



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Corso di Laurea
(*vecchio ordinamento, ante D.M. 509/1999*)
di LINGUE e LETTERATURE STRANIERE

Tesi di Laurea

—
Ca' Foscari
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia

*THE HARMONY OF THE WORLD
IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S AND
SIR JOHN DAVIES' SONNETS*

Relatore

Ch. Prof. LORETTA INNOCENTI

Correlatore

Ch. Prof. LAURA TOSI

Laureando

Patrizia Zoppas

Matricola n° 147592

Anno Accademico

2012 / 2013

To my Mother and Father

To my sister Antonella

Special thanks
to Professors Loretta Innocenti
and Laura Tosi
who gave me their precious time

CONTENTS

1. HARMONY IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE: INTRODUCTION	p. v
2. COSMIC ORDER AND MUSICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY	p. 2
2.1 The Elizabethan Universe when in tune and when not	p. 3
2.2 Queen Elizabeth I's progresses: Kenilworth Festivities	p. 11
2.3 Connections with W. Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"	p. 20
3. HIERARCHICAL AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY	p. 28
3.1 The sense of degree in the Chain of Being	p. 30
3.2 Queen Elizabeth I and the religious question	p. 39
4. HARMONY IN W. SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS <i>Harmony as musical elements in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets</i>	p. 44
4.1 The marriage issue and the mysterious "fair youth": <i>Sonnet n. 8</i>	p. 44
4.2 The beloved's eyes as the poet's "constant stars" with the shift from a private to a public role: <i>Sonnet n. 14</i>	p. 55
4.3 Timeless lines: <i>Sonnet n. 18</i>	p. 61
4.4 The Carcanet: the continuum in <i>Sonnet n. 52</i>	p. 64
4.5 The universal book of the world: <i>Sonnet n. 98</i>	p. 69
<i>Harmony as hierarchical and political elements in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets</i>	p. 75
4.6 The "sovereign eye": <i>Sonnet n. 33</i>	p. 76
4.7 Queen Elizabeth I's progress to Norwich	p. 79
4.8 "The sum of good": <i>Sonnet n. 109</i>	p. 83
4.9 The unifying music as the cosmos pattern: <i>Sonnet n. 8</i>	p. 86
5. REFLECTIONS ON HARMONY IN SIR J. DAVIES' GULLINGE SONNETS:	p. 91
5.1 The mutability of Harmony meant as cosmic order: <i>Sonnet n. II</i>	p. 92
5.2 Harmony as interdependence in <i>Sonnet n. III</i>	p. 95
5.3 A parody of Harmony's devotion to Love like the Knight's devotion towards his King/Queen in <i>Sonnet n. IX</i>	p. 102
5.4 Harmony as the entertainment spirit in <i>Sonnet n. V</i>	p. 105
Bibliography	p. 109
Webography	p. 112

1. HARMONY IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE: INTRODUCTION

1. HARMONY IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE: INTRODUCTION

The rediscovery of classical studies together with the progress in all fields of the European society characterized the Renaissance period. The shift from a feudal system to more and more complex social realities gave way to the rise of principalities whose organization led to the formation of the modern states.

This raised questions concerning the interrelationship of Man with his surrounding world in his search for harmony, the theme highlighted in this thesis, both in ancient and in modern times.

In Great Britain Queen Elizabeth II has celebrated her 60th reign anniversary, the renowned “Diamond Jubilee”. This special event has confirmed how important had been, and still is, the Queen’s link with her people, some of whom remember her Coronation in 1953, as a Ms. Terry Whitworth, Harlow, Essex, reports:

I was six years old at the time of the Coronation in June 1953 and I can still remember the excitement and patriotic fervour that built up in our home. My parents used to read the *Daily Mirror* and I have a memory [...] of a picture of the Queen and Prince Philip that they cut out of the newspaper and stuck on the kitchen dresser. My mother also stuck little Union Flags all around the living room [...]

and

[...] was involved in helping to organise a local street party.
[...]

The author of the article goes on with her memories as follows:

I believe the interior of the coach [taking the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Westminster Abbey] was lit, so spectators could see the Royal Couple as they passed.

[...]

The Queen had approved the decision to allow the Coronation to be televised.

[...]

Although food rationing was still in force, the government had eased rations slightly for the Coronation, by allowing housewives an extra pound of sugar and four ounces of margarine, with which to bake a celebration cake.¹

¹ Whitworth Terry, “Crowning Memories”, in “Yesterday Remembered” from *Best of British Past and Present*, Special Collector’s Issue, London, Christopher Peachment Editor, June 2012, p. 42

In earlier times, precisely in the 16th – 17th centuries, Elizabeth I's awareness of the relevance of the relationship she had with her people, made her affirm that she was married to "her subjects and her Kingdom".²

In facing the religious question dividing Protestants from Catholics, Queen Elizabeth I established a rather tolerating line allowing the coexistence of both creeds, in order to build unity within the English nation through the spread of Bible-reading as a unifying element among the English people.

With regard to this, Elizabeth I is depicted as being delighted in receiving the Bible as a gift from the Mayor of London in Thomas Heywood's play entitled *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* with the sub-title *The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth*³:

Queen Elizabeth I's having received a purse and Bible by the Lord Mayor as presents from the City of London, expresses her gratitude with moving eloquence:

An English Bible!
[...]
This is the jewel that we still love best.
[...] our solace when we are distressed.

Who looks for joy, let him this book adore:
This is true food for rich men and for poor.

Literary and artistic works, scientific as well as geographic discoveries developed in that era, the so-called "Golden Age", leaving space to reflections on how Elizabeth I managed to make such a special age real in her country, an age that also saw the flourishing of celebrations honouring the Queen, further unifying elements of a nation.

For example, Dr. Anna Whitelock reports that "Nicholas Hilliard's c. 1574 'Pelican Portrait' of the queen has been seen as "aiming to portray her as the mother of the nation".⁴

² Foolheea Kellinda, "Our Two Elizabeths", in *Best of British Past and Present*, Special Collector's Issue, London, Christopher Peachment Editor, June 2012, p. 15.

³ Boas LL. D. Frederick S., D. LITT., F.R. S.L., *Queen Elizabeth in Drama and Related Studies*, George Allen & Unwin LTD Ruskin House, London 1950, London and Hertford, pp. 11, 18 - 19

⁴ Whitelock Anna, "The Queen's Day", in *BBC History Magazine*, Jubilee Special, Bristol, Editor: Dr. David Musgrove, June 2012, p. 36

Being mother to a nation means having a special relationship and power over it, an idea of power which is conveyed by the rich jewellery and embroidery covering Elizabeth I's dress, made of "red plum velvet richly decorated with pearls and emeralds" in her portrait.

[...]

On her curled hair she wears a coronet decorated with pearls and jewels, and round her neck a chain or "carcanet" of gold enamel links set with diamonds and pearls.⁵

Elizabeth I's motherhood is symbolized by one item of her jewellery, that is to say, the pelican brooch or pendant worn by the Queen at her breast. Its allusion to motherhood emerges from the belief that in order to allow its young to live, the pelican pecks at its own breast to feed them and therefore dies. This resembles Christ's sacrifice in giving His life for all humankind.⁶

Consequently, this image contains a religious connotation in representing Elizabeth I both as the mother of her people and of the Church of England for whom she is willing to die, thus expressing her link to God. In this portrait, England is also symbolized by the Tudor roses embroidered on the Queen's dress and represented in her crown. Besides, the thornless red rose decorating her bodice is another meaningful sign referring to the Virgin Queen married to the nation.

Other historically meaningful portraits of Queen Elizabeth I are placed at Kenilworth Castle, the seat of the long-lasting celebrations arranged by Lord Robert Dudley in honour of the Queen aiming at the consolidation of the nation as well as of Elizabeth I's power.

Anna Whitelock reports that

From 1581 the focus of the annual accession day celebrations was a spectacular tournament – known as a 'tilt' – held at the palace of Whitehall;

[...]

⁵ Liverpool museums '*Queen Elizabeth I: The Pelican Portrait*', called Nicholas Hilliard (about 1573) in www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/13c-16c/er1.aspx, p. 3

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 3-4

Some 12,000 would squeeze into the tiltyard at Whitehall, now Horse Guards Parade, [...] to enjoy the tournament, which continued through the afternoon. It was for them a chance to display their loyalty to their monarch [...]⁷

The outline of a structured and well-functioning society with the monarch at its top is traced by the Elizabethan Chain of Being, one of the emblems of the Elizabethan idea of Harmony. For example, in a portrait, the proportion of lines and spaces, together with the combination of details, that is to say, the proportioned relation small – large, conveys a sense of harmony, and therefore of beauty. In ‘The Pelican Portrait’, Elizabeth’s pearl-and-rose ornamented crown communicates the idea of a wealthy and powerful British Monarchy in the person of Elizabeth Tudor, thus highlighting how the balanced, harmonious relation Microcosm – Macrocosm is at the basis of the unity as well as of the meaning of a portrait, or of any other structure.

Many authors have devoted themselves to the study of the concept of Harmony; in John Hollander’s view, most of the Greek thought was the basis of the Renaissance idea of harmony in the universe, that is to say, the Greek notion of “harmony” meant as an idea of proportion rather than the one of blending elements.⁸

This sense of measure gave way to images of the perfect motion of celestial bodies around the Earth with regard to the Ptolemaic theory, a motion circling the Sun as the centre of a harmonized universe according to the successive Pythagorean and Platonic theories.

In particular, the Pythagoreans represented reality with the use of numbers, which were the connection between the ideal and the material allowing an orderly and harmonized arrangement of the universe: a cosmic order reaching the inner feelings of Man.

Another image of harmony was embodied by a stringed musical instrument, for example,

⁷ Whitelock Anna, “The Queen’s Day”, in *BBC History Magazine*, Jubilee Special, cit., p. 35

⁸ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1961, p. 27

the Lyre, being properly played upon.

Yet, the Elizabethans saw the celestial bodies as part of God's ordered design.

In this divine design, Man, the protagonist of the sublunary world, becomes the connecting point of the terrestrial with the celestial worlds in the so-called Chain of Being, also through a series of correspondences converging on his highest faculty, that is to say, Reason.

This quality, together with Man's will and understanding will enable him to harmonize with the heavens, also through his various ways of expressing his feelings, among them, poetry.

This art allowed and still allows Man to give eternal voice to his feelings, thus overcoming his torments.

In this perspective, the union of learning with pastime constituted fundamental elements of growth in the Elizabethans' life, whose promoter, Queen Elizabeth I, loved music and dancing.

The Kenilworth Festivities had been the scenario displayed by Lord Robert Dudley, on the one hand, to favourably persuade Queen Elizabeth I to marry him; on the other hand, it also inspired mythological-lyrical songs praising the queen for her charismatic power besides her other virtues, such as the one of making creatures emerge from the under world to light.

Therefore, Kenilworth Castle represents various realities, that is to say,

- the centre of poetry for the performance of the cantata in honour of the Queen,
- the stage where the performance takes place and is watched by the Queen and her entourage,
- the temporary seat of the English Court,
- space for a national political-religious issue, as if it were a world within a world, with universal influence,

but it could also be the set of a Shakespearean dream, possibly turning into a "Midsummer Night" 's one.

The concept of harmony had also been dealt with by Plato whose *Timaeus* had inspired

the Elizabethan thought of an ordered cosmos through the metaphor of the Chain of Being, and therefore of other similar ones drawn, for example, from the worlds of nature, of music, and referring to any social organization.

In his *The Elizabethan World Picture* E.M.W. Tillyard conveys a detailed image of the structure of the Elizabethan Chain of Being, for example with regard to specific high qualities dealt with as one aspect of harmony reflecting at the same time the unity of a community also on a nationwide level. In the British one, Elizabeth I's religious sense promoting the reading of the Scriptures among her people at all levels, is highlighted by D. Starkey as a national unifying element, thus letting emerge how a top element of the Chain of Being influences its basis and viceversa.

In this Chain of Being Elizabeth I assumes a central role somehow becoming an idealized figure standing between Heaven and Earth. She has then also become the protagonist of musical and literary works, perhaps of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as well, should it be supposed that he was inspired by the Kenilworth Festivities for his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.⁹

What emerges from the concept of the Chain of Being is Elizabeth I's relationship with herself, including her view on marriage, her nation, the world and God. Hollander's "scale"¹⁰ and the "mutual ordering"¹¹ in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 8 recall Plato's idea of the World-Soul [...] regarded as a tuning, or "harmonia".¹² Hence, on a metaphorical level, Elizabeth I's degree of connection with all the links of the Chain can be comparable to the expression of her soul at all levels, but also to her properly playing upon a well-tuned stringed musical instrument. These themes are associable with the Queen's ability both in performing music and in ruling a

⁹ *Kenilworth Castle* in HISTORIC-UK.com, p.3

¹⁰ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 - 1700*, cit., pp. 27 - 28

¹¹ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 8 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, edited by Charles Jasper Sisson, Long Acre, London, Odhams Press Limited, 1953, p. 1300

¹² Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 - 1700*, cit., p. 44

nation. In addition, they also convey another image of harmony represented by dancing, her other artistic inclination, in which degree and priority are the basic steps to take for the enactment of her key role and also for its being celebrated through spectacular festivities as well as poetical lines. Some Shakespearean *Sonnets*, for example, have been seen by Chalmers in a different perspective with regard to the usual “fair youth” image, especially by taking into consideration the marriage issue as contributing to social harmonizing. Perhaps they could have influenced other Shakespearean works as well; yet, the main protagonist in W. Shakespeare’s works is Time seen with its contradictory characteristics of being both a destroyer and a preserver, another element to be connected with the marriage question leading once again to Elizabeth I.

For example, A. Serpieri states that the definitive identification of the sonnet’s addressee with the supposed Earl of Southampton, or else with the Earl of Pembroke, is not demonstrable with absolute certainty.¹³

A sort of circularity can be found in the natural changing of the seasons as well as in the repetition of events in history, whose cyclical movement is similar, in its form, to the circularity of a sonnet which structurally privileges the inversion movement of return, reaffirmation, permanence, as stated by A. Serpieri. He also emphasizes the fact that Shakespeare’s celebrative poems must deny [...] time, death, profane love, [...] to achieve the superlative degree of art, of permanence, [...].¹⁴ For example, this can be seen in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 18 because “immortality is not achieved through one’s having children anymore, but instead through the poetical lines’ blocking the natural burst of the old age”, thus turning into “eternal lines”.¹⁵

Other sonnets from the first sequence depict images representing the idea of the Chain of Being in both the relation Microcosm – Macrocosm, with the lower levels of the Chain aspiring

¹³ Serpieri Alessandro, *I sonetti dell’immortalità. Il problema dell’arte e della nominazone in Shakespeare*, Bompiani, Milano, 1975, p. 7, Nota 1

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 116, 118

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 39-40

to the higher ones, and the Macrocosm – Microcosm one, with the higher levels superintending and addressing the lower ones with their reciprocal blending into a continuum.

Yet, some kind of division emerges on expressing the concept of chaos, which, according to the Pythagorean emblem of the universe, stands on the lowest level, similarly to the contradictory sublunary world and to Man's contradictory feelings.

Nonetheless, the relation Macrocosm – Microcosm and viceversa conveys a feeling of hope, of regeneration as well, possibly enabling one's making up for one's absence from the beloved, a chance that the poet perceives within the interrelations of the celestial and terrestrial correspondences, among which the unifying elements have an important role in building or rebuilding a harmonious relationship. In this context, numbers represent the elements connecting the spiritual and the material worlds, a theme dealt with by the Pythagoreans through their "cosmic pattern" and by Plato as well. These numerical elements of order formed musical compositions shaping into the Elizabethan court masques, that is to say, the expression of the victory of harmony and order over chaos, the latter one usually performed in the antimasque, according to Stephen Orgel.¹⁶ The contraposition harmony/disharmony for example, on a musical level, is another theme described in Shakespeare's Sonnets and taken into consideration also by Leo Spitzer in favour of harmony.¹⁷ Other authors, such as A.H. Dodd, describe interesting aspects of daily *Life in Elizabethan England*. For example, Elizabeth Goldring has depicted a remarkable historical portrait of Elizabeth I in her progresses, thus helping perceive Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as reflections of a wide and interrelated world. M. H. Nicolson, instead, illustrates the breaking of the schemes of the perfect circular universe, an idea similarly conveyed by P. Rossi in his *La Rivoluzione Scientifica: Da Copernico a Newton*.

¹⁶ Orgel Stephen, *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975, p. 40

¹⁷ Spitzer Leo, *L'armonia del mondo. Storia semantica di un'idea*. (1967) Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009, p. 112

The emerging scientific era with its mechanical vision of the world will actually lead to the breaking of the schemes outlining a perfect harmonious universe of immutable perfection, geometrically represented by a circle, or of idealized and perfectly proportioned beauty. This breach can be seen in Sir J. Davies' *Gullinge Sonnets* because of their contradicting the idea of a cosmic order expressed in his work *Orchestra or a Poeme of Dauncing*.

In *Gullinge Sonnets*, for example, the detachment from an idealized and harmonious world occurs by means of both making fun of it through the so-called "gullibility" spirit and attacking it. Therefore, beauty is not inspiring anymore; instead, it is perceived as a disturbing element comparable to the danger of poison. Changes in the word order of the poetical lines emerge as well, almost turning into some kind of word disorder, thus emphasizing a detachment from the preceding types of sonnets and even from the Petrarchan ones.

Yet, some of Sidney's Sonnets, in *Astrophil and Stella* sequence, show some precursory elements in the wording and in the "leading astray" spirit of the poems similar to Davies' ones. Besides, the old chivalric world is still present in both authors' sonnets, but although it was strongly rooted in the English society of the age, it had to undergo changes because of its components' aspiring to go beyond an idealized environment and open towards a broader world, the infinite, as in Sidney's Sonnet n. 1.

In order to let Stella understand the poet's love for her, he chooses to express it through his poetical lines using repeated words in the succession of the verses. This increases chances of encountering contradictory feelings, also a sense of gradual increase in the poet's tension with regard to his beloved to the point that the artist expresses a complex and enlarged world reaching her, with the poet's return to his own self, but still aiming at his end, as illustrated in the following lines:¹⁸

¹⁸ Sidney Philip, Sonnet n. 1 from "Astrophil and Stella" in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, edited by William A. Ringler, Jr., Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 163

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 (ll. 1 – 4)

and in ll. 12 – 14:

Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite—
“Fool,” said my Muse to me, “look in thy heart and write.”

The first lines show the repetition of the words “loving”-“love” in l. 1, “she-She” in l. 2, “read-reading”, “might-might” in l. 3, “pity-pity” in l. 4, whereas there is the contraposition “pleasure/pain” in l. 2. Moreover, the word “pleasure” in the final part of l. 2 is repeated at the beginning of l. 3; the same happens in the final part of l. 3 with the verb “know” which turns into a noun, that is to say, “Knowledge” at the beginning of l. 4, in a sort of fractured continuum.

In the last lines instead, the repetitions and paradoxes disappear giving room to a spontaneous expression enabling him to get directly in touch with himself.

Climax, together with the repetition of some words, express the playfulness of a song as well as, at the same time, the author’s inclination to stop in order to become aware of a given situation and then to continue one’s way, not without disagreement, in a more enriched view, the same one that allowed Elizabeth I to have her reign flourish among divergences and adversities. Her ability both in playing musical instruments knowing the way the strings of a musical device functioned in relation to one another, and in ruling the English nation with all its social components, together with her own personal experience, had been fundamental elements of her knowledge, a kind of science of harmony brought to life in her golden age.

2. COSMIC ORDER AND MUSICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY

2. COSMIC ORDER AND MUSICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY

The Renaissance rediscovered the Classical studies highlighting Man's important role in relation to the world. Much of the Greek thought supported the Renaissance idea of harmony in the universe, as illustrated in the words of John Hollander, a Jewish-American poet and literary critic:

For the Greek notion of "harmony", we should rather seek to understand an idea of relative proportion, of an order that consists in the ratios of quantities to each other, rather than of a notion of blending that depends on the simultaneous effects of separate or even warring elements.¹⁹

According to the heliocentric theories still linked to Pythagorism and Platonism, the Sun was the central point of a simple and harmonized universe with the planets moving around it. This disposition was supposed to have been given by a coordinating Spirit pythagoras-wise "setting a limit to what would become disorderly unlimited"²⁰ towards the achievement of the sense of degree leading to the above-described precise mathematical planetary agreement. In this context seeing the planets with their orbs and their movements forming the universal structure where the Sun, at its centre, was the magnetic force making the celestial bodies move according to God's design, a slight change in a perfectly structured and harmonized universe caused confusion to the remaining parts as well as to the whole of it.

Copernicus (1473 – 1543), the renowned Polish astronomer theorizing that the Earth moved around the Sun, compared the latter to a Monarch by stating that

the Sun, as if being on the royal throne, rules the family of the heavenly bodies orbiting around it²¹,

whereas Johannes Kepler (1571 – 1630), the German astronomer saying that the planets

¹⁹ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 27

²⁰ Bridgwater William and Seymour Kurtz (editors) 1963 - *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, New York & London, Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 1750

²¹ Rossi Paolo, *La Rivoluzione Scientifica: Da Copernico a Newton*, Torino, Loescher Editore, 1973, p. 153

orbited around the Sun following elliptical paths, perceived it as a part of the universal natural body, by affirming that

The sun is [...] the eye of the world.
As [...] the source of light[...] it decorates,
paints and embellishes the other celestial
bodies of the world²²

The universal order found also expression in another image of harmony, the musical one, which besides recalling the concept of “blending [...] separate or even warring elements, was also based on the disposition of musical intervals [...] in terms of ordered ratios”²³, thus finding a reference point in the mathematical discoveries of Pythagoras (c. 570 - c. 497 B.C.) resulting from experiments with a vibrating string and the relation between its length and the pitch of the tone produced by plucking it.²⁴

2.1 The Elizabethan Universe when in tune and when not

Another reference point concerning the regained importance of the Classical studies in the Renaissance was the legendary Orpheus who had the musical ability to animate lifeless objects thanks to the pleasing sound of music. But he was also considered a mythological poet who together with other poets of the Classical culture gave way to “an Olympian image of a musico-poetic golden age” in the Renaissance.²⁵ A similar pleasing effect is revealed by the words of poetic lines, as in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 8

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear
(ll. 5 –8)²⁶

²² Rossi Paolo, *La Rivoluzione Scientifica: Da Copernico a Newton*, cit., p. 166

²³ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 - 1700*, cit., p. 64

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 14

²⁶ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 8 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

conveying a harmonious tune with line 5 recalling an agreeable blending of musical notes reviving the image of an orchestra, a large community of musicians cooperating in due time and measure in their roles to the modulation of the variety of sounds.

This tuned microcosm is a symbol of harmonized order on a vast, macrocosmic level like the precise separation of the planets in space, revolving in their orbs, which was perceived by some scholars as reflecting the intervals played upon the strings of a musical instrument.

According to the Pythagorean and Platonic theories, this general mathematical differentiation characterized the harmonic structure of the universe whose melody was thought to be produced by the motions of the celestial bodies making the chords of this cosmic arrangement vibrate at different intervals and therefore giving out the corresponding musical notes of this universal soul.

