

Shakespeare the Mystic Poet and a Music that Heals

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Abstract

Shakespeare (1564-1616) experienced the alchemical marriage or inner communion of the mystics and great poets. Consistent with the hero-child and Carl Gustav Jung's (1875-1961) Process of Individuation, Shakespeare discovered his better Self, "The Fair Youth" of the early sonnets who inspires the glorious plays. "The Dark Lady" of the later sonnets equates with the personification of Shakespeare's shadow side. Further, "The Phoenix and the Turtle" poem reveals in allegory Shakespeare's portrayal of the perfect inner marriage that leads to the birth of "The Hermetic Child" of the Alchemists and Rosicrucians. Music and the spoken word's overtones of the harmonic series coupled with the brain's neuroplasticity and pattern-recognizing abilities provide a modern scientific framework for understanding this inner union and healing. As such, the sonnets, poems, and plays are vehicles for the allegorical ideal inner wedding. The healing capacity of sound, particularly of words and music, invites further application and study.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Rosicrucian, Alchemical Marriage, Music of the Spheres, Allegory and Metaphor, Jungian Psychology, The Perfect Fifth, Rebis

Shakespeare, le poète mystique, et une musique qui guérit

Résumé

Shakespeare (1564-1616) a fait l'expérience des Noces alchimiques, à savoir, de la communion intérieure des mystiques et des grands poètes. Conformément à l'enfant-héros et au processus d'individuation de Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Shakespeare a découvert son meilleur Soi, "La belle jeunesse" des premiers sonnets qui a inspiré les célèbres pièces de théâtre. La "Dark Lady" (Dame Obscure) des derniers sonnets correspond à la personnification de la part d'ombre de Shakespeare. En outre, le poème "Le Phénix et la Tortue" révèle, sous forme d'allégorie, la description par Shakespeare du mariage intérieur parfait qui conduit à la naissance de "l'enfant hermétique" des Alchimistes et des Rosicruciens.

Les harmoniques de la musique et de la parole, associées à la neuroplasticité du cerveau et à ses capacités de reconnaissance des formes, fournissent un cadre scientifique moderne pour comprendre cette union intérieure et cette guérison. Ainsi, les sonnets, les poèmes et les pièces de théâtre sont des véhicules pour le mariage intérieur idéal allégorique. La capacité de guérison du son, en particulier des paroles et de la musique, invite à une application et à une étude plus approfondies.

Mots-clés : Shakespeare, Rose-Croix, Noces alchimiques, Musique des Sphères, allégorie et métaphore, psychologie jungienne, La Quinte parfaite, Rebis

Shakespeare, el Poeta Místico y una Música que Sana

Abstracto

Shakespeare (1564-1616) experimentó el matrimonio alquímico o comunión interior de los místicos y grandes poetas. Consistente con el niño-héroe y el Proceso de Individuación de Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Shakespeare descubrió su Yo mejor, "La Bella Juventud" de los primeros sonetos que inspiran las gloriosas obras. "La Dama Oscura" de los sonetos posteriores equivale a la personificación de la sombra de Shakespeare. Además, el poema "El Fénix y la Tortuga" revela en una alegoría la representación de Shakespeare del matrimonio interior perfecto que conduce al nacimiento de "El Niño Hermético" de los Alquimistas y Rosacruces. La música y los matices de la serie armónica de la palabra hablada, junto con la neuroplasticidad del cerebro y las capacidades de reconocimiento de patrones, proporcionan un marco científico moderno para comprender esta unión y sanación internas. Como tales, los sonetos, poemas y obras de teatro son vehículos para la boda interior alegórica ideal. La capacidad curativa del sonido, particularmente de las palabras y la música, invita a una mayor aplicación y estudio.

Palabras clave: Shakespeare, Rosacruz, Matrimonio Alquímico, Música de las Esferas, Alegoría y Metáfora, Psicología Jungiana, La Quinta Perfecta, Rebis.

Shakespeare, o poeta místico e uma música com o dom de curar

Resumo

Shakespeare (1564-1616) conheceu o casamento alquímico ou a comunhão interior dos místicos e dos grandes poetas. Em congruência com a criança-herói e o processo de individuação de Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Shakespeare encontrou o seu Eu Superior, "O jovem rapaz" dos primeiros sonetos, que inspirou as suas gloriosas peças. Já a "Dark Lady" dos sonetos tardios representa a personificação do lado-sombra de Shakespeare. Além desses, o poema "A fénix e a tartaruga" revela de modo alegórico o retrato que Shakespeare faz do casamento interior perfeito, que conduz ao nascimento da "criança hermética" dos alquimistas e dos rosacruceiros. A música e a palavra falada, com os tons da série harmónica, aliadas à neuroplasticidade do cérebro e à capacidade de reconhecimento de padrões, formam o enquadramento científico moderno que permite compreender esta união interior e a cura. Como tal, os sonetos, poemas e peças shakespearianos são veículos para o ideal alegórico do casamento interior. A capacidade de cura do som, em especial das palavras e da música, convida a uma investigação e estudo mais aprofundados.

Palavras-chave: Shakespeare, rosacruceiro, casamento alquímico, música das esferas, alegoria e metáfora, psicologia junguiana, a quinta perfeita, rebis.

Shakespeare, ein mystischer Dichter und die Heilkraft der Musik

Zusammenfassung

Shakespeare (1564-1616) erlebte die Chymnische Hochzeit bzw. die Innere Kommunion der Mystiker und großen Dichter. Im Einklang mit dem Held-Kind und dem Individuationsprozess von Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) entdeckte Shakespeare sein besseres Selbst. Das frühe Sonnet „Schöner Jüngling“ inspiriert die leidenschaftliche Spiele. Das spätere Sonnet „Die dunkle Dame“ entspricht der Verkörperung seiner Schattenseite. Shakespeares Schilderung wie die vollkommene innere Hochzeit zur Geburt des „hermetischen Kindes“ der Alchemisten und Rosenkreuzer wird allegorisch in dem Gedicht „Die Phoenix und die Turteltaube“ enthüllt. Die harmonischen Reihen der Obertonschwingungen in Musik und gesprochenem Wort, zusammen mit der Neuroplastizität des Gehirns und die Fähigkeit Muster zu erkennen, bieten einen modernen wissenschaftlichen Rahmen, um diesen inneren Verbindung und Heilung zu verstehen. An und für sich stellen die Sonetten, Gedichte und Theaterstücke ein Vehikel zum allegorischen Ideal der inneren Hochzeit vor. Die Heilkraft der Töne, insbesondere der Worte und der Musik sollten weiter angewendet und studiert werden.

Schlüsselworte: Shakespeare, Rosenkreuzer, die Chymnische Hochzeit, Sphärenmusik, Allegorie und Metapher, die vollkommene Quinte, Rebis.

Introduction

The Value of Allegory and Metaphor – Resilience and Meaning in Challenging Times

Modern research validates the use of metaphor and allegory as a tool for showing us the way to express ourselves more easily and to find meaning in difficult times such as those proposed and described by Shakespeare in his later sonnets (Nelson-Becker 2013, 339-357).

Nelson-Becker writes:

The language of metaphor helps us discover and say what cannot be said easily. Through metaphor we can speak about those thin places where the sacred hovers tantalizingly just beyond our fingertips ... where everyday language refuses its normal fluency and stutters to a stop until metaphor bridges the gaps into new awareness. At times, illness or calamity threatens to shatter us. Metaphor helps us move through those difficult places and times and share our story with others. Metaphors take us deeper than our own words would otherwise sometimes go.

