THE LANGUAGE OF LAMENT: GIACHES DE WERT AND CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S SECONDA PRATICA

A Thesis in
Musicology

by

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ABSTRACT

After an eleven-year publication silence beginning in 1592, Claudio Monteverdi emerged in 1603 with Il quarto libro de madrigali and in 1605 with Il quinto libro de madrigali. These volumes employ gestures that sidestep traditional Renaissance counterpoint, featuring unprepared dissonances and incongruous styles that prioritize text expression above codified conventions. Monteverdi’s arrival at a style tailored for conveying the text’s poetic imagery and emotional state of its characters marks a decisive turning point in his compositional development and aesthetic philosophy: the seconda pratica. This thesis addresses the context surrounding Monteverdi’s stylistic evolution, embracing scholarship that demonstrates the influence of his contemporaries, but expanding and isolating the discussion toward one key mentor: Giaches de Wert.

Wert advanced expressivity in the madrigal during his 1565-92 tenure as maestro di cappella at the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara in Mantua. He incorporated a lifetime of experiences with theatrical music and immersive chamber performances toward musically representing the dramatic content of contemporary poetry, notably works by Torquato Tasso and Giovanni Battista Guarini. In 1590, when Monteverdi entered into employment as a musician at the Mantuan court, Wertiian influences surfaced in his poetic selection and compositional gestures, appearing prominently in texts functioning as first-person laments during emotional peaks in their surrounding narratives. This thesis analyzes the plaintive madrigals Giunto alla tomba, Ah, dolente partita, Cruda Amarilli, and Lasciatemi morire for their expressive commonalities, illuminating Wert’s influence in Monteverdi’s burgeoning seconda pratica language.
The Prologue frames Monteverdi’s early development as a madrigalist within the thriving artistic climate of 1590s Mantua, discussing the environment and influences surrounding the composer while honing his craft. It considers Monteverdi’s turn toward affective representation after his Third Book, and his search for compositional devices useful in conveying the emotional turmoil of his selected texts. Chapter One discusses a shifting dynamic in madrigal performance during the sixteenth century, from social, amateur readings to concert environments that distinguished between audience and performer roles. Wert’s experience as a composer for theater, and his compositional involvement with the *Concerto delle donne* in 1580s Ferrara frames a discussion of Wert’s role in advancing dramatic representation in the madrigal. The final section of Chapter One considers the artistic movement of Mannerism, and its relationship to the stylistic developments of Wert and his contemporaries. Chapter Two analyzes direct comparisons between Wert and Monteverdi’s madrigals, tracing gestural similarities showing Wert’s continued influence on Monteverdi’s evolving *seconda pratica* style. It then analyzes settings of parallel texts between the two composers, isolating similar expressive gestures, then demonstrates their presence in Monteverdi’s later polyphonic reworking of his dramatic masterwork: the *Lamento d’Arianna*. The Epilogue discusses Wert and Monteverdi’s ideological relationship to aesthetic debates of the late sixteenth century, briefly profiling writings by Torquato Tasso and Giovanni Maria Artusi that interacted with the two composers’ stylistic changes.

In summary, this thesis seeks to trace Monteverdi’s arrival at a profound compositional style suited to the lament, by analyzing Wert’s contributions to the *seconda pratica*. 
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PROLOGUE

THE ELEVEN-YEAR SILENCE

Monteverdi’s Affective Style After His Third Book

By Second Practice, which was first renewed in our notation by Cipriano de Rore (as my brother will make apparent), was followed and amplified, not only by the gentlemen already mentioned, but by Ingegneri, Marenzio, Giaches de Wert, Luzzasco, likewise by Jacopo Peri, Giulio Caccini, and finally by loftier spirits with a better understanding of true art, he understands the one that turns on the perfection of the melody, that is, the one that considers harmony not commanding, but commanded, and makes the words the mistress of the harmony.¹

—Giulio Cesare Monteverdi

The polyphonic madrigal remained an essential genre to Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) throughout the majority of his career. At the age of twenty, the Cremonese composer began his endeavors within the medium, publishing volumes at a consistent pace: his First Book for five voices appeared in 1587, his Second in 1590, and his Third Book was published in 1592. It is therefore surprising that between the years of 1592 and 1603 Monteverdi published no books of madrigals. Further, he interrupted his momentum at a time when madrigal dissemination through the presses was crucial for establishing and maintaining a composer’s career. Viewed through the lens of historical perspective, the eleven-year hiatus seems to have served as a musical watershed in Monteverdi’s output, with the first three books on one side, and the six subsequent volumes on the other. The volumes appearing after the chronological barrier are imbued with the heightened rhetorical devices and expressive primacy of his seconda pratica.² Thus the significance of this interval, I posit, lies in its function as a gestation period for

² The first two books were composed in Cremona, and the Third emerged after the composer took a position in Mantua in 1590.
compositional experimentation, a laboratory for collecting and integrating colleagues’ innovations toward accomplishing new forms of expression within the genre. Though scholars have considered notable influences in Monteverdi’s development, this thesis adds a significant factor to the discussion, demonstrating the centrality of his Mantuan colleague, Giaches de Wert (1535-1596), in forming a palette of gestures tailored for conveying the poetic imagery of laments and the emotional state of characters within them.

The term *seconda pratica* is typically used in describing Monteverdi’s philosophy of musical expression, rationalizing the novel gestures appearing in his Fourth and Fifth Books of madrigals and his subsequent compositions, as serving the expressive and rhetorical demands of the text. Giulio Cesare’s words, quoted above, defend his brother’s unconventional practices that famously upset the Bolognese theorist and critic Giovanni Maria Artusi (c. 1540-1613). The madrigals that Artusi singled out for attack in his 1600 treatise, *L’Artusi, ovvero Delle imperfetioni della moderna musica*, appeared in Monteverdi’s Fourth and Fifth Books of madrigals, though Artusi first encountered them at a Ferrarese performance at the home of Antonio Goretti on 16 November 1598. In the passage, Giulio Cesare articulates the aesthetic philosophy behind Claudio’s *seconda pratica*: a refashioning of musical practice to serve the emotion and meaning of text, rather than obeying theoretical conventions. He then lists the composers who developed its language. By naming specific individuals, Giulio Cesare provides

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3 Tim Carter, among others, has also proposed this view, noting Giaches de Wert’s *L’undecimo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* of 1595 as well as significant publications by Alfonso Fontanelli, Carlo Gesualdo, and Luzzasco Luzzaschi that emerged during the mid 1590s and likely had an impact on Monteverdi’s stylistic development. See Tim Carter, “Artusi, Monteverdi, and the Poetics of Modern Music,” in *Monteverdi and his Contemporaries* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2000), 172.


a glimpse onto Monteverdi’s historical perspective and awareness of a changing discourse in music.