The distribution of space, of roles within a macrocosmic order could also be found on a microcosmic level within the human community of both a city and a State with hierarchies.

In Tillyard's words - a British classical and literary scholar (1889 – 1962) - :

[...] Plato, to whom the general correspondence goes back, seeks to arrive at individual justice through justice in the state [...]²⁷ .

This harmonized disposition inspired by Plato's ideas aimed at showing a mirroring and corresponding relationship Soul - State - Cosmos.²⁸ On relating to the view of the above-mentioned Greek philosopher Plato (427 – 347 B.C.), J. Hollander states that:

[...] the Platonic notion of the World-Soul [...] considered as a tuning, or 'harmonia', finds figurative expression in the image of the World-Lyre, or the stringed instrument of the human soul.²⁹

A general concordance pervaded the cosmological order, the basic idea of the

²⁷ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, London, Penguin Books, 1943, p. 102

²⁸ Bridgwater William and Seymour Kurtz (editors), 1963 - *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, cit., p. 1680

²⁹ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 44

Elizabethan cosmological one deriving from Plato's '*Timaeus*' where it is stated that the cosmic soul was distributed according to the laws of harmony in the universe on the basis of a melodic progression implying the stopping of one or more chords vibrating at different intervals in order to obtain musical notes with different tones, and the intervals among planets as well.³⁰

This scale derived from the Pythagorean theory stating that the revolving of the celestial bodies produced a melody; therefore, the regularity of the celestial motions expressed the interior order of the celestial soul.³¹ Therefore, the image of a stringed musical instrument being properly played upon, conveys not only ideas of producing both well-tuned sounds and the harmony of souls forming a family, the core of which is a love relationship, marriage, but also the idea of a larger, ordered society reflecting the corresponding harmony between the cosmos and Man, as explained by J. Hollander:

Up through the Renaissance and even later, the harmony of the parts of the cosmos, on the one hand, and of the parts of the human psyche, on the other, were seen as the basic elements of the same universal order. In the Ptolemaic astronomy,[...], the universal proportions could be seen as realized in the ratios to each other of the diameters of the heavenly spheres. In terms of this 'harmony', the old myth of the music of the spheres as representing the sounds of heavenly perfection could be reinterpreted as a metaphysical notion characterizing not only the order of the universe but also the relation of human lives to this cosmological order³²

In this wake, every aspect of the Elizabethan townman's life was regulated, including the moral one in a context of harmonization. An example of an attempt at 'tuning sounds to concord' on a social level in Elizabethan England, as described in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 8, was given by the authorities' struggle against drunkenness, thus not ignoring minor offences such as bickering and backbiting, both likely leading to breaches of the peace.³³

³⁰ Platone, '*Il Timeo ovvero della Natura*' in *Dialoghi*, a cura di Carlo Carena, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, 1970. p. 440, nota 1

³¹ *Ibidem*, nota 4, p. 441

³² Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 28

³³ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, edited by Peter Quennell, William Clowes and Sons, Limited, London and Beocles for the publishers, 1961 B.T. Batsford LTD, pp. 43, 44

Furthermore, a religious meaning was given to celestial harmony by Johannes Kepler, as his words illustrate:

The wonderful harmony of the immobile things - the Sun, the fixed stars, and space, correspond to the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit....³⁴

Man was believed to be the 'in-between' in the relation Stars – Fortune, that is, human character affected fortune, which was thought to be in the power of the stars; therefore, unruly Man's behaviour affected the whole system like a 'domino effect', thus causing general disorder, possibly resulting in sudden changes of fortune for Man in return.

Moreover, the Elizabethans, who relied on fate, perceived the celestial bodies as "obeying God's changeless order, [...] responsible for the vagaries of fortune in the realms below the moon."³⁵

Yet, Man's relying on the stars' influence deprived him also of the hope for salvation from his sins: stars, fortune and human nature are so changeable as to produce goodness as well as evil, thus creating chaotic situations leading to the loss of balance where anything dangerous could happen.

Those who listened to the tricky voice of the serpent instead of God's Word, contributed to Man's Fall from Grace to hell. Likewise, those angels who did not listen to God's Word anymore, fell from Heaven to hell.

It was the redeeming Spirit of God's Word to give people life and hope, or to change their life. This Divine Light led to salvation from the darkness of one's own sins and therefore to the regaining of one's true self.

In this, God was and is aided by the Angels, who, as illustrated by Tillyard,

[...] as representatives of God in pure goodness and love in His own image were

³⁴ Rossi Paolo, *La Rivoluzione Scientifica: Da Copernico a Newton*, cit., p. 159

³⁵ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., p. 60

therefore messengers of perfect harmony which could be perceived by the heavenly music of the spheres. The Angels were seen by the Platonists as the movers of the spheres, 'but these angels (the Intelligences) were identical with those heavenly sirens who, in Plato, sit upon their spheres and, each singing their different note, impose a harmony of ravishing beauty.'³⁶

What also emerged from the Platonists was that after the Fall, Man could not hear heavenly music anymore, but was somehow kept away from it as if he were covered by some sublunary imperfect material preventing him from getting in touch with the harmonious music of the heavenly spheres.

Furthermore, fallen angels who did not follow God were thought to have become Pagan deities or to have lost their way somewhere on earth, perhaps in its undergrounds.

Turbulent feelings and contradictory, or negative situations characterised the sublunary world, where earth, being far from Heaven - immersed in the music of the spheres -, became the seat of general decay and confusion resembling barbarism.

In addition, the conflicting feelings inside Man prevented him from being in harmonious touch with his soul and correspondently with the celestial bodies of the universe.

On a musical level, "when a particularly vehement broken chord is played upon such (lute) strings...."³⁷, they "vibrate against each other and produce a din of discord and struggle for independence"³⁸ with the consequent breach of harmony, and therefore of general balance, as when human feelings like greed, hatred, corruption, jealousy caused and cause discord both in a physical body and in a political one.

It is as if Man were turned into a beast without the capacity of mastering his passions through reason and will, which could have been reinforced through education allowing Man to get to know himself in order to improve, and to better fight against adversities.

³⁶ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., p. 56

³⁷ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 232

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 233

Moreover, the ill or good blending of humours inside him, was thought to determine Man's temperament with the dominance of bad behaviour, even disease, or good behaviour.

In the Elizabethan age, the human body was believed to contain four humours, that is to say, melancholy, phlegm, blood and choler, corresponding to the four elements forming the earth: earth, water, air, fire, thus forming Man's frame based on the same principles as was the sublunary world and also corresponding to the physical ordering of the universe.³⁹

Therefore, the way the elements were mixed, together with the influence of the stars, as well as the presence of God in the universal order, producing certain effects instead of others, characterized the Elizabethan sublunary world.

Man was at the centre of this unstable, contradictory and fighting, although paradoxically wonderful, sublunary world, which was made of the cold and dry element, the earth, and was also the heaviest and lowest part in the universal order. Outside earth was the region of cold and moist, water, and outside water, yet opposite to earth, was the air, the region of hot and moist. The final element of the sublunary world and surrounding the other components, but the closest to the moon, was fire, hot and dry, which therefore was considered the noblest part of the terrestrial globe.⁴⁰

What differentiated Man from the created world was reason residing in his brain, the superior part of his body. Reason, together with Man's will, allowed him to get over destruction and failure by expressing his feelings and to get in touch with his soul.

Therefore, Man became the bridge connecting heaven to earth, also through his words, which, depicted in poetical lines, defeated death, and going beyond mere matter, reached the celestial spheres.

In Tillyard's words:

It is only by being thoroughly enlightened by the understanding that the will can

³⁹ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., p. 76

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 69 – 70

be victorious in the eternal battle between passion and reason.⁴¹

Understanding enabled learning which could not be separated from mirth. Yet, for example, through *Toxophilus'* first dialogue (1545) Roger Ascham (1516 – 1568), an English humanist and Elizabeth I's tutor, affirms that

the minstrelsie of lutes, pipes, harpes, and all other that standeth by suche nice, fine manikin fingering [...] is farre more fitte for the womannishnesse of it to dwell in the courte among ladies, than for any great thing in it, whiche shulde helpe good and sad studie, to abide in the unversitie amonges scholers.⁴²

This statement is contrasted by Philologus' praise of singing⁴³ on the basis of

its "naturalness," the physical benefits accruing therefrom [...] But Ascham's overall attack on what he feels to be mincing, courtly music is hardly mitigated either by this or by his subsequent remark in *The Scholemaster* (1570) to the effect that "the Muses, besides learning, were also Ladies of dauncing, mirthe and minstrelsie: *Apollo*, was god of shooting, and Author of cunning playing upon Instruments."

This emerges from the specification of the debate, continued, as follows:

under the rubric, that is of "learnying joyned with Pastime"; in Apollo's case the shooting was the learning, the music the "mirthe"

and the above-mentioned "learnying joyned with Pastime" allowed Man's experimenting God's love by both his being related to a Superior Being and his contemplating the beauties of God's creation and their function. Since her childhood, Elizabeth I had been an eager learner, but this did not prevent her from enjoying recreational activities.

She is described by Jane Bingham, fellow at Oxford Brookes University in 2011/12 and writer, as a child who

enjoyed riding, hunting and hawking and had a passion for music and dancing.

⁴¹ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., p. 81

⁴² Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 107

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 108

She could play the lute and the virginals as well as singing and writing music.⁴⁴

“Pastime” represented a considerable part in the Elizabethans’ life, also thanks to the Queen’s promoting recreational activities, such as hunting, hawking, bull- and bear-baiting, archery practice, which were typical sports for royals and nobles, whereas coursing hares and rabbits was a sport open to everyone.⁴⁵ Actually, during her reign,

The Elizabethan period saw a great flourishing of the arts, actively encouraged by the queen and her courtiers. Portrait painters such as Nicholas Hilliard and Marcus Gheeraerts, were kept very busy painting the queen and her entourage, and Elizabeth also extended her patronage to musicians, encouraging composers, such as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, to produce new and adventurous works. Like her father and grandfather, Elizabeth presided over a very musical court.⁴⁶

Music and dancing were common among people as well, with the effect of lifting their spirit. As reminded by “Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* [...] human society, like the heavenly bodies, must ‘observe degree, priority and place’”.⁴⁷

Degree, priority and place had also to be observed by dancers in order to accomplish choreographies reflecting harmonious as well as disharmonious feelings.

When in harmony, it is as if the artists’ choreography expressed part of the harmony of the universe. Therefore, like dancers who, on doing a pirouette, first look at a fixed central point and then, by rotating, return to the starting point, so do planets that move in their orbits by circling around the sun, their fixed point, in a sort of cosmic dance.

The dancing artists’ balance enabling them to make leaps and body suspensions, reflects part of this harmony as the expression of the physical laws of the universe.

On the other hand, when in disharmony, it is as if the dancers’ art mirrored part of the universal disorder like the arrival of the darkening clouds with their irregular forms and

⁴⁴ Bingham Jane, *The Tudors. The Kings and Queens of England’s Golden Age*, London, Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2011, p. 147

⁴⁵ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p.112

⁴⁶ Bingham Jane, *The Tudors. The Kings and Queens of England’s Golden Age*, cit., p. 195

⁴⁷ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, p. 125

movements.

Yet, when dancing in duets, being in step, that is, the couple's combining their steps in due space and time, creates that sort of alchemy which is essential for a harmonious performance. On the contrary, being out of step turns the couple's dancing into a number of steps lacking the coordination of each other's space and time as if there were no musicality.

Although dancing was strongly opposed by the rigidly religious who considered it as something very impure, it was also believed that it was a means through which Love gave order to the Universe. This art taught also rules concerning mutual respect:

The pliè involved bending the knees and was one way in which dancers might bow in greeting their partners.⁴⁸

2.2 Queen Elizabeth I's progresses: Kenilworth Festivities

Elizabeth I showed great interest and was skilled in both music and dancing. Moreover, as reported by Reverend Harrison (1534 – 1593), whose accounts on Elizabethan England “form a fitting introduction to Holinshed's *Chronicles*,”⁴⁹ the Elizabethan recreational context was animated by the Queen's usual summer progresses around the country both

to recreate herself abroad, and view the estate of the country, and hear the complaints of her commons [...],⁵⁰

but she also gave to favoured subjects the rather demanding honour of accepting their private hospitality, as stated by Sir John Neale⁵¹ (1890 – 1975):

[...] she carried the whole court with her from palace to palace and from royal manor to royal manor, or conferred on favoured subjects the costly honour of

⁴⁸ Ravelhofer Barbara, “‘Virgin Wax’ and ‘Hairy Men-Monsters’: Unstable Movement Codes in the Stuart Masque” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* by Bevington David M. and Holbrook Peter, Cambridge University Press 1998, p. 252

⁴⁹ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p. 7

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 12

⁵¹ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p. 12

accepting their private hospitality.

She was the central point of both the court and the nation; in the words of Mary Hill Cole, Professor of History at Mary Baldwin College, Virginia:

[...] the Queen was a steady, yet mobile, centre in the turbulent, itinerant court: Elizabeth imitated the sun that moved through the universe with planets and solar system in tow.⁵²

The longest series of entertainments for her was held at Kenilworth Castle from 9th to 27th July 1575 during her progresses, the so-called “Kenilworth Festivities”, preciously witnessed by the paintings portraying the protagonists of those festivities: the Queen’s favourite, Lord Robert Dudley - Earl of Leicester -, and the Queen herself. Four, life-sized portraits of Lord Robert Dudley and Elizabeth I had been purposely commissioned for the 1575 Kenilworth celebrations, as reported by Elizabeth Goldring⁵³, who also states that

On that occasion Leicester played host to the queen and her court for nineteen days of diversions ranging from music, masques and dancing to tilting, hunting and bear-baiting. In the evenings, elaborate banquets were followed by fireworks displays and, on at least one occasion, an Italian acrobat’s astonishing ‘feats of agilitie. [...] with sundry windings, gyrings, and circumflexions’.⁵⁴

Actually, according to C. Masset, a freelance writer and editor specialising in gardens, art and architecture, Lord Robert Dudley displayed a fabulous scenario at Kenilworth, in order to induce Queen Elizabeth I to marry him. Her visit had been memorized in a letter of Robert Langham, who was “a cloth merchant within the court”⁵⁵, depicting,⁵⁶

⁵² Hill Cole Mary, “Monarchy in Motion: An Overview of Elizabethan Progresses”, in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 28

⁵³ Goldring Elizabeth, “Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575” in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, cit., pp. 163-164

⁵⁴ Goldring Elizabeth, University of Warwick, “Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Leicester for Kenilworth Castle” in *The Burlington Magazine*, London – October 2005 – Number 1231 – Volume CXLVII, p. 654

⁵⁵ Masset Claire, “Historic garden/A feast for the senses”, in *Realm. Britain’s rich past and historic present*, Seneca U.S.A./London UK, Editor Matthew Havercroft, August 2009, p. 48

⁵⁶ Ibidem, pp. 49 - 50

a viewing terrace, “four equal parterres”, a white marble fountain, arbours, alleys and an aviary “beautified with great diamonds, emeralds, rubies and sapphires ... and garnished with gold”.

Many of these features were typical of Tudor gardens, which took their inspiration from Renaissance Italy. There were also “flowers, in form, colour, and quantity so deliciously vibrant; and fruit trees bedecked with apples, pears and ripe cherries”.

Claire Masset also reports that the above-mentioned fountain came to light during excavations made in 2004 as part of the English Heritage research programme starting since 2007 and what emerged was that not only did the fountain foundations match the proportions illustrated by R. Langham, but also that the new discoveries confirmed his descriptions: “Archaeologists found chips of white Carrara marble embedded in the top of the foundations”, as explained by the Head of Gardens for English Heritage, John Watkins. Moreover, the study of the etchings and drawings of the 16th century Dutch architect and engineer Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527 – c. 1607), and the recreation of the Kenilworth gardens highlighted the way plants were arranged within knots, a common feature of Tudor gardens, to provide unity and rhythm.

This harmonious picture was the setting in which the so-called *The Masque at Kenilworth* is thought to have been performed. This libretto probably preceded the real masques that were presented especially after Queen Elizabeth I’s reign. In fact, its musical introduction is slightly different from the one of a typical antimasque, often describing a disordered world and including dancing; in addition, its title, *A Summer Night* is the title of an instrumental, not sung, piece followed by the chorus’ performance *Hark! The Sound that Hails a King*, both announcing that the Queen is approaching and emphasizing her splendour by describing it with a cosmic reference to sunlight as being much brighter than day in the Contralto Solo’s words:

Lo! The blaze more bright than day!

Spreading down the throngéd way⁵⁷

with a mythological-idyllic world at the background animated by the sylvans, Old Arion,
Thespis, as well as by

Dancers who the nimblest be
Minstrels harping lustily

who

Crowd around the brightest star

and
[...]

Welcome our Elizabeth.
exclaiming
God save the Queen!⁵⁸

It seems that, once at Kenilworth, Elizabeth I was saluted by the Lady of the Lake with the nymphs around her standing on a floating island.⁵⁹

S. Schoenbaum (1927 – 1996) describes part of the above-mentioned entertainment as follows:

For Shakespeare the Earl's Warwickshire connection holds a special significance. The latter kept his county ties. When in the summer of 1575, he entertained the Queen sumptuously for 19 days at his castle in Kenilworth, 12 miles N-E of Stratford, the local populace crowded in as spectators to watch Elizabeth as she passed in splendour, and to gape at the devices that whiled away the afternoon, [...]. On the large lake in the castle grounds a water-pageant displayed Arion on the back of a dolphin carried by a boat of which the oars simulated fins. Accompanied by instrumentalists within the dolphin's belly, Arion sang (in the phrase of an eye-witness) "a delectable ditty of a song well apted to a melodious noise."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer) *The Masque at Kenilworth* from Wikisource http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Masque_at_Kenilworth, p. 1: Originally titled "Kenilworth, A Masque of the days of Queen Elizabeth", it is now generally referred to as *The Masque at Kenilworth*. The libretto was taken from the score, except for No. 7, which, though retaining Chorley's changing of words, uses Shakespeare's formatting.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 2

⁵⁹ *A Royal Visitor* - Image 4 from:
www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworthcastle/explore_kenilworth/The_Story_of_Kenilworth...

⁶⁰ Schoenbaum Samuel, *William Shakespeare. A compact documentary*, New York, O.U.P. 1977, pp. 115 – 116

The Queen's arrival makes creatures who have experienced the underworld with all its secrets, come to the surface and therefore to life in the sunlight, as the Lady of the Lake expresses in her Song *I have slept beneath the water*:

But the secrets I have treasured
Will my lake to none betray,
For below they hide in twilight,
Though above you have the day;
Now I wake to life and glory,
[...]
To forget that rude old story,
For the golden days are now! ⁶¹

The mythological-lyrical characteristic of this piece of music, together with the praise of the virtues of the Queen by emphasizing also her power of giving light and therefore of revitalizing whom or what she meets or comes across at her arrival, as well as the possibility of displaying this artistic work outdoors, in the scenario of Kenilworth Castle, resemble and reinforce the masque elements in this musical performance, as sung by the Quartet and Chorus of Sylvans in "*Let Fauns the cymbal ring*", showing that the rural gods, the fauns, will openly play musical instruments, the cymbal, while the Sylvans, the inhabitants of the forest, which was perceived as a mysterious hiding place, will

[...] tribute bring
To Oriana's (that is, Elizabeth I's) feet!

whose magnificence has seasonal and cosmic comparisons, as in the Quartet's words:

[...] Summer's bounteous noon;
Most radiant to behold,
As chaste as younder moon,
But not one half so cold

and is perceived as a leading force allowing even the most hidden creatures to come to light and praise, together with the Dryads, courage and beauty, a praise to be echoed 'far away'. ⁶²

⁶¹ Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer), *The Masque at Kenilworth*, cit, p. 3

⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 3-4

Yet, according to Elizabeth Goldring, the mythological characters taking part in the Lady of the Lake's story, as represented at the Kenilworth Festivities, were also carriers of a political message as Leicester meant, with reference to

his vigorous, almost obsessive, advocacy of English intervention in the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain.⁶³

Therefore, Leicester was rather convinced of the fact that the Kenilworth celebrations were his most important chance of having the Queen accept the sovereignty of the Netherlands as a result of the people's riots against the politics of the Spanish occupiers. This historical event was performed through⁶⁴

William Hunnis's fictions depicting the knight 'Sir Bruse sauns pittie' and his attempted rape of the Lady of the Lake.

The description of the representation continues as follows:⁶⁵

On the evening of 18 July, Elizabeth was approached, on her return from hunting, by Triton, floating on a mermaid. After greeting the Queen with a blast on his trumpet, Triton related the story of Sir Bruse, who had imprisoned the Lady of the Lake with waves, [...] This tale of woe completed, Triton asked the Queen to free the Lady: 'Your presence onely shall suffice, | her enemies to convince' (p. 499). Then, acting on behalf of Neptune, Triton commanded the winds, waters, and fishes to retreat, before proclaiming 'the maide released be, | by soveraigne maiden's might' (p. 500). [...] the would-be rapist Sir Bruse doubtless was intended to represent Spain, and the innocent Lady of the Lake the Netherlands. Thus, in liberating the Lady, Elizabeth assumed (within the confines of the festivities' fictions) the role that Leicester and the Orangists fervently desired her to adopt in the real world: that of saviour of the beleaguered Netherlands.

In the performance at Kenilworth Castle, the musical piece was followed by a slow dance with a Chorus, which, despite its not being described, still evokes a masque element.

⁶³ Goldring Elizabeth, "Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575", in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, cit., p. 177

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 177

⁶⁵ Goldring Elizabeth, "Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575", in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, cit., p. 177

Furthermore, singing the glory of the English Crown increases the number of the above-mentioned masque elements also highlighting England's dominion on the seas through its strong mariners ready to protect and defend their Monarchy against any danger, including the Spanish threat, through the words of Arion's Song *I am a ruler on the sea*, as in the following:

This is our message to the land,
"We guard from harm old England's crown!"

Who dares to brag and boast afar,
Like thunder clouds that threaten rain?

What need we care if jealous war
Be brooding in the ports of Spain? ⁶⁶

Afterwards, space is given to Immortal Poetry to speak, for the Queen is to see the show, as announced by the Contralto Solo in *Place for the Queen our Show to see*: another typical masque element characterized by the presence of the Queen to whom these entertainments were usually dedicated, a presence which was pointed out by Harmony being evoked, in this specific case, in the Duet (Tenor and Soprano) Scene from *The Merchant of Venice: How sweet the moonlight sleeps*. In this scene the two lovers, Lorenzo and Jessica, perceive the harmony surrounding them coming from "soft stillness and the night" as if "music were creeping in their ears", or from the view of Heaven decorated with bright gold where

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal sounds ⁶⁷

The musical composition for the two performers is then followed by an instrumental brisk dance followed by a softening sweet "Good Night" wished to the Queen, as sung by the Solo

⁶⁶ Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer), *The Masque at Kenilworth*, cit, p. 4

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 5

and the Chorus in *After banquet, play, and riot*, for the happy ending of the celebrations of the day was to be continued in the next one.

The colourful display of the feast will turn into a quiet night, a transformation emphasized in the musical piece both by the presence of Morpheus, the god of dreams and sleep, and the Chorus' wish for a peaceful sleep to the Queen being followed by its announcement of the celebrations continuing:

[...]
Morpheus stayeth at the door
Of the guest so cherished

CHORUS:

Sleep, great Queen! And do not dream,
Sleep in peace, our watch is set.
[...] tomorrow's morn shall beam
On the masque not ended yet.
Sleep great Queen, sleep in peace!