Nelson-Becker continues:

However, it is important to remember that metaphors only point the way to resilience, they are not the way. They gift us with a way to express our struggle and our pain, our hope and our yearning, our confidence and courage, our buoyancy and boldness as they crash against our disbelief and doubt. In crossing desert places, whether that crossing be short or long, metaphor gives us a way to see beyond our immediate vision; it gives us a song of sustenance, when all else fades away. Metaphors help us touch our grief in moments when that grief seems too hard to bear.

In his popular book *In Tune with the Infinite*, first published in 1897, author Ralph Waldo Trine discusses his concept of the Infinite Spirit or Cosmic Being that is behind all created life on Earth, fills all space in the universe, and works through immutable laws that govern all life on Earth. Trine writes:

There is a divine sequence running throughout the universe. Within and above and below the human will incessantly works the Divine will. To come into harmony with it and thereby with all the higher laws and forces, to come then into league and to work in conjunction with them, in order that they can work in league and in conjunction with us, is to come into the chain of this wonderful sequence.

This divine sequence is referenced in Homer's eighth book of the *Iliad* as a golden chain that connects heaven and earth (Schaa 1978), as well as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act 5, Scene 2, 10-11) likely written around 1600 when Hamlet says: "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will."

Trine himself uses the metaphor of a large reservoir high up a mountain side that is capable of supplying water to many much smaller reservoirs down in the valley below, so huge is its size. There is no difference in essence between the water high up on the mountain and below in the much smaller reservoirs in the valley. Trine concludes that we are of the same essence as this Infinitely great Cosmic Being and that the life of each of us not only comes from the inflow of this Infinite Spirit but is ever part of this Infinite Spirit where nothing is separate or outside of It.

This mystical concept of the Divinity within all things is echoed in the article "Burning the Darkness" (*Rosicrucian Digest*, September 1985, 20-23) by the Russian mystic and artist Nicholas Roerich: "The main mistake of people is in considering themselves outside that which exists. From this misconception arises the lack of cooperation. It is impossible to explain to the one who stands without that he is responsible for what happens within him."

Shakespeare wrote about his own mystical experiences of the inner wedding in his sonnets, but he used universal allegories, metaphors, and personifications which assisted him in looking at himself to see these experiences more objectively. He created the plays featuring character-rich dramas which function as a subliminal invitation to those of his audience who are ready to join him in this inner mystical experience. Hamlet addresses this imperative when at the end of the play he states, "The readiness is all" (Act 5, Scene 2, 234-237). The need to be prepared and "clean enough" has been emphasized by modern-day Rosicrucians as reviewed here.

Shakespeare's Use of Allegory and Metaphor

In a psychological study of Shakespeare that points to Shakespeare having something more profound than normal insight, medical doctor R.H. Semple (1881) writes:

the minds of ordinary mortals are bewildered in attempting to grasp the idea of so much wisdom, so much invention, so much insight into all the mysteries of [humanity's] existence, being crowded into so narrow a space of time, especially amidst the ordinary pursuits and amusements of common life, and the necessary labours involved in the

maintenance of a family and in the provision of a moderate competence for support in advancing years.

Semple added that he sees the psychological energies surrounding Shakespeare as transcendent (Semple 1881, 207). This interpretation concurs with the thesis presented here, which follows Richard Maurice Bucke (2011), namely that Shakespeare was inspired to create the plays through personal periods of profound harmony and resonance; and that some of the sonnets and poems may be regarded as commentaries on his feelings and thoughts after such experiences, albeit couched in allegories and personified concepts. As the German poet and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832) recognized: “Shakespeare is rich in wonderful allegories which arise from personified concepts, and would not suit us at all, but for him are entirely in place, because in his time all art was dominated by allegory” (Goethe 2006, 759).

In its essence, an allegory occurs when a story, poem, picture, or other piece of art uses one thing to “stand in for” a different, hidden idea. C.S. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love* (1936, 2017, 55) puts this definition in a context that helps to clarify Shakespeare’s use of allegory:

Allegory, in some sense, belongs not to medieval [humankind] but to [humanity], or even to mind, in general. It is of the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms. What is good or happy has always been high like the heavens and bright like the sun. Evil and misery were deep and dark from the first. Pain is black in Homer, and goodness is a middle point for Alfred no less than for Aristotle.

What literature scholars have described as “The Dark Lady” in Shakespeare’s later sonnets may not be a real physical person but a creative personification by Shakespeare to describe his new, unwanted dark feelings that are crowding in on him. Shakespeare writes in the later sonnets that “my mistress’ eyes are raven black, and if hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head” (*The Oxford Shakespeare* 2005).

Several of Shakespeare’s created characters have been regarded as displaying signs of melancholia (Minton 2022), suggesting this proposal has merit. Like modern literature scholar Harold Bloom (1998), Semple viewed Shakespeare as the creator of the modern concept of personality:

And though Shakespeare himself were a shadow or a myth, yet Othello and Shylock, and Lear, and Macbeth, and Falstaff, are the living and breathing representative types of human character, of which the faithfulness to nature is universally conceded, the pictures of which are impressed upon the minds of all, and their language familiar in every mouth as household words. (1881, 207)

This physician concludes that Shakespeare intrudes none of his personal sentiments upon the attention of his readers, with the exception perhaps of some obscure and vague allusions in the sonnets and poems, which are the subject of psychological review in this paper. Semple sees Shakespeare throwing all of himself into the characters which he created and dramatically portrayed, losing his own individuality in theirs.

Shakespeare knows his scripture but is recognized as having no religious message *per se*, and not being sectarian or partisan, nor pleading anybody’s cause. His works have been seen as the

secular equivalent of the scriptures (Bloom 1998); his plays being interpreted as speaking to the underlying philosophical essence of religion. Shakespeare is profoundly concerned that humanity should have the right attitude to Providence or the Divine rather than with any particular form of worship (Lings 2006, 11- 12).

Shakespeare scholar Martin Lings has said there can be no doubt that Shakespeare was well familiar with the various esoteric doctrines that fascinated the London poets of his day and the aristocrats who sustained and protected them (Lings 2006, 4). These featured the alchemical wedding of the Rosicrucian and Hermetic traditions where the Hermetic child is the culminating offspring of this royal conjunction of inner opposites, which is represented by the Hermaphrodite, or Rebis seen below (Figure 1). Lings cites Paul Arnold's interpretation that the theme of Shakespeare's poem *The Phoenix and The Turtle* exemplifies this mystic union. However, Arnold's article could not be accessed, prompting a new, fresh analysis here (Lings 2006, 4-12; Arnold 1955, 130-139, 4).



Figure 1. An illustration showing the Rebis. “The fifth image from Basil Valentine’s *Azoth*” from “Adam McLean’s *Gallery of Alchemical Images*” (2010).

