IMMORTALITY IN THE SONNETS OF SIR PHILIPP SIDNEY

Akhadova Mukhabbat Akmal kyzy
2nd Master's student of Uzbekistan State World Languages University.
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
ahadovamuhabbat0803@gmail.com

Abstract. *This paper argues that Sidney's Sonnet 1 and Sonnet 31 move beyond conventional love poetry to explore the difficulty of authentic expression and a redefined immortality. Sonnet 1 shows the poet abandoning imitation for honest inward writing, while Sonnet 31 extends this voice to an unresponsive cosmos, where the moon's silence deepens the poem's unresolved longing. Sidney's immortality thus lies not in love's fulfillment but in the persistence of a truthful, questioning voice that endures because it refuses closure.*

Key words: *Elizabethan poets, sonnets, Sir Philip Sidney, immortality, Astrophil and Stella.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье обосновывается положение о том, что сонеты 1 и 31 Сидни выходят за рамки традиционной любовной поэзии и раскрывают проблему искреннего самовыражения, а также переосмысление понятия бессмертия. В сонете 1 поэт отказывается от подражания и выбирает путь искреннего выражения своих внутренних переживаний. В сонете 31 этот поэтический голос обращается к безмолвной Вселенной, где молчание Луны усиливает неразрешённую тоску, звучащую в стихотворении. Таким образом, в интерпретации Сидни бессмертие заключается не в осуществлении любви, а в непрерывном существовании искреннего, вопрошающего голоса, стремящегося к истине и отказывающегося от окончательного разрешения.*

Ключевые слова: *поэты елизаветинской эпохи, сонеты, сэр Филип Сидни, бессмертие, Astrophil and Stella.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada Sidney qalamiga mansub 1- va 31-sonetlar an'anaviy sevgi she'riyati doirasidan chiqib, samimiy ifoda muammosi hamda boqiylik tushunchasining yangicha talqinini ochib berishi asoslab beriladi. 1-sonetda shoir taqlidchilikdan voz kechib, o'z ichki kechinmalarini samimiy*

ifodalash yo‘lini tanlaydi. 31-sonetda esa ushbu poetik ovoz javob bermaydigan koinotga murojaat qiladi va Oyning sukuti she’rdagi hal etilmagan sog‘inch tuyg‘usini yanada chuqurlashtiradi. Shunday qilib, Sidney talqinida boqiylik muhabbatning ro‘yobga chiqishida emas, balki yakuniy xulosaga kelishni rad etadigan, haqiqatni izlovchi va savol qo‘yuvchi samimiy ovozning davomiyligida namoyon bo‘ladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *Yelizaveta davri shoirlari, sonetlar, ser Filipp Sidney, boqiylik, Astrophil and Stella.*

Sir Philip Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella is often read as a conventional Renaissance sonnet sequence celebrating courtly love, yet a closer examination reveals a far more complex artistic project. This paper argues that Sonnet 1 and Sonnet 31 are not merely love poems but meditations on the very possibility of poetic expression and emotional truth. Rather than presenting love as something easily captured in verse, Sidney dramatizes the poet’s struggle against inherited conventions and his eventual turn inward toward authentic self-expression. At the same time, the sequence reimagines the concept of immortality itself—not as the beloved’s eternal fame or the lover’s triumph, but as the enduring power of an honest, questioning voice. By analyzing the poet’s frustrated search for words in Sonnet 1 and his unanswered address to the moon in Sonnet 31, this paper explores how Sidney transforms poetic failure and emotional isolation into a new, introspective form of literary permanence.

Sonnet 1 is not just about love. It is about the difficulty to expressing love in poetry. In this sense, it is a poem about the impossibility of writing for the poet, showing how hard it is to find the right words. From the first lines, the poet makes it clear that his intention – to write something meaningful about his love – is sincere, but also ineffective. His effort feels forced and unnatural, as if he is trying to fit his feelings into patterns that do not truly belong to him [1].