Day shall bring thee new delight,
[...]
God save the Queen! ⁶⁸

The climax of the festive nature of this cantata emerges with its being defined as a 'masque', the most important courtly celebration of the Monarch. Another mythological element probably appearing in 1610 in the masque of *Prince Henry's Barriers* with King James I, is represented by characters related to the Arthurian legend of *The Lady of the Lake*; in this specific case, the latter reveals her emerging from the water underworld of the lake to a lit surface, a kind of rebirth recalled in the planned cantata *The Masque at Kenilworth* in 1575, which could find correspondence with Henry Prince of Wales's wish to reawaken the ancient British chivalry through Meladius, the lover of the female character, as performed in the above-mentioned masque. In addition, Elizabeth I's visit to Kenilworth is believed to have inspired "a watchful young W. Shakespeare for his *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."⁶⁹ According

⁶⁸ Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer), *The Masque at Kenilworth*, cit, p. 6

⁶⁹ *A Royal Visitor*, cit., - Image 10

to Penny McCarthy, researcher at the University of Glasgow, in *Pseudonymous Shakespeare*, the so-called *Langham Letter* describing the Kenilworth celebrations is thought to have been written by W. Shakespeare, because recent studies have highlighted the fact that the language of the letter in question⁷⁰ “is indistinguishable” from “over 2100 lines” in “Shakespeare’s plays, in each of which a vocabulary word used in the *Letter* is used in the same sense, and as the same part of speech, as is used in Shakespeare’s plays.”

Multiple references from his plays appear in the *Langham Letter* footnoted, as, for example, in the following lines depicting a celestial ordered picture:⁷¹

Then to consider how fully the gods (as it seemed) had conspired most magnificently in abundance to bestow [...]their influences [...] and gifts upon her court there to make her Majesty merry.

Sage [...] Saturn [...] himself in person (that because of his lame leg could not so well stir), [...] in chair [...] therefore to take order [...] with the grave [...] officers of household, holpen [...] indeed with the good advice of his prudent [...] niece [...] Pallas, that no unruly body [...] or disquiet [...] disturb the noble assembly or else be once so bold [...] to enter within the castle gates.

Traces of connections between W. Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth I have been emphasized by other studies in some of the artist’s poems as well.

As for the entertainments of the age, the performers of a masque belonged to the sovereigns’ entourage, thus conveying the audience the best projection of themselves, and therefore, of the nation they symbolized by expressing their idea of monarchy.

The masque was preceded by an antimasque, played by professionals, which could be a comical introduction, or else the representation of a disordered situation being progressively harmonized in the masque. The fact that “the costumes were real court clothes”⁷² indicates the important political meaning this type of entertainment had. They were part of a masque’s

⁷⁰ The Oxford Authorship Site, *Langham Letter*, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/langham.html, p. 1

⁷¹ Langham Robert, *The Langham Letter*, edited by The Oxford Authorship Site, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Langham/Langham-Footnoted.pdf - p. 42

⁷² Orgel Stephen, *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, cit., p. 8

play within the play because it all orbited around the monarch, the real protagonist of the performance, watching it. Yet, the audience was another protagonist who used to be directly addressed within the play as part of the work performed.

The machinery involved in creating illusionistic effects had the extraordinary function of letting the spectators perceive the monarch's projection of liberality and magnificence to which the court aspired through the wonderful unexpected influence of the intermezzi characterizing a masque. As stated by S. Orgel, scholar of Shakespeare and Professor of English at Stanford University,⁷³

For speaking roles [...] professionals had to be used, and this meant that the form, composite by nature, was in addition divided between players and masquers, actors and dancers. In the hands of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, this practical consideration became a metaphysical conceit, and the form as they developed it [...], rapidly separated into two sections. The first, called the antimasque, was performed by professionals, and presented a world of disorder or vice, everything that the ideal world of the second, the courtly main masque, was to overcome and supersede. The masque presents the triumph of an aristocratic community; at its center is a belief in the hierarchy and a faith in the power of idealization.

The sovereign sat at the center of this universe; therefore, the one who sat closer to the monarch was superior in status or in favour in comparison with the other partakers.

2.3 Connections with W. Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

Similarly, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the palace of Theseus is the ordered reality to which the protagonists' awakening from a spell-dream, a midsummer night's one, are restored. In this courtly setting, in the initial scene of the play, Hermia's father, Egeus, appeals to Theseus, the Duke of Athens, in order to be obeyed through Hermia's marrying Demetrius instead of Lysander who apparently enchanted her. Therefore, in this new situation, contrary to Egeus' view, courtship depicted as singing

[...] by moonlight at her window [...]
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,

⁷³ Orgel Stephen, *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, cit., p. 40

And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats [...] (ll. 30-34, Act 1–Scene 1)

becomes “stubborn harshness”⁷⁴, that is, something contrary to harmonious order.

The moon, the symbol of inconstancy, is often governing the scenes in this play, both in the orderly city of Athens on the Palace of the Duke of Theseus, who is depicted as waiting for the moon to reach the phase corresponding to the wedding time, for he is to marry Hippolyta, and on the moonlit wood, the meeting point for the lovers of the play, as well as for the protagonists' rehearsing the entertainment *The Most Lamentable Comedy...*, which has to be performed on the wedding day.

The above-mentioned devised entertainment *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe* is a sad love-story, therefore spiritually contrary to the one of a wedding, or else, showing how the love theme is contradictory; besides, it is rehearsed in the wood, the darkest and turbulent side of the play.

This inconstant sublunary wood-world finds also expression in one of the protagonists of the play rehearsed, that is, Bottom, who reveals his prevailing humour, choler, as the right one for the role he will perform in the play, the tyrant, but he is ready to perform other different, also opposite, roles corresponding to the other different humours, like the one of a lover, or of a wandering knight. But Bottom's readiness for his expressing various roles, and therefore, feelings, characterizes him as the 'weaver' of the play because his “inconstancy” turns into a unifying force.

The mysterious wood is not only the place where the above-mentioned rehearsals take place, but is also the magic environment where the fairies appear with Oberon and Titania as respectively their King and Queen. Their love course is not smooth because of jealousy and of Oberon's desire for having the little changeling back from Titania, which she denies.

⁷⁴ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 313

Therefore, Oberon's tormenting Titania, together with their quarreling, correspondingly affect both high and low levels of the universe causing weather disorders with consequent harvest losses and human diseases as well as the lack of people's cheerful singing and dancing gatherings, as described by Titania in the following lines:

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound;
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: [...]
[...]
[...] The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd world,
By their increase now knows not which is which

(ll. 103-114, Act 2 - Scene 1)⁷⁵

Harmony is regained by Puck's reminding a past event, on Oberon's request, describing the power sweet music has both to subdue even the roughest natural forces leading to levels of civilization and also to change the natural order, as illustrated by Oberon:

My gentle puck, [...]. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music?

(ll. 148-154, Act 2 - Scene 1)⁷⁶

In connection with this event, another one is reported by Oberon who tells that at that time Cupid had aimed at

'a fair vestal thronèd by the west'

but

⁷⁵ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 317

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 317

‘[...] his love-shaft [...]’
‘[...]’ dissolved
‘in the chaste beams of the wat’ry moon,’ leaving
‘[...] the imperial vot’ress [...]’
In maiden meditation, fancy-free’

and what Oberon also saw was that Cupid’s shaft fell upon a little flower turning its colour

‘Before, milk-white; now, purple with love’s wound-
And maidens call it love-in-idleness
(ll. 157-168, Act 2 – Scene 1)⁷⁷

also known as “pansy”.

The imperial votaress conveys the image of the Virgin Queen moving without love thoughts, therefore perceived as chaste and cold as Diana, “[...] the goddess of the moon, of forests, of animals, and of women in childbirth”⁷⁸, was perceived.

When “flying between the cold moon and the earth” (l. 156, Act 2 – Scene 1), Cupid has his fiery shaft extinguished in the beams of the cold moon, as if it symbolized the Queen’s being unmarried, or her giving up love, also emphasizing the fact that no transformation occurs, as love implies, which is expressed through the juxtaposition of the heat of love’s fiery arrow and “the chaste beams of the wat’ry moon” (l. 162, Act 2 – Scene 1), and depicting its end almost as if the Sun turned into water.⁷⁹

This idea is similar to the one conveyed in Act 1, Scene 1, when the Duke Theseus reproaches Hermia’s disobedience to her father about her marrying Demetrius by giving her a deadline to change her mind, which is Theseus’ wedding-day, as illustrated in the following lines:⁸⁰

[...]
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father’s will,

⁷⁷ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 317

⁷⁸ Bridgwater William and Seymour Kurtz (editors), 1963 - *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, cit., p. 569

⁷⁹ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 317

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 313

Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye, austerity and single life. (ll. 86 – 90, Act 1 – Scene 1)

[...]
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.

[...]
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness
(ll. 72 – 78, Act 1 – Scene 1)

With regard to the play within the play to be performed, that is, *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*, the sadness of its title in comparison with the event to be celebrated, a wedding, could also be perceived as an allusion to the fact that Queen Elizabeth I was not married, almost recalling the Kenilworth Festivities in 1575, when Lord Robert Dudley displayed them also in the hope of winning Elizabeth I's heart, thus conveying a misrepresentation of the theme of love.

The rehearsal setting in question becomes the seat of misunderstandings occurring with tragic outcomes, too, where Lysander and Hermia's elopement was supposed to take place, as well as the place where charms or devices are used to achieve results, as when on obeying Oberon's commands, Puck introduces the magic infusion of a flower called 'love-in-idleness' into the eyes of the wrong person, that is to say, on sleeping Lysander's eyes with the belief he was Demetrius; therefore, differently from what was aimed at, it is Lysander who is made to immediately fall in love with Helena, as soon as he awakens and sees her, thus turning the tables on the situations of the four lovers involved because Hermia is looking for Lysander who is now in love with Helena who is searching for Demetrius who is following Hermia.

Puck will pour the same flower-juice on Titania's eyes, so that by having her fall immediately in love with whom or whatever she will first see on her awakening, Oberon can get the changeling requested. In this lower, sublunary world, spirit and instinct are interwoven; therefore, the kind of correspondences typical of the Elizabethan idea of the Chain of Being, is

somehow referring to the female characters speaking about them in animal terms rather than on a spiritual level, as in Lysander's words:

Not Hermia but Helena I love
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
(ll. 119 – 120, Act 2 – Scene 2)⁸¹

But it also happens that who or what is apparently rough turns out to be closer to spirit than one could imagine, as shown by the charmed ass-headed Bottom with whom Titania, the Queen of the Fairies, falls in love, by charm, too.

In Titania's words, with regard to Bottom:⁸²

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.
[...]
[...] thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee (ll. 130–134, Act 3–Sc.1),

moreover, she compares him to the spiritual entity of an angel (l. 122, Act 3 – Scene 1).

Yet, Bottom and his companions' artisan skills enacted in '*The Most Lamentable Comedy...*' for Theseus' wedding, together with the Fairies' sweet art of singing, dancing, and enchanting, in their flowery world, build an artistic path going beyond this obscure, disordered world and leading back to an enlightened, orderly and virtuous one, which Bottom identifies as wisdom.

Once the four lovers' worst and best aspects have been revealed, they will get out from a shadowy, unruly and complex world to the open, clear and civilized city of Athens in correct pairs, also in the sunlight, at last.

Moreover, what completes this harmonious picture is the music of Theseus' hounds produced by their attuned barking, to the point that Hippolyta defines it as

⁸¹ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 319

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 321

so musical a discord, such sweet thunder
(l. 117, Act 4 – Scene 1)⁸³

The return to Athens symbolizes the protagonists' awakening from a dream, but Theseus' words enable the reconciliation of illusion with reality through the amending of imagination within human contradictory situations, for

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact
(l. 7 - 8, Act 5 – Scene 1),
[...]
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
(l. 37, Act 5 – Scene 1)⁸⁴

⁸³ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 327

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 329

3. HIERARCHICAL AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY

3. *HIERARCHICAL AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN HARMONY*

It is thought that two of the four paintings portraying Lord Robert Dudley and the Queen commissioned for the 1575 Kenilworth Festivities had been painted by the Italian artist Federico Zuccaro, but the fact that the two protagonists are portrayed life-sized indicates their almost equal importance and closeness; yet, at the same time, it could also reveal some kind of divergence between them. Looking at those paintings, therefore ‘reading’ or deciphering what is illustrated, recalls the idea of “learnynge joined with Pastime”⁸⁵, because although the context portrayed is a celebrative one, the message conveyed is a political one, as interpreted by Susan Frye:

[...] the dramatic performances ‘fell into two groups: those displaying Dudley’s interests and those showing Elizabeth’s’. [...] the entertainments in the former category articulated Leicester’s desire for equal status with the Queen through marriage, as well as for a militant Protestant foreign policy, while those in the latter asserted Elizabeth’s autonomy by emphasizing Leicester’s place beneath her in the hierarchy at court.⁸⁶

The view on a universal hierarchy as generally not leaving out even the smallest element of the Elizabethan Chain of Being is interestingly alluded to by Queen Elizabeth I herself in her *Translation of The Consolation of Philosophy [All human kind on earth]* by the philosopher Boethius (ca. 480 – 524 AD):

ALL human kind on earth
From like beginning comes:
One father is of all,
One only all doth guide.
He gave to sun the beams
And horns on moon bestowed;
He men to earth did give
And signs to heaven.
He closed in limbs our soul
Fetched from the highest seat.

⁸⁵ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700, cit.*, p. 108

⁸⁶ Goldring Elizabeth, “Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575”, in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I, cit.*, p. 169

A noble seed therefore
Brought forth all mortal folk.
What crake you of your stock
Or forefathers old?
If your first spring and author
God you view,
No man bastard be,
Unless with vice the worst he feed
And leaveth so his birth

Wr. 1593; pub. 1899⁸⁷

In Elizabeth I's version God is represented as the Author of the Creation and the only Father and Guide of the whole where no man will be unacceptable, unless he is a promoter of what is worst.

Therefore, the interrelation among several ordered parts of The Whole makes up hierarchy, an aspect of harmony. According to J. Hollander, on a musical level,

The disposition of musical intervals [...] in terms of ordered ratios would then be seen as applicable to architecture, or even to all smoothly functioning systems: "scale" would mean "proportion" and "just disposition of the relative role of parts in a whole".⁸⁸

Degrees indicate the measure of the closeness of the links within an organization, every part of which depends on another one both on a superior and on an inferior level. It is as if the core of this organization developed into a more elaborate arrangement, comparable to the relation family – nation, with the many intermediate connections.

With regard to education, A.H. Dodd (1891-1975) makes it clear that

Elizabethans did not think as we do in terms of an 'educational ladder'; rather each stage of education repeated in a more complex form the content of the last.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Elizabeth I, Poem "All Humankind on Earth", in *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*, edited by Jones Emrys, Oxford University Press, 1992. 184 from [Queen Elizabeth I of England], www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm, p. 1

⁸⁸ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 27

⁸⁹ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p. 92

Furthermore, Elizabeth I did not want to create conflicts within the country by promoting a rigid religious creed; therefore, she had her subjects read the scriptures at all levels:

[...] that was common ground to all: queen, parliament, bishops, gossellers of all shades. [...] even more important from the point of view of government, respect for the social order must be maintained. Hence, as an immediate expedient, the Book of Homilies.⁹⁰

3.1 The sense of degree in the Chain of Being

In the Elizabethan age, it was also thought that another way of recovering one's true self, after having lost the right way, was the contemplation of God's creation, and therefore of its hierarchy or chain:

Humans occupied a place in the chain below the angels but above animals, plants and stones. Some humans were higher in the chain than others. The monarch was the highest, with nobles and churchmen below. Then followed gentlemen and commoners.⁹¹

The Angels were the celestial beings who could mediate between God and Man, and although they belonged to perfect immutable heavens, they could reach the extremities of the sublunary world, a world full of contradictions and far from Heaven, and act as God's messengers, therefore contributing to His plan of Salvation for Man.

A Christian Neo-Platonist of the fifth century A.D., i.e., Dionysius the Aeropagite, stated that the Angels were divided in three main orders on the basis of their natural capacity to receive the undivided divine essence.

The idea of the Elizabethan cosmological order derived from Plato's *Timaeus* and was conveyed through the image of a chain, i.e., the Chain of Being, according to the Platonic concept of the Demiurge having moulded the chaotic material world because of his being inspired by the world of ideas. On this basis, in the Elizabethan order, the Chain of Being

⁹⁰ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., pp. 84-85

⁹¹ Claybourne Anna & Treays Rebecca, *The World of Shakespeare*, Usborne Publishing, 1996, p. 6

"stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain,[...]"⁹² where animals, on a level lower than Man, helped him in his everyday activities for he could not do all things by himself alone, besides feeding him; yet, they also represented specific symbols of wisdom, as illustrated in Tillyard's words:

The bees were wonderfully organized, but the chief thing was that they should teach the art of order to a peopled kingdom.⁹³

This same idea of collective organized working, directed to the same purpose and recalling the Chain of Being, is expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry the Fifth* with the description of the specific roles embodied by the protagonists within the kingdom:

[...] Therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavour in continual motion;
To which is fixèd, as an aim or butt,
Obedience. For so work the honey-bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom
(ll. 183 – 189, Act 1 – Scene 2)⁹⁴

followed by an account of the tasks being accomplished in the kingdom-hive with the best achievements:

They have a king, and officers of sorts,
[...]
Others like soldiers, armèd in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent royal of their emperor,
Who busied in his majesty surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens lading up the honey,
[...]
As many arrows, loosèd several ways,
Fly to one mark, as many ways meet in one town,

⁹² Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., p. 33

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 88

⁹⁴ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 571

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea,
 As many lines close in the dial's centre,
 So may a thousand actions once afoot
 End in one purpose, and be all well borne
 Without defect

(ll. 190 – 213, Act 1 – Scene 2)⁹⁵

A century later, *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714) of Bernard Mandeville, English philosopher and writer (1670 – 1733), will compare the image of a beehive to the one of a successful nation because of the ruler's power being limited by the law, the basic link keeping the bees united, as illustrated in the initial poem *The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves Turn'd Honest* introducing the work ⁹⁶:

A Spacious Hive well stock'd with Bees,
 That lived in Luxury and Ease;
 [...]
 No Bees had better Government,
 [...]
 They were not slaves to Tyranny,
 Nor ruled by wild Democracy;
 But Kings, that could not wrong, because
 Their Power was circumscrib'd by Laws

In the author's view the wise control of vices was an important element producing work and trade, which would not have happened with virtue alone, as depicted in the following lines in which the similitude Bees – Men once again confirms the close connections they have within the Chain of Being reproducing the same spirit both on a smaller, inferior level and on a bigger, superior one:

These Insects lived like Men, and all
 Our Actions they perform'd in small:
 [...]
 Vast Numbers thronged the fruitful Hive;
 Yet those vast Numbers made 'em thrive;
 Millions endeavouring to supply
 Each other's Lust and Vanity;
 Whilst other Millions were employ'd,

⁹⁵ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., pp. 571-572

⁹⁶ Mandeville Bernard, *The Fable of the Bees*, edited by Phillip Harth, London Penguin Books, 1989, pp. 63-64, 67

To see their Handy-works destroy'd;
They furnish'd half the Universe

The spirit of the eighteenth century with the industrial revolution making Great Britain become the centre of trade by discovering new horizons reflects the fact that a large number of exchanged products, and therefore of work, was based on people's imperfect, vicious wishes and beliefs,

Thus every Part was full of Vice,
Yet the whole Mass a Paradise

It is as if the different behavioural characteristics of humankind somehow reflected the interrelations of a cosmic model whose blending could be compared to the harmonizing of different musical notes.

Still, with regard to musical comparisons, "The music of my hounds" (l. 105, Act 4 – Scene 1) is the definition used by Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to describe the attuned barking of his hunting dogs to Hippolyta.⁹⁷ Actually, Theseus is proud to let his beloved listen to the choral performance of his Spartan hounds in the valley:

[...] up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction
(ll. 108-110, Act 4 – Scene 1)

In the wake of Theseus' words, Hippolyta praises his Spartan dogs by reminding a preceding hunting experience with other hounds of Sparta and her being impressed by "so musical a discord, such sweet thunder" (l. 117, Act 4, Scene 1), thus completing her memorized picture where

[...] the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seemed all one mutual cry
(ll. 114-116, Act 4 – Scene 1)

⁹⁷ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 327

But although Hippolyta's praise of Theseus' dogs is appreciated by him, he wants to emphasize that the interplay of his hounds' barking is so reciprocally well-combined that it resembles the joyful ringing of bells:

[...] matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to nor cheered with horn
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly
(ll. 122-125, Act 4 – Scene 1)

This is similar to the singers of a choir performing different parts in different degrees.

A similar argument concerning the attuned barking is dealt with by Gervase Markham in a 1615 volume of his work entitled *Country Contentment* whose commentary by G. Marvin describes how during fox hunting the 'voices' of hounds turn into 'a melodious chorus'.⁹⁸

The notion of "voice" is highly elaborated in the discourse of foxhunting. Not only are hounds spoken about as having "voices" but they also "speak", and as soon as the pack begins a definite baying chorus, the human participants will excitedly comment, "Listen, hounds are speaking"

[...]

The interpretation, understanding, and appreciation of "voice" is wonderfully complex in hunting.

[...]

There is another, purely aesthetic elaboration of the sound made by foxhounds. Hounds are regarded as having soprano, tenor, or bass voices, and these are highly appreciated by Huntsmen. They speak of attempting to develop a range of such voices in their pack to create a pleasing and melodious chorus, and all aficionados of foxhunting will refer, explicitly, to "the music of hounds". Here the basic vocalizations of an animal are responded to in a cultural register.

But the fact that the 'voices' of Theseus' hounds barking are musically so well-combined is also interpreted by Marcello Pagnini, as the Duke's capability of taming what is wild, compared to chaos, in favour of harmony, of rational order⁹⁹. Both Theseus the tamer and his

⁹⁸ Marvin G. (in press) Abstract from *Cultured Killers. Creating and Representing Foxhounds. Foxhounds and Hunters in England: Structures of Affection, Aesthetics and Accomplishment*, pp. 284-285; Leiden: Kononklijke Brill, 2001; NV in John Knight (Ed.), *Animals in Person: www.animalsandsociety.org/asset/library/442_s935.pdf*

⁹⁹ Pagnini Marcello, *Shakespeare e il paradigma della specularità: lettura di due campioni: "King Lear" e "A Midsummer Night's Dream"*, Pisa, Pacini Editore, 1976, p. 100

humanized hounds get closer to God the Creator in the universal hierarchy by the Duke's turning an undomesticated state into a mannered one going beyond the animal world within a human dimension.