“REBIS” (see Figure 1) comes from the Latin where “*res*” means thing, and “*bina*” means two or twice as in binoculars, bicycle, bifocals, etc. “Rebis” thus refers to dual matter and is the culmination of the alchemical work, signifying the resolution of the tension between soul and matter in humanity through a harmonizing wedding. In this image, “Re” also refers to “Ra,” the masculine Sun of alchemy joined in marriage with Isis, the archetypal feminine, the moon in alchemical symbolism. The star above their heads refers to the enigmatic philosopher’s stone—a by-product of this inner union. Later in this paper the Rebis is linked to music’s harmonic

resolution and the resolution of the tension through music therapy by including the playing of a series of dominant fifths and the tonic (V- I).

This wedding with inner opposites may be thought of in terms of the Process of Individuation in modern Jungian Psychology where the goal is to uncover and redeem, through conscious effort and individual realization, the greater Self that has been hidden through unconscious identification with the ego (Edinger 1973, 103). This process is an ongoing work through which the individual becomes psychologically whole, an indivisible unity called The Self, by uniting the conscious parts of the psyche with the personal and collective unconscious to create a new, more universal Self that subordinates the old ego to Itself. The psyche needs to become unified if the mystic union is to take place (Barker 1920; Eriksson 2022; Hall and Lindsey 1970; Edinger 1973; Jung 1957; Jacobi 1974, 96). Seen through Jungian eyes, Shakespeare's encounter with "The Fair Youth" of the sonnets and "the better part of me" of Sonnet 39, speaks to the appearance of this new Self, a universal hero-child who inspires the writing of the plays. The Hermetic child of the alchemists (Kalec 2017) can thus be linked to the hero-child of modern Jungian psychology .

Thus, readers can infer that if Shakespeare experienced such a metamorphosis in himself, then the evidence may be in the sonnets and poems, albeit couched in allegory and personified concepts as Goethe recognized. This would help to account for Shakespeare's universal appeal across different cultures and languages. There is certainly evidence for this interpretation in the early sonnets. In the later sonnets, there appears a dark lady who causes Shakespeare considerable grief and a feeling of alienation. This could be a sign that not all of Shakespeare's shadow side was made conscious before joining with the Greater Light.

Discussion

Shakespeare's goal in writing the plays has been regarded as an attempt to justify the ways of the Divine to a humanity that was losing the virtue of trust in the overall goodness of Life (Lings 2006, 6, 194). Seen as a divinely inspired poet, Shakespeare opens a door into the human soul's journey back home to Paradise, humankind's inherently divine nature. This idea is given support by Shakespearean actor Sir Laurence Olivier who put on Shakespeare's characters many times in his professional career. He is quoted as saying (Eriksson 2021), "Shakespeare is the nearest in incarnation to the eye of the Divine."

Usher (1997) has broadened our view of Shakespeare to include an awareness of science. He suggests that Shakespeare was aware of the recent Copernican heliocentric revolution and the infinite nature of the universe. Usher refers to Sonnet 14 where Shakespeare disavows astrology but tells us he has astronomy. Shakespeare tells us the source of his knowledge is not in the stars, but in the eyes of the beauty within with which he communes as is evidenced in Sonnet 14.

Sonnet 14

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
And yet methinks I have Astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,

Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well
By oft predict that I in heaven find:
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself, to store thou wouldst convert;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

This inner communing is also beautifully described by William Wordsworth in his famous poem “Tintern Abbey” where he reflects on the power of experienced harmony and joy that allows us to commune and see into the life of things; in effect, a mystic zone of creativity which Shakespeare also describes but with metaphor and allegory (Wordsworth 2008; Eriksson 2021,15, 81).

The Mystic Zone, Creativity, and Shakespeare’s Muse

In his book *Creativity Inc.*, Ed Catmull (2014) of Pixar Animation states that everyone has the potential to be creative, and that it is common: “Athletes and musicians often refer to being in the zone, that mystical place where their inner critic is silenced and they completely inhabit the moment, where the thinking is clear, and the motions are precise.” He likens this zone to a sweet spot between the known and the unknown, where the key is to be able to linger there without panicking. Catmull says this means developing a mental model that sustains us, a kind of visualization, and that this is absolutely needed (Catmull 2014, 225-226). The use of metaphors and allegory makes this “zone” possible as poets and mystics have long known.

Modern pianist Fanya Lin speaks to her own mystic zone:

I played in competitions a lot, and when I was about 17, there was one time I was performing on stage and had this almost out-of-body experience where I felt like I wasn’t the one playing the music. It just flowed through me very naturally. I didn’t know it at the time, but later I researched and discovered this was what athletes call “in the zone.” This became more common as I grew older, but I think that was essentially what I was after. In the pursuit of music and performance, to be able to enter that realm where time slows down and it’s like you’re in the company of a higher power. The music really just flows through you. (*Tucson Lifestyle* 2023, 44)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is recognized as one of the greatest of Western composers and an example of mindfulness and creativity at its highest. His wife Constanze is quoted as having said that when he was composing, he was completely oblivious to what was going on around him; such was the degree of his focus on the flow of some new musical composition forming in his mind. He is considered by many to have been a recipient of divine inspiration (Greenberg 2017, 106).

Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 114) calls this state “flow,” which may be thought of in terms of resonance in physics since this is what happens when a system under a vibrating force hits a resonant frequency (Woolfson 2015; Eriksson 2021). Csikszentmihalyi quotes the poet György Faludy as saying that he usually does not start writing until a voice tells him, often in the middle of the night when he has let go, that it is time to start writing, adding: “That voice has my number, but I don’t have his.”

John Masfield, a British Poet Laureate tells a similar story. He had arrived at the title of a poem that he intended to write but could not write it. One day out on a walk, he suddenly saw the poem appear before him complete in every detail (Cecil Poole 2015). To the ancient Greeks such an inspiring voice or picture was viewed as a muse, one of the goddesses of science, the arts, and literature. In Sonnet 78, Shakespeare says that he owes everything of his art to his muse (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. *William Shakespeare [with a winged muse and two cherubs which hold a crown of laurel].* Alexandre Bida (1893).

Sonnet 78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,
 And found such fair assistance in my verse
 As every alien pen hath got my use
 And under thee their poesy disperse.
 Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing
 And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
 Have added feathers to the learned’s wing
 And given grace a double majesty.
 Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
 Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:
 In others’ works thou dost but mend the style,

And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.

Shakespeare scholar Martin Lings (2006, 198) relates art to creativity:

The true and original purpose of art is to communicate secrets, not by blurting them out, but by offering them as it were with half-open hand, by bringing them near and inviting us to approach.... This casts a spell over us and momentarily changes us, doing as it were the impossible and making us quite literally excel ourselves, as if we were God's [the Divine's] spies.

The German playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe described how his own mind was significantly broadened after reading Shakespeare: "When I had reached the end of the first play, I stood like one who, blind from birth, finds himself suddenly blessed with sight.... I realized that my existence had been infinitely expanded" (Goethe 1986).

Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), French mystic philosopher, echoed this sense of imaginative expansion in the more traditional language of initiation into the mysteries and the alchemical marriage: "The only initiation which I advocate and which I look for with all the ardour of my Soul, is that by which we are able to enter into the Heart of the Divine within us, and there make an Indissoluble Marriage, which makes us the Friend and Spouse of the Repairer..." (Arthur Edward Waite 1901).