The influence of fellow composers aided Monteverdi’s development from his earliest endeavors in Cremona. His first two books of five-voice madrigals largely derived from the guidance of his teacher and maestro di cappella of the Cremona cathedral, Marc’Antonio Ingegneri (1535-92).6 Monteverdi had already designated Ingegneri as his instructor in the dedication of his three-voice Sacrae Cantiunculae of 1582, and continued to do so in his next four publications.7 A capable madrigalist in his own right, and a native of Verona, Ingegneri provided Monteverdi with lessons drawn from great composers such as Cipriano de Rore (c. 1515-65).8 Distinguishing between a Renaissance conception of imitatio—where models from great artists are borrowed and elaborated upon as a means of learning and stylistic renewal—and the modern tendency to define artistic strength by a work’s liberation from influence, Geoffrey Chew demonstrates Monteverdi’s use of models throughout his early compositions: the Sacrae Cantiunculae, the 1584 collection of three-voice canzonettas, and his First and Second Books of madrigals.9 Gary Tomlinson agrees with this perspective, and attributes many of the gestures and techniques of his First Book to the influence of Luca Marenzio (c. 1553-59) and Luzzasco Luzzaschi (c. 1545-1607), especially concerning Marenzio’s expertise in the lighter canzonetta-madrigal, and Luzzaschi’s weightier emphasis on emotional content, and use of abrupt shifts in

8 Denis Arnold explains Ingegneri’s mastery of two pivotal lessons in Rore’s approach to composition: the primacy of word expression and the importance of formal structuring—though, Arnold notes, Ingegneri would, at times, skilfully shape and develop thematic sections in later parts of his madrigals. See, Denis Arnold, “Monteverdi and his Teachers,” in Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, eds. The New Monteverdi Companion (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985), 93-4.
style for affective illustration.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, while still in his hometown of Cremona, Monteverdi had already become relatively cosmopolitan, assimilating styles from Marenzio, who was primarily employed in Rome, and Luzzaschi in Ferrara. In Monteverdi’s Second Book, one finds the beginning of a geographically closer influence: the maestro di cappella at the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara in Mantua, Giaches de Wert. This consideration in Monteverdi’s influences gains prominence when Giulio Cesare later delineates the list of composers who paved the way for his seconda pratica in the preface of Claudio Monteverdi’s 1607 Scherzi musicali. Regarding Monteverdi’s list of names, Denis Arnold rightly considers the significance of their geographic proximity:

all had been at courts neighbouring that of the Gonzagas: Luzzaschi and Gesualdo in Ferrara, where Cipriano de Rore had also worked; Bardi, Alfonso, Fontanella, Cavalieri and the other members of the Camerata academy of Florence. Marc’ Antonio Ingegneri had been his teacher at Cremona, Giaches de Wert was for some time his immediate superior at Mantua.\textsuperscript{11}

I suggest that the previous considerations evince two significant themes regarding Monteverdi’s influences: he possessed a keen historical awareness of madrigalists’ styles in the areas surrounding Cremona and Mantua, and was able to utilize their models in creating novel forms of expression. As Tomlinson describes, Monteverdi continued exploring Marenzio’s and Luzzaschi’s styles in his Second Book, though increasingly began altering their gestures and broadening his scope to Wert for setting texts such as Torquato Tasso’s (1544-95) Ecco mormorar l’onde and Giovanni Battista Guarini’s (1538-1612) Vezzosi augelli—a relationship I will explore at length in Chapter One.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} Arnold, “Monteverdi and his Teachers,” 92.
\textsuperscript{12} Tomlinson, Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance, 41-50.
Arguing against Glenn Watkins and Thomasin LaMay’s assessment that Monteverdi shed imitative models after his Second Book, Chew notes that a composer of Monteverdi’s generation would not have regarded imitation as any sort of weakness: “The notions of ‘independence’ and a composer’s ‘voice’ imply an anachronistic aesthetic at a period in which variety of musical treatment was valued at least as highly as the authenticity of a composer’s utterance.”¹³ I agree with Chew’s appraisal, and extend his assessment beyond Monteverdi’s first three volumes, viewing Monteverdi’s evolving compositional language through Book Five as a continuing process of imitatio. Indeed, as I explore in Chapter Two, the variety and authenticity of Monteverdi’s compelling gestures in his Fourth and Fifth Books often resemble models found in his colleagues’ madrigals. This is not to say that Monteverdi’s innovations depended upon the influence of other composers; rather, I suggest that he possessed an acute sensitivity to the language of his contemporaries, adding their voices to his own for achieving desired musical effects. Monteverdi’s Third Book, published in June of 1592, inaugurates his Mantuan tenure, and his Fourth Book, published in 1603, reveals a decisive step in seconda pratica aesthetics, bearing—along with his Fifth Book (1605)—compositional tactics that had fomented attacks from Artusi.

Surveying what is known of Monteverdi’s operations between 1592 and 1603 illuminates encounters that informed his stylistic development during this time. In the early part of 1590, Monteverdi entered into employment as a musician in the court of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga (1562-1612),¹⁴ a dedicated champion of music and spectacle. Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga (1538-87), Vincenzo’s father, had postured himself as a pious and ideal Christian prince, and used his

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patronage to mold Mantua’s image into the model Catholic state. Though fiscally conservative on measures relating to his family, Guglielmo amassed considerable funds toward projects bolstering Mantua’s—and by extension his own—image with respect to other Italian princes.\(^\text{15}\)

Guglielmo’s crowning achievement was planning and overseeing the construction and liturgical practices of the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara.\(^\text{16}\) Vincenzo, on the other hand, after assuming rule in 1587, broke away from his father’s notions of piety, invigorating the Mantuan court with a rebirth in secular performance and pageantry. Whereas Guglielmo grounded his image in sacred projects reflecting piety and reform, Vincenzo amassed considerable funds toward his personal interests in worldly pleasures and displays of courtly splendor. Molly Bourne summarizes the ideological polarity between the two dukes:

> Where Guglielmo was pious, dour, and fiscally conservative, Vincenzo was secular, flamboyant, and outrageously prodigal. Driven by an ever growing rivalry with the Ferrarese Este and the Florentine Medici courts, as well as a desire to emulate the courts of France and of Emperor Rudolf II, Mantua’s fourth duke sought to give a more powerful and cosmopolitan look to the Gonzaga court in the eyes of their princely peers and competitors.\(^\text{17}\)

Thus Monteverdi’s move from Cremona to Mantua in 1590 would have ushered him into a court surging with artistic renewal, facilitating exposure to new compositional trends and virtuosic performances.

> Having been recruited as an instrumentalist and singer for Vincenzo’s \textit{cappella}, the young composer would have interacted considerably with Wert, the maestro di cappella since


\(^{16}\) Ibid.

