

THE SONNETS



Il dolore di Galileo

Pace non trovo e ho da far guerra
a questi mostri dall'animo stanco
che non voglion sapere i segreti della Terra,
che restan supini o chini sul panco.

Oh figli infedeli che solo pregate
Con ipocriti credi, per ipocriti scopi;
sulle Sacre Scritture menzogne ho giurato:
l'uomo è fallace e vive tra i topi.

Io che non vado mai alla messa,
che punto cannocchiali verso cieli proibiti,
che nessun prete senza Dio mi confessa.

Mi devo arrendere a cervelli assopiti.
A te figlia vergine, da cieco morente lascio 'sto orrore,
è stata la tua abiura di me a spezzarmi il cuore.

Galileo's pain

I find no peace and I have to fight,
against these monsters with their tired soul
who do not want to know the secrets which are high,
bound blindly to the Church in whole.

Oh unfaithful sons who only pray
With hypocritical creeds, for hypocritical aims;
for me the Church is something far away:
men are fallacious and live on surface.

I never go to Mass,
I focus on my telescopes towards prohibited skies,
I do not entrust the ecclesiastical class,
I must surrender to people that make me die.

To you, my virgin daughter, as a blind dying man I leave this world falling apart,
it was your abjuration to me that broke my heart.

Our task

was to write two sonnets: one following the Petrarchan model and one according to a Shakespearean structure and later compare them.

We drew inspiration from **My Galley Charged With Forgetfulness** by Thomas Wyatt and ***Passa La Nave Mia Colma d'Oblío*** by Francesco Petrarca.

The aim of our workshop was to learn how to develop the structure of the sonnets, to highlight the differences between a Shakespearean and a Petrarchan model and so to be able to understand the difficulties of translating an Italian sonnet into an English one, something that English first sonneteers surely experienced.

We decided to write two sonnets about Galileo's story because we wanted to connect our work to something concerning the Renaissance.

The problems Galileo Galilei had to face were Church corruption and the pain he felt for his daughter.

The sonnets are both a fourteen line composition in alternative rhyme, but the first one is organised into two quatrains and a sestet while the second one consists of three quatrains and a final rhyming couplet.

The title of the sonnet is Galileo's Pain (or "Il Dolore di Galileo").

From the title the reader can immediately understand what the sonnets deal with. The language used is quite simple: indeed our sonnets are addressed to the common people. Despite its simple language in order to understand their meaning, you have to know about Galileo's life and studies.

Galileo's beloved daughter (**Virginia Galilei**) was a nun called **Heavenly Sister Mary**, who totally disagreed with her father due to her religious principles. His way of life concerned with science hindered the Church's values.

Moreover, Galileo did not enter a Church for many years, because he did not agree with its clerical principles. In addition, he was also condemned by the Church for his discoveries (natural phenomena like the sunspots e, the moon's ripples, etc.) and therefore so he was compelled to abjure his discoveries.

This was the reason why father and daughter had a really hostile relationship but in spite of all that Galileo gave up loving her. On the other hand, Virginia repudiated her father and all that broke Galileo's heart.

There are several differences between Italian and English sonnets. In particular, the Italian language differs sensibly from the English one because for example in Italian the subject can be omitted or many others depending on its different rhythm. That explains why in the Shakespearean sonnet you can find anaphors depending on the subject pronoun "I" differently from the Petrarchan one.

For example the anaphor in the first one is

"... che non voglion sapere i segreti della Terra, che restan supini o chini sul panco."

And

"... che punto cannocchiali verso cieli proibiti, che nessun prete senza Dio mi confessa...";

The anaphora in the English sonnet is

***"I never go to Mass,
I focus on my telescopes towards prohibited skies,
I do not entrust the ecclesiastical class,
I must surrender to people that make me die."***

An intelligent reader can notice that in the Italian sonnet action is highlighted, while in the English sonnet the subject plays great importance.

An additional feature is that line length is shorter in the Italian sonnet than in the English one.

As regards the connotative level, some *run on lines* can be singled out in each sonnet (for example in the first stanza of each sonnet; in the first line of the second stanza of each sonnet, too; and in the third stanza of the Italian sonnet) and an alliteration in the English sonnet ("... *bound blindy* ...").

Moreover, the function of the first and the second stanzas of each sonnet is a lead in to: Galilei's contrast with the Church, one that makes him say: "*the Church is something far away*", indeed he says "*Oh unfaithful sons who only pray, with hypocritical creeds, for hypocritical aims* " because he was against the institution.

The third stanza provides an explanation to Galilei's point of view: his attitude and his thoughts are clearly stated.

In the end, the last stanza provides the conclusion: indeed Galileo Galilei surrenders to reality and expresses his pain. Before dying, he "*leaves*" the corrupted and "blind" world to his daughter, who has sided with the Church and repudiated him.