Shakespeare's success and continuing popularity across different cultures and languages may thus be linked to his ability to have formulated universal allegories and personified concepts that lead his audience on, almost imperceptibly into a mystic-like zone, to a realization of having crossed a threshold into some new profound understanding or recognition as Goethe described for himself (Bloom 1998; Lings 2006). Shakespeare's plays tell us this mystic zone is related to a music that is therapeutic, healing, and related to Boethius's music of the spheres (Janowitz 2011; Sulka 2017; Grigore 2019).

The Power of Vocal Harmonics and the Brain's Harmonic Resolution

Modern physician Henry Janowitz (2001, 541-543) writes about how, in the late plays and romances of Shakespeare, medicine becomes transformed into a medical utopia by the magic of music: "The physician experienced a complete transformation into a magus or master through secret studies which allow him to cure souls and bodies through invocations that are infused with the magic of music."

Janowitz ascribes this transformation to the Neoplatonists at the Medici Court in Florence who revived the ancient occult philosophy that had been associated with the Rosicrucians and to a recovery through translation of the texts of Plato and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This latter text is one of the places where Carl Jung encountered the word "archetype" and used it in his understanding of the collective unconscious and its structure – the Divine being referenced in this hermetic text as "the archetypal light" (Jacobi 1959, 34; Scott 1924, 36).

This ancient philosophy can be traced back to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (560-480 BCE) who theorized that music is a microcosm of the cosmos and ruled by the same mathematical laws that operate throughout the universe, including within humankind (Greenberg 2007, 106). June Schaa (1978) in her article on “Carl Jung and the Fire of the Magi” reminds us that, in the 8th book of the *Iliad*, Homer speaks of a “golden chain” which connects heaven and Earth. Superstring theory in modern physics may be viewed as a modern scientific version of Pythagorean theory since it sees the universe as composed of an enormous number of identical, extremely small strings vibrating in different vibrational patterns and frequencies like different notes on a keyboard. As physicist Brian Greene (1999) has written, “these vibrating strings are akin to a cosmic symphony.”

Music in Shakespeare is seen to be effective in so far as it mirrors the harmony of “the music of the spheres.” Janowitz quotes Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), Renaissance scholar and philosopher, who defined the magic of the magus as “nothing other than to marry the world, that is to marry the earth to heaven through celestial music” – an alchemical marriage with humankind. This concurs with the mystic writings of Jacob Boehme that the heart of humankind is not in tune with the beating rhythm of the Divine, inviting a restorative retuning (Eriksson 2021).

Much has been written on the magic of music in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare’s last complete play, and Prospero’s role in it. He is the authentic magus in his “magic garments” as he is transported and rapt in “secret studies.” Martin Lings remarks that it is generally agreed that Prospero’s magic represents Shakespeare’s own powers as an artist. If true, Prospero’s return to Milan and his giving up of his powers would suggest that Shakespeare may have returned to his old self after the plays were all written and may have given up the intermittent periods with his better more universal Self, “The Fair Youth” of the scholars. His darker closing sonnets lend support to this theory and are examined later in this paper (Grigore 2019, 48; Janowitz 541-543; Sulka 2017; Lings 2006, 173, 198).

Janowitz cites Shakespeare’s *Pericles* where the enlightened physician Cerimon, a Lord of Ephesus, has acquired his medical prowess by studying physics. He invokes his music and accomplishes the resuscitation of Thaisa, the wife of Pericles. The onlookers consider Cerimon has worked a miracle through divine intervention, but it is the magic of music which accounts for his intervention and alters the nature of medicine: “Gentlemen, the Queen will live (3.2 90-92).” And further, “The heavens, through you, increase our wonder, and set up your fame forever” (3.2 95-97).

In the climax of *Pericles*, Pericles is seen as out of harmony and in need of treatment, so Marina is asked to sing for him since she is perfectly in tune with the spheres, “having been trained in ‘music’s letters’ in the years of separation from her family.” She is described as the one who “sings like one immortal” (Janowitz 2001; Sulka 2017).

Janowitz quotes physician and polymath Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535) in his *De Occulta Philosophia* on the magic of music and the celestial harmonies: “Thus, no songs, sounds and instrumental music are stronger in moving the emotions of [humanity] and in inducing

magical impression than those composed in number, measure, and proportion as likenesses of the heavens” (Tomlinson 1989,63).

In the *Music Therapy Handbook* (Wheeler 2015, 126), the editor quotes the biographer André Maurois on the ability of the music of Beethoven to profoundly affect human emotions: “Everything that I had thought and been unable to express was sung in the wordless phrases of these symphonies. When that mighty river of sound began to flow, I let myself be carried on its waters. My soul was bathed and purified.... Beethoven called me back to kindness, charity, and love.” Further, Maurois suggests that Beethoven’s music is built upon heavenly harmonies and inspiration as German composer Richard Wagner (2013) recognized: “Who does not hear the Redeemer’s word when listening to the Pastoral Symphony? And thus, these wonderful works preach repentance and atonement in the deepest sense of a divine revelation.”

Claudia Grigore (2019) in “Healing Music in *Pericles*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest*,” links the ability to hear or register the music of the spheres to the living of a virtuous life and the importance of a clear conscience. This is surely referenced in the first line of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 8 as discussed in the following section. Leading a virtuous life is of special interest because a clear conscience and being ready before undertaking the alchemical royal wedding or inner communion has recently been stressed by the modern Rosicrucians in their 400-year commemoration of *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*, first published in 1616 and reissued in the *Rosicrucian Digest* in 2016:

Today - today - today
is the Royal Wedding day.
For this you were born,
Chosen by the Divine for joy.
You may ascend the mount
Whereon three temples stand
And see the Thing yourself.
Take heed,
Observe yourself!
If you’re not clean enough,
The wedding can work ill.
Perjure here at your peril;
One who is light, beware!”

Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* portrays the need to be ready, and specifically near the end of the play when Hamlet states, “the readiness is all” (Act 5, Scene 2, 234-237). The play is about the royal prince being unwilling to accept his new, unexpected situation: “The Time is out of Joint; O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right” (Act 1, Scene 2); said in response to his being called upon by the Ghost to deal with the fact that his father, King Hamlet, was murdered by his uncle. Hamlet adopts a resentful attitude. He proves unable to end his inner conflict, unable or unwilling “to take up arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them” (Act 3, Scene 1). He cannot find the will to act. What matters, Hamlet says, is to be ready when the time comes, generally interpreted by scholars to mean when death comes (Lings 2006, 8). Readers, however, should understand that this type of readiness and acceptance of inevitability refers to the coming

of the alchemical wedding where the human self joins with the Fire of the Soul at death before being resurrected into a new and cleansed life. Patience as a virtue is highlighted: “Not a whit, we defy augury. There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all ...” (Act 5, Scene 2).

Shakespeare tells us that only Hamlet can end this inner conflict by making a decision to end it since it is all in his own mind. But Hamlet does not know himself. In the play he has only recently, and even then, resentfully, started to observe himself to see his own immaturity (Bloom 1998, 383-431). He is loath to take decisive action. He envisages death doing it for him, which is what happens at the end of the play with the death of the whole court including himself. Hence the relevance of the following Rosicrucian injunction from the *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* attributed to Johannes Valentinus Andrea (1616): “Observe yourself!/ If you are not clean enough,/ The wedding can work ill.” In other words, if one does not know one’s dark side, still thinking that one is all light, the joining with the Greater Light in the Alchemical Wedding will enliven the shadows and may prove more of a curse than a blessing as Hamlet and the whole court experience. The question to be asked is, did Shakespeare experience something similar himself since *Hamlet* is his creation? Was Shakespeare ready and prepared for his own inner wedding? Did he have a clear conscience, or not?