Wert played a pivotal role in transferring innovative Ferrarese styles to Mantua throughout the late 1570s and 1580s—as will be explored further in Chapter One—and along with Vincenzo Gonzaga’s conceptual rebirth of Mantua as a thriving musical and artistic center, helped usher in a regenerated musical climate in the early 1590s. In addition to bolstering the rosters of paid court musicians, Vincenzo invited acclaimed singers to court for performances, such as Agnese del Carretto, the Marchioness of Grana, who was instrumental in organizing and rehearsing Guarini’s pastoral tragicomedy, *Il pastor fido* (The Faithful Shepherd), for production beginning in 1591. Wert was also extensively involved with staging Guarini’s renowned work, providing musical settings along with Francesco Rovigo for a performance slated to premiere between 1592 and 1593, though it failed to reach fruition. Vincenzo diligently sought a Mantuan staging, and the inaugural performance finally took place in 1598, and was performed in Mantua two other times within a five-month period from its inception. Throughout the 1590s, Mantua was saturated with a fervor surrounding *Il pastor fido*, and Monteverdi operated within the Ferrarese-Mantuan orbit that functioned as an epicenter for compositional experimentation in setting the work. Furthermore, between 1587 and 1589 Vincenzo formed a Mantuan ensemble of virtuosic female singers mirroring the renowned *Concerto delle donne* of Ferrara that flourished throughout the 1580s. In addition to providing Wert and other Mantuan composers with a professional, in-house ensemble to write for—which is strongly reflected in Wert’s Ninth Book

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18 Ibid. Tomlinson describes in depth the growth of Wert’s influence in Monteverdi’s madrigals since arriving in Mantua. See Chapter 3 of Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance.*
20 Denis Stevens, “Monteverdi’s Life to 1601,” in *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi,* trans. Denis Stevens, revised ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 20. Wert was also heavily involved with staging Guarini’s acclaimed tragicomedy, providing musical settings along with Francesco Rovigo for a performance that was intended to premier between 1592 and 1593, but failed to reach fruition. See Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance,* 114-15.
of madrigals (1588) as Iain Fenlon has suggested—the Mantuan concerto accompanied Vincenzo to Ferrara and performed in Florence during the years of their formation,\(^{23}\) displaying Mantua’s artistic strength to neighboring states and likely collecting musical ideas to bring back to court. Monteverdi consequently found himself in an advantageous position to benefit from the creative arteries flowing into Mantua from Vincenzo’s patronage.

It is therefore unsurprising that Monteverdi’s Third Book bears the fruit of Mantua’s artistic flourishing. As Tomlinson has demonstrated, the madrigals in this collection reflect the vocal possibilities of Mantua’s virtuosic female ensemble, an increase in settings of Torquato Tasso’s poetry—who had resided in Mantua for a considerable duration in 1591—and a distinct turn to Wert for ideas in poetic selection and musical style.\(^ {24}\) In what follows, I argue that Wert’s influence remained a considerable force in shaping Monteverdi’s seconda pratica style in his Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books. Though Wert died in 1596, his aptitude for musically expressing human emotions in texts shaped affective discourse in the late sixteenth-century madrigal, providing resources for Monteverdi to implement in his prioritization of emotional expression over theoretical conventions. The eleven-year interval in Monteverdi’s publications between 1592 and 1603 is viewed within this thesis as a period of compositional experimentation, during which he explored the innovative gestures of his colleagues, especially those showing a notable impact on his style before and after the divide.

Certainly other factors contributed to Monteverdi’s eleven-year publication silence. As the details above illustrate, he would have been considerably occupied with his new duties as a court musician in Mantua. As Tim Carter describes, “he was closely involved in the day-to-day musical life of the court and also accompanied Duke Vincenzo on a least two trips to foreign

\(^ {23}\) Ibid.
\(^ {24}\) Tomlinson, Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance, 58-9.
parts: a military campaign in Hungary in 1595, and a health cure to Spa in Flanders in 1599.”

During the 1595 campaign, Monteverdi directed a small *cappella* accompanying Vincenzo on his expeditions, providing musical entertainments and new compositions, and even producing music for a vespers service performed on the eve of an important battle. In addition to performance duties at court and traveling in military campaigns, Monteverdi likely accompanied Vincenzo to Florence for the festivities celebrating the wedding of Maria de’ Medici and Henry IV in 1600, and was himself married in 1599 to the Mantuan court singer Claudia Cattaneo. Monteverdi also experienced considerable success in musical dissemination within the decade, having five madrigals from his Second and Third books published in a 1597 Nuremburg anthology, *Fiori del giardino di diversi eccellentissimi autori*, and six canzonettas published by Antonio Morsolino in 1594. Furthermore, as Carter notes, Monteverdi lacked the pressing need to publish another book of madrigals after his Third Book, having just secured a position in a prestigious and flourishing court. Nevertheless, I argue that the madrigals appearing in the 1603 and 1605 publications suggest anything but a compositional recess in the decade preceding their arrival. Rather, the rhetorical strength and dramatic impetus of Monteverdi’s madrigals emerging from the divide reveal a studied and decisive approach, one giving practice to the composer’s claim that he did not compose his works haphazardly, and his brother’s description of the aesthetics and individuals who shaped his language.

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This thesis considers Giaches de Wert’s influence upon Monteverdi’s developing language for lament in his *seconda pratica* madrigals, illuminating the modes of expression Monteverdi assimilated from his contemporaries in achieving his modern compositional voice at the turn of the seventeenth century. Chapter One discusses Wert’s role in the madrigal’s shift toward greater theatricality and audience-directed performances surrounding the Ferrarese musical environment of the 1580s. I examine Wert’s involvement in courtly theater productions throughout his career as a means of illuminating his sensitivity for musically representing human emotions, and the artistic current of Mannerism for framing the social currents surrounding his compositional development. Chapter Two analyzes Monteverdi and Wert’s settings of parallel texts from narrative laments in Guarini’s *Il pastor fido*, tracing gestural similarities demonstrating Wert’s continued influence upon Monteverdi’s evolving *seconda pratica* style in his Fourth and Fifth Books, and the polyphonic reworking of the *Lamento d’Arianna* in his Sixth Book. The Epilogue discusses both composers’ rhetorical advances in terms of aesthetic debates rooted in the dichotomy between emotional potency and theoretical rationalization, examining Tasso’s dialogue, *La Cavaletta* and Artusi’s, *L’Artusi, overo Delle imperfettioni della moderna musica*. In its sum, this thesis explores the critical role Wert’s advances played in shaping the sixteenth-century madrigal toward greater expressivity, contributing to a language Monteverdi mastered in forging a new intimacy between drama, language, and music.
CHAPTER 1
WERT AND THEATRICALITY: MADRIGAL AS CONCERT EXPERIENCE

Social Readings and the Early Madrigal

For understanding how the relationship between Wert and Monteverdi assisted the latter’s development of a compositional style engineered for emotional provocation within the madrigal, it is useful to consider the genre’s evolution in certain locations within the sixteenth century. At these centers, the madrigal shifted from communal, amateur music-making to concert settings placing a greater emphasis on listening, rather than singing. This shift necessitated stylistic changes accommodating the prowess of well-trained singers and learned audiences. The courtly environment of 1580s Ferrara, ruled by Duke Alfonso II d’Este (1559-97), provides a vista into this transition. Understanding the significance of this climate, and Wert’s compositional operations within it, sheds light upon the composer’s stylistic development toward the end of the sixteenth century, illuminating the models available to Monteverdi after his arrival in Mantua in the early 1590s.