In this picture showing God's Creation, plants too fed Man with their fruits and gave him repair from the heat, but they also embodied growth. The interconnections among the parts of this universal order give way to similitudes between a lower and a higher level of the Chain of Being. The concept of growth, for example, is also illustrated by the interconnections between the vegetable and the political similarities in Shakespeare's *Henry the Fifth* through the Bishop of Ely's words:

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality;
And so the Prince obscured his contemplation
Under the veil of wildness – which, no doubt,
Grow like the summer grass, fastest by night,
Unseen, yet crevice in his faculty

(ll. 61-67, Act 1 – Scene 1) ¹⁰⁰

In addition, thanks to their quality of lasting long without damages, their durability, stones were used in Man's activities, but they were also symbolic of meaningful long-lasting bonds.

On a musical level, J. Hollander states that

[...] Bodin in the late 16th century can discuss [...] the harmonic proportions that govern the good commonwealth, reinforcing his conclusions about the harmonious music of monarchy with comparisons of classes and levels of society to musical parts in a polyphonic texture.¹⁰¹

The king or queen, the highest among humans in the chain, were seen as symbols of harmony subject to and blessed by God, their having a role within society comparable to God's role in the Universe. Consequently,

¹⁰⁰ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 569

¹⁰¹ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 41

Disrupting the chain was thought to lead to chaos, but of course many people still did challenge their position in society¹⁰².

In this chain, one of the images representing the harmonic structure of the Universe, the One, embraces the Whole, which is simultaneously directed to the One, therefore conveying the idea of a hierarchy based on degrees where everyone has a specific role fixed by God and connected to both a superior and an inferior one aiming at Unity.

This view on hierarchy was also expressed through images of a harmonic planetary arrangement in the universal order making one aware of the central position Man had in the Chain of Being and his reflecting the order of the macrocosm.

According to the Pythagorean idea of order, the classifications, symmetries and correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, [...] form a complex net of relationships among the various levels of reality: 'men's grades', passions, human beings and their organs, the spheres of nature up to the angelic hierarchies and the divine mysteries.¹⁰³

The fact that what happened in the Chain of Being on a superior level was perceived by the lowest one as well, showed the dignity that was given to every single part of the chain which was characterized by a unique, specific quality tending towards the top of this bond:

[...] within every class there was a primate [...]
Sebonde speaks of the dolphin among the fishes, [...] the lion among the beasts,
the emperor among men.
[...] God among the angels, the sun among the stars, justice
among the virtues, and the head among the body's members.¹⁰⁴

Both on descending and ascending the Chain of Being, Man became aware of how much support he received from God; therefore, his search for God "in the highest" lets the Chain of Being become an educational aid allowing him to get in touch with his spiritual, celestial part and get over failure.

¹⁰² Claybourne Anna & Treays Rebecca, *The World of Shakespeare*, cit., p. 6

¹⁰³ Casini Paolo, *L'Antica Sapienza Italica, Cronistoria di un Mito*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1998, p. 88

¹⁰⁴ Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, cit., pp. 37-38

Furthermore, the Chain of Being “was sometimes depicted as a tree”¹⁰⁵ where the seed of God’s Word was grown both by its giving life to Man and its recovering life through his poetical lines. Poetry, then, was the fruit of Man’s looking up towards the heavens and enabling him to become a new creature among God’s other creatures through this Platonic love. Such spiritual dimension conveys beneficial energy allowing Man’s going beyond a certain limit and improve aiming at the upper level, also because receiving love, affection in return from it like one’s receiving the positive energy and light from the sunbeams. This idea is illustrated in Shakespeare’s *Henry the Fifth* in the following lines of the chorus describing King Harry as a giver of affection to the people surrounding him and feeling its good effects¹⁰⁶:

For forth he goes and visits all his host,
 Bids them good morrow with a modest smile
 And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
 Upon his royal face there is no note
 How dread an army hath enrounded him;
 [...]

But freshly looks and overbears attaint
 With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty,
 That every wretch, pining and pale before,
 Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks
 A largess universal, like the sun,
 His liberal eye doth give to everyone,

His liberal eye doth give to everyone,
 Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all
 Behold [...]

(ll. 32-46, Act 4 – Scene 0)

This concept of love is derived from Plato who dealt with this theme in *Symposium*, a banquet aiming at celebrating Agathon’s victory as a tragic poet, but turning into improvised discourses on love. Among the guests, a lady, Diotima of Mantinea, on her being questioned by Socrates, gives her opinion¹⁰⁷ by stating that Love is neither good nor beautiful, and therefore not

¹⁰⁵ Claybourne Anna & Treays Rebecca, *The World of Shakespeare*, cit., p. 6

¹⁰⁶ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 584

¹⁰⁷ Platone, *Il Convito ovvero dell’Amore*, XXII, in *Dialoghi*, a cura di Carlo Carena, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, 1970, pp. 322-323

necessarily ugly and bad, but something which stands in the middle,[...] between what is mortal and what is immortal.

What is peculiar in the Chain of Being is the fact that Man, differently from other categories, can improve and therefore ascend to an upper level because he is endowed with intelligence, together with feelings, thanks to his being a reflection of the image of God.

Therefore, Man's being an in-between among inferior and superior positions is given worth by Diotima¹⁰⁸ who explains that Love is the wish for what is beautiful; yet, it is necessary for this feeling to long for wisdom, as a philosopher does and if so, Love has to stay among the wise as well as the ignorant, due to the fact that it was born both from a man of knowledge as well as of abundance, and a poor, unlearned woman.

Love, meant as the supreme good, enables one's ascending to a higher dimension in the Chain of Being. Moreover, the sense of Platonic Love is conveyed by Diotima's words¹⁰⁹ stating that many are those who wish for good, but those aiming at it through other ways as by accumulating riches, doing physical exercise, or philosophizing, are not called lovers, unlike lovers, who carefully aspire to rise to a more spiritual level through love itself.

What emerges is that Platonic Love is as fruitful, as a passionate relationship is, because being a feature shared with artistic as well as administrative fields, it has given plenty of creations, as explained in Diotima's speech.¹¹⁰ She affirms that wisdom and the other virtues are generated by all poets and bearers of creative minds; yet wisdom is also aimed at setting houses and towns in order, thus enabling common sense and justice.

Actually, not only the fruits of a passionate link, but also the ones of the soul become immortal for their enduring time in glory.

As for the Chain of Being, the ascending movement of looking upwards together with the

¹⁰⁸ Platone, *Il Convito ovvero dell'Amore*, XXIII, in *Dialoghi*, cit., p. 325

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, XXIV, p. 326

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, XXVII, pp. 330-331

descending movement of looking downwards, produce the harmonizing of the two extremes of the Chain, as similarly happens on one's playing a stringed musical instrument, the typical Renaissance image of harmony, as in the words of John E. Ziolkowski, Professor Emeritus of Classics at George Washington University, showing

[...] how the two stringed instruments – manmade creations, having contrary, even contradictory, high and low aspects (or notes) are brought into harmonious union by the string: the stretched cord of a bow/lyre communicates lowness to high and highness to low, thus ‘harmonizing’ the two extremes in a single tone. [...] the dilemma of harmonizing two opposing aspects of human nature.¹¹¹

3.2 Queen Elizabeth I and the religious question

On an artistic-celebrative level, the meeting-point of the highest and lowest levels of the Elizabethan society took also place with festive events, which many times were feasts of the Church like St. George's Day, the Patron Saint both of England and of England's ancient order of chivalry, the Garter. On festive days of this type, the Queen used to go to chapel and perform specific rituals.¹¹²

Religion was the centre of the Elizabethan society to the point that

the parish had always looked after its own poor in its own fashion, but Elizabeth added yet another bevy of statutory officials, the overseers of the poor, selected by the country magistrates from among substantial parishioners to relieve the churchwardens in the discharge of this task and to help them out in other ways.¹¹³

Above all, combining the different religious sides in England was one of Queen Elizabeth I's enterprises. Probably, her personal experience supported her politics in this sphere, for the religious education she received from her stepmother, Catherine Parr, had been strong; therefore, Elizabeth I's sensitiveness towards this topic was very deep to the point that she,

¹¹¹ Ziolkowski John E., “The Bow and the Lyre: Harmonizing Duos in Plato's Symposium”, in *The Classical Journal*, october –november/1999, vol. 95/No. 1, pp. 31-32

¹¹² Starkey David, *Elizabeth. The Struggle for the Throne*, Harper Perennial, Chatto & Windus, Great Britain, 2000, U.S. edition in 2001, p. 296, 298

¹¹³ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p. 73

regardless of her being a queen, or, being a common person in times of trouble, could not have conceived a world without God, as expressed in the speech she addressed to a delegation of parliamentarians in 1567:

I thank God that I am indeed endowed
with such qualities that if I were
turned out of the realm....., I
were able to live in any place of Christendom. ¹¹⁴

In fact, Elizabeth I experienced very hard times and contradictory situations, starting from her being Princess and inheritress of England, to her being disinherited, or her being nominated successor to the throne and then being accused of betrayal to her becoming a prisoner in the Tower, not to mention her being forgotten by her father when she was three years old due to his excitement on his marriage to a new wife as well as her contemplating exile [...].¹¹⁵

Moreover, Elizabeth I experienced the violent death of her mother, Anne Boleyn, due to her father's will, a very deep wound for her who is thought never to have spoken about it.¹¹⁶

It had been very hard for Elizabeth I to perceive marriage as something immortal against the destructive power of time and although on the one hand, the fact that she was not married became an important political problem for the nation, on the other hand it was a problem which Elizabeth instead did not feel as the most important one; nevertheless, she ruled one of the longest and rather prosperous reigns in England.

On a religious level, her father, Henry VIII, had not imposed an excessively rigid Creed on England, notwithstanding his separation from the Roman Catholic Church.

Furthermore, Elizabeth I had to accept Mary Tudor's, that is to say, her half sister's Catholic religious view when the latter became Queen of England. This might be a reason why Elizabeth faced the strong disagreements concerning the different religious beliefs in the nation

¹¹⁴ Starkey David, *Elizabeth. The Struggle for the Throne*, cit., p. ix

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. ix

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 23

by making efforts to avoid conflicts.

In a letter, Elizabeth expresses her opinion with regard to her father's kingship, as follows:

Since philosophers [...] 'regard [a king] as a god on earth', nothing should be more acceptable to him than theology – 'the study' [...] 'which lifts us to heaven and renders us heavenly while on earth and divine while yet in the flesh, and which, though we were in the toils of endless and infinite troubles, even then restores us to our happiness and felicity'.¹¹⁷

As for the religious question, A.H. Dodd states that

The repudiation of the papacy for the second time in fifty years caused relatively little stir; the queen at least toned down the title her father had assumed[...].¹¹⁸

Besides, Elizabeth I was convinced of the unifying power the Scriptures had on the English people. The Catholic spirit she experienced under her half sister's reign helped her enact moderate Anglicanism that maintained its episcopate and its rituals were very similar to the Catholic ones, although Elizabeth I's restoring the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity.

An example of the Queen's religious action was represented by the revision of the forty-two Articles "toward a more Catholic position and reduced to Thirty-nine".¹¹⁹

But some negative religious events increased persecution against Catholics due to Mary Stuart's return to England, for the Scottish Protestant people did not recognise her as their queen.

Therefore, she represented an obstacle to her Protestant cousin Elizabeth who perceived Mary as a threat to her throne, thus deciding to imprison her and sentence her for treason against Elizabeth herself in 1587, although the latter had to fight with her inner conflicts concerning both her personal feelings and the State Reason.

Another negative event happened when at the opening of the Bartholomew Fair in London, confiscated church goods were burned at St. Paul's Churchyard, Cheapside, and other strategic

¹¹⁷ Starkey David, *Elizabeth. The Struggle for the Throne*, cit., p. 23

¹¹⁸ Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, cit., p. 75

¹¹⁹ Bridgwater William and Kurtz Seymour (edited by) 1963, *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, cit., p. 657

sites throughout the City,¹²⁰ by means of a cunning management of spectacles, with the consequent despair of many of the Queen's subjects, among them, "the conservative chronicler Charles Wriothesley"¹²¹.

Elizabeth I realized the gravity of this fact; therefore, the sign of a change in her politics had been the royal proclamation of Lent as the period of fasting by abstinence from flesh before Easter, with consequent confiscating of "illicit cart-loads".¹²²

When the Spanish Armada's attack had been defeated by the English fleet, the sense of unity within the country was strengthened, a sense also reinforced with the reading of the Bible which helped reduce the barriers among people, also on a linguistic, and "literary" level.

What Elizabeth tried to do was to fight extremisms in both Catholic and non-Catholic religions on the basis of her personal creed relying on the belief that Divine Justice did not forsake anybody.

In the wake of this attitude, D. Starkey reports that Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper, read the opening speech at the ceremony of Elizabeth I's first parliament:

Their prime task, Bacon told the assembled lords and commons, was to consider The 'well-making of laws for the according and uniting of the people of this realm into a uniform order of religion.'¹²³

¹²⁰ Starkey David, *Elizabeth. The Struggle for the Throne*, cit., p. 290

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 290

¹²² *Ibidem*, p. 291

¹²³ *Ibidem.*, p. 276

4. *HARMONY IN W. SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS*

Harmony as musical elements in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets

4. HARMONY IN W. SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

Harmony as musical elements in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets

Rhythm and rhyme unify the images conveyed by the words of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in a sort of ordered hierarchy including various aspects of harmony, the goal which the "fair youth", that is, the protagonist of the first 126 sonnets, is invited to achieve.

In this thesis, the choice of *Sonnets* # 8, 14, 18, 52 and 98 has been made because, despite the different themes characterizing them, they all seemingly lead to a special protagonist of the English Golden Age. In particular, *Sonnets* # 8 and 14 are linked to the renowned idea of "increase" aiming at inviting the "fair youth" in question to perpetuate himself by having children. This idea of continuation embodies one's fight against the destructive power of Time, thus reinforcing the sense of social harmony through marriage.

4.1 The marriage issue and the mysterious "fair youth": *Sonnet n. 8*

In England the marriage issue had been the centre of the debate about succession; Elizabeth I addressed her speech on the topic to the English parliamentarians with regard to her being single, in her reply of 10 February 1559 to her being requested by a motion to marry in view of her succession:

As I have good cause, so do I give you all my hearty thanks for the good zeal and loving care you seem to have, as well towards me as to the whole state of your country,¹²⁴

What emerges is the correspondent relation between the Queen in her single state and the entire nation. She then continues by highlighting her being a humble servant to the Almighty, as in these words:

[...] from my years of understanding since I first had consideration of myself to be born a servitor of almighty God, I happily chose this kind of life in which I yet

¹²⁴ Elizabeth I: "Response to the Parliament's Request She Marry (1559)", in *Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature – Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603)* from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm, p.1

live, which I assure you for my own part hath hitherto best contented myself and I trust hath been most acceptable to God. From the which, if [...] ambition of high estate offered to me in marriage [...], I say, could have drawn or dissuaded me from this kind of life, I had not now remained in this estate wherein you see me.¹²⁵

Elizabeth I goes on appreciating the way the petition was moved because it was not limited as to either place or person, thus preserving individual space, and therefore, individual freedom, as illustrated in her speech:

[...] the manner of your petition I do well like of and take in good part, because that it is simple and containeth no limitation of place or person.¹²⁶

But Elizabeth I, still referring to God's will with regard to her being single, reassures the addressees of her discourse by telling them that the realm would not be deprived of an heir, for the continuation of the English Monarchy at its best after her death was in her thoughts, as in her words:

[...] And albeit it might please almighty God to continue me still in this mind to live out of the state of marriage, yet it is not to be feared but He will so work in my heart and in your wisdom as good provision by his help may be made in convenient time, whereby the realm shall not remain destitute of an heir. That may be a fit governor, and peradventure more beneficial to the realm than such offspring as may come of me.

[...]

And in the end this shall be for me sufficient, that a marble stone shall declare that a Queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin.¹²⁷

Her conclusion shows her role as a Queen to be a special one particularly because of her single state; therefore, this was to be highlighted and remembered forever for her ability to reign for so long a period of time as a virgin as well as from God's benevolence. Not only had Elizabeth I reigned for a long period of time, but had also extended her profound religious faith in God overseas through the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, the Elizabethan Prayer Book whose

¹²⁵ Elizabeth I: "Response to the Parliament's Request She Marry (1559)", cit., p.1

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 1

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 2

third revision for the Anglican Church was closer to Catholicism:

It served not only the England of Elizabeth I, but her Stuart successors as well. This was the first Prayer Book used in America, brought here by the Jamestown settlers and others in the early 1600's¹²⁸.

This contributed to the cultural bridge unifying these two countries which belonged to two different continents. This fact was also celebrated some years ago when in May 2007 President Bush welcomed Queen Elizabeth II on her State Visit to the USA

to mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of the first permanent English settlement in North America, when some 104 intrepid adventurers landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607.

[...]

Their (the colonists') search for gold and silver proved fruitless, and they survived only by discovering the money to be made by growing tobacco. But their real legacy was to implant on the North American continent the English language and English ideas of the rule of law and the rights of the individual, ideas on which the modern US is built.¹²⁹

These were the principles alluded to by Elizabeth I herself in her above-mentioned Response to the Parliament's Request She Marry (1559).

Moreover, Virginia was the name given to one of the US States in honour of Queen Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen, by Sir Walter Raleigh on his exploring it.

Therefore, the reception of Britishness overseas, also through Shakespeare's works and their adaptations to the local contexts included natives and immigrants.

Professor Irena R. Makaryk, Professor of English at the University of Ottawa, describes one of those North American realities as follows:

Other First Nations Shakespeare includes a Winnipeg group called Shakespeare in the Red, founded by Native actor Michael Lawrenchuk and British director Libby Mason in 1996. [...] They have experienced enthusiastic response from Native audiences to *To Thine Own Self Be True* (scenes from *King Lear*, *Hamlet*,

¹²⁸ Wohlers Charles (Web Author), *The Book of Common Prayer – 1559. The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, from: www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/BCP_1559.htm, p. 1

¹²⁹ Hamilton Alan, "State Visit", in *Majesty. The Quality Royal Magazine*, Volume 28, Number 6, London, June 2007, Editorial: Ingrid Seward, Joe Little, pp. 9, 11

King John, and sonnets [...], linked by a periodic return to the rehearsal scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), accompanied by Native instrumental and vocal Music.[...] ¹³⁰.

Elizabethan cultural influence therefore surpasses space and time. Interestingly, George Chalmers (1742 - 1825), a Scottish antiquarian and political writer, looked beyond the apparent protagonist of Shakespeare's first 126 Sonnets, that is, "the fair youth" and argued that "the fair youth" in question was the protagonist of the English Golden Age, Elizabeth I herself, as in his words:

[...] Elizabeth was often considered a man: [...] Spenser paints her as a Prince[...]. ¹³¹

But there were also linguistic reasons leading to Chalmer's belief, as in his words:

Add to this, that there was much darkness, and confusion, introduced into writing, in the days of Shakespeare, by the frequent use of the masculine pronoun *his* instead of the neuter demonstrative *it* [...] [Thus] I maintain my great position, that the *sugr'd sonnets* were addressed by Shakespeare to Elizabeth, whom the greatest philologists, and philosophers, of her reign, addressed both as a male, and female. [...] Shakespeare, knowing the voracity of Elizabeth, determined to gorge her with praise [...] [...] he addressed her, as Spenser, Raleigh, and Bacon had addressed her before, both as a princess, and a prince; as a heroine and a hero; as an angel, and a goddess; as Adonis, and Helen [...]

In the "increase sonnets" the fair youth in question is invited to start a family. According to Leo Spitzer (1887-1960), University Professor of Romance Philology, the ancient idea of family could not be restricted to a particular emotional nucleus, but instead could be expanded through various modern branches with their specific emotional nuclei, as if it were a system of railroad tracks spreading out from one center and developing into new rail systems, made of the same rail material, with new centers. ¹³²

¹³⁰ Makaryk Irena R., "Introduction: Shakespeare in Canada: 'a world elsewhere'?" in *Shakespeare in Canada: 'a World Elsewhere'?*, edited by Brydon Diana and Makaryk Irena R., University of Toronto Press Incorporated 2002, p. 31

¹³¹ Chalmers George, "An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers", Thomas Egerton, 1797, pp. 157- 158, in *SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM*, vol. 10, James E. Person, Jr., Sandra L. Williamson Editors, Lawrence J. Trudeau Associate Editor, Detroit, New York, Fort Lauderdale, London, 1990

¹³² Spitzer Leo, *L'armonia del mondo. Storia semantica di un'idea*, (1967) Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009, p. 81

Similarly, peace is defined by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, 18, 13, as starting from the order and peace within the body to the order and peace in the soul (*consensio*) and then proceeding to the peace of men among each other (*concordia*), peace in the house and in the state, gradually expanding to the heavenly peace of the souls, as reported by Leo Spitzer.¹³³

On continuing with this “harmony development”, he also affirms that, for example, the definition of beauty given by Thomas Aquinas contains both the Augustinian idea of *numeri* (proportion) and of the world music. Spitzer then goes on by stating that the idea of harmony could be perceived on a semantic level as well, as in the modern German word “Stimmung” whose compound meaning is a semantic reflection sometimes of one, sometimes of other different etymons having lent each other parts of their contents, thus forming a mixture, a woven fabric.¹³⁴

Finding a common, uniting way between opposites, that is, tempering, contributes to balance, leading to the harmonious coexistence of differences, a condition also expanding to an artistic level including beauty, with the sense of proportion at the core of the whole harmonious context, and to which music belongs as well.

Likewise, a common structure joining the opposing religious beliefs in Elizabeth I’s England was what she tried to give to the English people on the basis of her strong faith in God.

In religious matters, Elizabeth I sought a “middle way” between the rampant Protestantism of her brother Edward VI’s reign and the rabid Catholicism of Mary’s rule.¹³⁵

These are Queen Elizabeth I’s words in her Response to the Parliament’s Request She Marry:

[...] your petition I do well like of [...], because that it is simple and containeth no

¹³³ Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo. Storia semantica di un’idea*, p. 78

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 80-81

¹³⁵ Ellis Siàn, “The Queen’s Golden Age – Shades of the First Elizabethan Era”, in *The British Heritage-Live the History*, September 2011 – Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 36

limitation of place or person [...] ¹³⁶

These are the seed of the growing plant leading to the usage of the 1559 Prayer Book in America in the early 1600s, for Elizabeth I's Christian world was interwoven with her consideration on individual freedom, together with economic reasons. This constitutes the bridge starting from her Renaissance England and extending to the American New World, her self continuation, as shown by "the Queen resplendent, her hand on a globe, pointing symbolically to Virginia, while the doomed Armada sails behind her imperiously coiffed head on George Gower's iconic Armada Portrait at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire". ¹³⁷

Instead, the textual depiction of Elizabeth I somehow blurs her portrayal through a rich variety of words, adjectives, expressions used and arranged, like the notes in a song, in poetical lines converging to the mysterious image of "the fair youth" in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

J. Hollander reports Sidney Lanier's words declaring that "music is not a species of language, but language is a species of music" ¹³⁸ whose precise arithmetical rhythm and rhyming, together with the images conveyed, animate the written words forming poetical lines, like the ones of the Shakespearean *Sonnets*, which contributed to the Renaissance "musico-poetic golden age." ¹³⁹

Therefore, reading or listening to them enables one to perceive a reverberating world touching one's soul and producing a kind of meditative as well as enjoyable interior musicality, which is also gained through their rhyme pattern: abab cdcd efef gg, and their iambic pentameter rhythm.