This need to be ready or worthy can also be found in *King Lear* (Act 5, Scene 2, 9-11) where Shakespeare seems to speak to the necessary stages of getting ready (Lings 2006, 8): “Men [people] must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither,/ Ripeness is all.”

Referring to Gonzalo’s generous character in *The Tempest*, Grigore (2019) writes: “To the educated and those with a clear conscience, music is perceived as the sweet harmony of the spheres and resonates with a virtuous life. King Alonzo has been purged of his sins, so he too has a harmonious perception of music, as opposed to Sebastian the drunken butler, who hears the same music as ‘a living droller.’”

Grigore (2019) sees music in Shakespeare as a complement to rhetoric, adorning words with the power to change meanings, challenge beliefs, and promote wholeness and healing. This is supported by modern science since music is recognized as a language of its own, and the spoken word generates harmonics as does music (Eriksson 2021, 76).

The neuroplasticity of the brain and its own way of healing is now well established with its ability to transform itself through music (Doidge 2007, 2016). The human brain is an efficient pattern recognition instrument. Just as there are optical illusions, there are auditory illusions (Deutsch 2012; Patel 2008; Kung 2013; Eriksson 2017). The cochlea or inner ear and the brain do not need all the harmonics from the sounding of a given note or pitch to be present to identify a given person’s voice from another, a clarinet from a violin, or one vowel sound from another. If we listen to a clarinet and remove the fundamental frequency of that note leaving the harmonics or overtones, the brain constructs the fundamental pitch from the information in the remaining frequencies and adds it from memory so that is what we hear, our reality as opposed to the actuality. This phenomenon is called “Perception of the Missing Fundamental” (Deutsch 2012; Kung 2013; Patel 2015; Eriksson 2021).

This pattern recognition ability of the human brain is most relevant here. John Beaulieu (2016) in his paper “The Perfect Fifth: The Science and Alchemy of Sound” has related the healing ability of music to the presence of a perfect fifth. The interval of a perfect fifth in music can be readily seen since it refers to five white notes apart on the piano keyboard, for example C to G. See Figure 3.



Figure 3. Piano Keyboard showing a perfect fifth.

A perfect fifth is a 3:2 pitch or frequency ratio, and unlike an octave (a 2:1 ratio), the perfect fifth does not duplicate itself upwards and downwards on the keyboard. Instead, a new pitch or note is produced. An ascending sequence of six perfect fifths (F-C-G-D-A-E-B) when placed within the span of an octave, produces all the white keys on the piano and are all the pitches necessary to construct the seven diatonic modes known as the Pythagorean collection, which was the basis of Western musical language during the Middle Ages (Greenberg 2007, 41- 43). By the 1600s the number of these modes had been reduced to two, which came to be known as the major and minor modes.

The two most important notes or pitches in any diatonic or seven note collection are the tonic (the first) and dominant (the fifth) pitches. By extension, the two most important chords are those built on the tonic and dominant pitches – tonic (symbol as Roman I) and dominant or fifth (symbol as Roman V) chords. The tonic chord, in which the tonic pitch is the root of the chord, represents rest and resolution. The dominant chord in which the dominant pitch is the root of the chord, represents unrest, tension, and irresolution. The chords built atop the tonic and the dominant pitches are the essential harmonies in any diatonic collection because the tension between them defines the tonic. “There is no surer way to establish an irrefutably powerful sense of tonal gravity than to play the harmonic progression V – I in any given key” (Greenberg, 47- 48). This is tonality via harmonic resolution.

Playing a series of V-I harmonic progressions will thus establish a series of tonal gravity centres which the listener will hear clearly. Choosing in which keys to play these V-I harmonic progressions has the capability to be therapeutic and to retune the listener’s tonal centres. It is outside the scope of this paper to detail modern research on acoustic phonetics and vowel sounds. However, the human voice whether spoken or sung has been described as being like a little orchestra of wind instruments and/or stringed instruments with high harmonics, where the cavities in the head and throat form a series of unique resonators in each individual, and give the vowel sounds their individuality yet are made distinct by each individual (Godwin 1991; Loy 2006; Greenberg 2007; Kung 2013). It is clear that we have an inborn familiarity with the harmonic series which modern research on acoustic illusions and phonetics has endorsed, and which is well known to the Rosicrucians (Graphica 1994, 25). Somewhere in our perceptive mechanism the harmonics of vocal tones are continuously being analysed and presented to our

consciousness as potential vowels to be understood as speech (Godwin 1991). Accordingly, the adding of musical energy and a sequence of V- I harmonic progressions whether instrumental or vocal with energetic harmonics has a scientific basis for delivering, almost imperceptibly, harmonic energy as a therapeutic tool to return the body via its memory to its healthy original state as has been documented and recorded (Godwin 1991; Wheeler 2015; Beaulieu 2016). Even though some harmonics may be missing in a given therapeutic treatment, modern science indicates that the cochlea and brain through memory will recognize the pattern with the fundamental and that will be what the individual hears and feels to become his or her reality (Eriksson 2021).

The “magic of music” referred to by Janowitz in *Pericles* and other plays may thus be seen as a metaphor for when energetic and harmonic sound waves incorporating perfect fifths and tonics are applied through music and song to the human ear and body. They are able to restore health through energizing and resolving the “musical” tension to retune the body to its more natural frequencies and rhythm, in tune with the original cosmic sound that is said to still resound within us through the harmonic series (Graphica 1994, 25). The success of modern music therapy with a range of medical conditions where other approaches have not worked (Wheeler 2015; Beaulieu 2016) gives credibility to Shakespeare’s allusions in the plays to “the magic of music” and suggests its successful use in previous eras such as ancient Egypt and Greece in addition to our own (Godwin 1991).

These modern reflections on the magic of music in Shakespeare’s later plays are consistent with the views of the Roman philosopher and senator Boethius (ca. 480-524 CE) who wrote probably the most influential treatise on music ever written, *De Institutione Musica*. It was through this treatise that classic music theory was primarily transmitted to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which included the fact that music and numbers are connected in their very essence (Stevens 1986, 20; Godwin 1992, 86). Boethius distinguished three kinds of music: cosmic (*musica mundana* or “music of the spheres”); human (*musica humana*, the music of the human body and soul); and instrumental (*musica instrumentalis*) (Godwin 1992; Marenbon 2003).

John Stevens (2008) in his book *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* reminds us that only rarely is the Latin term *musica* precisely equivalent to the English word music. Medieval meanings of *musica* are sometimes the theory of music, sometimes the harmony of sound waves in any medium, and sometimes music as a metaphor for the celestial harmonies. As reported by Stevens (2008), Boethius in Book One of *De Institutione Musica* writes:

Music is related not only to speculation, but to morality as well, for nothing is more consistent with human nature than to be soothed by sweet modes and disturbed by their opposites. Thus, we can begin to understand the apt doctrine of Plato, which holds that the whole of the universe is united by a musical concord. For when we compare that which is coherently and harmoniously joined together within our own being with that which is coherently and harmoniously joined together in sound – that is, that which gives us pleasure – so we come to recognize that we ourselves are united according to the same principle of similarity (which is based on the harmonizing properties of the overtones in different octaves and the harmonic series).