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain.
(Sidney, Sonnet 1, lines 1-4)

In these lines, the poet reveals his simple and hopeful plan. Through his poetry he will create a chain reaction: Stella will enjoy reading it, understand his feelings, feel sympathy for him, and return his love. The poet aims to use his verse as a tool for persuasion and seduction. However, the poet feels stuck and

overwhelmed as he realizes he is unable to write as he intended. The existing poetic traditions and the pressure to imitate other writers prevent him from expressing himself freely.

I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe:
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunbunr'd brain.
(Sidney, Sonnet 1, lines 5-8)

The image of *"turning others' leaves"* shows how the speaker looks to other poets for inspiration. This reflects a common Renaissance practice, where writers studied and imitated earlier models like Petrarch and other European poets. At first, he thinks reading their work will help him to *"to paint the blackest face of woe"*, however, borrowing *"inventions fine"* [2] is not truly belong to his real emotions. His overworked, exhausted, and *"sunburn'd brain"* dry like a land under too much heat, even the *"fresh and fruitful showers"* of inspiration cannot help him as all this reading seems to have drained his creativity rather than refreshing him. In this sense, the poet feels trapped by language and poetic tradition but cannot find a voice that is truly his own.

The speaker's Muse – the personification of his own creative voice – interrupts him sharply and commands what he really needs to do:

But words came halting forth, wanting invention's to stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
"Fool," said my Muse to me "look in thy heart, and write."
(Sidney, Sonnet 1, lines 9-14)

The speaker describes himself *"great with child to speak"* – pregnant with emotion and meaning – but he is *"helpless in [his] throes,"* unable to deliver his thoughts. He bites his *"truant"* (lazy) pen and beats himself in frustration. The Muse's command *"look in thy heart, and write"* is a change declaring to trust his own feeling and create his own artistic work independently, instead of following strict rules or copying others [3]. Real poetry, the poem suggests, does not come from books or imitation, but from honest self-expression. By turning inward, the speaker finally finds a way to write that feels authentic.

In sonnet 1, the immortal element is not the beloved or her beauty or her virtue, it is the speaker's voice, his own experience – the struggle, the emotion,

and the process of trying to express his love. He does not create a perfect image of Stella, but expresses his thoughts, frustration, and feelings honestly admitting that he cannot fully capture her at all. This honesty is what gives his verse its enduring power.

As a reader we may not know the real historical figure behind Stella, but we can clearly feel Astrophil's emotions. His inner world becomes immortal through the poem. In this way, Sidney presents a different idea of immortality. It is not about successfully achieving love or making beloved's name immortal, instead, it comes from writing truthfully about one's own experience. When Sidney's Muse commands him to *"to look thy heart and write,"* it is not guaranteed that Stella will read, know, pity, or grant grace. In fact, the rest of the sequence demonstrates that she does none of these things in the way Astrophil desires. The Muse is guaranteeing something else entirely: that the act of looking inward and writing will produce a true record. And because it is true, because it is the honest image of love and pain, it will be immortal.

If Sonnet 1 establishes the inward, immortal voice of Sir Philip Sidney, sonnet 31 expands that voice outward toward the vastness of the cosmos. Addressed to the moon, the sonnet transforms a conventional expression of melancholy into a deeper meditation on love, isolation, and the silence of the universe. Sidney presents heavens as distant and unresponsive. The heavens do not offer reassurance; they reflect emptiness. As a result, the immortality in the poem does not come from triumph over time, but from the persistence of questioning and emotional unrest.