From the madrigal’s inception in 1520s Florence, the genre maintained a dualism in function, serving social, amateur music-making as well as courtly spectacles and ceremonies.31 As James Haar notes, the style of Philippe Verdelot’s madrigals—among the earliest compositions within the new genre—appears well-suited for amateur consumption, featuring moderate use of melismas, controlled melodic range, and predominantly chordal textures.32

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31 James Haar, “Madrigal,” in European Music: 1520-1640, ed. James Haar (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2006), 228. Haar attributes the Florentine circle surrounding Philippe Verdelot in the 1520s as the generative force behind the madrigal’s inception as a genre. In this environment, as Haar notes, madrigal performances could function as intermedi between acts of a play, as well as background music for informal literati gatherings.
32 Ibid., 228-29.
Around the late 1530s, madrigal acquisition expanded beyond aristocratic patronage, due to the growth in Venetian publications of part music. This expanded circulation to the general public naturally led to a growth in compositions incorporating the exigencies of popular interests, often utilizing formulas modeled after prominent composers, such as Verdelot (c. 1480-1530) and Jacques Arcadelt (1507-68). Several factors likely contributed to the early madrigal’s general appeal, such as condensed vocal ranges, simple rhythms, and poetry emanating from local sources. Though poets were often local, their subject matter, voice, word choice, and imagery generally emulated the linguistic style of Francesco Petrarcha (1304-74), bearing a scholarly elevation seemingly at odds with the thaw in public engagement. In light of the public consumer, Haar comments on the resulting detachability between text and musical setting, noting that “poems known in settings for four or five voices were printed in collections of easier music in newly written compositions for two or three voices, such as the series of volumes that appeared under the name of the publisher Girolamo Scotto.” Thus, not only were popular compositions refashioned to suit a broader range of vocalists, but performers could, at times, select vocal textures matching their available forces. This further suggests the importance of amateur, communal performance in the early madrigal’s public appeal.

The madrigal’s suitability for amateur performance fostered interactions emphasizing social readings. Qualities that made the early madrigal desirable for amateur musicians—such as

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33 James Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 100-101. Haar also notes that, although music prints were typically dedicated to aristocrats and rulers, their genuine patronage is often unclear, and the life of the madrigal in the 1530s and 1540s was largely fueled by (and catered to) amateur consumption.

34 Ibid., 102.

35 In a further point regarding the madrigal’s favorability among amateurs, Haar emphasizes partbook features that facilitated easier sight reading, such as increasingly accurate text underlay and idiomatic music notation. See Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music*, 106.


manageable rhythms and melodies, unified textures, and a variety of pieces in a familiar style—contributed to a culture of communal performance: chamber music centralizing the performer as audience.\textsuperscript{38} This connectivity, I argue, bound the public more closely to the dominant secular genre within the century, cultivating an intimacy between performer and listener that embodied a poetic conversation, rather than a delivered performance. The metaphor of a musical conversation for describing performance practice in the early madrigal, as Laura Macy has demonstrated, is congruous with Baldassare Castiglione’s social prescriptions regarding the \textit{cinquecento} courtier.\textsuperscript{39} Noting Castiglione’s emphasis on the art of conversation, Macy views the early madrigal as a social arena for improving one’s wit, emphasizing the skilled repartee required for its graceful execution.\textsuperscript{40} Macy highlights the interchange between madrigal singing and conversation, emphasizing Antonfrancesco Doni’s social engagements that mixed conversation within madrigal singing in his 1544 \textit{Dialogo della musica}:

[Madrigals] accomplish in music the aims of the evening’s discourse. Like conversations, they involve their participants in witty repartee. Since the words are supplied, the repartee may be seen as scripted. In that sense the madrigal becomes a kind of practice for “real” conversation where the dialogue must be improvised.\textsuperscript{41}

Thus, I argue that the early madrigal found its ideal performance within intimate chambers, fulfilling a social function of communal readership and conversation. Certainly, madrigals were sung in a variety of other contexts—such as Verdelot’s music for performances of Niccolò Macchiavelli’s plays\textsuperscript{42}—but the growing market of amateur consumers, stemming from the

\textsuperscript{38} Haar, \textit{Essays on Italian Poetry and Music}, 107.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 7-8.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{42} Tim Carter, \textit{Music in Late Renaissance & Early Baroque Italy} (London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1992), 90.
boom in partbook printing and rise in music literacy,\textsuperscript{43} created a substantial arena for chamber music.

A significant printing shift undergirds this social dynamic. Haar notes that madrigal partbooks in the sixteenth century were among the first polyphonic genres seemingly tailored for sight-reading.\textsuperscript{44} In contrast to musical notation in prior centuries, which more or less functioned as memory aids for singers executing an internalized repertory, the notation found in madrigal partbooks catered to an increasingly music-literate public, showing heightened sensitivity to text underlay and generous spacing for easier reading.\textsuperscript{45} The notational style displayed in printed madrigal repertories throughout the sixteenth century therefore reflects a cultural shift in music performance toward social readings, in its growth of features tailored to sight-reading. Haar identifies stylistic features distinctly suiting conversational performance: “In certain respects the early madrigal, with its basically syllabic declamation and its gently curved (sometimes nearly flat) melodic lines, seems meant for the singers to treat the verse as if they were reading aloud, using repetitions of words and phrases for rhetorical emphasis; single parts diverge into imitative counterpoint as if to emphasize the individuality of each reader within the framework of a harmonious single interpretation of the text.”\textsuperscript{46} As I will demonstrate, the intimate, communal readership characterizing amateur madrigal performances contrasts with the dynamic arising from professional singing groups later within the century, where the unity between performer and listener separates.

\textsuperscript{43} Haar, \textit{Essays on Italian Poetry and Music}, 106.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{45} In addition to text sensitivity, Haar points toward markings within partbook sources that reveal the practice of sight reading, such as paintings depicting singers reading from partbooks while tapping the tactus, corrected printers’ errors, and bar lines written in. See Haar, \textit{Essays on Italian Poetry and Music}, 106.
\textsuperscript{46} Haar, \textit{Essays on Italian Poetry and Music}, 108.
Madrigal performances by virtuosic ensembles fulfilled a contrasting social function from amateur readings, differentiating the roles between musician and listener. As performance and repertory developed throughout the century, composers began writing madrigals with more daring effects, tailored to specialized singers. Whereas social singing resembled a musical conversation between equal voices, emphasizing wit and grace, concert settings focalized delivery from an active to a passive group; or, as Macy summarizes, “the madrigal became a spectator sport.” Tim Carter confirms this interpretation, noting: “Virtuosity was also an increasingly important feature of performing practice, particularly as the madrigal, at least in some of its manners shifted ground, catering for a non-participant audience gaining its pleasure not from singing madrigals themselves but from hearing the performances of ‘professional’ groups.” The polarization between audience and performer within the madrigal finds its clearest example in the *musica segreta* performances Duke Alfonso II maintained in Ferrara with his ensemble of singing ladies known as the *Concerto delle donne*.