This approach to the therapy of music appears in the philosophy of Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) who promoted the scientific method and who lived at the same time as Shakespeare. Bacon, as quoted in *The Oxford Francis Bacon IV Book of Quotes*, wrote: “The poets did well to conjoin music and medicine in Apollo: because the office of medicine is but to tune this curious harp of [a person’s] body and to reduce it to harmony” (Apollo meaning the light of the Divine).

This idea is found in modern Rosicrucian ontology and practice. H. Spencer Lewis (*Rosicrucian Digest*, Nov. 1931) invites us to practice this human attunement to experience the unity of the Symphony of Life, which is Alfred Adler’s feeling of oneness and having one’s place in life or *gemeinschaftsgefühl* in German (Ansbacher 1968; Eriksson 2021). This Rosicrucian attunement or coming into harmony with Nature’s harmonies involves the intonation of specific vowel sounds. This is described in the video “Sanctum Invocations and Vowel Intonations Rosicrucian – Number 7,” on the *INVIGORATION* YouTube channel: “The Symphony of Life is the rhythm of the Divine Consciousness surging through, and it knows no limitations of thought or doctrine. Attune yourself and join the Cosmic Choir. Time will make you a master musician in the Great Orchestra and you will find Health, Happiness, and Cosmic Power flowing into your being as your song flows outwardly into the Infinite Space of Universal Consciousness.”

Joscelyn Godwin (1991), in his book *The Mystery of The Seven Vowels*, offers an interpretation of how the physician may have been transformed into a magus. It is nothing less than an understanding of the laws of vowels and harmonics, and our imposing these vocal harmonics not only on our own selves and its practice as an art, but on others when needed:

The vowels are the way in which the human being creates and perceives the phenomenon of harmonics. Subjectively speaking, harmonics are the foundations of number made audible. Objectively, they are the imposition of these numbers on the physical world. In making vowels, we are speaking or singing numbers. The physical world is nothing but number, and its laws are to a great extent harmonic ones. The adept . . . is one who understands these laws, and can replicate them with the voice. (Godwin, 74)

Shakespeare’s Creative Use of Allegory, Metaphor, and Personifications in the Sonnets

In referring to the dating of Shakespeare’s sonnets, Don Paterson (2010) writes, “The sonnets seem to have been composed between 1582 and their date of publication, 1609 – between Shakespeare’s 18th and 45th birthdays. Thus, when we read Shakespeare’s first sonnet, we are witness to the poet’s early creative stirrings in his feminine sub-conscious.”

Shakespeare begins his first sonnet speaking of “Fairest Creatures” and “Beauty’s Rose.”

Sonnet 1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty’s rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,

Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

Theoretical physicist David Bohm (2004, 46), when writing on the beginnings of the creative process in famous scientists such as Albert Einstein and Henri Poincaré, suggests that what Shakespeare calls “fairest creatures” in Sonnet 1 refers to these early stirrings of new creative ideas about to break through into consciousness, but before being apprehended and worked on by the intellect and rational mind:

And some of the most creative scientists (such as Einstein and Poincaré) have indicated that in their work they are often moved profoundly, in a way that the general public tends to believe happens only to artists and other people engaged in what are regarded as “humanistic” pursuits. Long before the scientist is aware of the details of a new idea, he [she] may “feel” it stirring in him [her] in ways that are difficult or impossible to verbalize. These feelings are like very deep and sensitive probes reaching into the unknown, whilst the intellect ultimately makes possible a more detailed perception of what these probes have come into contact with. Here, then, is a very fundamental relationship between science and art, the latter must evidently work in a similar way, except that the whole process culminates in a sensually perceptible work of art, rather than in an abstract theoretical insight into nature's structural process. (Bohm 2004, 46)

This idea is given psychological support in Jungian Psychology. Emma Jung (1981, 52-53) writes:

This means that the yearning, the desire for new undertakings, makes itself felt first in the unconscious feminine. Before coming clearly to consciousness, the striving for something new and different usually expresses itself in the form of an emotional stirring, a vague impulse or unexplainable mood. When this is given expression ... it means that the unconscious stirrings are transmitted to consciousness through the feminine element in the man, through his *anima*. This occurrence starts an impulse, or acts like an intuition, disclosing new possibilities to the man and leading him on to pursue and grasp them.

Emma Jung sees receptivity as a feminine attitude and the great secret of femininity (Jung 1981, 55). Accordingly, in Jungian psychology this feminine attitude plays an important role in the creative individual that brings new ideas to the surface of consciousness. In the *Phaedo*, Plato criticizes the “overly-reasonable” male attitude, especially in matters of love, considering that it may bring a “divine gift,” like a new creative Self (Emma Jung 1981, 53).

This explanation sheds light on Shakespeare's choice of the term “fairest creatures” in the first line of Sonnet 1, of which he says he wants more so that his newly perceived inner beauty and harmony that he calls “Beauty's Rose” may not die but continue to express itself with new ideas.

“Beauty’s Rose” may be thought of as a metaphor for the bard’s more noble better Self (Eriksson 2021). Shakespeare says it gradually unfolds itself as a rose bud that opens and shrinks with the weather; sometimes indicating a famine, sometimes leaving some remnant behind like an ornament.

Personification of Melancholia as “My Mistress”

Shakespeare’s use of allegory and personified concepts is evident in Sonnets 127 and 130 which introduce what literature scholars have called “The Dark Lady” in stark contrast with “The Fair Youth” of the earlier sonnets. Consistent with Goethe’s and C.S Lewis’ insights into the popular use of allegory by artists in Shakespeare’s time, it is proposed that Shakespeare used his creativity to turn his new experience of dark feelings into an allegory, which he could then write about more easily as if it were something apart from him, some unpleasant woman who has come visiting, bringing her dark heavy emotions with her that are horrible in comparison with those of his recent loving muse, “The Fair Youth.”

Literature scholars have referred to this Dark Lady as though she were a real physical person, but such a dark lady in Shakespeare’s life has never been identified just as the Fair Youth of the earlier sonnets and described below has never been clearly identified as a separate physical person (Eriksson 2021). Shakespeare calls his dark feelings or melancholia “My Mistress” in Sonnet 130 and then disparages her in no uncertain terms. In Sonnet 130, he writes, “I grant I never saw a goddess go”; a likely referral to the departure of his “muse” as a goddess and the unwanted arrival of this new Dark Lady, that he calls “My Mistress,” who has replaced his wonderful Fair Youth. Compared to the muse whom he loved, he has nothing good to say about his new Mistress whose emotional gait is heavy as she treads on the ground of his being, almost destroying his positive feelings and emotions.

Sonnet 130

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

In the next example, Sonnet 127, Shakespeare speaks of old age and the Dark Lady in contrast with fair youth – it must be one or the other, and cannot be both together.

Sonnet 127

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem:
Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

This change of mood from fair to foul, a black mood, is announced first through allegory in Sonnet 127, Sonnet 126 being the last sonnet to the Fair Youth after his departure. In Sonnet 127 Shakespeare says “my mistress’ eyes are raven black,” which is not surprising if he now sees and feels through a dark cloud that hangs over him, treading heavily on the emotional ground of his being. The whole allegory of the sonnet is that he used to experience uplifting ideas and feelings of beauty and harmony and being connected to a creative, intelligent, all-seeing eye of human nature as the plays tell us and that we see in several of the earlier sonnets up to Sonnet 126. Now a black mood descends on him, and he tells us that this blackness is “beauty’s successive heir,” meaning his future, which he may think he is supposed to accept as the successor to the Fair Youth. Clearly, both feelings cannot be together.

