immortalize. Thus, what does he need to make her name immortalize: that must weigh more than sand.

The speaker writes his mistress name on the shore but the waves wash it away twice. This helps to notice that she too will be erased from this world like her name getting washed away. So, the name becomes a symbol of the beloved herself. Again, we hear the speaker almost say that “Well I have a better plan to do I am going to write your name in my verse then.

**My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name:**

As such, the word name is used repeatedly in the poem as a symbol to mean something more substantial, the beloved and her virtues. It signifies one's identity. According to, Christian's belief God will write the names of his beloved in the “Book of Life” and nobody or no tide can erase it from there.

This might be the perspective of Edmund Spenser. The lover Expresses his confidence that even when the world will be subdued by death, their ‘love shall live’ and will be renewed in heaven. William Shakespeare avoids the concept of reunion in heaven and only seeks to prolong in his verse the glory of love that will last till the day of doom. But Spenser goes beyond that and believes in reunification in life after death.

The entire poem is marked by a strong and undisturbed, unshivered sincerity of the poet's feeling of sadness as well as hope that surpasses the feeling of depression. When he and she are together after life their existence will be all the richer because he has praised her in his poems making her almost divine through his verse. So unlike many other poets who attempted to write this sort of poem such as Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophil with his beloved Stella, Spenser can be pretty sure that he and his beloved Elizabeth will be together in heaven.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, this poem is the ultimate expression of unending love. Spenser used many literary techniques like metaphor, personification, alliteration, imagery, and symbolism to make readers able to understand what his point is. Though, we may be able to understand his point by having a glance at literary techniques. But we need a sensible heart to feel what the writer's intention is. In the history of literature, nobody attempted to write of the things which may happen after death. So that people wish to be with their beloved ones until their existence on earth. But Spenser could not imagine himself without Elizabeth even in heaven. It shows the strong fidelity between them. There may be no end in love and he doesn't want an end in his imagination. Many works are there which offer pleasure to readers but this poem creates a great hope. It clearly shows affection never depends on time and place.

“A mind not to be changed by place or time” – John Milton

REFERENCES

- [1]. Long, William J. English Literature: Its History and its significance for the life of the English-speaking World. Good Press, 2019.
- [2]. Abrams, Meyer Howard, and Geoffrey Harpham. A glossary of literary terms. Cengage learning, 2014.
- [3]. Tearle, Oliver. One day I wrote her name upon the strand': Cognitive Poetics and Literary Communication." In The Conference on Bi-directional, pp. Perspective-s. 2009.
- [4]. Plantinga-Pauw, Amy. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes: A Theological Commentary on the Bible. Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Web References:

- [1]. <https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/edmund-spenser/sonnet-75-one-day-i-wrote-her-name-upon-the-strand>
- [2]. <https://englicist.com/topics/one-day-i-wrote-her-name>
- [3]. <https://poets.org/poet/edmund-spenser>
- [4]. <https://englishhistory.net/poets/edmund-spenser/>
- [5]. <https://poemanalysis.com/edmund-spenser/sonnet-75/>
- [6]. <https://literarydevices.net/amoretti-lxxv-one-day-i-wrote-her-name/>