In *Sonnet* n. 8, the poet asks the young man the reason why he feels so sad in listening to music, which has positive connotations in this poem because it is compared to sweetness and

¹³⁶ Elizabeth I: "Response to the Parliament's Request She Marry (1559)", cit., p. 1

¹³⁷ Ellis Siân, "The Queen's Golden Age – Shades of the First Elizabethan Era", cit., pp. 37, 36

¹³⁸ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 11

¹³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 14

joy both leading to musical and social harmony.

As a matter of fact, the well-tuned strings as well as the harmonious family composed by a father, a mother and a child, as described in this poem, convey the idea of unity although there are several parts that form it. This sense of harmonious order is also illustrated by the image of a string:

[...] sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing (ll. 09 – 12)¹⁴⁰,

A string, sweetly and proportionally combined with the other ones in this “mutual ordering” (l.10), produces a pleasant sound to a listener.

According to John Hollander, “scale” means “proportion” and “just disposition of the relative role of parts in a whole” and “In the Ptolemaic astronomy, [...] the universal proportions could be seen as realized in the ratios to each other of the diameters of the heavenly spheres” the music of which, [...] “representing the sounds of heavenly perfection”¹⁴¹ could be perceived as the harmonious order of the universe which finds correspondence with the order of a human community, such as a state, or a city, with all its hierarchies, and founded on families, the souls of which are the expression of the interrelated individuals’ ones, a music of the souls, which producing sounds, produces also words.

These poetic words are so well-orchestrated that they become the author’s musical instruments that convey the idea that harmonious multiplicity gives way to unity, whereas one single unit is comparable to a single note or a broken string which cannot create music in this context.

Therefore, while sounding unpleasant to the listeners, it leads to “nothingness”, to no harmonious correspondence of macrocosm – microcosm. “Thus, the Platonic notion of the

¹⁴⁰ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 8 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

¹⁴¹ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 - 1700*, cit., pp. 27 - 28

World-Soul [...] considered as a tuning, or “harmonia”, finds figurative expression in the image of the World-Lyre, or the stringed instrument of the human soul”.¹⁴²

The protagonist of this sonnet is not “in tune” with his feelings, for although he should be like music to listen to, he instead feels sad on listening to music.

In the first quatrain of the poem, gently rebuking questions are addressed to the protagonist like “Music to hear, why hear’st thou music sadly?” (l. 1), or “Why lov’st thou that which thou receiv’st not gladly,” (l. 3)¹⁴³ giving ‘untuning’ messages; but they are followed by images of harmony, as illustrated in ll. 5 – 7:

[...] the true concord of well-tuned sounds
By unions married [...]
They do but sweetly chide thee [...]

The key adjective in the harmonious context is “sweet” which also appears in the following image to refer to a musical instrument being played upon, an image that alludes to a love relationship, as described in ll. 9 – 10:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering.¹⁴⁴

This is also an image that enables one to think of an ordered arrangement where everybody from heaven to earth has its own role, also on a social level, as in the Chain of Being.

But a contraposition between the image of a family with its internal roles and the lonely addressee is emphasized in ll. 11 – 14 of the poem:

Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one
Sings this to thee: ‘Thou single wilt prove none’.

The final couplet depicts the harmony of the voices of the family members dealt with

¹⁴² Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 - 1700*, cit., p. 44

¹⁴³ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 8 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 1300

channelling their ‘multiplicity’ into the apparent singleness of a choral voice with its internal ordered parts and turning the addressee’s singleness into ‘nothingness’, thus in the end pointing out that the addressee is not music because, as Leo Spitzer had affirmed:

music is union, a family of sounds [...] seeming one, and a single note is no music; a single man is no man. The protest against disharmony, [...] although made gentler with musicality and order, is revealed in the end, almost threatening the destruction of the human being alien to music so musically loved by the poet.¹⁴⁵

Other images connected to the idea of singleness as something musically dim are conveyed by the following lines in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, when Hermia, on asking about her fate if she refuses to marry Demetrius opposing her father’s will, learns from Theseus’ words that she will

live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon
(ll. 72-73, Act 1–Scene 1)¹⁴⁶.

This illustrates the correspondence between a concept of music with low-pitched sound and sadness, the feeling stemming from a condition of deep loneliness. In addition, ll. 76 – 78 (Act 1

– Scene 1) of the above-mentioned work continue with the idea of a fruitless singleness, as follows:

But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness,

Once again the poet states that one’s continuation in family descendants through one’s own essence like that of a distilled rose is preferable to one’s single blessedness that will end with decay like a rose that after having grown in beauty and vitality, withers on a virgin thorn.

The similarity of the above-described images in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 8 with the ones

¹⁴⁵ Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo – Storia semantica di un’idea*, cit., p. 112

¹⁴⁶ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 313

in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reveals the similarity of the ideas chosen in expressing them, as emerges from ll. 12 – 14 of the sonnet:

Who, all in one [sire and child and happy mother], one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none"¹⁴⁷

as well as from ll. 72 – 73 in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where emphasis is placed on the contraposition between the song of a family resulting in a single but choral voice whose words compare singleness with being nobody and the hymns feebly sung by a childless nun to the coldness of the moon. Moreover, the idea of flowers that become a distilled essence enabling the "family" continuation in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 5, as expressed in ll. 13 – 14

But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,
Lose but their show; their substance still lives sweet¹⁴⁸

is also traceable in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the following lines:

But earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness¹⁴⁹
(ll. 76-78, Act 1–Scene 1)

In *Sonnet* n. 5, although flowers lose their beauty and freshness in time, their essence is still preserved, similarly to the distilled rose in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* whose substance contributes to blossoming happiness on earth, and unlike the rose growing and living until its lonely withering on a barren thorn.

Furthermore, in *Sonnet* n. 109, the rose is the protagonist as it represents the poet's beloved, and therefore, the lover's universe, but it is also the symbol of the Tudor family.

Again, in *Sonnet* n. 8, sweetness and joyfulness of well-tuned sounds producing true

¹⁴⁷ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 8 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem.*, *Sonnet* n. 5, p. 1299

¹⁴⁹ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 313

concord should not be accepted sadly, hence the attempt to let the addressee become aware of how the “blending” of the voices, or of the roles within a family, produces a pleasing choral sound and at the same time to let him also understand everybody’s unique voice or role forming this togetherness.

The use of adjectives conveys clear images richly describing the characteristics of the physical and emotional scenario. The expressions “sweet husband” (l. 9) – “mutual ordering” (l. 10) – “happy mother” (l. 11) – “one pleasing note” (l. 12) – illustrate positive harmonious concepts in contraposition with the final line affirming “Thou single wilt prove none” (l. 14).

Alliterative lines, together with repetitions, as well as assonances, not to mention the use of the emphasizing ‘do’ before verbs to strongly illustrate a situation, produce both the musicality of the sonnet and its strong tone conveying the idea of the young being reproached.

But at the same time, the musical world in this sonnet stems from ideas of love, peace and order creating a harmonious context. The above-said ideas could be semantically found in the Latin root of a word connected to the Greek thought and supporting basic concepts in the poem, that is to say, “cord-“ which, according to Leo Spitzer, could imply not only the meaning

[...] *cor, cordis*, “heart”, which was the original meaning, but also the one of *chorda*, “string” [...]; thus, *concordia* could suggest either “an agreement of hearts, peace, order” (*concord-ia*) or “a harmony of strings, world harmony” (*con-chord-ia*). Therefore, both psychological and musical harmony, as well as disharmony: *disc(h)ordia*, were included in one poetic ambivalent word which made possible a certain type of metaphysical punning.¹⁵⁰

The dual meaning of the word “concordia” could be found in the images of Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 8, both as “harmony of strings” and “agreement of hearts” where a peaceful union of hearts is pictured. Moreover, this agreement resembles a choir whose orderly combined voices sing pleasing notes giving way to a harmonious world.

¹⁵⁰ Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo – Storia semantica di un’idea*, cit., p. 93

4.2 The beloved's eyes as the poet's "constant stars" with the shift from a private to a public role: *Sonnet n. 14*

In the Elizabethan age, the musical scale was also the metaphorical image of an ordered cosmos where the stars had an important position, another remarkable element in Shakespeare's *Sonnet n. 14*. For example, the couple's looking at each other while dancing is their basic language communicating their feelings, their reciprocal understanding and orientation for their steps. Dancing was one of Elizabeth I's favourite entertainments still implying musical accompaniment whose orderly arrangement of steps, music and roles conveys the idea of concord also as a symbol of the universal one embodied in the dancers' expressing the physical laws of the universe. Besides, in dancing, both the respect for one's roles and the combination of one's steps with the partner's, allow this harmony within the couple to be perceived by the surrounding community and influence it.

According to Skiles Howard, who has published articles on dancing in English masques, the way dancing is represented by John Davies, another Elizabethan poet and author of "Orchestra", both "emphasizes gender differences" and "transcends gender categories", thus embodying an institutional role, especially in the latter case, as Elizabeth I, the Queen, does.¹⁵¹

In Shakespeare's *Sonnet n. 14*, the poet addresses its protagonist using images from astrology; in doing so, he states that although he knows astronomy – not in order to tell good or bad luck – the only valuable knowledge he can have from it derives from his beloved's eyes – his "constant stars"¹⁵² – l. 10 -, as celebrated in ll. 9 – 10:

But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art,

¹⁵¹ Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, from: <http://freessays.0catch.com/daviesdancing.html>, p. 22, 14

¹⁵² Shakespeare William, *Sonnet n. 14* from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

through which the poet expresses his perception of a vital, everlasting knowledge, if not the wisdom of living, which is not unstable and has something to do with the harmony of Divine Providence. He can also read his beloved's capability of making truth and beauty fruitful in time by having children, otherwise, and still using the astrology language, what he can "prognosticate" (l. 13) is the destruction of truth and beauty.

This relationship is his world, which is described as being surrounded by images of chaos and destruction when the feeling of uncertainty and disharmony are perceived.

Therefore, on a universal level, the role of the stars influencing one's own fortune is strongly felt, as expressed in the following lines:

And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality (ll. 2 – 4).¹⁵³

By conveying a great sense of changeability, astrology affected those times with the projection of Man's feeling of uncertainty onto a disordered scenario of diseases, natural disasters and sudden weather changes.

The author also reveals the contradictory, ambivalent characteristic of the stars, of fortune and of human nature which are so changeable as to produce good as well as evil, and to create chaotic situations leading to the loss of balance and therefore to a void where anything dangerous could happen.

Man's wisdom prevents his relying on the changeable stars' influence only, and instead makes him believe in the everlasting power of generating life, enabling prosperous harmony, as expressed in the following lines:

[...] truth and beauty shall together thrive

¹⁵³ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 14 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert (ll. 11-12) ¹⁵⁴

The protagonist's denial of astrology as his reference point is conveyed through the repeated use of negative expressions, such as ¹⁵⁵ 'Not' at the beginning of the first quatrain – l. 1 -:

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck,

and the use of the negative 'Nor' starting the second one – l. 5 -:

Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell [...]

The shift from what is negative or unstable is indicated by the use of 'But' at the beginning of the third quatrain in order to affirm that what has to do with reason, that is, 'judgment' (l. 1), 'knowledge' (l. 9), the harmonious spiritual part in Man, is derived from the beloved's eyes.

In fact, l. 1 is somehow continued, contrasted and concluded by l. 9, as follows:

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck,
[...]
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive, ¹⁵⁶

Besides, the poet compares the beloved's eyes to "constant stars" (l. 10) and affirms that the truth and beauty inside them will emerge if they are fruitful through the eyes of a child perpetuating its parents' image in the future.

Furthermore, the expression 'constant stars' conveys the image of the beloved's eyes as symbols of stable, harmonious heavens and his real reference point.

Yet, the poet states that if she will not make her qualities fruitful, these qualities will die with her: this final change is announced by the words 'or else' in l. 13 continuing with l. 14:

¹⁵⁴ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 14 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 1300

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 1300

Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date ¹⁵⁷,

in this case indicating the final negative direction the possible beloved's choice will lead to.

The strength of the poet's statement could be perceived by the correspondences at the beginning of most of the lines in the sonnet, such as:

'not' (l. 1), 'yet' (l. 2), 'not' (l. 3), 'nor' (l. 5), 'or' (l. 7), 'but' (l. 9), 'or [else]' (l. 13).

A similar idea of one's eyes can be found in the initial scene in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Egeus, Hermia's father, addresses Theseus, the Duke of Athens, in order to be helped in being obeyed. His daughter is to marry Demetrius instead of Lysander, but Hermia's reply will be the following:

I would my father look'd but with my eyes
(l. 56, Act 1–Scene 1)¹⁵⁸

that is, the eyes of love. Yet, Theseus affirms that Hermia should leave space to her father's judgement, as expressed in the next 57th line:

Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

Another example of the same importance given to eyesight as in Sonnet n. 14, can be found in Act 2, Scene 1, when Oberon remembers the time he saw Cupid "flying between the cold moon and the earth"¹⁵⁹ (l. 156) because, as its following verses illustrate:

[...] A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow (ll. 157 – 159)

but his shaft extinguished "in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon" (l. 162) at the same time

[...] the imperial vot'ress passèd on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free (ll. 163 – 164)

¹⁵⁷ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 14 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

¹⁵⁸ Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 313

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 317

(helpfully, the moon's half-descried cheek averts her eyes from the enticing sight [...] on the dancing place).¹⁶¹

This recalls again those lines in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – Act 2, Scene 1¹⁶² - describing “the imperial vot’ress” (l. 163) not noticing Cupid, but instead “passing on in maiden meditation fancy-free” (ll. 163 - 164), while Cupid’s shaft extinguishes in “the chaste beams of the wat’ry moon” (l. 162), and leads to another dimension in which one’s female and private role within society is surpassed by a neutral role: the public one.

The shift from dancing on a private level to a public one changes one’s eyesight; yet, dancing is the trait-union between private and public roles.

As for the galliard, another popular dance of the age, Skiles Howard affirms that

The fervent galliard is, unexpectedly, also a woman, who “[i]mpatient that her house on earth should stay/...cloth she make her body upward flyne,” much like the queen who danced high, elevated by a “fierie and divine” spirit and “virtue Masculine” of a king, and a king of England, too. In doubly gendering the queen, Davies elevates her [...], and signifies marriage – between the monarch’s two bodies.¹⁶³

Davies’ “doubly gendering the queen” recalls Chalmer’s belief that Shakespeare’s sonnets were referred to Elizabeth I “whom the greatest philologists, and philosophers, of her reign, addressed both as a male, and female.”¹⁶⁴ It seems as if Elizabeth I’s physical elevation in dancing and her spiritual one towards her important role, coincided.

The volta, for example, was a dance for couples which Elizabeth I often performed; in Howard’s words:

[...] Full of hoppings and leapings [...] the dance elevated the lady [...] [...]
a queen chastely married to sovereignty¹⁶⁵,

¹⁶¹ Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, cit., p. 14

¹⁶² Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, cit., p. 317

¹⁶³ Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, cit., p. 14

¹⁶⁴ Chalmers George, *An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers*, cit., p. 157

thus becoming a dance accomplishing the concordance between private roles, that is, the dancing couple, as well as public ones, that is to say, the dancing lady, Queen Elizabeth I, who is married to her nation.

Music had, and still has, mitigating effects over what is extreme, consequently contributing to the creation of an atmosphere of concordance associable with temperance meaning “one’s intervening both at the right time and within measure” according to the Latin etymology, but also referring to moral harmony as well as to the weather’s one.¹⁶⁶

4.3 Timeless lines: *Sonnet n. 18*

In this context, the choice of Shakespeare’s *Sonnet n. 18* adds another piece to the puzzle, and illustrates the idea of self-perpetuation through the spiritual fruit of a Platonic Love that through one’s wisdom and virtues gives way to various arts: the administrative, the political, the pictorial, as well as the poetical ones.

In Shakespeare’s *Sonnet n. 18*, the message conveyed is that poetry, through its lively verses, contrasts the destructive power of Time.

In fact, the poet’s memory of his beloved becomes an eternal summer through his celebrating lines contrasting the shortness of a summer season with all its extremities characterizing this picture of instability, as depicted in the following lines:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed (ll. 5-6)¹⁶⁷

Unfavourable furious winds destroy the natural seasonal signs of life; therefore, rebirth will take too long in comparison with the short period of summer; consequently, what derives is a sense of destruction or uncertainty, as illustrated in ll. 3-4:

¹⁶⁵ Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, cit., p. 14

¹⁶⁶ Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo – Storia semantica di un’idea*, cit., pp. 91, 90

¹⁶⁷ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet n. 18* from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1301

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date¹⁶⁸

In this scenario, “a changing course” (l. 8) can deprive the natural process of the blossoming and growing of “the [...] buds of May” (l. 3) causing chaos in their condition. But the poet reassures his beloved by not comparing him (or her) to a temporary summertime on earth: “Thou art more lovely and more temperate” (l. 2), but rather to an “eternal summer” (l. 9), and by affirming that she is increasingly better, as expressed through the form “more [...] and more [...] in the above-mentioned sonnet.

Therefore, the addressee of this poem will outlast the summer season through the author's celebrating her immutable eternal summer and life and whose memory will be everlasting, as expressed in l. 9:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

and in l. 12:

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st

Because

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee (ll. 13-14)¹⁶⁹

that is to say, the author's poetic lines will eternally give life and celebrate his beloved, allowing her to survive the chaotic and destructive power of time, and re-establish harmony in this poetical universe, as suggested by the use of the platonic adjective ‘temperate’ in l.2.

‘Temperance’, according to Plato's word usage, means:

A virtue of the soul which, unlike courage and wisdom, is not peculiar to any one part. In the state, as in the soul, temperance is a sort of moderation in all affairs, resulting in harmony [...] The temperate man is described as self-

¹⁶⁸ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 18 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1301

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 1301

controlled (430-431).¹⁷⁰

The idea of human frailty, uncertainty, is conveyed through images depicting too strong or excessive forces and elements like “the rough winds shaking the tender buds of May” (l. 3).

The lack of balance is expressed¹⁷¹ through the use of “too”, as in ll. 4-5:

[...] summer’s lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines

and the use of the adverb of frequency ‘often’ portrays the darkening of the sunny sky, as in l. 6:

[...] often is his gold complexion dimmed

as well as the use of alliterations, the repetition of words and sounds, as in l. 7

[...] every **fair** from **fair** sometime declines.

The lack of balance gives way to images of weakening and decay, as depicted in l. 7 where what is fair ‘declines’ from being fair and being trimmed, as illustrated in l. 8 in which the depriving prefix ‘un’ precedes the decorative adjective ‘trimmed’, due to both changeable fortune and nature’s course.

The initial ‘but’ in l. 9 is the indicator of the contrasting answer to the poet’s question in l. 1, thus giving back stability and beauty to the scene by describing the beloved as an ‘eternal summer’ which will not fade. In addition, the denial of negative situations is expressed by the use of ‘nor’ introducing ll. 10-11:

Nor lose(ing) possession of that fair thou ow’st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade¹⁷²

Her being evoked through the author’s poetry will give her eternal life against the

¹⁷⁰ Coles Notes, *Plato - Republic Notes*, Coles Publishing Company Limited, Toronto (Canada), p. 140

¹⁷¹ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 18 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1301

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 1301

destructive power of Time, thus also conveying at the same time the idea of the poet's vital role in the world, whose defense is emphasized in Sidney's words:

[...] the poet interconnects the realm of abstract generalities and the realm of concrete particulars. [...] the "moderator" between the philosopher and the historian.

[...]

The poet's description of reality [...] was an imitation of life which started with the imperfect and ephemeral brazen world and by poetic imagination transmuted this to a golden world of perfection.¹⁷³

4.4 The Carcanet: the continuum in *Sonnet n. 52*

Instead, Time's positive role of preserving unity both on a small and on a large scale, even in its apparently negative part in situations dealing with a lover's absence, is what has inspired the selection of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* n. 52 and 98 in this writing.

Another golden world similar to the one depicted by the afore-said words of Sidney is in some way reproduced by the images in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 52¹⁷⁴ beginning with a comparison between the poet and the mentioned 'rich' who unlocks 'his sweet [...] treasure' (l. 2) and recalling a relationship lover - beloved both on a spiritual and on a physical level, but it could also be possible that if the rich were the poet, the treasure could be his Muse so preciously inspiring his love, as well as his poetry, as to make him impatiently waiting for the

[...] feasts so solemn and so rare

[...]

Like stones of worth they thinly placed are, (ll. 5-7).

This conveys the idea of the enduring value he got to know during the above-mentioned entertainments where he maybe met his lover, or the patron or patroness of his art, or both.

But "captain jewels in the carcanet"(l. 8)¹⁷⁵ somehow changes the blurry portrait that the

¹⁷³ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, San Marino, California, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1974, pp. 308, 316

¹⁷⁴ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 52 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1305

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 1305

poet is delineating by emphasizing again the preciousness of these very important jewels, thus describing the importance of the role of the lady wearing them, both the social and the artistic ones, she possibly being the patroness of that precious art of communication whose words are jewels shining to the present and future generations: perhaps, she could be Queen Elizabeth I herself.

The above-mentioned jewels represent the outstanding symbol of the special, high value of a person wearing them, thus recalling a correspondence of value starting from the smallest, though precious, element, a jewel – also called “stone of worth” (l. 7) – to higher and higher levels of importance possibly dealing with the social value of the person described.

The feasts belong to this highly-valued field because they emphasize the importance of the person and event celebrated, as l. 5 depicts the feasts by defining them “so solemn and so rare” in this world of correspondences.

Marta Patino history, reports that Queen Elizabeth I, who was renowned for her promotion of recreational activities, used to spend Christmas at Whitehall,¹⁷⁶

where the festivities were especially extravagant. Hundreds of guests would take part in two week-long courtly celebrations, which included splendid feasts and unrivalled entertainment;

therefore, according to M. Patino, a banquet course showed the status of the host as well as the creative cookery and artistic skills of the lady of the house. For example, “leech” was a very highly longed for sweetmeat.

Made from milk, sugar and rosewater, it was cut into cubes and often arranged to form a chequerboard.

Fruits and vegetables from the New World enriched the banquet tables, as well as “other traditional meats served included roast beef, goose and turkey”¹⁷⁷, which were dishes particularly

¹⁷⁶ Patino Marta, *An Elizabethan Christmas Feast: Sugar and All Things Nice*, from: TimeTravel-Britain.com, p. 2

¹⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1

symbolizing Christmas, a very special day that together with its important religious meaning, carried also a social and a historical one. Again, in M. Patino's words:

For the well-to-do, the most traditional meat on Christmas Day was goose. It is said that in 1588 Elizabeth I ordered the entire country to serve goose at their Christmas feast, since it was the first meal she had eaten following England's victory over the Spanish Armada and would thus provide a fitting tribute to the Navy Royal.¹⁷⁸

In miniature, this special Christmas meal symbolized a world of religious, social, historical and political correspondences leading to Elizabeth I, the representative of the English monarchy at that time, and therefore of nationhood, as well as the Head of the Church of England.