Having equated the Fair Youth of the early sonnets with the hero-child of Jung’s Process of Individuation who inspires the glorious plays, it is appropriate that the Dark Lady of the later sonnets would speak to Shakespeare’s shadow side, all of which then would not have been integrated into his consciousness at the time of the alchemical wedding. Just as Hamlet’s ghost arrives with a task for Hamlet which is unexpected and unwanted, and for which he knows he is not ready, the Dark Lady is unexpected and certainly unwanted and proves an alienating experience for Shakespeare especially after having been with his better self, the Fair Youth.

These dark sonnets are in sharp contrast to Sonnet 17 in praise of the Fair Youth: “If I could write the beauty of your eyes, and in fresh numbers number all your graces, the age to come would say “this poet lies”!” Note also how Sonnet 17 makes reference to “old men” and the “stretched metre of an antique song” but closes with the enduring qualities that are in praise of Beauty’s Rose and the Fair Youth.

Sonnet 17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled with your most high deserts?
Though yet heaven knows it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say "This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces"
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, in it, and in my rhyme.

Further, the earlier Sonnet 8 opens with why some persons hear beautiful music sadly. This may reference those who are not in tune with Nature's heavenly "music of the spheres," nature's harmonic series which is so familiar to us, being part of our bodily make-up. They need a retuning as Shakespeare indicates in the plays, associated by Claudis Grigore with those who have not lived a virtuous life (Grigore 2019). Moreover, Sonnet 8 asks us to attune with the Music of the Spheres in a single note, in other words, not to stay "single" but to recognize our place within a wider framework.

Sonnet 8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
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.
Mark how one 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:
Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

Considering Shakespeare's profound knowledge of human nature, the last line of Sonnet 8 is clearly not limited to whether one is married or not on the outside, but its meaning is far more profound. It surely refers to the benefits of having a feeling of being married on the inside, a feeling of being in harmony with the family of life as are the harmonics of a single musical note

that is sounded on a musical instrument; “whose speechless song being many, seeming one, sings this to thee.” See Figure 4, which illustrates this harmonic relationship visually.

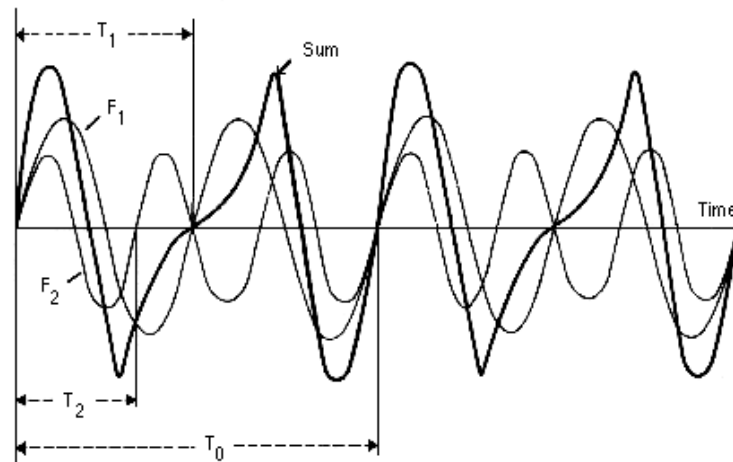


Figure 4. “The dark line shows the sum of the second and third harmonics (F_1 , F_2 respectively) whose periodicities (T_1 , T_2 respectively) repeat at the same period (T_0) as the fundamental.” From J. Roederer, *Introduction to the Physics and Psychophysics of Music*, Springer, 1975.

In Shakespeare’s meaning, if we do not bear the trials of family members who can be challenging or difficult in our personal life, we will not experience the harmony inherent in life itself as is the symphony of Nature in a single musical note. We will feel “single and not connected.”

Shakespeare’s use of allegory and metaphor can also be seen in Sonnet 33 in which we can experience the exalted mountaintop view versus our finite space-time vision.

Sonnet 33

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 alchemy;
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
 With ugly rack on his celestial face,
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine
 With all triumphant splendor on my brow;
 But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
 The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
 Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
 Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

Sonnet 33 refers to this elevated and exalted state, like a divine resonance, a oneness, a heavenly alchemy with Sovereign Eye. “Even so my sun one early morn did shine with all triumphant splendor on my brow.” However, this new inner light and love comes and goes and is intermittent as recorded by other mystics such as Jacob Boehme (Bucke 2011; Eriksson 2021, 2023). Shakespeare tells us it lasted one hour one early morning when it gave way to his normal “cloudy self” of the more common, finite 3-D space-time perception. Shakespeare’s use of allegory can be discerned in many of those sonnets described by scholars as addressing the Fair Youth viewed here as his more noble or universal self which comes to him in periods of profound harmony as described in the early sonnets. As already described, it is proposed here that this fair youth is not a physical person, but rather a personification and allegory of his new creative Self, what Shakespeare calls “the better part of me” of Sonnet 39, as opposed to his everyday self that he says has its flaws. The poet says they should stay separate so that he can honour “this better part” of himself. This imagery is consistent with the new Self, the hero-child that emerges following Jung’s Process of Individuation as already mentioned (Jung 57, 76, 81). See Sonnet 39 which follows:

Sonnet 39 – Let us divided live that I may honour Thee.

O! how thy worth with manners may I sing,
 When thou art all the better part of me?
 What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
 And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?
 Even for this, let us divided live,
 And our dear love lose name of single one,
 That by this separation I may give
 That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
 O absence! what a torment wouldst thou prove,
 Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave,
 To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
 Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,
 And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
 By praising him here who doth hence remain.

Shakespeare continues to look into the mirror of his mind-body and climb the mount of Self. He describes an androgenous being, a hermaphrodite, like a noble or divine parent with both Female and Male Aspects, the master-mistress and source of his passion. This idea is consistent with the writings of Jacob Boehme and the opposites inherent in the Divine (Eriksson 2023). Shakespeare compares this to the creation of separate physical man and separate physical woman who have the freedom to think and act separately as they wish, as we do now. See Sonnet 20 which follows:

Sonnet 20 – The Cosmic Being – The Hermaphrodite

A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
 Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
 A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted

With shifting change, as is false women's fashion:
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
 A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
 Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
 And for a woman wert thou first created;
 Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
 And by addition me of thee defeated,
 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
 But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

Shakespeare says this Female aspect of the Divine Androgyne has a bright generous face and is less changeable and more giving than separate physical woman. He says this spiritual feminine gives golden wisdom to all she looks upon, which includes Shakespeare himself here since he is doing the looking, the vision is his!

The sonnet says the masculine aspect of this androgenous being is true to himself, and has all control over his emotions or hues which surprises the feminine since she is the one who is receptive to new ideas as Jung has outlined (Emma Jung 1981). The sonnet states that the male was created for woman, to complement the female aspect, till Nature as she fashioned “you,” (meaning Shakespeare as the male here as the observer or subject), “doted on Nature” (clearly too much) and fell in the process to a narrower perception.