**Audience Immersion and the *Concerto delle donne***

The *Concerto delle donne’s* virtuosic performances for private, sophisticated listeners shifted madrigal practice away from conversational engagement, toward immersive listening. In the following passages, I consider how Wert’s compositions within this setting contributed to greater theatricality in madrigal performance, fostering a style designed to exploit the dramatic exchange between performer and listener.

Ferrara’s *Concerto delle donne* solidified as a court institution in the 1580s, fostering an environment of experimental composition and immersive listening. The trio of virtuosic

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48 Carter, *Music in Late Renaissance and Early Baroque Italy*, 131-32.
sopranos—Laura Peverara, Anna Guarini, and Livia d’Arco—was appointed by Duke Alfonso after his marriage to Margherita Gonzaga (daughter of Duke Guglielmo of Mantua) in 1579, supporting his penchant for music and appeasing his new bride’s passion for entertainment and dance. The singers were recruited from surrounding areas in Northern Italy and selected for their vocal prowess and suitability for handling bolder artistic demands, forming an act that would become a central institution within Alfonso’s court. The ladies performed within Ferrara’s *musica segreta*: exclusive, daily concerts within the duke’s and duchess’s private chambers, solely for the enjoyment of the ruling family and their guests. Anthony Newcomb, in his seminal 1980 work on the subject, begins by addressing the significant conclusions that research suggests: namely, that the group fomented compositional experimentation and stylistic change within the madrigal to satisfy a highly sophisticated audience, and the divide between audience and performer changed the genre’s emotional context, in turn bolstering the growth of dramatic music.

Throughout the 1580s, Wert became engrossed in the Ferrarese cultural environment surrounding the *Concerto delle donne*, and his madrigals during this period reflect newfound experimentations suiting the virtuosity of its singers, exploring greater theatricality and drama. Though Wert remained Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga’s *maestro di cappella* at the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara in Mantua, his frequent stays in Ferrara during the 1580s suggest an artistic kinship with the progressive center, reflected in the dedication of his Eighth Book of madrigals (1586) to Duke Alfonso, in which he states that the greater portion of the enclosed works were

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50 Ibid., 20.
51 Ibid., 3.
52 Ibid., 3. Though Newcomb displays these conclusions, he does so only after noting the continued research necessary for their substantiation. Nevertheless, Newcomb raises significant considerations regarding the ensemble’s centrality in the madrigal’s evolving discourse in the late sixteenth century.
composed in Ferrara.\textsuperscript{53} Though prolific in his output in Mantua, Wert likely found inspiration in Ferrara, as it provided a more secular and progressive respite from the Counter-Reformation conservatism enforced by Guglielmo.\textsuperscript{54} During this period, Wert would have encountered a thriving milieu of poets and musicians working within the city, such as Giovanni Battista Guarini, Luzzasce Luzzaschi, and Luca Marenzio.\textsuperscript{55}

Luzzaschi was an acclaimed composer and organist at the Este court during this period, and had extensive practice writing madrigals suited to the capabilities of the \textit{Concerto delle donne}.\textsuperscript{56} Haar notes that Luzzaschi’s experimental madrigals—along with Wert’s—set the tone for stylistic developments in the 1590s, stating, “Varied textures, use of contrast motifs, occasional employment of chromaticism and above all a tendency toward fragmentation—change of mood and style heading toward hair-trigger response to the affective message of the text—made of Luzzaschi’s madrigals a model to be emulated, if possible to be surpassed.”\textsuperscript{57}

Wert equally forged new expressive pathways with his madrigals composed during the 1580s, though, as with Luzzaschi, his style was well-established by this point, and thus could borrow from Ferrarese trends in gratuitous ornamentation and virtuosic diminutions without compromising the integrity of his compositional voice.\textsuperscript{58} Stated differently, Wert and


\footnotesize\textsuperscript{54} Iain Fenlon, \textit{Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua}, 4-5. A poignant example of diverging musical tastes between Guglielmo—who preferred castrati singers—and Alfonso appears when Guglielmo boisterously interjected, “ladies are very impressive indeed—in fact, I would rather be an ass than a lady,” during Alfonso’s premiere of his new ensemble in 1581. See Newcomb, \textit{The Madrigal at Ferrara: 1579-1597}, 24.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{55} While Marenzio assuredly spent time in Ferrara in the 1580s, his travels in the service of his patron, Cardinal Luigi d’Este, make it difficult to denote the exact periods of his stays. Marco Bizzarini provides evidence confirming Marenzio’s presence in Ferrara from the end of 1580 to the spring of 1581. See Marco Bizzarini, \textit{Luca Marenzio: The Career of a Musician Between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation}, trans. James Chater (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2003), 36.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{56} Haar, “Madrigal,” 240.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{58} Newcomb, \textit{The Madrigal at Ferrara: 1579-1597}, 24. Newcomb, drawing from Vincenzo Giustiniani’s 1628 \textit{Discorso sopra la musica}, details first hand reports that note a new compositional style blossoming in 1580s
Luzzaschi’s stylizations, when employed, can be viewed as self-conscious affectations rather than decisive metamorphoses or shifts in identity. Complete adoption of this “luxuriant style,” as Newcomb has titled it, would have required significant effort for both composers, whereas younger generations appealing to Ferrarese interests, such as Marenzio, likely assimilated more easily. Nevertheless compositions within Wert’s Seventh (1581) and Eighth (1586) books—such as *Tirsi morir volea* and *Vezzosi augelli*—reveal a shift toward virtuosity and theatricality, providing a dramatic experience for the audience that featured rhythmic and textural variation and vocal ornamentations deviating from madrigals intended for amateur consumption.

Table 1.1: Giovanni Battista Guarini, *Tirsi morir volea*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tirsi morir volea,</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gli occhi mirando di colei ch’ adora;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ond’ ella, che di lui non meno ardea,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gli disse: “Ohimè, ben mio,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deh, non morir ancora,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ché teco bramo di morir anch’ io.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tirsi wanted to die,</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>his eyes gazing on her whom he adored;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she, who burned no less than he,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>said to him: “Alas, my love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do not die yet,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for I too wish to die with you.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frenò Tirsi il desio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ch’ havea di pur sua vita all’ hor finire,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et sentia morte e non potea morire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et mentre fisso il guardo pur tenea ne’ begli occhi divina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et nettare amoroso indi bevea,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la bella Ninfa sua, che già vicini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentia I messi d’Amore,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disse con occhi languidi e tremanti:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mori, cor mio, ch’ io moro.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le ripose il Pastore:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ed io, mia vita, moro.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Così morirno i forunati amanti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>di morte si soave e si gradita,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>che per anco morir tornaro in vita.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thus died the fortunate lovers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A death so sweet and so welcome,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That to die again they returned to live.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ferrara based upon written diminution formulas that allowed madrigal singers to simultaneously ornament their parts in highly virtuosic displays.

