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The Drug of Faith drowns out the Misfortunes.

William Shakespeare’s Sonnets 29 and 30 are both sonnets that are a part of the “Fair Youth” collection. They both open with a narrator speaking reminiscing upon their shortcomings, whether it be somethings they cannot do or do not have. The speakers conclude that they are absolved of these hardships whilst in the presence of this unnamed figure whom they love dearly. Each speaker uses different perspective of time, with one reminiscing on the past and the second on the present. The ending couplets create a complete reversal of mood, which is synonymous to people of the New Testament giving up their belongings and remembering about God's and Jesus' love and the faith they put in them. Not only do these lines affect mood, but their positioning also gives it other religious meanings, such as a reference to Last Judgement. The two sonnets show the positivity and benefits of having faith in God and looking forward to the day of the Last Judgement. The speakers of both sonnets' give implications of faith and Last Judgement by their initial negative imagery and the disparity of mood created by the final two lines, utilizing happy and restorative feelings. Both sonnets display the development in faith of the speakers, through the disparity in mood. Yet they still depict the contrasting the degree of faith each speaker has, through the difference in perspective of time.

Both sonnets present a melancholy mood because of the speaker’s lack of possessions and show their faltering faith in God, but even so, as the sonnets go on, their faith appears to strengthen. In sonnet 29, when the speaker is befallen with misfortunes, they tend to look at surrounding people’s properties and items that they could only wish to have; in sonnet 30, the speaker remembers how they were previously saddened by their lack of possessions. Both sonnets portray the speakers’ developments in faith in God through the advancement of mood. Initially, we are presented with a setting of the speakers “in disgrace” (Shakespeare "29", 1) and weeping, emphasizing a negative mood to begin with. In sonnet 29, the speaker “beweep[s] my outcast state,” ("29", 2) showing that they are in a state of desolation because they are left out of the success that others seem to have around them. The sonnet even mentions how they “trouble deaf heaven,” ("29", 3) attempting to reach out to God without success most likely depreciating whatever faith the speaker had. Similarly, to sonnet 29, in sonnet 30, the speaker “sigh[s] the lack of many a thing I sought,” ("30", 3) meaning that even though they are only remembering them as the past, their sadness is not immediately resolved. Even though the speaker no longer deals with these misfortunes, or might have even seen great fortuity, they will still ponder and complain, showing that they can still waiver in faith. Both sonnets 29 and 30’s body is composed of their speakers talking about their hardships. Whilst approaching the end of the sonnets, there is a shift of mood. In sonnet 29, when the speaker “think on thee,” ("29", 14) they feel able to sing “hymns at heaven’s gate.” ("29", 12) Whenever the speaker is facing unfortunate circumstances, the simple thought of these unnamed character converts their state from sadness to singing at heaven’s gate. Self-standing, the speaker’s inclusion of singing at the gates of heaven would not have as great of a significance as it would being paired with previous troubling of deaf heaven with bootless cries. The speaker initially feels dejected and rejected after not getting a response to his prayers from God, but as the sonnet progresses and the speaker regains faith in God, he feels closer to Him. In sonnet 30, when the speaker also “think on thee…all losses are restor’d,” ("30", 13-14) an extremely similar conclusion to sonnet 29. It is evident that in both sonnets, the speaker is enlightened by the thought of an unnamed character, most likely God. Our mood is completely reversed by the inclusion of “sweet love” ("29", 13) and “sorrows end” ("30", 14). However even though this is the case, multiple aspects of each sonnet depict the dissimilarity in the degree of faith in God each speaker has.

Word choice, while showing creating a shift in mood, also shows the difference in faith each speaker has through its indication of time. The clearest impact that word choice has is in relation to time. In sonnet 30, the speaker says “I summon up remembrance of things past” ("30", 2) an indication that the hardships he speaks about subsequent to this line, have already occurred and he has gotten over them. This indication of time is not as evident in sonnet 29, but the speaker does say “I… beweep my outcast state” ("30", 2) most likely meaning they are still an outcast. This discrepancy between the past and the present is one factor in the difference in levels of faith between the speakers. The speaker of sonnet 30 speaks about past events and being comforted in the present by the thought of “thee” while the speaker of sonnet 29, speaks about an event bound to happen or already happening, and their need to console themselves with the thought of “thee”. Speaker of 30 seems to have more control and a heightened level of faith in God while the speaker of 29 appears to go through a cycle of losing faith in God and finally regaining it.

The two sonnets display a meaning of faith made evident through the usage of specific phrases and lines to adjust the mood throughout both sonnets, and the juxtaposition of the final lines from each poem reveal the effectiveness of faith in God. While both display a restored faith in God, the difference in time shows the difference in levels of faith.

Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. “29.” 1609. *Shakespeare’s Sonnets,* edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, pp. 63

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