This sonnet suggests that this “fall” from an exalted perception created and added a separate, independent male being with a new masculine Ideal or Male God, so defeating the Male-Female Androgyne or Divine Self. It says this separation added nothing new to the male purpose. As Nature teased “you” (addressing the male who is Shakespeare here) out of this Male-Female Union for woman’s pleasure, the love that “you” uses belongs to the Male-Female Self and is the sacred “treasure.”

“The Phoenix and the Turtle” Poem as a Metaphor for the Divine Marriage

In Egyptian and Greek mythology, the phoenix was seen as a bird that lived typically five hundred years, then died in a fire after the sun ignited an Arabian tree on which the phoenix was perched. The tree was located near Heliopolis, The City of the Sun, Egypt. From its own ashes, the phoenix rose to new life and has been a symbol of immortality and resurrection. In modern English, the turtle in Shakespeare’s poem is a turtledove, like a small pigeon (Figure 5).



Figure 5. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Asphagnum (<https://www.deviantart.com/asphagnum/art/The-Phoenix-and-the-Turtle-449978712>). The Phoenix is a symbol of the Cosmic Fire of the Divine Soul. The turtledove in the phoenix's embrace is a metaphor for the human soul. The image of the turtledove and phoenix is inspired by the Shakespearean poem.

Verse 1 Let the bird of loudest lay
On the sole Arabian tree
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

Interpretation:

Let the Divine Soul on the Tree of Life be the trumpeting herald to announce the sad news which those with noble thoughts will obey. A “lay” here is a poem or song as in the Troubadour tradition.

Verse 2 But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near.

Interpretation:

But the loudmouth who likes to announce all the bad news, like “the end is nigh,” is not welcome to come near.

Verse 3 From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king;
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Interpretation:

Those with power-hungry thoughts are forbidden to attend this strict funeral rite, except those with an eagle or sovereign eye who see everything from a broader, mountaintop perspective.

Verse 4 Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

Interpretation:

Let the priest in white vestment be the death-divining swan who sees death coming so the music for the dead is right for the requiem and occasion.

Verse 5 And thou treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Interpretation:

And you who boast and crow in black garb, using the Soul's breath of life to dispense what is right and wrong, will go with the mourners. You think you know it all.

Verse 6 Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead;
Phoenix and the Turtle fled
In a mutual flame from hence.

Interpretation:

The anthem here begins. Change is coming. Love that never ends is dead. The Divine Soul and the human self have fled together in a mutual flame.

Verse 7 So they lov'd, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Interpretation:

They love as two, but are one in essence, yet two distinct beings. Their love expresses a oneness, a totally harmonious blending, like two similar notes sounded on a keyboard an octave apart.

Verse 8 Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance and no space was seen
'Twixt this Turtle and his queen:
But in them it were a wonder.

Interpretation:

Hearts remote, but not broken or asunder. No separation can be seen as in Verse 7: like two similar notes on a keyboard an octave apart that sound the same. It is a wonder, a mystical oneness between the human self and his Queen, the Divine Soul.

Verse 9 So between them love did shine
That the Turtle saw his right
Flaming in the Phoenix' sight:
Either was the other's mine.

Interpretation:

Between them love shines as the human self sees its rightful place lit up in the Divine Soul's sight. Either could be the other's self, so perfect is the harmony and blending between them again like two notes on a divine keyboard an octave apart.

Verse 10 Property was thus appalled
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Interpretation:

Those who are "proper--who like things as they should be" are horrified that self was no longer the same. Of single nature with a double name as after a marriage. What to call them?

Verse 11 Reason, in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither
Simple were so well compounded;

Interpretation:

Human reason is confounded; it cannot understand seeing differences grow together. They themselves could be either, yet neither, so simple, so well compounded, like two notes on a keyboard an octave apart. A modern example: who could know ahead of time that two different gases could join to make a liquid like H₂O?

Verse 12 That it cried, "How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one!
Love has reason, reason none,
If what parts can so remain."

Interpretation:

So well compounded that it cried out how true a "two" seems this harmonious "one." Love has its reason that reason knows not, if what leaves can still remain. Reason cannot reason about itself!

Verse 13 Whereupon it made this threne
To the Phoenix and the Dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene:

Interpretation:

So, the new two-in-one couple makes the following funeral ode to the Divine Soul and the human self, joint stars in love, a chorus to their tragic scene.

Threnos (Funeral Song)

Verse 14 Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclos'd, in cinders lie.

Interpretation:

Beauty, truth, and that rare simple grace are all encased in burnt cinders and ashes.

Verse 15 Death is now the Phoenix' nest,
And the Turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

Interpretation:

Death is now the Divine Soul's nest and the little human self's loyal breast resting in sweet repose.

Verse 16 Leaving no posterity:
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Interpretation:

Leaving nothing for posterity, not because of some infirmity. It is a marriage of virtue and nobility, a total blending, not a wedding for reproduction.

Verse 17 Truth may seem but cannot be;
Beauty brag but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

Interpretation:

It may seem like truth, but this cannot be. Beauty brags, but 'tis not she. Truth and beauty are gone and buried.

Verse 18 To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

Interpretation:

To these ashes let those go who are true or noble. For these dead "birds" sigh a prayer.

Overall Meaning of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” Poem

This poem is an allegory of the Ideal Alchemical Marriage of Shakespeare’s time period – the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The unified human psyche with a clear conscience and no shadow has put on the seamless wedding gown of the harmonious marriage with the Fire of the Soul. Death of the old personality occurs before something more divine arises.

Conclusion

As a seeker for the Divine, Shakespeare undergoes the alchemical wedding of the mystics and great poets to discover his better self and an inner wisdom, like the hero-child born of Jung’s Process of Individuation. Shakespeare esteems highly this hero-child in the sonnets who is referred to by scholars as “The Fair Youth.” Using allegories and metaphors, this “Fair Youth” inspires the wonderful plays that touch on the ancient mysteries known to the alchemists and Rosicrucians.

An unexpected product of Jung’s Process of Individuation applied to Shakespeare’s life is the arrival of the Dark Lady of the later sonnets, seen here as his shadow side brought to life by the Light of the Divine joining with him. Modern Rosicrucians echo Hamlet’s warning, “the readiness is all” (Act 5, Scene 2), which is to say that preparation and patience are necessary before undertaking the alchemical marriage. Shakespeare’s art and use of allegory and metaphor in the plays communicate this hidden wisdom by inviting those who are ready to approach and cross the threshold to a broader understanding of life as Goethe experienced.

Shakespeare’s “The Phoenix and The Turtle” poem (Turtledove in modern English) is interpreted here as an allegory of the ideal or perfect Alchemical Marriage, a blending of a unified human psyche having a clear conscience with the “Healing Fire of The Universal Soul.” This process allows the Divine Self to arise from the ashes of the old personality. This idealized perfect union is likened to the playing together of two similar notes and their chords an octave apart on a keyboard. They blend and resonate so well that they sound like one note, yet are two, in perfect harmony as Shakespeare writes.

Finally, music and the spoken word’s overtones of the harmonic series coupled with the brain’s neuroplasticity and pattern-recognizing abilities provide a modern scientific framework for understanding this inner union and healing. As such, the sonnets, poems, and plays are vehicles for the allegorical ideal inner wedding. The healing capacity of sound, particularly of words and music, invites further application and study.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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