59 Ibid., 50.

Tirsi morir volea, a polyphonic dialogue between seven voices within his Seventh Book, demonstrates Wert’s theatricality in the late sixteenth-century madrigal. The text is a pastoral scene by Guarini, in which a shepherd and nymph pursue an erotic encounter (Table 1.1)—capitalizing on the double meaning of “death”—and was a highly popular text for madrigal settings during the rise of the luxuriant style.\(^\text{61}\) First, and most strikingly, Wert structures the dialogue between two choral groups: a lower quartet and an upper trio (Example 1.1). Though textural diversity was commonplace in madrigals—especially with composers such as Marenzio, who published two volumes for four voices, nine volumes for five voices, and six volumes for six voices—scoring for five voices remained the standard medium throughout the mid to late century.\(^\text{62}\) Since seven voices would compound difficulties in required personnel and performance execution, Wert’s texture in Tirsi morir volea decisively sidesteps tradition for expressive gains. Wert classifies this madrigal as a dialogue for seven voices (Dialoghi A 7), along with In qual parte, which concludes the publication. Further, the unusual scoring of the two dialogues at the end of a book of five-voice madrigals—with one six-voice Petrarch setting, Gratie ch’a pochi, preceding them—distinguishes the piece as an outlier within the individual collection, as well as Wert’s oeuvre.


\(^{62}\) Early madrigalists such as Verdelot and Arcadelt generally scored their published collections for four and five voices. Verdelot published four volumes of four-voice madrigals, two volumes of five-voice madrigals, and one volume for six voices. Arcadelt, on the other hand, remained faithful to a quartet, publishing five volumes of four-voice madrigals. Likewise, Cipriano de Rore (1515–65) adhered mostly to five-voice collections, publishing five volumes and only two books of four-voice madrigals. Later madrigalists such as Luzzaschi and Wert often favored five-voice settings: Luzzaschi published seven five-voice volumes and Wert published one volume of four-voice settings and at least twelve volumes of five-voice madrigals.
Example 1.1: Giaches de Wert, *Il settimo libro de madrigali* (1581): *Tirsi morir volea*, mm. 8-11

Wert uses his seven-voice texture in *Tirsi morir volea* for dramatic purposes. The choirs alternate speaking to one another, as the other group waits silently, until clashing in a brilliant display of text painting for Tirsi’s final line, “Ed io, mia vita, moro.” (And I, my life, die), when the two lovers unite in pleasure (Example 1.2). This choral division provides a dramatic staging between the two groups, where the lower choir functions as the narrator’s voice, and the upper choir voices the nymph. Further, as Carol MacClintock notes, Wert’s groupings are used to clearly distinguish between narration and direct discourse, and *Tirsi morir volea* is one of the earliest works to do so.\(^63\) The use of textural contrast for delineating between narrative and direct speech—as will be discussed in the following chapter—is a formative device in *seconda pratica* development, featured prominently in *Giunto alla tomba* (also appearing within his Seventh Book) as well as numerous other madrigals by Wert and Monteverdi.\(^64\) Wert’s homophonic declamation predominates throughout *Tirsi morir volea*, broken only by brief imitative writing in the final measures (Example 1.3),\(^65\) providing textual clarity that sharpens the dramatic exchange between the two choirs. If one imagines a *Concerto delle donne* performance of Wert’s setting, with Ferrara’s three virtuosic sopranos performing the nymph’s role, theatrical possibilities abound. Susan McClary also highlights this consideration, stating: “The top three voices were no doubt designed for the fabled *concerto di donne*, the Ladies of Ferrara whose high-voice virtuosity—as featured in compositions by Wert and Luzzasco Luzzaschi—pushed the envelope of the madrigal almost beyond recognition and led to many of the generic transformations that make seventeenth-century Italian music so radically different from that of the sixteenth.”\(^66\)

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\(^{63}\) MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 110.

\(^{64}\) Monteverdi’s *Sfogava con le stelle* from his Fourth Book of madrigals (1603) provides another clear example in its contrast between *falsobordone* and double counterpoint to delineate between narrative and direct speech. See Tim Carter, “‘Sfogava con le stelle’ Reconsidered: Some Thoughts on the Analysis of Monteverdi’s Mantuan Madrigals,” in *Monteverdi and his Contemporaries* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2000), 157.

\(^{65}\) MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 110.

\(^{66}\) McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 144.
Wert’s setting of Torquato Tasso’s *Vezzosi augelli*, in his Eighth Book, provides another example of theatricality emerging from his involvement in Ferrara’s musical environment in the 1580s, further demonstrating a shift in the madrigal toward virtuosic performances and immersive listening. Tasso’s poetry depicts a musical tournament between a group of birds and the breeze (Table 1.2), and Wert’s setting again uses textural groupings for delineating characters. The madrigal begins with the upper three voices in trio, personifying “The charming birds among the green branches” (*Vezzosi augelli in fra le verdi fronde*) described in the first line of poetry (Example 1.4). Just as in *Tirsi morir volea*, Wert’s vocal groupings seem uniquely suited to showcase the trio of *Concerto delle donne* singers, facilitating a dramatic interchange.

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67 Owens, “Marenzio and Wert Read Tasso,” 558.
68 Ibid.
between the upper trio and the bottom duo. Beginning in m. 2, the basso and tenor—embodying the wind—interject with a contrary rhythmic motive on “mormora l’aura” (the breeze murmurs), interrupting the trio and initiating the musical competition. From mm. 2 to 10, the “mormora” motive appears in every measure, in close imitation with at least one other voice—with the exception of mm. 7 and 8, where the quinto voice carries the motive in isolation, then repeats it down a fifth. This contagious imitation creates a constantly shifting ground between voice groupings (and poetic structure) within the five-voice texture, requiring virtuosic skill for maintaining ensemble cohesion. Furthermore, Wert’s extravagant vocal diminutions—characteristic of the Ferrarese luxuriant style—in painting words such as “cantan” (Example 1.5) and “musica” require abilities likely beyond the amateur consumer, especially in cohesively executing the paired melismas amidst imitative lower parts. Thus, *Vezzosi augelli* demands a high level of virtuosity for its execution, though if entrusted to the *Concerto delle donne*, would provide a theatrical experience to *musica segreta* audiences bringing natural and musical worlds into aural manifestation.

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69 Ibid.