The poem opens with the striking image of the moon rising *"with how sad steps," "silently,"* and with a *"wan"* (pale, sick) [4] face. This description is not objective; it is shaped entirely by the speaker's emotional state. Astrophil projects his own sadness onto the moon, turning it into a companion in suffering. This is more than simple comparison – it is an attempt to find connection in a vast and indifferent universe:

With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
(Sidney, Sonnet 31, lines 1-4)

The reference of Cupid, the *"busie archer,"* deepens the idea of finding connection. Astrophil wonders whether the moon's pale and quiet conditions the result of love's wounds. By asking this, he suggests that even the *"heav'nly place"*

might not be free from the emotional pain and love torments. [6] This moment opens the possibility that his suffering is not isolated but part of a larger, universal condition. If the moon suffers too, then his pain gains meaning beyond personal – it becomes something shared across existence itself.

In the sestet, this imagined connection turns into direct questioning. Astrophil addresses the moon with a series of urgent and probing questions about the nature of love. He asks whether, in the heavens, loyalty is treated as foolishness, whether beauty leads to pride, and whether love is met with ingratitude. These concerns reflect the familiar frustrations of the lover, but Sidney expands them into a cosmic inquiry:

Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?
(Sidney, Sonnet 31, lines 5-14)

The accumulation of questions creates a sense of urgency and emotional intensity. Astrophil wants to know if the moon's society operates by the same maddening rules. However, what is most significant is that none of these questions receive an answer. The moon remains silent throughout. What initially seemed like a sympathetic presence is revealed to be only a surface onto which the speaker has projected his own feelings. The sense of shared suffering collapses into isolation. The final line, ending with a question *"Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?"* leaves the poem open and unresolved, emphasizing the absence of any external confirmation or comfort. [5]

This silence is precisely what gives the poem its lasting power. If the moon had answered, the poem would reach a form of closure, and its emotional tension resolved. Instead, the unanswered questions remain active, continuing to speak to readers across time. Each reader takes the place of the silent moon. Each reader receives the speaker's questions and engages with them internally.

Sidney presents an uncertain and introspective model of immortality. His poem does not claim to defeat time or secure permanence for love. But it

preserves the experience of longing itself. The voice of Astrophil becomes the true object of immortality. This voice captures a universal human experience. Experience of the feeling of loving without certainty, of seeking answers in an unresponsive world. The poem remains "alive" not because it resolves its themes, but because of refusing to do so. Sidney's immortality lies in openness: a voice that continues to ask, continues to feel like a wound that never fully heals. And, therefore continues to endure.

In conclusion, Sidney's Sonnet 1 and Sonnet 31 together reveal a radical rethinking of both love poetry and poetic immortality. Sonnet 1 dismantles the illusion that borrowed conventions can express genuine feeling, culminating in the Muse's command to "look in thy heart, and write"—an affirmation that authentic poetry arises from honest inward experience rather than imitation. Sonnet 31 extends this inward voice outward to the cosmos, where the moon's silence transforms a conventional complaint into a profound meditation on isolation and unanswerable longing. What emerges from both poems is not the fulfillment of desire or the glorification of the beloved, but the persistence of the speaker's voice itself—frustrated, questioning, and unresolvable. Sidney thus offers an alternative model of immortality: one grounded not in triumph over time, but in the truthful recording of emotional struggle. It is precisely this openness—the refusal to resolve—that allows Astrophil's voice to endure and to continue speaking to readers across centuries.

REFERENCES

1. **Smith J. M.** Seven Centuries of Verse. – 1957. – P. 77–89.

2. **Spenser E.** Amoretti and Epithalamion // Edmund Spenser's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Criticism / ed. by **A. Hadfield, A. L. Prescott**. – 4th ed. – W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. – P. 589–624.

3. **Inglis R. B., Donald A., Larsen C. E.** Adventures in English Literature. – Mercury Edition, 1952. – P. 120–123.

4. **Sidney P.** Astrophil and Stella // The Major Works: Including Astrophil and Stell / ed. by **K. Duncan-Jones**. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. – P. 153–212.

5. **Greenblatt S., Abrams M. H.** The Norton Anthology of English Literature. – New York, 2006. – P. 708–917.

6. **Croft W., Cruse D. A.** Cognitive Linguistics. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. – P. 40–74.