

Gender Roles and Power Struggles in Edmund Spencer's Amoretti Essay

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During the course of Edmund Spencer's Amoretti, the "Petrarchan beloved certainly underwent a transformation" (Lever 98); the speaker depicts the beloved as merciless and is not content with being an "unrequited lover" (Roche 1) as present in a Petrarchan sonnet. Throughout Sonnet 37 and Sonnet 54, the speaker provides insight into the beloved not seen within the Petrarchan sonnets; though the speaker does present his uncontrollable love for the beloved, he does so through his dissatisfaction with his position and lack of control. In Sonnet 37, the speaker describes the beloved as an enchantress who artfully captures the lover in her "golden snare" (Spencer, 6) and attempts to warn men of the beloved's nature. Sonnet 54, the speaker is anguished by the beloved's ignorance towards his pain and finally denies her humanity. Spencer allows the speaker to display the adversarial nature of his relationship with the beloved through the speaker's negative description of the beloved, the presentation of hope of escaping from this love, and his discontent with his powerlessness. Spencer presents a power struggle and inverted [gender](#) roles between the lover and the beloved causing ultimate frustration for the speaker during his fight for control. The [woman](#) is portrayed as a siren as she consciously entraps men through her beauty

which is so breathtaking men are unable to resist once ensnared by a single glance. In Sonnet 37, the beloved is representative of women as a whole and is depicted as siren-like in her conscious entrapment of innocent men through her beauty. The speaker begins his tantrum towards his beloved in saying, "What guyle is this" (1), establishing his resentment of and frustration towards, essentially, women and their pres...

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...ry description of the beloved, his hope for freedom, and fight for power. The beloved, through the speaker's perception of her, is able to maintain the inverted gender roles and strip the speaker of all power and control resulting in his resentful acceptance of defeat.

Works Cited

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