70 Iain Fenlon, referring to the two Tasso settings in Wert’s Seventh Book—*Donna, se ben le chiome* and *Giunto alla tomba*—highlights “simultaneous diminution” as a characteristic that, in part, signifies intended *Concerto delle donne* performance. See Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua*, 138.
Table 1.2: Torquato Tasso, *Vezzosi augelli*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vezzosi augelli in fra le verdi fronde temprano a prova lascivette note; mormora l’aura, e fa le foglie e l’onde garrir, che variamente ella percote. Quando taccion gl’augelli alto risponde; quando cantan gl’augei, piu lieve scote; sia caso od arte, hor accompagna, ed hora alterna I versi lor la Musica ora.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The charming birds among the green branches tune their playful notes; the breeze murmurs, and makes the leaves and waves chatter, as variously it catches them. When the birds are silent, it answers clearly; when the birds sing, it blows more softly. Whether by chance or design, the music [of the breeze] now accompanies and now alternates with their verses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 1.4: Giaches de Wert, *L’ottavo libro de madrigali* (1586): *Vezzosi augelli*, mm. 1-6

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71 Translation supplied by Owens, “Marenzio and Wert Read Tasso,” 558.
Example 1.4: (Continued) Mm. 7-12

Example 1.5: Giaches de Wert, L’ottavo libro de madrigali (1586): Vezzosi augelli, mm. 20-22
The artistic climate of 1580s Ferrara fostered a unique culture around madrigal performances with the *Concerto delle donne* and *musica segreta*. The ensemble’s virtuosic capabilities and formation as an institution assisted a shift in the genre, deviating from amateur social readings to a linear exchange between performer and listener. This atmosphere allowed Wert to experiment with more dramatic forms of expression in his compositions, leading to increased theatricality. Wert’s developments, in part, broadened the available palette of rhetorical gestures within the madrigal, providing composers of Monteverdi’s generation with significant resources for reaching new levels of text representation.

**Wert and Theater**

Wert’s lifelong involvement with theatrical productions enabled him to develop a unique sensitivity to dramatic representation, contributing to the extravagant gestures contained in his later books of madrigals. Examining theatrical traditions in the cities and courts Wert served in as *maestro di cappella*, illuminates the ways in which his involvement with drama supplemented his stylistic evolution as a madrigalist. Understanding this component of Wert’s development sheds light upon his contributions to the *seconda pratica*, an aesthetic change prioritizing expression over contrapuntal orthodoxy.

Documenting Wert’s early years in Italy has proven difficult for scholars, though research has revealed the composer’s activity in courts possessing strong theatrical traditions. Concerning Wert’s early exposure to Neapolitan theater, after moving from Flanders and entering into employment as a singer in the *cappella* of Maria di Cardona in nearby Padula,

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MacClintock states: “As has been pointed out, from the very beginning of his life in Italy Giaches was associated in some way with the theater; the circle around Maria de Cardona was absorbed with musical-theatrical representations and Giaches undoubtedly witnessed and was a participant in some of them.”\textsuperscript{74} Wert’s early theatrical exposure would serve him well at his first \textit{maestro di cappella} post at Novellara in 1553, in the service of Count Alfonso Gonzaga.\textsuperscript{75} The music room where Giaches directed performances for the Novellara court was uniquely designed for theater, equipped with a stage for the musicians.\textsuperscript{76} Within this environment, Wert likely found a close relationship between his role as a composer and the realization of his madrigals for dramatic performance. After moving to Mantua in 1565, Wert maintained close contact with Alfonso and the Novellara court, collaborating on \textit{intermedi} for a comedy slated for performance at Alfonso’s marriage to Vittoria da Capua in 1568.\textsuperscript{77} In Mantua, Wert managed all of Duke Guglielmo’s musical entertainments including \textit{rappresentazioni} and \textit{intermedi}, and prepared performances for the marriage celebration of Duke Francesco and Caterina of Austria in 1549, and Vincenzo Gonzaga and Margherita Farnese in 1580.\textsuperscript{78}

In Mantua, theater maintained a robust and central position within courtly society, largely due to the Jewish acting troupe, which thrived in part due to Mantua’s more relaxed treatment of Jews in comparison to other Italian states. Especially during Guglielmo’s reign, Jewish communities were the subject of less persecution than in many other Italian cities, partially due to their utility as performers within court theater and during the carnival season.\textsuperscript{79} That being said, Jews were still victimized and relegated to ghettos, though able to move freely throughout

\begin{footnotes}
\item[74] MacClintock, \textit{Giaches de Wert}, 162.
\item[76] Ibid., 163.
\item[77] Ibid., 32.
\item[79] Treloar, “The Madrigals of Giaches de Wert,” 19.
\end{footnotes}
the city. Yet by maintaining a role in performances, Jewish theatrical troupes were necessarily included in the most important ceremonies of the ducal family and courtly elite. Stephanie Lynn Treloar notes, however, that during the carnival season, Jewish performances were expected to be given without compensation, as payment for their liberties of movement and association within the duchy. Treloar also indicates several high-profile performances in which the Jewish troupe would have performed, including Duke Francesco and Caterina of Austria’s 1549 wedding, Archdukes Rudolf and Ernest of Austria’s reception in 1563, and Vincenzo’s marriages to Margherita Farnese and Eleanor de’ Medici. Thus, Guglielmo’s Mantua sustained a moderately inclusive relationship toward the Jewish community, though it was built upon their utility in courtly spectacle and service to the ducal household. Guglielmo’s policy of Jewish tolerance likely enforced his image as the subjects’ defender against inquisitorial encroachment, especially after Pope Pius V’s 1569 bull expelling non-converting Jews from papal states.

When Vincenzo Gonzaga came to power in 1587, his taste for lavish entertainment brought the artistic level of the Mantuan court to an apex, providing fertile ground for Wert’s expressive text setting to flourish amidst innovative poetry, theatrical productions, and virtuosic singing. Vincenzo expressed a lifelong interest in theater, and had been progressively more involved with theatrical institutions in Mantua. During Guglielmo’s reign, Vincenzo began

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82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 16-17.
organizing court performances, and acting companies increasingly sought an audience with Vincenzo, rather than Guglielmo, for matters related to licensing and production approvals.\(^87\)

