

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ANTI-PETRARCHAN SENTIMENTS IN THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE POETRY

İNGİLİZ RÖNESANS ŞİİRİNDE PETRARCH KARŞITI UNSURLARA DAİR
KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR İNCELEME

Yazar/Author

Veysel İŞÇİ

Asst. Prof. Dr. TRABZON
UNIVERSITY

veyselisici@outlook.com

ORCID:
0000-0001-5187-5120

Abstract:

The sonnet as a form of poetry was first introduced from Italian into English during the Elizabethan age. Poets like Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard were pioneers in translating the works of Italian sonnet master Petrarch into English. Therefore, it is not surprising that they were also first to experiment with the sonnet form. They were followed by significant poets of the era, such as Edmund Spenser. However, it was William Shakespeare that greatly contributed to maturing the sonnet form in English. As well as writing plays for the theatre, he mastered in writing sonnet. As a result, the sonnet became the prevailing form of poetry during the Elizabethan era. However, the English sonneteers did not solely copy or imitate the works of Petrarch. On the contrary, they transformed the Italian sonnet form in a way that resulted in creating a new pattern called the English sonnet. In these contexts, this study sets out to analyse various ways by which English Renaissance poets made a contribution or reacted to the Petrarchan convention of love poems. Therefore, it mainly discusses how Petrarchan traditions and conceits were used (and abused) by English poets. Particularly, the anti-Petrarchan attitudes which arose in the 1590s and later are examined in order to show the differences between Italian and English sonnet forms. To do so, first, Thomas Wyatt's poems is going to be analysed to illustrate the way how he adapted the Italian sonnet form into the English language. Then, Edmund Spenser's Amoretti (1595) is going to be examined to reflect the poetic differences that are in contrast with the Petrarchan sonnet tradition. Finally, William Shakespeare's Sonnets (1609) are going to be studied to demonstrate anti-Petrarchan elements in the English sonnet form.

Keywords: Petrarch, Sonnet, Shakespeare, English Renaissance Poetry

Özet:

Bir şiir biçimi olarak sone, ilk olarak Elizabeth döneminde İngilizce'ye İtalyanca'dan aktarılmıştır. Sir Thomas Wyatt ve Henry Howard gibi şairler, İtalyan sone ustası Petrarch'ın eserlerini İngilizce'ye çevirmede öncülük etmişlerdir. Bu nedenle, sone formunu ilk kez deneyen kişilerin de onlar olması şaşırtıcı değildir. Onları aralarında Edmund Spenser'ın da olduğu dönemin önemli şairleri izlemiştir. Ancak, İngilizce sone formunun olgunlaşmasına en büyük katkıda bulunan kişi William Shakespeare'dir. Shakespeare, tiyatro için oyunlar yazmanın yanı sıra sone yazmakta ustalaşmıştır. Neticede sone Elizabeth dönemi boyunca hakim şiir biçimi haline gelmiştir. Bununla birlikte, İngiliz sone şairleri Petrarch'ın eserlerini sadece kopyalamamış veya taklit etmemiştir. Aksine, İtalyan sone formunu İngiliz sonesi adı verilen yeni bir biçim yaratacak şekilde dönüştürmüşlerdir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, İngiliz Rönesans şairlerinin Petrarch'ın aşk şiirlerine – geleneklere bağlı kalarak - nasıl katkıda bulduklarını veya ne tür tepkiler verdiklerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, çalışma esas olarak Petrarch'ın geleneklerinin ve stillerinin İngiliz şairler tarafından nasıl kullanıldığını (veya kötüye kullanıldığını) tartışmaktadır. Özellikle 1590'lar ve sonrasında ortaya çıkan Petrarch karşıtı tutumlar, İtalyanca ve İngilizce sone biçimleri arasındaki farkları göstermek için incelenecektir. Bunu yapmak için önce, Thomas Wyatt'ın şiirleri, İtalyan sone formunu İngilizce'ye nasıl uyarlandığını göstermek için analiz edilecektir. Ardından Edmund Spenser'ın Amoretti (1595) adlı eseri Petrarch'ın sone geleneğine zıt olan şiirsel farklılıkları yansıtmak için incelenecektir. Son olarak, William Shakespeare'in Soneleri (1609), İngiliz sone formunda Petrarch karşıtı unsurları göstermek için analiz edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Petrarch, Sone, Shakespeare, İngiliz Rönesans Şiiri