The goose served at the Christmas feast, together with the new species of fruits and vegetables, were some of the symbols of the Old and New World whose meeting point was still Queen Elizabeth I, the symbol, in turn, of the English nation allowing old and new to coexist harmoniously. In this relationship microcosm – macrocosm and viceversa, a common model unifies these worlds aiming at a higher level until their surpassing the terrestrial level and reaching the celestial one by creating a contact between the human soul and the divine which is rendered eternal through both one's addressing God and one's composing poetical lines. This idea of looking at God as the One and at the same time at His embracing the whole world recalls concepts within Pythagorean cosmology, as described by S.K. Heninger, Jr.,

In Pythagorean cosmology [...], our universe taken as a whole is a metaphor for God which resolves the paradox of how He is both one and infinite. The holy infinitude is represented by the multifarious diversity of our world, [...]. His creation exhausted the possible permutations and combinations of matter. Yet this diversity is not chaotic. Cosmic order organizes it into the oneness of a universe. Multeity is reduced to unity in this prototypical metaphor.¹⁷⁹

In this universal interrelation, poetry is a metaphorical world rich in correspondences and is both Man's highest means of expression and his way of getting to know the Poet as well as

¹⁷⁸ Patino Marta, *An Elizabethan Christmas Feast: Sugar and All Things Nice*, from: TimeTravel-Britain.com, p. 1

¹⁷⁹ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 328

himself. In the relationship poet-treasure in Shakespeare's Sonnet n. 52, the Lady herself was the most precious jewel of the chest which Time rarely unfolds to the poet.

The final lines read:

Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph; being lacked, to hope. (ll. 13-14)¹⁸⁰

Perhaps this is like the triumph or the hope given by a queen, who, like a king, makes the moments spent with her "blessed" just like the ones when "Sun blesses the day".

These blessed moments mentioned in the sonnet could also be the key of either the rich's poetry freeing "a sweet up-locked treasure" (l. 2) or "his imprisoned pride" (l. 12).

The fact that "some special instant" is "special blest" (l. 11) is due to Time, another protagonist of this poem because it preserves the possible beloved. Therefore, the feasts, "so solemn and so rare" (l. 5) in the course of the year become very special occasions for the protagonists' meetings, their preciousness being compared with "stones of worth" (l. 7), "or captain jewels in the carcanet" (l. 8).

Consequently, as these feasts are so rare that the presence of the addressee of the sonnet is seen as a blessing, a triumph, her absence makes the poet hopeful for another occasion because their love or artistic relationship whose "seldom pleasure" (l. 4), although its being occasional like the feasts, has immediate and long-lasting response.

The assonances, the rhymes and the words chosen, such as: 'pleasure – treasure – rare' as well as the frequent use of the adverb 'seldom', together with the alliterations, emphasize this idea of preciousness, too, as in ll. 5-7:

Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are ¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 52 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1305

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1305

Another aspect of this poem is represented by the idea that the poet's treasure will not be continuously controlled because it would mortify the best magic moments of pleasure, their being so rare.

In addition, the simile depicting Time in ll. 1 and 9 as another harmonic element of preciousness, with the function of preserving the poet's partner, the very special treasure, instead of destroying her/it, leaves the poet a rich man, as illustrated in the following lines:

So am I as the rich, [...]
 [...]
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
 [...] (making)
[...] some special instant special blest.¹⁸²

The beloved's worth lets the poet's joyful feeling towards her harmonize his various thoughts so as to express happiness when being with her during the rare celebrations where they meet, or else feel hopeful for her return when she is far away: an image of this harmonic microcosm emerging from the final couplet of the poem, in which once again Time is not an enemy. This sense of eternity linking earth to heaven is illustrated by St. Augustine's words:

Terrestrial things are subject to celestial, and their time circuits join together in harmonious succession for a poem of the universe.¹⁸³

On the basis of Pythagorean cosmology, the tetrad was the numerical unit allowing the inclusion of smaller parts into the larger ones of the whole entity. Spenser himself used a similar structure in his works, that is to say,

the twelve part cosmos, the elaborated tetrad, the annual unit of time which organizes the twelve months and four seasons into a single ideogram [...] ¹⁸⁴

as if it formed a cycle which like the seasons, once finished with winter, started over again with

¹⁸² Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 52 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1305

¹⁸³ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 369

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 373

spring as in the eternal continuum of a circle where even the smallest point is part of something neverending like eternity. This cosmic pattern is reproduced also in Spenser's "The Faerie Queene" where Elizabeth I could be recognized in Gloriana's character, as described by Heninger:

Elizabeth as Gloriana, is the perfect unit which is infinity, *e pluribus unum*, ringed about with her twelve constituent knights who derive from her court and return to it, just as rivers rise from and return to the ocean, or as the moments of time rise from and return to eternity. She is a self-contained entity, revealing the cosmic pattern of twelve-in-one, demonstrating the paradox of *concordia discors* and representing the basic unit of time. Significantly her feast is an annual event, not only what is but what shall always be. It is a continuing process [...] ¹⁸⁵.

This recalls the idea of the preciousness of those "rare solemn feasts" longed for by the poet in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 52, l. 5. Moreover, by following the above-mentioned cosmic pattern, the feasts are described as ¹⁸⁶

[...] seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet (ll. 6 – 8)

"the carcanet" resembling the form of a circle including those precious stones that according to the concept of time in the following lines are compared to very special blessed moments lasting forever:

So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest (ll. 9 – 11) ¹⁸⁷

4.5 The universal book of the world: *Sonnet* n. 98

Somehow, the counterpart of *Sonnet* n. 52 could be Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 98 because the importance of being together with his beloved is emphasized by the poet's expressing his deep

¹⁸⁵ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 375

¹⁸⁶ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 52 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1305

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1305

sadness due to his having been absent from his partner right in the flourishing springtime season.

The poet's interior unhappiness contrasts with the beauty and joyfulness of spring, in April, a part of the year comparable to youth, with its colours and perfumes, a season in which even Saturn, the planet of sadness itself, is leaping and laughing in this cosmic scenario.

The beauty of this picture of nature in springtime strengthens the lover's awareness of his feelings towards his beloved, his self-knowledge being conveyed by his contemplation of creation, that same natural environment Man belongs to, but who also has been created in the resemblance of the divine image of God.

According to Heninger, this idea of learning emerges from what had been reported by Augustine and Nicephorus, who affirmed that

when Antonius the Hermit was asked by a philosopher, "How might we know heavenly things, since there are no books about them, he replied: "This universal book of the world takes the place of a library, and always and everywhere it lies open to men."¹⁸⁸

In this sonnet, a series of negative forms renders the climax of the natural blossoming of the season, together with its colours and sounds, very limited. Expressions such as: "yet – nor – but" turn the splendour of the depicted April images into something blurry, distant like the distance from the poet's lover, in comparison with whom, these wonderful images are

but [...] sweet , [...] figures of delight
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those. (ll. 11 – 12)¹⁸⁹

His lover is the model of beauty; therefore, the wonders of Nature take after her. In the Renaissance, beauty was mostly seen as proportion whose resulting harmony had the effect of producing delight conveying a sense of musicality to the observer. For instance, L.B. Alberti is reported to have defined the proportions of an architecture as "tutta quella musica", "all that

¹⁸⁸ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touces of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., Note n. 4, p. 358

¹⁸⁹ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 98 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1311

music”.¹⁹⁰

According to the Christian religion, divine architecture is represented by the perfectly structured temple of the human body in which the spiritual and the physical interconnect, thus reflecting both the celestial and the terrestrial worlds forming the universe.

Similarly, as in the Platonic ideology the original idea inspires and gives way to the encircling world in this sonnet, so the poet’s permanent image of his beloved’s beauty in his mind becomes the central point of the surrounding springtime scenario where the variegated flowers with their perfumes and the birds’ songs are but delightful figures, that is, delightful expressions of the central source of cosmic beauty.

Yet, imitating the beloved’s beauty in a sort of extension, of a system of correspondences including both the interior musicality produced by the pleasing effects of beauty as harmony on a spiritual as well as on a physical level, and the exterior musicality expressed through the sounds of the birds’ songs, makes musicality become a unifying element. With regard to this, L. Spitzer reports that the best means of restoring a broken unity between Man and the cosmos is music itself.

In “De Vita” Ficino is said to have used the simile of the harp whose strings, once plucked, make the unplucked ones vibrate, a similitude that illustrates the influence of the stars on stones, plants, human nature and talent.¹⁹¹

This idea is embodied by the image of dancing Saturn that although representing the planet of melancholy, is “laughing” and “leaping” – l. 4¹⁹²-, thus conveying the sense of its being inserted in a larger and harmonized order allowing the surpassing of its sadness within an unending universal unity, also showing how the harmony of a love relationship within a couple

¹⁹⁰ Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo – Storia semantica di un’idea*, cit., p. 137

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 139

¹⁹² Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 98 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1311

on a small scale involves the worlds of plants, of animals, and ascends to the heavens with their universal and eternal characteristics. In fact, despite the lover's absence, Time has not caused the interruption of the pair's union, and then, the harmony of this love relationship comes back to the lovers in this circle of eternity.

Yet, although the poet is facing the marvels of Spring, he still feels as if it were winter, when he thinks of his beloved being away.

Therefore, the poet is able to feel some joy in his facing the shadowed beauty of this landscape, just because, from his point of view, he is 'playing' – 'enjoying his lover's shadow', she being the pattern of all beauties and somehow becoming like the Sun being orbited by the other planets and figures, in a sort of cosmic dance, but this image darkens and the heat of the Sun, together with April's joyful show of blossoms, colours, perfumes of flowers, as well as of the songs of the birds, turns into the coldness of Saturn, of winter, because, actually, the above-said pattern, his Sun, is away; therefore, the poet cannot help playing with what remains of her: her shadow.

The artist addresses his lover, who is his reference point, as shown by the repetition of the word "you"¹⁹³ in ll. 1, 12, and 13; in the 12th line, "you" both ends the first half of it and begins the second one:

From you have I been absent in the spring, (l. 1)
[...]
Drawn (figures of delight) after you, you pattern of all those. (ll. 12-13)
Yet seemed it winter still, and you away

What results is that the beloved's coming back means the return of springtime with its "spirit of you/th in every thing" (l. 3)¹⁹⁴, where the word "youth" could enhance the meaning of "you being youth", therefore emphasizing the poet's wish for the addressee's presence, also expressed in the final couplet (ll. 13 – 14) where the word "you" is recalled through the

¹⁹³ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 98 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1311

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 1311

possessive adjective “your”:

Yet seemed it winter still, and you away,
As with your shadow I with these (...sweet...figures of delight-1.11) did play.¹⁹⁵

In these final lines, the feeling of heaviness produced by a correspondence between the poet’s feeling of sadness because of his beloved being away and the coldness of winter, is softened by his accepting to be delighted in just seeing her reflection or by keeping her in mind in the beautiful display of Nature in springtime.

This again emphasizes the relationship Universe – Nature – Man – Man’s soul, which could be crowned with the poet’s seeing his beloved again, and with the couple’s coming back to the starting point where the springtime scenario could still be found even with “heavy Saturn laughing and leaping [...]“ - 1. 4 -. The musicality of this permanent, timeless and universal dance unifies various worlds characterizing Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* also reflecting the remarkable aspect of the English Renaissance capable of including both the old and the new realities in the Elizabethan age.

¹⁹⁵ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 98 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1311

4. ***HARMONY IN W. SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS***

*Harmony as hierarchical and political elements
in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets*

Harmony as hierarchical and political elements in W. Shakespeare's Sonnets

In the Elizabethan world where multiple realities coexist through a large net of interrelations and correspondences, a hierarchical arrangement ruling them through the metaphorical Chain of Being comes to light. Therefore, what happens on a larger or higher scale is perceived on a smaller or lower one and viceversa, thus forming a context in which the choice of William Shakespeare's *Sonnets* # 33, 109 and 8 could reflect the above-mentioned dynamics, that is to say, the relation infinite - finite.

A well-ordered structure given by hierarchy harmonizes the diversities, but, at the same time, it also points out their specific characteristics, thus reproducing a "cosmos pattern" based not only on the concept of "concordia discors" but also on the idea of "e pluribus unum", as illustrated with various metaphors in Heninger's words: ¹⁹⁶

Many metaphors which had flourished from earliest times continued in use to convey the idea of universal order: the golden chain by which the earth depends from heaven, the providential eye of God the caretaker, the cosmic dance of the elements and planets, the angelic hierarchies or the cohorts of gnomes and sylphs and ondines and salamanders, the world as an organism with bodily parts and a soul, the sun in his annual journey through the signs of the zodiac, the eight-chorded lyre of Pythagoras. Moreover, poets were free to devise their own metaphors for cosmos- for example, [...] Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* projects the court of Gloriana as a framework wherein each knight can exemplify his partial virtue to be subsumed in the inclusive virtue of Prince Arthur.

According to Helisaeus Roslinus' "A Pythagorean emblem of the universe" in "De opera dei creationis seu de mundo hypotheses (Frankfurt, 1597), At", the whole universe is formed by several "conjoined" geometrical forms "with symbolic significance" on top of which is a circle representing the archetypal idea of the universe in the mind of Jehovah, Who is infinite and absolutely good.

¹⁹⁶ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 149

This idea reaches the lower levels, “partly angelical [...] and partly ethereal”, and “partly made of the four elements”, levels including also “beasts, stones, atmospheric phenomena (meteora), birds, planets, metals, and fish” with Man at its centre, who stands “in a small circle reproducing the circular perfection of the macrocosm”. At the bottom is hell with chaos as part of it.¹⁹⁷

4.6 The “sovereign eye”: *Sonnet n. 33*

In this context, Shakespeare’s *Sonnet # 33* somehow reproduces the above-depicted scheme¹⁹⁸ with the sun’s allowing

[...] the basest clouds to ride
with ugly rack on his celestial face, (ll. 5 – 6)

creating a darkening and confusing picture where “the forlorn world” (l. 7) emerges, as the hiding sun “flees” to west, thus conveying a sense of instability which could lead to chaos in any natural process.

Similar is the poet’s relationship with his shadowed beloved because

The region cloud hath masked him from me now (l. 12).

These images of restlessness have replaced what was a bright colourful picture of “a glorious morning” (l. 1) with the sun shining and “flattering the mountain-tops with sovereign eye” (l. 2) illuminating the earth. It is as if love were conveyed from the sun through its beams

Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy (ll. 3 – 4),

therefore reaching every point on earth enlivening and enlightening it.

The vital eternal rays of the sun make the landscape a brilliant golden one through a

¹⁹⁷ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touces of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 159

¹⁹⁸ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet n. 33* from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

“heavenly alchemy” (l. 4) that gives joyful harmony.

But the sun is also depicted as shining in “Full many glorious morning...” (l. 1) “...with sovereign eye”¹⁹⁹ (l. 2), as if a regal character in his glory were portrayed, as THE ONE who, like THE SUN, can reach many realities, and watch ‘his’ world, also his entourage.

What is dark and base like the above-described clouds stands in the lowest levels of the Renaissance universal hierarchy, as also reflected in the Pythagorean emblem of the universe.

Yet, the coexistence of good and evil in the same universe could explain the sun’s allowing the chaos of the darkening clouds to overwhelm it, despite its being at the top of the scheme reproducing the universe, that is to say, at the opposite side of evil.

Consequently, the Sun is associable with the positive aspects of life, with good, therefore, with God, who is watching the world from the highest “with sovereign eye” (l. 2).

In addition, the Sun shines in the highest skies as well and turns the lowest earth with its mountains, “the meadows green” (l. 3) and “pale streams” (l. 4) into a gold-covered picture, as if it bettered earth with its heavenly chemistry. Likewise, in this universal hierarchy, where Man stands at its centre, does a king or a queen watch over their courtiers and people “with sovereign eye” (l. 2). The idea of the providential eye of God carefully watching over the whole universal hierarchy is reproduced in A. Kircher’s “Arithmologia” (Rome, 1665), where

At the top the beneficent deity is depicted as the eye of providence watching over creation from the center of a triangle symbolizing the trinity. This holy triangle is in turn the center of three superimposed triangles whose points signify the nine orders of angels. In the middle of the page is the universe, comprising our earth at the center, then the seven planetary spheres, next the sphere of fixed stars, and finally the *primum mobile*. [...] Immediately above this cosmos two angels fly with accoutrements to proclaim that God created the universe according to measure, weight, and number (Book of Wisdom, xi.21). [...] In the landscape below, one philosopher discourses from a book [...], while another philosopher expounds the geometrical theorem traditionally associated with Pythagoras [...]. On a tablet in the foreground are inscribed the first four digits – 1, 2, 3, 4- which represent the limit of extension in the physical world and define by their sum the perfect number 10 [...].²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 33 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

²⁰⁰ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touces of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 209

According to Richard Helgerson, “The monarch was unquestionably the single most powerful unifying force in the English state”²⁰¹; correspondingly, what emerges in the enchanting harmonic scene in the sonnet illustrating an initial picture of ordered creation is disrupted by the sun letting “the basest clouds”²⁰² (l. 5) cover its heavenly face, allowing its nature of light to be furiously obscured by the lowest part of the celestial order which causes the sun to disappear and abandon the world. This sense of looseness is rendered²⁰³ in the sonnet by the alliterative and assonant sounds in ll. 7-8:

And from the forlorn world his visage hide, (l. 7),

also emphasized by its

Stealing unseen to west[...] (l. 8),

as if the sun were fleeing from defeat, from shame.

In the ‘golden age’ very often the Monarch was compared to the Sun with God in the highest. According to the Elizabethan concept of the Chain of Being, the latter stretched from God Himself to the lowest form of life. Humans were below the Angels, and the Monarch occupied the highest place followed by nobles, churchmen, gentlemen and commoners.²⁰⁴

Once the position occupied by the Monarch was challenged, because, for example, of his/ her being betrayed, fear and disorder pervaded the whole disposition, from the smaller to the biggest levels. An example could be represented by Mary, the Queen of Scots, who betrayed Elizabeth I in order to replace her, thus leading to conflicts at every level including Elizabeth I’s inner ones, when having to decide to get her cousin sentenced to death.

²⁰¹ Helgerson Richard, *Forms of nationhood: the Elizabethan writing of England*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 9

²⁰² Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 33 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

²⁰³ *Ibidem*. p. 1303

²⁰⁴ Claybourne Anna & Treays Rebecca, *The World of Shakespeare*, cit., p. 6

According to Jonathan Dollimore, in “E.M.W. Tillyard’s very influential *The Elizabethan World Picture*”

[...], the didactic stress on order was in part an anxious reaction to emergent and (in)-subordinate social forces which were perceived as threatening. Tillyard’s world picture, [...], was not shared by all; it was an ideological legitimation of an existing social order, one rendered the more necessary by the apparent instability, actual and imagined, of that order.²⁰⁵

4.7 Queen Elizabeth I’s progress to Norwich

In Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 33, the last quatrain deals also with a love relationship whose triumphant light lasted just “one hour”²⁰⁶ (ll. 10-11), thus recalling the frailty described in the second quatrain represented again by the covering threatening clouds.

The final couplet starts with the disjunctive “yet” restoring hope for the return of the sunlight due to the superior force of love and accepting that as the sun in the highest sky may darken, so ‘may suns of the world stain’ (l. 14) in this interrelation among the many elements of the universal and social arrangement. Therefore, the interconnection ‘Sun in the highest-suns in the world’ could also be seen on a political level through the unifying power of religion enacted by a ‘sovereign eye’²⁰⁷ - l.2 -, the Supreme Head of Church, i.e. the Queen, in whom, State and Church converged and for whom the Bible represented the reference point in the lives of the English people, though of different beliefs, as well as in her life.

Elizabeth I was deeply affected by the religious question in England to the point that her 1578 progress to East Anglia could be inserted in this political-religious context, for, as Professor Patrick Collinson, Fellow of Trinity College and of the British Academy, reports:

The religious issues were the political issues, and viceversa.
[...]

²⁰⁵ Dollimore Jonathan, Sinfield Alan (editors), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 5

²⁰⁶ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 33 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

²⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 1303

In January 1578, Sir Francis Knollys, a councillor privileged by his blood relationship to the Queen, had written a letter in which religious and political motives were inextricably linked: “The avoiding of her Majesty’s danger doth consist in the preventing of the conquest of the Low Countries betimes; secondly, in preventing of the revolt of Scotland from her Majesty’s devotion unto the French and the Queen of Scots; and thirdly, in the timely preventing of the contemptuous growing of the disobedient papists here in England.”²⁰⁸

Therefore, the Sun of “the heavenly alchemy” depicted in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 33, l. 4, disappears under the dark threatening clouds embodying the arising religious and political chaos, chaos which in the Pythagorean emblem of the universe stands at the lowest level, that is, at the opposite side of God, of light, of what is virtuous.

Consequently, Elizabeth I’s progresses were the means to enable her to promote both her personal political image and the one of her court; besides, they represented special occasions for strengthening her dialogue and links with her people. The Queen’s attempt of limiting religious conflicts was probably one of the reasons for her going on progress to Norwich in 1578, reasons that were reinforced by reports²⁰⁹ describing Norwich as

“that great disordered diocess”.

[...]

Someone in Norfolk said that ‘the state could not long stand thus, it would either to papistry or puritanism’. The Queen, determined that no such thing should happen, favoured the third way, [...], Anglicanism: strict conformity to the terms of the ecclesiastical settlement, Catholic and Puritan dissidence to be handled with equal severity.

Elizabeth I’s choice with regard to the local religious hierarchy²¹⁰ “was Edmund Freke, who was appointed Bishop of Norwich in 1575” and who had to “suspend most of the leading nonconformist preachers in his diocese” through the vigilance of her “sovereign eye”, an

²⁰⁸ Collinson Patrick, “Pulling the Strings: Religion and Politics in the Progress of 1578”, in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 133

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 127

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 127-128

expression shared by the poet in the above-cited Shakespeare's *Sonnet*, l. 2.

Yet, an important connection between Elizabeth I and the English people takes shape in Thomas Churchyard's text for the Norwich Pageant performance during the Queen's Progress in 1578.

Through the above-mentioned text, political or religious messages were conveyed very quickly and the people could get to know what was taking place, despite their being distant from the event described, thus spiritually taking part in it with the consequent disappearance of the limits delineating the categories forming the social hierarchy.

In the words of David Bergeron:

The author ponders what binds the community together and how certain moments (such as the pageant entertainment) cross several boundaries. The prefatory material itself helps the reader cross the boundary into the text proper; in it, we hear the author's unmediated voice.²¹¹

Moreover, David M. Bergeron reports T. Churchyard's statement, that is to say, the narrator of the event:

In Churchyard's view, the Queen has not only been received within 'their boundes' [the people's], but also within their hearts. In fact, some social boundaries have been blurred by the remarkable behaviour of the people: even in Norwich, 'where the entertainement was so greate, that all degrees, from the highest to the lowest, were had in such admiration, that it seemed another worlde to beholde' [...]

This welcoming world has its reference point in its celestial side from whence Churchyard lets MERCURIE approach the Queen with one or two jumps after having got out of the Coache in order to express the gods' support of the Queen, as described in Churchyard's text²¹²:

'And so vpon Monday before supper, I made a Deuice, as though MERCVRIE had bin sente from the Gods, to request the Queene to come abroade, and behold what was deuised for hir welcome' [...] [...] the Queene smiled at the boldnesse of the Boy' [...]. This boy/

²¹¹ Bergeron David M., "The 'I' of the Beholder: Thomas Churchyard and the 1578 Norwich Pageant", in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, cit., pp. 148, 149

²¹² *Ibidem*, p. 153

Mercury then spoke nearly 100 lines, offering expected praise of Elizabeth and the good wishes of the gods, who promise assistance to ‘Vphold hir raigne, maynteyne hir regall state, | Find our false harts, and make of subiectes true, | Plant perfite peace, and roote vp all debate’ [...]