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1. Introduction

The Elizabethan era can be referred to as “the age of the sonnet” because it was at this time that England first saw this short but highly structured poetic form. The sonnet form originated and flourished in Italy in the thirteenth century. It was mostly used by two Italian masters, Dante and Petrarch. Yet, Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard are credited with popularizing the Petrarchan sonnet by introducing and promoting the form in England in the early sixteenth century. Thanks to their experiments with the form, writing love sonnets to a cherished, idealized woman, in the style of Petrarch’s sonnets to his mistress Laura, quickly became popular in England¹. In this context, this study examines historical development of the sonnet form in England in the Elizabethan age. While doing so, the study focuses on similarities and differences of the English sonnet by comparing and contrasting it with the Petrarchan sentiments within the framework of new historicist theory.

Francesco Petrarch, an Italian poet, made significant contributions to and wrote extensively in this style, therefore his name is associated with the Petrarchan sonnet. In Petrarchan conventions, all sonnets comprise of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter – five two-syllable feet². Every foot comprises of an unstressed syllable, chased by a stressed one³. Sonnets are mainly divided into two groups regarding their form and rhyme pattern. The Italian sonnet’s rhyme pattern is usually abbaabba/cdecde. Thus, it basically constitutes a poem of two parts, each consisting of eight and six lines, respectively. According to Dasenbrock, “these two parts are played off against each other in an infinitive variety of ways”⁴. The second half can either enlarge or diminish the first depending on the context. In other cases, though, it stands in stark contrast to it.

On the other hand, the Shakespearean or English sonnet presents a structure that has four different parts. In this structure, an idea or theme is built in three phases through variation, extension, and alternation⁵. Finally, a resolution is reached in the fourth or final stage. This final couplet can be utilized in various manners: to summarize, to highlight a point, to make rapid statement, to immediately attenuate focus, or even to make an unexpected reverse. It is probably most influential when it provides a surprise, suspending the reader with a comic twist or a tragic reminder that has powerful sentimental influence. Similarly, when it comes to the form, the English sonnet differentiates from its Italian counterpart, as well. Contrary to the Petrarchan sonnet, the English sonnet’s rhyme pattern is usually abab/cdcd/efef/gg. There are numerous poems from the Renaissance that serve to illustrate these distinctions. Several examples are provided below to demonstrate how selected poems help build the sonnet form in England and in what ways they challenge the origins of the form while making adaptations and adding new conventions through experiments.

2. Miscellaneous Poems by Thomas Wyatt

English poets owe a great deal to the Petrarchan sonnet for both its form and their subject matter. The entire essence of the kinship between the poet and his love is customized through an ideal courtly love behaviour, which Petrarch demonstrated for Laura in his poems of love. The idea of the lover being a modest slave for the beautiful lady, who is harmed by her look and caught in despair by her rejection, is taken from the notion of courtly love in the Middle Ages, a love phenomenon which stemmed from the shifting behaviour towards women centralizing around Virgin Mary as an idealized sample. According to Berdan, “this imported poetic theme had become essential for satisfying the mental needs and cultural tastes of the English gentlemen created by the Renaissance”⁶. Thus, we see the historical presence of the English equivalents of Laura in nearly whole works of 16th century poets writing in sonnet form.

Similarly, being the founders of the English Sonnet, Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard wrote love lyrics which mainly conform to afore-mentioned Petrarchan sonnet traditions. In this respect, Wyatt’s *I Find No Peace* and *Whoso List to Hunt* (1557) are first examined to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Petrarchan sentiments and those of English Renaissance lyric poetry.

2.1. *I Find No Peace and Whoso List To Hunt* by Thomas Wyatt

I find no peace, and all my war is done.
I fear and hope. I burn and freeze like ice.
I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise;
And nought I have, and all the world I season.
(5) That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison
And holdeth me not—yet can I scape no wise—
Nor letteth me live nor die at my device,
And yet of death it giveth me occasion.
Without eyen I see, and without tongue I plain.
(10) I desire to perish, and yet I ask health.
I love another, and thus I hate myself.
I feed me in sorrow and laugh in all my pain;
Likewise displeaseth me both life and death,
And my delight is causer of this strife⁷.

The main theme in Wyatt's *I Find No Peace*, being actually a translation of Petrarch's *Sonnet 104*, is the complexity, elusiveness and hesitancy of emotions and feelings related to love. The poem is composed of conflicting perceptions and viewpoints to portray the entire range of feelings that love can evoke. Although it appears that this connection is an unlikely issue that drives him to the verge of misery, the poet also appears to be ecstatic by it. The metaphors including bodily contradictions like freezing and burning refer to the mental results of the dramatic feelings suffered. According to Thomson, "love in the Tudor court was often fraught with social implications, particularly as the king himself was involved in numerous precarious romantic relationships"⁸. However, the notion of being imprisoned in spite of the fact that no bars could captivate him hints that the emerging torment is one which the speaker is eagerly suffering from. Therefore, he gets zest from the affair that directly results in his suffering.

In contrast to text-centred schools of criticism such as New Criticism, New Historicism examines literature in a wider historical context. It mainly suggests that literary criticism should mandate the interpretation of literature in terms of the milieu from which it emerges⁹. In this context, when the historical context of the English society in the sixteenth century is analysed, it can be observed that the court and love affairs in it were mostly degenerated¹⁰. Thus, this deviation from glittering courtly loves of the past to the corrupt relationships in the kingdom is also portrayed in Wyatt's works of sonnet. Contrary to Petrarch who foregrounds the beautiful feelings one gets from love, Wyatt reflects sadness, adversity and dichotomy while referring to love.

On the other hand, regarding the style, the poem has a pattern that is really identical to a Petrarchan form of sonnet. It consists of fourteen lines and has a rhyme pattern that splits it into an octave and a sestet. Nevertheless, as illustrated below, there are certain changes on its form when compared with a Petrarchan love poem. For instance, the poem does not have rigid iambic pentameters and rhyme pattern. While it complies with a Petrarchan sonnet in the first eight lines (octave) with its rhyme pattern of abbaabba, it differs in the last six lines (sestet) having a pattern of cddcdd in contrast to ccdeed. These conflicting rhyme patterns also add to poetical impact of ambiguity, which the poet creates through his mental states. The rhymes, especially in the sestet, may be identified as half rhymes, with "death" rhyming with "strife" in two ending lines. It may indicate the divergence, which the narrator of the poem sees in himself due to his broken mental condition, as discovered in the poem. Moreover, Wyatt differs from the Petrarchan form in terms of its subject theme. For example, whereas in the Petrarchan form, the subject of the poem is presented in the octave and improved in the sestet, Wyatt's work does not keep the partition and dissociation of sentiment. Dasenbrock argues that "the poet begins by enumerating the conflicting states of mind occasioned by the onset of love"¹¹. Thus, Wyatt hints the idea that love brings both joy and misery.

On the other hand, In *Whoso List to Hunt*, Wyatt diverges from the conventional form of sonnet and describes the female subject as a deer that is followed in an apparently fiery manner. Thomson argues that “in being not an inanimate object of the suitor's affection but a wild animal in flight, the female has more personality than the typical subject of a courtly love poem”¹². Despite her lack of vocalization, she is actively participating in a conversation with the speaker through her actions and the display of her collar. Therefore, according to Thomson, “Wyatt shifts the perspective on courtly love to focus on the ideas of masculine desire and ownership”¹³.

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
 But as for me, hélas, I may no more.
 The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
 I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
 (5) Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
 Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
 Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,
 Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.
 Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
 (10) As well as I may spend his time in vain.
 And graven with diamonds in letters plain
 There is written, her fair neck round about:
 Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am,
 And wild for to hold, though I seem tame¹⁴.

Through feminist perspectives, one can examine Wyatt's work *Whoso List to Hunt* and see how it foregrounds women's lack of power in early sixteenth-century English society. The hind's position in the sonnet as the possession of a noble owner identifies her as too hazardous for the speaker to hunt. The fact that she is in the control of a powerful man places her in a precarious predicament, though. Dasenbrock claims that “the hind's seeming inability to recognize this danger, as a mere animal, adds to the complexity of the narrative, especially when the cultural and historical realities of the Tudor court are considered”¹⁵. Wyatt describes the woman in the poem as a hind in real-life. He does so not because her identity is insignificant but naming her could have resulted in speculation that would put both the poet and the woman into danger.