But in this text, through “Tuesday’s device”, Churchyard shows the contraposition between the virtuous and the vicious in order to praise Elizabeth I for her virtues with Chastity among them, another celebrated theme of the Queen’s progress. “Tuesday’s device” was

a morality play representing the conflict between Cupid, Wantonness, and Riot and the forces of Chastity, including Modesty, Temperance, Good Exercise, and Shamefastness. No one can doubt the outcome and its appeal to Elizabeth as the embodiment of Chastity and its several virtues.

Churchyard then narrates that

‘[...] there is a fayned device, that VENVS and CVPID were thrust out of Heauen, and walking on the earth, mette a Philosopher, who demaunded from whence they came’[...]²¹³,

thus emphasizing the fact that from Chastity’s perspective Venus and Cupid could not be part of a virtuous world, therefore they had to get out of Heaven like sinners and were found walking on the earth moving from a perfectly harmonious world to a lower and contradictory one, a confirmation of the Pythagorean emblem of the universe with what is chaotic and vicious standing at lower levels of the universal hierarchy.

Therefore, Chastity is a virtue, the most emblematic of the Queen’s ones, which is at the opposite higher side of the Pythagorean arrangement of the universe, but this celebrated virtue once again confirmed Elizabeth I’s giving top priority to the national politics over the marriage question, this time with Monsieur François, duc d’Alençon and Anjou at its centre in Norwich, after Leicester in 1575.

William Davison, who was Ambassador in the Netherlands, “thought that he knew what

²¹³ Bergeron David M., “The ‘I’ of the Beholder: Thomas Churchyard and the 1578 Norwich Pageant”, in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, cit., p. 154

contributing to his frailties, could not make him leave the universe he found in his beloved for what could have been, and is, NOTHING without her, as emphasized in the final couplet of the poem:

For nothing this wide universe. I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all. (ll. 13 – 14)

Therefore, his leaving his beloved has meant leaving a wide universe, symbolized by a rose. “Nothing” indicates a state of non-existence, a zero quantity which is opposed to the idea of “all thy sum of good” in l. 12, with “sum” being the total resulting from a mathematical operation of addition.

Mathematical operations are based on numbers; in a harmonious situation, the adding of a number of qualities of the beloved originates “the sum of good” (l. 12), that is, the entire diversified whole, although a unique one, thus reflecting the whole in a small entity and viceversa, an emblem of the interrelation between the cosmos and its own single components, thus reproducing the link infinite – finite, macrocosm – microcosm and viceversa.

With regard to numbers, according to the Pythagoreans, the tetrad was the pattern of the Cosmos, and in the specific case of the number 4, Heninger reports that

[...] the sum of its component parts equals 10. We are most likely to express this fact by an arithmetical equation: $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$. The Pythagoreans [...] expressed it by a figure composed of points. This figure – or, as the Pythagoreans would say, “number” - reveals the special relationship between the decad and the tetrad and the monad, how each flows to the others.²¹⁷

What also emerges in *Sonnet* n.109 is the correspondence between the poet’s beloved, who is invoked as his ‘rose’, and the universe, in which she is his ‘all’ (l. 14).²¹⁸ This blending of nature and feelings lets both the universe be found in a rose, which also represents the

²¹⁷ S.K. Heninger, Jr., *Touces of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 151

²¹⁸ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 109 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1312

beloved, and a rose, a small symbol of Creation, that is to say, the poet's lover – his soul – the all, his universe, whose correspondences form harmony at all levels.

Therefore, his rose is his universe, his everything, thus emphasizing the link microcosm – macrocosm sealed by the flower symbolizing love par excellence.

Besides the number 4, the idea of cosmos was thought to be embodied by the number 3, as reported in Heninger's work:

The number 3 represents cosmos because the middle term can be a mean relating two extremes, and therefore it is a model for the reconciliation of opposites.²¹⁹

In this relationship the rose is the unifying element of both a physical, natural world and the emotional one, thus similarly reproducing the structure of the number 3 on an arithmetical level, with the rose harmonizing the two above-mentioned different worlds. On this purpose, Heninger recalls Macrobius' words by the latter's citing *Timaeus*, as follows:

We know, according to Plato [...], that those bodies alone are closely held together which have a mean interposed between extremes to create a strong bond.²²⁰

But the rose metaphorically extends also to other realities because this elegant flower symbolizes simultaneously the Tudor family, therefore, Queen Elizabeth I and consequently the English nation. Besides, in this cosmic-mathematical scheme the rose, arithmetically becoming the monad, adds and sometimes multiplies other meanings, other links, like the tetrad. The latter, being the cosmos pattern, in turn, sums up also historical and political correspondences, as if it became the decad, another numerical category among the other mentioned ones receiving and sending their flux, as in a precise hierarchical structure denoting both a scale of importance and the belonging to the same family due to the sharing of common characteristics.

²¹⁹ S.K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 150

²²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 150

4.9 The unifying music as the cosmos pattern: *Sonnet n. 8*

Similarly, an arrangement of musical notes reflects a hierarchical organization which, on a higher level, is reproduced by a choir whose singers' performance is the result of the combination of their different musical parts. A picture of this type is depicted in the last quatrain in Shakespeare's *Sonnet n. 8* (ll. 9 – 12) where the important role the interrelations have inside an organization is expressed, for, the more balanced they are, the better they make it work in favour of the nation's welfare, as follows:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
When, all in one, one pleasing note do sing.²²¹

The sound of two strings vibrating harmoniously, recalls the joyful microcosm of a family, and a series of these familiar microcosms build the nation, from the highest of this organization to the single citizen, provided that the latter takes part in it with consonant order although each one singing different notes.

Proportion and degree characterize the correspondence microcosm – macrocosm and viceversa with a sort of control of the universal infinite where, for example, the stars high in the sky could be compared to the stones down on earth letting emerge a kind of mirroring correspondence.

Measure, or proportion, is what music is based on producing a harmonious result, as explained in Heninger's words:

The discipline of music, which by definition depends upon relationships between whole numbers, provides, a natural expression of cosmos. The diapason is a precisely delineated unit composed of discrete parts which are harmoniously arranged in a fixed order.
Each part expressly relates to every other part and makes a distinct contribution to the whole.
[...] so music provides a convenient way of relating the finite to the infinite,

²²¹ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet n. 8* from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

or better yet, of knowing the infinite through the finite.²²²

Music, therefore, was the unifying expression like the tetrad, that unique principle supported by the Pythagoreans linking Heaven to Earth, and shared by the different cosmos categories, among them the four elements: fire, water, earth and air. The latter ones consequently turned into mythological-godlike-elemental personifications connected with the celestial bodies in the Elizabethan court masques. The harmonious order of the above-mentioned performances in their final and definitive part was conceived of as the victory over, and therefore usually set against, chaos represented in the textual section preceding a masque, that is to say, the antimasque.

In his work, Heninger reports Diogenes Laertius' words concerning Empedocles' thought about the four elements' assuming a human shape so as to be subject to love and hate:²²³

That there were four Elements of all things; *Fire, Water, Earth, and Air*; that Friendship and Concord united 'em together, and that Enmity and Discord kept 'em from Association.

[...]

Meaning thereby, that *Jupiter* is *Fire*, *Juno* the *Earth*; *Pluto* the *Air*; and *Nestis* the *Water*, which are always circling in continual changes, and never lye still, the Government and Interchangeable Order of all things being sempiternal.

By Friendship all Things this sometimes cement,
Sometimes by Discord and Confusion rent.

Therefore, the order of the gods is hierarchically reflected on earth through the Queen's court whose masques showed that dancing allowed people of different ranks to meet, though with respect of each one's role and place, thus mirroring on earth the harmonious order of the cosmic dance on a celestial level. Similarly, gods and goddesses appear in masques celebrating important events as representatives of a particular quality or season, with music unifying the visual and the verbal parts performed as well as its protagonists, such as the dancing monarch or

²²² Heninger S.k., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 156

²²³ *Ibidem*, p. 170

courtiers, and members of the audience, thus representing a piece of the ruled nation on a smaller scale. In S. Orgel's words:²²⁴

At court performances [...] the audience around him [the king] at once became a living emblem of the structure of the court. The closer one sat to the monarch the "better" one's place was, an index to one's status, and more directly, to the degree of favour one enjoyed.

[...]

[...] the monarch was at the center, and they provided roles for members of the court within an idealized fiction. The climactic moment of the masque was nearly always the same: the fiction opened outward to include the whole court, as masquers descended from pageant car or stage and took partners from the audience. What the noble spectator watched he ultimately became.

In what might have been the masque performed at Kenilworth before Queen Elizabeth I, a message of protection of the English nation in its every single component from the attacking Spain is conveyed in Arion's Song *I am a ruler on the sea*, where the idea of interdependence among the elements of the Chain of Being emerges leading to its top symbol, that is to say, the Crown:

[...]

When ever wind old Ocean stirs,

[...]

No Don shall touch a blade of grass
In any border of our isle!
The very highway stones would rise,
The shepherd's hills rain ruin down
Were we not there, against surprise,
To guard our glorious England's crown!²²⁵

Religion was often an intrinsic component in these celebrations; Helgerson, in *Forms of nationhood*, reports that as the king (Henry VIII), the queen likewise, was the

supreme head of both Church and State, 'a revolution in government' transformed the essentially household role of what was still thought of as the king's estate into a genuinely national administration²²⁶,

²²⁴ Orgel Stephen, *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, cit., pp. 10 – 11, 39

²²⁵ Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer) *The Masque at Kenilworth*, cit., p. 4

²²⁶ Helgerson Richard, *Forms of nationhood: the Elizabethan writing of England*, cit., p. 4

according to G.R.Elton's words.

Notwithstanding the fact that some Puritans did not accept the presence of Catholics because they were considered traitors, the monarch had the ability to keep the various religious believers united by a common link: the Bible. In J. Hollander's words:

Among these (certain elements of ancient political thought) were the State treated as harmonious organism,... music itself, in a political context, treated, as if it were political or social ideology to be carefully controlled.²²⁷

Yet, in this social and musical context, whenever an individual does not want to follow its pleasing sounds, like the young standing aloof in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 8, he or she is comparable with the broken string of a musical instrument, or to a strident note in a choir, where the strident note becomes very similar to a cry.

The youth is rebuked by the poet because his or her staying alone creates confusion within a social harmonized order, as expressed in ll. 5 – 8: ²²⁸

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

As Leo Spitzer explains:

The sonnet takes the shape of a strong admonishment warning the young not to act against the laws of harmony ²²⁹

In the final alliterative line, the poet addresses the young emphasizing his solitude leading to no community, therefore to nothing, as follows:

[the speechless song] **S**ings this to thee: 'Thou **s**ingle wilt prove none.'²³⁰,

²²⁷ Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, cit., p. 27

²²⁸ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 8 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

²²⁹ Spitzer Leo, *L'armonia del mondo – Storia semantica di un'idea*, cit., p. 112

²³⁰ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 8 from "Sonnets" in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

and rebukes him in order to make him join the community, in order to take and become part in the 'concord' picture, which although made up of different elements, allows the continuation of the fruitful "cosmos pattern".

***5. REFLECTIONS ON HARMONY IN SIR JOHN DAVIES'
"GULLINGE SONNETS"***

5. REFLECTIONS ON HARMONY IN SIR J. DAVIES' GULLINGE SONNETS

Not only did Elizabethan poetry express the idea of harmony as “cosmic pattern”, but it also included ideas of mutability of that pattern.

Sir John Davies' poetry (1569 – 1626) represented another way of conveying thoughts of the Elizabethan age with its idea of cosmic order somehow “untuning it” in his other poems. By rendering ridiculous or disgusting some typical characteristics of the poetry or ideology of the age through the negative exaggeration of its specific aspects, he produced a thorough distortion of its basic image in his work entitled *Orchestra or a Poeme of Dauncing*.

Perhaps, on a personal level, his having taken part in the Middle Temple riots in the 1590s with his consequent being “kept out of Commons”²³¹, as well as his noticing the emerging scientific influence of his times which tended to perceive Man as a physical rather than a spiritual world, made Sir John Davies not accept the Pythagorean cosmic pattern of harmony as the perfect one.

Besides this, due to trade development, the explorations and the discoveries made by the English in the New World led to a growing economic and scientific outlook whose practical experimentation was at odds with a perfect and somehow immutable world.

These two conflicting views could be perceived in J. Davies' *Gullinge Sonnets* n. II – III- IX – V as they describe a noticeable change in the idea of the world, universe and Man, as well as in their mutual relationships. The concept of a neverending link facing contradictions and going back to its starting point in a sort of timeless continuum which symbolically could be represented by the perfection of a circle, falls to pieces. As in the words of M.H. Nicolson (1894-1981):

The Circle of Perfection, from which man for so long deduced his ethics, his

²³¹ Davies John Sir, “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, London: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, p. xxxii

aesthetics, and his metaphysics, was broken during the seventeenth century. Correspondence between macrocosm, geocosm, and microcosm, long accepted as basic to faith, was no longer valid in a new mechanical world and mechanical universe [...]

[...]

To Bacon the Circle of Perfection was a mere fiction [...] “The human understanding,” he wrote, “is of its own nature prone to suppose the existence of more order and regularity in the world than it finds. [...] Hence the fiction that all celestial bodies move in perfect circles.”²³²

5.1 The mutability of Harmony meant as cosmic order: *Sonnet n. II*

Davies made fun of the traditional cosmic pattern by changing it markedly through a kind of tricky poetic play enhancing an idea of “gullibility”, of one’s being misled from the starting point, as expressed in these poems.

In *Gullinge Sonnet n. 2*²³³ the poet’s serene thoughts are compared to a clear blue sky, when all of a sudden, ‘An ydle, carles thoughte forthe wandring went’ (l. 6) as if it lost control, balance, and

[...] of that poisonous beauty took a taste
Which does the harts of lovers so torment (ll. 7 – 8).

The effect produced is comparable to the contagious one of a disease overwhelmingly spreading from a sheep to the whole flock, thus depriving the described love relationship of its original state of pureness and placing it into a context of animals affected by a disease.

The flock in question appears to exist in the usual quiet rural world, but, instead, this image turns dramatically into one conveying a sense of sickness annihilating its initial serene characteristic. The idea of the world is negatively represented by the perception of beauty as poison, but at the same time, although the use of the word “poison” is an indicator of the

²³² Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the “New Science” upon seventeenth-century poetry*, New York, Columbia University Press, London, Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 7, 9

²³³ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet n. 2* from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 164

scientific spirit of discovery of the age, it certainly does not embody an element of harmony.

Therefore, this negative and dangerous alchemy is subtly spoiling or at least threatening the love relationship in question, as expressed in ll. 9 – 12 of the sonnet:

Then as it chauncethe in a flock of sheepe
When some contagious yll breedes first in one,
Daylie it spreades, and secretly doth creepe
Till all the silly troupe be overgone

Therefore the flock, that is, what was an element alluding to a peaceful, simple, pastoral world, is not idealized anymore; contrarily, it is debased to a disease means of transmission because this is how love is perceived in this phase with its effects on the representation of the flock being described as “the silly troupe”.²³⁴

The initial image of a frivolous and inattentive thought whose excessive freedom lets it experience the slowly tormenting and destructive power of beauty by completely influencing the lovers, is followed by the similar one of a disease, that is, scurvy being spread by a single sheep to the whole flock.

The two final lines of the sonnet continue with this idea of a diseased love relationship for “one scurvy thought infecteth all the rest” (l. 14), thus progressively annihilating what represented cleanness and balance.

A comparison of this sonnet to Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 33 shows that a harmonious landscape is the common starting point in both poems. In Davies

As when the brighte Cerulian firmament
Hathe not his glory with black cloudes defas’te, (ll. 1 – 2),²³⁵

in Shakespeare:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen

²³⁴ Davies John Sir, Gullinge Sonnet n. 2 from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger, cit., p. 164

²³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 164

Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye, (ll. 1 – 2).²³⁶

In the latter sonnet, the sun is suddenly and furiously obscured by “the basest clouds” (l. 5) causing it to disappear, whereas, on the contrary, *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 2, - l. 2- shows that the sky “Hathe not his glory with black cloudes defas’te”, nor was there any sign of imbalance, as expressed in l. 4:

[...] with noe myste of passions overcast²³⁷

Yet, a sudden uncontrolled and forward thought is affected by that kind of insidious beauty ‘tormenting’ the love relationship: beauty which, as poison, pervades the lovers as if it were such a dangerous and disgusting disease as to spread from one sheep, taken as a term of comparison, to the whole flock.

This destructive alchemy is totally different from the Sun’s giving light and life to the world depicted in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 33, ll. 1 – 4:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy²³⁸

The common theme of a love relationship is founded on a different basis because although in Shakespeare’s poem²³⁹ “its triumphant light lasted just one hour” (ll. 10 – 11), as depicted with the covering threatening clouds, at the same time, a love relationship also accepts that Love, like the Sun, may darken, as “may suns of the world stain” (l. 14); nevertheless, the sun could shine again.

Likewise, love could be restored in a relationship and these correspondences trace a

²³⁶ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 33 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

²³⁷ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 2 from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 164

²³⁸ Shakespeare William, Sonnet n. 33 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1303

²³⁹ *Ibidem.*, p. 1303

celestial heavenly image made both of physical and spiritual components.

This highly-stylized concept of love is reduced to an idea of something negatively contagious spread from one animal – a sheep – to its flock, in Davies; therefore, feelings, together with the fact that a couple is a special and unique entity, are missing.

Differently from Shakespeare's sonnet, love is not perceived at the highest level, but is instead denigrated and set, as something dangerous and disgustingly infective because of a "scurvy thought" (l. 14)²⁴⁰, on the basest level, below Man.

After all, notwithstanding the presence of the furious clouds, the sunbeams remain the pervading element in Shakespeare's *Sonnet* n. 33, whereas an insidious creeping poison pervades Davies' sonnet by turning the initial celestial image into one of disease, due to a lover's 'scurvy thought infecting all the rest' (l. 14), as if the author felt pleased to demolish what he perceived was exaggeratedly idealized love according to the traditional cosmic pattern.

5.2 Harmony as interdependence in *Sonnet* n. III

Eyesight, for example, represents the central point in a relationship where an observing protagonist, the poet, or the lover, is subject to a superior being or at least to a person very important to him or her, as illustrated in Sir John Davies' *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 3, ll. 1 – 2:

What Eagle can behold her sunbrighte eye,
Her sunbrighte eye that lights the world with love²⁴¹

The person whom these lines refer to, has a "sunbright eye" - l. 1 - which an eagle, a symbol of power and sharp eyesight, cannot withstand and which embraces the world enlightening it with her love. Therefore, this person must be central to the poet's life, or else, to a society.

²⁴⁰ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 2 from "Gullinge Sonnets" in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemsler, cit., p. 164

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*, *Gullinge Sonnet* 3, p. 165

Similarly, the “eye theme” is present in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet* n. 33 as well, through the use of the expression “sovereign eye” - l. 2 - emphasizing the most important role of the person dealt with.

A whole world is dependent on the benevolent influence of a powerful person par excellence, as similarly revealed in both Sir J. Davies’ and W. Shakespeare’s poems. Yet, in Davies’ sonnet, this harmonious picture is somehow annihilated by the poet’s own reflections containing several repetitions of parts of his thoughts, usually their being expressed in the last part of a line and then repeated in the first part of the following line, almost as if the poet were humorously to become aware of his current situation, as in ll. 2 – 4:

Her sunbrighte eye that lights the world with love,
The world of Love wherein I live and dye,
I live and dye and divers chaunges prove²⁴²

Lines 3 and 4 are rather humorous, for the protagonist experiences two completely opposite situations at the same time, their humour being emphasized by words illustrating a consequent witty mutability²⁴³, as in the above-mentioned l. 4, but another change of direction will follow, as described in ll. 5 – 6, and expressed by the use of ‘yet’:

I chaunges prove, yet still the same am I,
The same am I and never will remove

and another closing contradiction will give way to images of interdependence opening the sonnet, as expressed in l. 9:

I cease to move which now am mov’d by yow

This dancing movement continues in ll. 10-11:

Am mov’d by yow that move all mortall hartes,
All mortall hartes whose eyes your eyes doth viewe,

²⁴² Davies John Sir, Gullinge Sonnet n. 3 from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger, cit., p. 165

²⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 165

surprisingly emerges is that instead, the prize won was the result neither of the contestant's skilfulness nor of his luck, but of Stella's – that is to say, his beloved, his Muse – watching him. This idea is expressed in the following lines:

How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella look'd on, and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth the beams, which made so fair my race. (ll. 12 – 14)²⁴⁶

In Heninger's words:

When the notion of *universe* broke down in the seventeenth century, however, when the new scientists displaced the four elements from the center of our world and removed its finite boundaries, the poet could no longer rely upon natural metaphors.[...] This change in cosmology and epistemology had a profound effect upon poetics.

This caused

The demand that poets devise original metaphors [...] ²⁴⁷

According to Elisabeth Porges Watson, the chivalric contest might have been one among those characterizing the celebrations that had unsuccessfully taken place during the marriage negotiations between Queen Elizabeth I and the French Catholic Duc d'Alençon.²⁴⁸ It seems that Sidney was against this match for a religious reason above all, for he was of a Protestant faction and very likely feared the controversial effects of the marriage in question:

Late in 1579 Sidney made his opposition to Alençon's suit explicit in an open letter to the queen.

[...]

and many English Protestants feared a Catholic consort. Sidney's faction, which included his father and his powerful uncle Leicester, believed that a French marriage might lead to civil war.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Sidney Philip, Sonnet n. 41 from "Astrophil and Stella" in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, cit, p. 185

²⁴⁷ Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 358

²⁴⁸ Porges Watson Elisabeth, " (Un)bridled passion:chivalric metaphor and practice in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella", in *Renaissance Essays: Sir Philip Sidney*, from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/sidney.htm , p. 124

²⁴⁹ *Philip Sidney* from: www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/philip-sidney, pp. 9-10

As for the above-mentioned contest, Elisabeth Porges Watson states that

Astrophil triumphs on what is a public occasion involving considerations of diplomacy and national honour as well as personal expertise.

[...]

The concept of love as an inspiration to virtuous action has already been subverted, forcing the register of the conclusion obliquely into comedy.²⁵⁰

In this context, perhaps the award was not only the prize for the winner of the chivalric tournament, but also the prize of both a religious and a historic kind, as the winner's words illustrate in ll. 2 – 4:

[...] I obtain'd the prize,
Both by the judgement of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France²⁵¹

Besides, the preceding awards could be joined with a “gullibility” one, whose spirit extended to some of Sir J. Davies' poems.

In this sonnet, the “gullibility” spirit is expressed, for example, by Sidney's having misled both spectators and readers, as to the real reason for his chivalric skill, that is to say, Stella's heavenly face looking on him (ll. 13 . 14), differently from what was thought by most people watching the event, thus confirming the surprising effect of these new poetical expressions.