This is a purposeful deviation from the conventional Petrarchan form of sonnet, where the hind clarifies that the collar is actually designed to make her free, even from the possession of Caesar's. In Petrarch's *Rime 190*, the collar of the doe, emphasized in line eleven, means that it gratified my Caesar to set me free. Caesar was mostly defined as a deity to Roman people, and therefore this line illustrates that the god has made the hind free. In Wyatt's sonnet, however, the collar symbolizes not independence but possession. The hunt is abandoned not because the hind was designed to be free, but rather because a powerful man owns her.

This argument becomes more valid if a new historicist approach is adopted while analysing the poem. Particularly, when the historical upheaval stemming from the liaison between Thomas Wyatt and Anne Boleyn is taken into consideration, it is not surprising that Wyatt abstains from naming the woman in the poem. However, historical context reveals that it is Anne Boleyn who was then married to the king of England, Henry VIII¹⁶. Henceforth, Wyatt does not speculate on identifying his love in the poem but rather symbolizes her as a hind.

3. *Amoretti* by Edmund Spenser

Petrarchism may be identified as the manner of penning love poems inspired from Petrarch's poetry to Laura, his *Canzoniere*. The key stylistic mark of Petrarchan poems is the Petrarchan oxymoron or contrast that also strengthens this inclination towards instability. According to Ribes, “the Lady is the poet's ‘sweet enemy’, and his

love for her is a 'living death' or an 'icy fire'"¹⁷. Many English poets during the Elizabethan era maintained imitating these conventions while writing in the sonnet form.

However, Spenser's *Amoretti* differs dramatically from the other significant Elizabethan sonnets. Spenser is one of the most important Renaissance poets to copy Petrarch via his divergence from being a Petrarchan. Here, it will be argued that Spenser's distinctly non-Petrarchan treatment of the sonnet form and pattern is necessitated by his closer affinity with Petrarch. And, this leads the reader, whose expectations are centred around *Astrophel and Stella* (1580) or any other conventional poetry of Renaissance Petrarchism, to think of *Amoretti* so disconcerting.

To begin, the focus of Spenser's sonnet is on the relationship rather than the individual. The lover's 'I' or ego is totally neglected and even if referred, it is often deeply interested in a scheme that stops self-definition. Therefore, the *Amoretti* is never very descriptive, nor does it say us anything peculiar to the love affair being described. Particularly, in sonnet 67, the self-effacement feature of the *Amoretti* shows direct opposition to the egotism and self-absorption of conventional Petrarchan sonneteers like Sidney and Wyatt. In determining the common redirection of the desire away from egotistical contradiction and establishing the metaphysical link between the poet and Lady as the central cause for the presence of love, Spenser stabs at the core of Petrarchism so purposefully. The conflict *Amoretti* presents to the works of other Petrarchan sonneteers is a purposeful conflict. Dasenbrock argues that "Spenser consciously challenges Petrarchan notions of love when he writes a poem like sonnet 67, which relies on the classic Petrarchan topos of love as a hunt"¹⁸. By doing so, he concludes that love could not be a hunt if it is love.

Spenser's *Amoretti* is a volume that "memorializes Spenser's courtship of Elizabeth Boyle, a young, well-born Anglo-Irish woman, and the couple's wedding on June 11, 1594"¹⁹. It can also be regarded as "personal revelation by Edmund Spenser about himself and his courtship with Elizabeth Boyle during the years 1594-1595"²⁰. Elizabeth Boyle was not a married woman, and their courtship finally ended in marriage. This biographical information helps us understand that, contrary to that of Petrarch, the love theme in *Amoretti* is not portrayed as a hunt which is hard to catch but rather an honourably win for the poet. Similarly, unlike Petrarchan tradition's obsession with instability, discontinuity, egotism, and conflict, Spenser's eventual marriage at the end of the poem reveals a unique resolution. Thus, he aims to illustrate that marriage is a quiet and peaceful place where the couples may find harmonious love contract.

Likewise, if the pattern of the whole poem is considered, one may observe another stage at which Spenser is transforming and defying the traditions of Petrarchism. In such sonnets as 10 or 30, there are nearly parodic Petrarchan sentiments in their description of the unpleasant fair and of the uncertainty and restlessness of the love affair. However, as the sequence continues, Spenser turns that convention upside down, changing it in a coherent way and exposing it to an interrogating critique. The trouble with his love affair through much of the sonnet is that it is trapped in the unstoppable change and self-effacement of Petrarchan love. The poem, diverging away from that sort of love, moves beyond a more certain type of love where decisions are persistent and include a fastening and curbing of the self.

Many sonnet forms involve a genuine problem with concluding couplets since the love affairs they describe have no convincing ending. However, Spenser's *Amoretti* leads into a magnificent poem commemorating the poet's wedding. The last part of "Amoretti" provides the poem with a pattern that many other sonnets of a similar style do not have. It is mostly considered that Petrarch and the Petrarchans often advocate of a lower, vulgar kind of love. Yet, from the perspective presented at the end, the whole poem can be described as a turn-away from the restlessness of Petrarchan love. It further moves beyond the ease and tranquillity Spenser reaches in the holy universe of wedding. Spenser's conception of love is sacred only when it is expressed in a certain, mutual, and altruistic marriage. Thus, according to Dasenbrock, "he stands out as a poet of marriage, articulating in his love sonnets a critique of adulterous love"²¹. Thus, Spenser offers a heavenly alternative to the misery and sufferings that is seen in the works of many sonneteers in the Elizabethan era.

4. Shakespearean Sonnets

Similar to afore-mentioned Elizabethan poets, William Shakespeare also engaged in writing sonnets. Shakespeare got involved into this fashion, adjusting his remarkable skill to the common literary trope as well as writing plays for the theatre. He particularly pursued to adhere by the sonnet pattern as introduced from the Italian into English by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard. Although he maintained the fashion of his contemporaries, as a sonneteer, Shakespeare was divergent from his age in many ways including sonnet structure, style, vocabulary and characterization.

First, Shakespeare was different in his handling of the language and subject employed in his works. He did not maintain the courtly conventions. Instead, he ridiculed it by playing a hard-laboured pun on the traditions of love poetry prevailing in his age. Second, with his actualist depiction of human feelings, Shakespeare was also divergent from the sonneteers writing in the style of Petrarch. According to Vendler, "the love expressed in the courtly love poems through elaborate language was considered by Shakespeare as artificial and unrealistic"²². Shakespeare's dislike for this traditional Petrarchan handling of love is first observed in *Sonnet 21*. The poem, which is devoted to his juvenile buddy, shows us that Shakespeare does not wish to depict the beauty of his mate in the way in which major Elizabethan poets define it. An additional anti-Petrarchan component can be noticed in the manner in which Shakespeare emphasised the reciprocity of love. For the Bard, mutuality lies at the heart of both friendship and love. In *Sonnet 116*, for instance, "the ideal relationship was defined by Shakespeare as 'the marriage of true minds', a union that can be realized by the dedicated and faithful"²³.

Oliver Farrar Emerson argues that Shakespeare "may have begun his sonnet writing under the direct influence of Surrey's [Henry Howard, Early of Surrey] sonnet form"²⁴. As will be shown below, regarding the sonnet pattern in particular, Shakespeare is believed to be heavily influenced and inspired by *Songes and Sonettes*, better known as *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). The Surrey form had also a great impact on Shakespeare's contemporaries who engaged into writing sonnets²⁵. Thus, if looked through new historicist lenses, it can be argued that young William Shakespeare sought to imitate the English sonnet form in his early poems whereas he experimented on new forms with strikingly original and conflicting themes in his later sonnets.

In these respects, Shakespeare's *Sonnet 130* stands out as a good example to elaborate on anti-Petrarchan elements in the English sonnet form.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 (5) I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 (10) That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
 I grant I never saw a goddess go;
 My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she belied with false compare²⁶.