The repetition of the word “horse” in the first lines of the poem also recalls the physical as well as the mental energy used in a hunting scenario, together with the thought of some spectators that “[...] Nature me a man of arms did make” (l. 11).

This gradual progression from one semantic field to a subsequent intensified one traces a movement of advancement of the author's thought including his making fun of the preceding idea through his use of puns. His playing on the expression in l. 12 “How far they shot awry”,

²⁵⁰ Porges Watson Elisabeth, ” (Un)bridled Passion: Chivalric Metaphor and Practice in Sidney's Astrophil and Stella” in *Renaissance Essays: Sir Philip Sidney*, cit., p. 124

²⁵¹ Sidney Philip, Sonnet n. 41 from “Astrophil and Stella” in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, cit, p. 185

shows a missed target and also indicates a conceptual change in direction from the spectators' beliefs to the true cause of the contestant's victory embodied in the heavenly vision of Stella's face among the people. This mechanism is described through Heninger's words with regard to the poet:

Philip Sidney states [...] that poetry, of all the arts, most readily produces the "knowledge to lift up the minde from the dungeon of the bodie, to the enjoying his owne divine essence."²⁵²

After all, in his *Apologie for Poetrie* (1595) Sidney, together with Ovid and Horace, thought that "a poem is a speaking picture, with this end, to teach and delighte".²⁵³

In addition, the idea of the beloved as the centre of the universe like the Sun whose enlivening beams have the power both to transform whom or what they get in contact with, and to make everyone or everything move around her, is present in Shakespeare and Sir John Davies as well as Sidney.

Yet, a somehow scientific attitude was becoming increasingly important in the literature of the age.

In Marjorie Hope Nicolson's words:

[...] man, like the world and viceversa, gradually ceased to be part of an animate universe, and became mechanism, a subject for objective analysis in terms of mechanical actions and reactions.²⁵⁴

Besides, what was a former circle of perfect interdependence became a more imperfect structure, as if it reflected the latest celestial discoveries of the age, like Copernicus' one stating that the orbs of the planets were elliptical and not circular.

Marjorie H. Nicolson, for example, in quoting some of J. Donne's verses in *First*

²⁵² Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, cit., p. 344

²⁵³ *Brief History Literary Criticism in the West* in www.ucm.es/info/siim/siim2/2.HistoryLiteraryCriticism.pdf, p. 2

²⁵⁴ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., p. 129

Anniversary, among them, l. 207 reading “The Sun is lost, and th’earth, [...]”, emphasizes the loss of the daily universal reference points. She then goes on by explaining that

[...] Copernicus had changed the places of both, and man looked at the heavens with unfamiliar eyes. If the planets still moved in circles, they moved about another center, including in their cosmic dance the earth which had become merely a planet.²⁵⁵

Yet, the interrelation microcosm – macrocosm, and viceversa, is recalled in Davies’s *Sonnet* n. 3, ll. 10 – 11:

[...] you that move all mortall harts,
All mortall hartes whose eyes your eyes doth viewe,²⁵⁶

that is, the beloved moving hearts of men whose eyes consequently look at hers in turn.

“Eyes” is repeated again in the following line, to emphasize the importance of their central role in this sonnet, eyes moving a whole world and causing “Cupid to shoot his darts” (l. 12), therefore affecting the poet who becomes a lover splitted in two: a wounded, and contradictorily, an untiring lover.

The beloved’s eyes, an element of harmonic constancy, is another theme shared with Shakespeare, as expressed in *Sonnet* n. 14 in which the poet addresses his lover as follows in ll. 9 – 10:

[...] from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art²⁵⁷,

thus reaffirming the interconnection microcosm – macrocosm, and viceversa,

²⁵⁵ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the “New Science” upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., p. 146

²⁵⁶ Davies John Sir, Gullinge *Sonnet* n. 3 from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 165

²⁵⁷ Shakespeare William, *Sonnet* n. 14 from “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, cit., p. 1300

eyes – stars in Shakespeare,
eyes – sun in Davies

These are eyes that reflect a whole world and a world that can be found in the beloved's eyes in this sort of wavering between the new and old ideas of the relation Microcosm - Macrocosm. This mutability Man himself was experiencing, as confirmed by M.H. Nicolson's words:

[...] men were living between an old world and a new.²⁵⁸

5.3 A parody of Harmony's devotion to Love like the Knight's devotion towards his King/Queen in *Sonnet n. IX*

This dualism can also be found in Davies' *Gullinge Sonnet n. 9*, where the protagonist's devotion to Love, the King of harmonious Order, is compared to a chivalric tenant at the disposal of a monarch under whose care is also his wit, as illustrated in ll. 1 – 2:

To Love my lord I doe knightes service owe,
And therefore nowe he hath my witt in warde;²⁵⁹

As explained by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*:

Technically, the Crown was the guardian of all minors who held land by knight-service (i.e. by a grant from the monarch in exchange for military service, which meant virtually all the knights and peers of the realm), all unmarried female orphans, and all idiots. [...] The number of appeals and complaints attests frequent conflicts of interest between guardians and wards.²⁶⁰

In the Renaissance age an endless and harmonious relationship was often geometrically symbolized by a circle representing perfect continuity that recalls eternity. As M.H. Nicolson

²⁵⁸ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., p. 129

²⁵⁹ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet n. 9* from "Gullinge Sonnets" in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 167

²⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 393

explains,

[...] poets [...] still saw the Circle of Perfection in the universe, in the globe, in the little world of man, and read it into their metaphysics, their ethics, their aesthetics, and their theories of cosmic and of human history.²⁶¹

This sense of a neverending relationship, for example, is expressed by Sir Lancelot to His King, and Queen, Arthur, and Guenevere, at the end of a battle for his Queen in order to defend her against slander in the name of the chivalric values such as courage, honour and faithfulness.²⁶² This example illustrates not only Sir Lancelot's gratitude for the Queen's benevolence towards him, but also

the ethical ideals that [...] represented a fusion of Christian and military ideals and still form the basis of the ethics of gentlemanly conduct. The chief chivalric virtues were piety, honor, valor, and loyalty. Loyalty was due to the spiritual master, God; [...] Love, in the chivalrous sense, was largely Platonic; [...].²⁶³

Yet, in *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 9 the author thinks that this relation is too demanding because although his wit has been given to frivolous Vanity in marriage,

[...] nowe to full, and perfect age dothe growe,
Yet nowe of freedome, it is most debared. (ll. 7 – 8)²⁶⁴

In this sonnet the protagonist cannot accept the fact that after twenty-one years of service owed in nonadulthood, his wit is still excluded from "sweete libertye" (l. 11) and is still to bear

²⁶¹ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., pp. 48-49

²⁶² Lang Andrew (edited by), "The Fight for the Queen" in *Tales from King Arthur*, Wordsworth Classics, 1993 by Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, p. 91:
"My lord", [...], "you know well that I ought of right ever to fight your battles, and those of my lady the queen. For it was you who gave me the high honour of knighthood, and that same day my lady the queen did me a great service, else I should have been put to shame before all men. Because in my hastiness I lost my sword, and my lady the queen found it and gave it to me when I had sore need of it. And therefore, my lord Arthur, I promised her that day that I would be her knight in right or in wrong."

²⁶³ Bridgwater William and Kurtz Seymour, (edited by) 1963, *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, cit., p. 1142

²⁶⁴ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet* n. 9 from "Gullinge Sonnets" in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 167

the tie of wardship because of Love's will. It is as if Love became just a sequence of rules; therefore, the poet wonders if Love has changed Title "And holds my witt now for an Ideott." (l. 14).

This use of technical legal terms conveys the idea of the lover finding himself confined in a merely lawful relation between the Crown and an Idiot, an amusing representation of the relationship between the Crown and the ward.

The values of the older world are not taken into consideration by the new world and M.H. Nicolson reports also other verses of J. Donne's *First Anniversary* highlighting the end of an interrelated world with Queen Elizabeth I's death:

" 'Tis all in peeces, all cohaerence gone,/All just supply and all relation."
"Shee, shee is gone; shee's gone," and with her have gone beauty, harmony,
proportion, justice and truth, the absolutes of a departing world.

[...]

Donne felt in the chaos in the macrocosm one more indication of chaos in the microcosm, the confused political and economic "little kingdom" of England, in which "Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot." "Order," established and maintained by Elizabeth, was gone; traditional values of royalty, aristocracy, family were facing disruption. The individual was no longer content to play his allotted role in an established scheme [...] ²⁶⁵.

This thought somehow finds confirmation in the lines of Davies' *Sonnet* n. 9 for Time is perceived as a deadline for the protagonist's being freed from a kind of confining relationship with the indication of precise limits, as expressed in l. 10:

When I am past the one and twentieth yeare,²⁶⁶

letting us know he has become an adult and therefore has the right of being freed from the preceding duties.

The relationship described is felt as if it were based on a duty with terms recognized by the

²⁶⁵ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., pp. 100-101

²⁶⁶ Davies John Sir, Gullinge Sonnet n. 9 from "Gullinge Sonnets" in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 167

force of law. Consequently, it becomes something like a mock relation reproducing the parody of a faithful bond.

5.4 Harmony as the entertainment spirit in *Sonnet n. V*

A detailed analysis of a love relationship in *Gullinge Sonnet n. 5* reflects the anatomizing spirit which was developing from the new scientific discoveries of the age. The description of the link is made up of a series of complementary words prolonging the development of one or more sentences, as illustrated in ll. 1 – 4:

Mine Eye, myne eare, my will, my witt, my harte,
Did see, did heare, did like, discerne, did love,
Her face, her speche, her fashion, judgement, arte,
Which did charme, please, delighte, confounde and move ²⁶⁷,

This expresses the idea of a fragmented harmony which the author makes fun of and takes delight in.

The effects of the breaking of the afore-said circle once symbolically representing a perfect relationship are visible in the way J. Davies perceived the Elizabethan sense of immutable perfect harmony as something rather dull which his correlated lines tried to fight by using the entertaining device of increasing the possible ways of reading them. Going back to Davies' above-mentioned ll. 1 – 4, besides reading the first line horizontally as “Mine Eye, myne eare, my will, my witt, my harte”, denoting a strong use of the possessive adjective “my” on the poet’s addressing the beloved in this relationship, there is also another way of reading the poem: by taking ll. 1 – 4 into consideration, another vertical line emerges among the four ones, as follows:

l. 1: Mine Eye, [...]
l. 2: Did see, [...]
l. 3: Her face, [...]
l. 4: Which did charme, [...] .²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Davies John Sir, *Gullinge Sonnet n. 5* from “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 165

²⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 165

The concatenation of causes and effects, as in a kind of repeated brainstorming literary process, gradually becomes dull in turn in this sonnet²⁶⁹, as depicted in ll. 5 – 8:

Then fancie, humor, love, conceipte, and thoughte
Did soe drawe, force, intyse, perswade, devise,
That she was wonne, mov'd, caryed, compast, wrought,
To thinck me kinde, true, comelie, valyant, wise

and gradually leads to the ironic description of all the cosmic and internal forces contributing to the great disharmony in the love relationship in question, as expressed in ll. 9 – 12:

That heaven, earth, hell, my folly and her pride
Did worke, contrive, labor, conspire and sweare
To make me scorn'd, vile, cast off, bace, defyed
With her my love, my lighte, my life, my deare

whose conclusion is the opposite of what was conveyed in the starting lines, to the point that the same words of the first line are displayed contrariwise in l. 13, and preceding the last and sorrowful one revealing the end of the love relationship, as reported in ll. 13 – 14:

So that my harte, my witt, will, eare, and eye
Doth greive, lament, sorrowe, dispaire and dye,

with 'eye', the so-called 'mirror of the soul', rhyming with 'dye' and emphasizing the perception of a world in decay.

Notwithstanding the different literary and human points of view, together with the use of different devices, the themes linking poets in the Elizabethan age were common.

This sense of decay, however, is fought by the poets' verses themselves because of their re-establishing the relation between the microcosm of Man's soul and the macrocosm of the vast, infinite universe, as well as between the known and the unknown.

²⁶⁹ Davies John Sir, Gullinge Sonnet n. 5 from "Gullinge Sonnets" in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, cit., p. 166

In Marjorie Hope Nicolson's words:

The new philosophy that had called all in doubt now gave back to man what should be his by nature [...].

It released him from the limits of a finite world and universe, gave mind and spirit space to expand, afforded room to those thoughts that wander through eternity.

[...]

Man was discovering a new aesthetics – the aesthetics of the infinite.²⁷⁰

In Davies' *Gullible Sonnets*, his choice of words with similar if not synonymic meanings, together with their arrangement – somehow partially heralded by Sidney's sonnets -, compose lines whose gullibility frees them from highly-stylized schemes. It is as if they opened to a wider world leading to the infinity of the new universe, although they stem from the old one with its themes of Love, Law, Time.

Therefore, this new poetical pattern mirroring the presence of both these new and old worlds, shows a certain degree of balanced flexibility which made the Elizabethan age a special one.

²⁷⁰ Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon seventeenth-century poetry*, cit., p. 202

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer), *The Masque at Kenilworth*, from Wikisource: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Masque_at_Kenilworth

Davies John Sir, “Gullinge Sonnets” in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, edited by Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser, London: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 163-167, 391-393.

Elizabeth I, Poem “All Humankind on Earth”, in *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*, edited by Jones Emrys, Oxford University Press, 1992. 184 from [Queen Elizabeth I of England], www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

Elizabeth I, “Response to the Parliament’s Request She Marry (1559)”, in *Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature – Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603)* from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

Langham Robert, *The Langham Letter*, edited by The Oxford Authorship Site, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Langham/Langham-Footnoted.pdf pp. 1-61.

Mandeville Bernard, *The Fable of the Bees*, edited by Phillip Harth, London Penguin Books, 1989.

Platone, “Il Convito ovvero dell’ Amore” in *Dialoghi*, a cura di Carlo Carena, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, 1970, pp. 287-346

----- “Il Timeo ovvero della Natura” in *Dialoghi*, a cura di Carlo Carena, Torino, Giulio Einaudi editore, 1970, pp. 419-501.

Shakespeare William, “Sonnets” in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, edited by Charles Jasper Sisson, Long Acre, London, Odhams Press Limited, 1953, pp. 1299-1318.

Shakespeare William, *The Complete Works. The Oxford Shakespeare*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Sidney Philip, “Astrophil and Stella” in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, edited by William A. Ringler, Jr., Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 163-237.

SECONDARY SOURCES

A Royal Visitor - Images 4, 10 from:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworthcastle/explore_kenilworth/The_Story_of_Kenilworth...

Bergeron David M., “The ‘I’ of the Beholder: Thomas Churchyard and the 1578 Norwich Pageant”, in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 142-159.

Bingham Jane, *The Tudors. The Kings and Queens of England’s Golden Age*, London, Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2011.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Boas LL. D. Frederick S., D. LITT., F.R. S.L., *Queen Elizabeth in Drama and Related Studies*, George Allen & Unwin LTD Ruskin House, London 1950, London and Hertford.
- Bridgwater William and Seymour Kurtz (editors), 1963 - *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, New York & London, Columbia University Press, 1963.
- Brief History Literary Criticism in the West* in www.ucm.es/info/siim/siim2/2.HistoryLiteraryCriticism.pdf
- Casini Paolo, *L'Antica Sapienza Italica, Cronistoria di un Mito*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1998.
- Chalmers George, "An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers", Thomas Egerton, 1797, in *Shakespearean Criticism*, vol. 10, James E. Person, Jr., Sandra L. Williamson Editors, Lawrence J. Trudeau Associate Editor, Detroit, New York, Fort Lauderdale, London, 1990.
- Claybourne Anna & Treays Rebecca, *The World of Shakespeare*, Usborne Publishing, 1996.
- Coles Notes, *Plato - Republic Notes*, Toronto (Canada), Coles Publishing Company Limited.
- Collinson Patrick, "Pulling the Strings: Religion and Politics in the Progress of 1578", in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 122-141.
- Dodd A.H., *Life in Elizabethan England*, edited by Peter Quennell, William Clowes and Sons, Limited, London and Beocles for the publishers, 1961 B.T. Batsford LTD.
- Dollimore Jonathan, Sinfield Alan (editors), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Ellis Siàn, "The Queen's Golden Age. Shades of the First Elizabethan Era", in *The British Heritage-Live the History*, September 2011, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 34-39.
- Foolheea Kellinda, "Our Two Elizabeths", in *Best of British Past and Present*, Special Collector's Issue, London, Christopher Peachment Editor, June 2012, pp. 14-15.
- Goldring Elizabeth, "Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575" in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 163-188.
- Goldring Elizabeth, "Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Leicester for Kenilworth Castle" in *The Burlington Magazine*, University of Warwick, London, October 2005, Number 1231, Volume XLVII, pp. 654-660.
- Hamilton Alan, "State Visit", in *Majesty. The Quality Royal Magazine*, Volume 28, Number 6, London, Editorial: Ingrid Seward, Joe Little, June 2007, pp. 6-15.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Helgerson Richard, *Forms of nationhood: the Elizabethan writing of England*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Heninger S.K., Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, San Marino, California, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1974.
- Hill Cole Mary, "Monarchy in Motion: An Overview of Elizabethan Progresses", in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, edited by Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 27-45.
- Hollander John, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500 – 1700*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Kenilworth Castle* in HISTORIC-UK.com
- Lang Andrew (editor), "The Fight for the Queen" in *Tales from King Arthur*, Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Classics, by Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1993, pp. 84-91.
- Liverpool museums 'Queen Elizabeth I: The Pelican Portrait', called Nicholas Hilliard (about 1573) in www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/13c-16c/er1.aspx
- Makaryk Irena R., "Introduction: Shakespeare in Canada: 'a world elsewhere'?" in *Shakespeare in Canada: 'a World Elsewhere'?*, edited by Brydon Diana and Makaryk Irena R., University of Toronto Press Incorporated 2002, pp. 3-41.
- Marvin G. (in press) Abstract from *Cultured Killers. Creating and Representing Foxhounds. Foxhounds and Hunters in England: Structures of Affection, Aesthetics and Accomplishment*, pp. 273-292; Leiden: Kononklijke Brill, 2001; NV in John Knight (Ed.), *Animals in Person*: www.animalsandsociety.org/asset/library/442_s935.pdf
- Masset Claire, "Historic garden/A feast for the senses", in *Realm. Britain's Rich Past and Historic Present*, Seneca U.S.A./London UK, Editor Matthew Havercroft, August 2009, pp. 48-50.
- Nicolson Marjorie Hope, *The Breaking of the Circle. Studies in the effect of the "New Science" upon Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, New York, Columbia University Press, London, Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Orgel Stephen, *The Illusion of Power. Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975.
- Pagnini Marcello, *Shakespeare e il paradigma della specularità: lettura di due campioni: "King Lear" e "A Midsummer Night's Dream"*, Pisa, Pacini Editore, 1976.
- Patino Marta, *An Elizabethan Christmas Feast: Sugar and All Things Nice*, from: TimeTravel-Britain.com
- Philip Sidney* from: www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/philip-sidney

- Porges Watson Elisabeth, “(Un)bridled Passion: Chivalric Metaphor and Practice in Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella”, in *Renaissance Essays: Sir Philip Sidney*, from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/sidney.htm, pp. 117- 129.
- Ravelhofer Barbara, “‘Virgin Wax’ and ‘Hairy Men-Monsters’: Unstable Movement Codes in the Stuart Masque” in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* by Bevington David M. and Holbrook Peter, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 244-272.
- Rossi Paolo, *La Rivoluzione Scientifica: Da Copernico a Newton*, Torino, Loescher Editore, 1973.
- Schoenbaum Samuel, *William Shakespeare. A Compact Documentary*, New York, O.U.P., 1977.
- Serpieri Alessandro, *I Sonetti dell’Immortalità. Il Problema dell’Arte e della Nominazione in Shakespeare*, Milano, Bompiani, 1975.
- Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, from: <http://freessays.0catch.com/daviesdancing.html>, pp. 1-22.
- Spitzer Leo, *L’armonia del mondo. Storia semantica di un’idea*, (1967) Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.
- Starkey David, *Elizabeth. The Struggle for the Throne*, Harper Perennial, Chatto and Windus, Great Britain, 2000, U.S. edition in 2001.
- The Oxford Authorship Site, *Langham Letter*, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/langham.html, pp. 1-3.
- Tillyard E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, London, Penguin Books, 1943.
- Whitelock Anna, “The Queen’s Day”, in *BBC History Magazine*, Jubilee Special, Bristol, Editor: Dr. David Musgrove, June 2012, pp. 31-37.
- Whitworth Terry, “Crowning Memories”, in “Yesterday Remembered” from *Best of British Past and Present*, Special Collector’s Issue, London, Christopher Peachment Editor, June 2012, pp. 40-46.
- Wohlers Charles (Web Author), *The Book of Common Prayer – 1559. The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, from: www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/BCP_1559.htm
- Ziolkowski John E., “The Bow and the Lyre: Harmonizing Duos in Plato’s Symposium”, in *The Classical Journal*, october –november/1999, vol. 95/No. 1, pp. 19-35.

WEBOGRAPHY:

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Chorley Henry F. (librettist) and Sullivan Arthur (composer), *The Masque at Kenilworth*, from Wikisource: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Masque_at_Kenilworth

WEBOGRAPHY:

PRIMARY SOURCES

Elizabeth I, Poem “All Humankind on Earth”, in *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*, edited by Jones Emrys, Oxford University Press, 1992. 184 from [Queen Elizabeth I of England], www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

Elizabeth I, “Response to the Parliament’s Request She Marry (1559)”, in *Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature – Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603)* from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/eliza.htm

Langham Robert, *The Langham Letter*, edited by The Oxford Authorship Site, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Langham/Langham-Footnoted.pdf pp. 1-61.

SECONDARY SOURCES

A Royal Visitor - Images 4, 10 from:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworthcastle/explore_kenilworth/The_Story_of_Kenilworth...

Brief History Literary Criticism in the West in

www.ucm.es/info/siim/siim2/2.HistoryLiteraryCriticism.pdf

Kenilworth Castle in HISTORIC-UK.com

Liverpool museums ‘*Queen Elizabeth I: The Pelican Portrait*’, called Nicholas Hilliard (about 1573) in [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/13c - 16c/er1.aspx](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/13c-16c/er1.aspx)

Marvin G. (in press) Abstract from *Cultured Killers. Creating and Representing Foxhounds. Foxhounds and Hunters in England: Structures of Affection, Aesthetics and Accomplishment*; Leiden: Kononklijke Brill, 2001; NV in John Knight (Ed.), *Animals in Person*: www.animalsandsociety.org/asset/library/442_s935.pdf

Patino Marta, *An Elizabethan Christmas Feast: Sugar and All Things Nice*, from: TimeTravel-Britain.com

Philip Sidney, from: www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/philip-sidney

Porges Watson Elisabeth, *(Un)bridled Passion: Chivalric Metaphor and Practice in Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella*, in *Renaissance Essays: Sir Philip Sidney*, from: www.luminarium.org/renlit/sidney.htm

Skiles Howard, *Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England*, from: <http://freessays.0catch.com/daviesdancing.html>

The Oxford Authorship Site, *Langham Letter*, from www.oxford-shakespeare.com/langham.html, pp. 1-3.

Wohlers Charles (Web Author), *The Book of Common Prayer – 1559. The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, from www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1559/BCP_1559.htm