In this poem, the anti-Petrarchan indicators are a bit more numerous when compared to other Shakespearean sonnets. One of these elements is that only one single theme is foregrounded throughout the initial twelve lines and it is the partly unattractive features of his loved one. However, Petrarch's poems compare two conflicting themes. For instance, the beloved's emotions that she feels while waiting for her death is contrasted with the notion

of the poet's emotions at her death. There are more anti-Petrarchan elements in Shakespeare's works, such as the structure and rhyme pattern. *Sonnet 130* comprises of 3 quatrains (4 lines), accompanied with a concluding couplet. There are possibly voltas (turns of thought) although they are not required - at lines 5 and 9. However, Petrarch's poems are designed with an initial octave (8 lines) and it is followed by a sestet (6 lines). The rhyme pattern of *Sonnet 130* is similar to what is set for the standard English sonnet: abab/cdcd/efef/gg.

The volta in *Sonnet 130* illustrates an anti-Petrarchan way of writing sonnet, as well. Petrarch's voltas at line 9 turn from conflicting notions that are being contrasted to one another. But, the volta at line 9 in *Sonnet 130* is a small turn from one stressed point to another within the similar notion. In the poem, the volta turns from bodily comparisons between his beloved's features and the outer world. For instance, the speaker in the sonnet compares his love's eyes and lips to sun and coral. He also establishes a parallel between her cheeks and roses. On the other hand, following the volta, lines from 9 to 12 compare her to intangible notions. Her speech is likened to music and her walk is compared with how a goddess walks around the world. Another anti-Petrarchan thing in the sonnet is the ending. *Sonnet 130* has a bewildering conclusion which may be considered to be identical to the English sonnet since it presents an epiphany as the resolution to the tension in the poem. According to Waller, "the epiphanic resolution is that the speaker thinks his love as much of a marvel as any other beauty"²⁷. *Sonnet 130* also maintains the English sonnet pattern as it presents the resolution to the tension of the poem in a rhyming couplet.

In conclusion, it is evident that Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, maintained the fashion of writing sonnets in English. Yet he accomplished it in his own special style, which was strikingly original.

5. Conclusion

Petrarchan sonnets are modelled off of Petrarch's love sequences for a fair lady called Laura. Petrarch did not ever have the chance to meet Laura. However, he pursued her continuously and speculated about her idealized beauty and elegance. He also wrote about the misery she caused him to suffer due to his deep feelings for her. Mostly, he used to depict love by referring to materials like ice or fire as comparisons or the opposites. Petrarchan sonnet forms usually depict women to be ideally beautiful (eyes like pearls, lips as red as roses) whereas they also utilize contrasting elements such as pain-pleasure, fire-ice to identify love.

However, English poets during the Renaissance period mostly subverted and reversed the conventions of the Petrarchan love sequence in many ways. Although Thomas Wyatt has penned sonnets in a form that is so identical to a Petrarchan sequence, he deviates from the tradition by altering the rhyme scheme. Moreover, in *Whoso List to Hunt*, Wyatt also challenges the idealized woman of the typical love sonnets and casts her as a deer which can represent the weak status of the woman in the Tudor court. Like Wyatt, Edmund Spenser handles the Petrarchan lyric sonnet in a very distinctive way, too. Spenser's focus in his sonnets is much more on the relationship than the individual. For instance, in determining the common guidance of the desire away from egotistical contradiction, the lover's ego is completely ignored or transformed into a scheme that stops self-definition in Spenser's *Amoretti*.

Similarly, Shakespeare takes up Petrarchan sonnet trend, too. But, he is different from his contemporaries in many respects including sonnet structure, style, subject, language and characterization. Introducing a dark lady rather than a beautiful girl as the subject of his lustful sequences is definitely a distinct tradition initiated by Shakespeare. In addition, he also employs erotic language for a boyfriend to whom he devotes his first 126 sonnets. The poet depicts him to be prettier than a day in summer. For him, the youth is his reign and his knight of love. Therefore, this subject characterization becomes a significant deviation from the Petrarchan tradition. Another anti-Petrarchan form is demonstrated in the manner Shakespeare underlines the reciprocity of love. For Shakespeare, the ideal love bond is established through "the marriage of true minds"²⁸. Shakespeare considers the love in the poems of courtly love, which is depicted through a comprehensive language, to be artificial and unrealistic. He makes fun of the courtly tradition by playing a witty pun on the tradition of love poems popular among his contemporaries.



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