Around 1590, and throughout the decade preceding the seventeenth century, Vincenzo desperately sought a Mantuan staging of Guarini’s tragicomedy, *Il pastor fido* (“The Faithful Shepherd”), and Wert played a crucial role in preparing the event. After Tasso’s removal from court in 1579, due to his increasing mental instability, Guarini became Ferrara’s court poet and began crafting *Il pastor fido* throughout the 1580s, likely spurred by the success he had witnessed in Tasso’s pastoral play, *Aminta* (1573).\(^88\) Guarini’s work had fomented attacks from literary critics and Counter-Reformation ecclesiastics, for its lack of didactic moral function and as a categorical abnormality. His iconoclastic splicing of poetic genres—classifying the work as a *tragicommedia pastorale*—cut against Aristotle’s clear distinctions between comedy, tragedy, and heroic forms in his *Poetics*, culminating in a heated debate between literary critics of the time.\(^89\) Nevertheless, Vincenzo had cherished Guarini’s play from its earliest stages of manuscript circulation around 1584, and actively pursued a full theatrical performance beginning in 1591.\(^90\) The first attempts, slated for performance between 1592 and 1593, ultimately failed due to complications with staging some of the more difficult scenes, and insufficient practice time. This was especially true regarding the *gioco della cieca* in Act III—a choral dance and kissing game based upon blind man’s buff.\(^91\) During this time, Wert was involved in preparing the production, working closely with Francesco Rovigo in composing music for the play that

\(^{87}\) Ibid.


likely functioned as *intermedi* and choral pieces punctuating the ends of acts.\(^{92}\) The exact function of Wert’s intended compositions for the performance remains unclear, though the *Il pastor fido* madrigals included in Wert’s Eleventh Book (1595) represent his musical activities from 1591 to 1594, and are drawn from dramatic high points within the narrative, such as *Cruda Amarilli* and *Ah, dolente partita*.\(^{93}\) Further, all texts set within the volume embody Mirtillo’s role,\(^{94}\) indicating Wert’s preference for expressing the subjective condition of a singular character, as will be discussed in the following chapter of this thesis.

Wert’s musical involvement in courts with substantial theatrical programs assuredly contributed to his ability to infuse realistic drama into his later madrigals. His successive positions at the courts of Maria di Cardona in Padula, Alfonso Gonzaga in Novellara, and Guglielmo and Vincenzo Gonzaga in Mantua each necessitated his contributions for staged works and *intermedi*, closely and consistently integrating secular polyphony with dramatic productions. Examining this aspect of Wert’s career provides cultural significance illuminating his effectiveness in madrigals that simulated theatrical dialogue and staged action—such as *Tirsi morir volea* and *Vezzosi augelli*—or projected the internal state of lamenting characters, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

\(^{93}\) MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 127.
\(^{94}\) Ibid.
Mannerism: Aesthetic Considerations, Mantua, and Wert

The term “Mannerism” has served as a point of discussion and contention in understanding aesthetic and stylistic developments within the late madrigal. The final section of this chapter considers the term’s definition, its relationship to Mantuan artistic traditions, and its usage in discussing the stylistic trends of the late Renaissance madrigal. The intention is not to established or deny a connection between Mannerism and Wert’s affective gestures, but to supply an alternative framework for approaching Wert’s later madrigals amidst his contemporaries.

According to Denis Arnold and Tim Carter, Mannerism originated as a description of particular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century visual artists such as Michelangelo Caravaggio (1571-1610) and Giulio Romano (1499-1546), who stretched and contorted their subjects with virtuosic skill, deviating from the classical ideals of symmetry and balance prized by earlier Renaissance artists such as Raphael (1483-1520) and Michelangelo (1475-1564). Maria Rika Maniates, in her expansive work on the subject, elaborates upon this definition, emphasizing the deliberate intellectualism embraced by artists who boldly flaunted formal complexities. Thus Mannerism, regarding sixteenth-century visual artists, was at once a stylistic, aesthetic, and intellectual statement. It was also a personal statement, requiring boldness in relinquishing the safety of conventions. Maniates rightly addresses the problem of the term’s malleability and prolific use among art, music, and literature studies, but draws attention to its etymology, stemming from “the Italian, maniera, meaning style or more precisely stylization, a term that first attained prominence in sixteenth-century literature.” Giorgio Vasari famously discusses

97 Ibid., 3.
maniera in his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550), stating that a beautiful style (*bella maniera*) derives from compiling the most beautiful forms after one has repeatedly copied each component to perfection, and also that one can determine the maniera of a specific artist—referring to stylistic qualities that distinguish a particular artist’s style. In this sense, we have two working definitions of the term, which are both employed in discussing late Renaissance visual arts and music: a contortion of classical symmetry for effect, and a cultivated style that distinguishes a specific artist.

Mannerism thrived in Mantua during the sixteenth century, as the Gonzaga’s created a world of sensationalism surrounding their ducal household, expressing their wealth and local power by employing progressive artists such as Giulio Romano. Romano arrived in Mantua in 1524, at the request of Federico Gonzaga II (1500-1540), and began cultivating a thriving studio that included architects, painters, sculptors, theatrical set designers, and costume designers to suit the tastes of Federico’s requests. Romano’s acclaim as Raphael’s star pupil ushered in a dramatic change for Mantua’s artistic climate, elevating the duchy’s cultural status in relation to other thriving artistic centers, like nearby Ferrara. After Romano was appointed as the Prefect of Building Works around 1526, Mantua began to evolve aesthetically from previous centuries, favoring the bizarre themes and theatrical embellishments of Mannerism in the interiors and exteriors of Federico’s villas and palaces.

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101 Ibid., 118.

102 Ibid., 170.
featured ambiguous forms and unbalanced proportions, developing an idiosyncratic style that
deviated from the classical idealism heralded by his teacher, Raphael.103 Romano’s frescos in the
castle’s interior such as Cupid and Psyche’s Wedding Banquet in the Sala di Psyche and Fall of
the Giants in the Sala dei Giganti portray a kaleidoscope of lavish color, extreme lighting, and
chaotic motion in the depicted scenes.104 Thus, Mantua throughout the first half of the sixteenth
century cultivated a strong aesthetic of Mannerism. This climate surrounded Wert, and the
composer was substantially exposed to mannerist representation in the visual arts.

The mannerist concept of rupturing classical structure for dramatic effect is often
considered with regard to certain late Renaissance madrigalists such as Carlo Gesualdo (1566-
1613). Gesualdo—and to a somewhat lesser extent, Wert and Marenzio—experimented with
devices such as extreme dissonances and chromaticism in order to more graphically depict their
poetic texts.105 In reference to Mannerism in the Italian madrigal, McClary describes it as “an
aesthetic characterized by deliberate exaggerations and an emphasis on the artist’s seemingly
arbitrary—even forced—connections between one item and another.”106 While deliberate
exaggeration for the sake of expression certainly applies to works of all three madrigalists,107
Gesualdo is typically heralded as the bellwether, due to his overt and capricious flaunting of
stylistic conventions. Glenn Watkins agrees that Gesualdo ostensibly falls in line with mannerist
conventions, noting his persistent juxtaposition of incongruous elements such as sporadic

103 Paul F. Grendler, ed., Encyclopedia of the Renaissance, vol. 4, Machiavelli-Petrarchism (New York:
Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1999), 29.
104 Furlotti and Rebecchini, 143, 175.
105 Ibid.
106 McClary, Modal Subjectivities: Self-Fashioning in the Italian Madrigal, 124.
107 Salient examples can be found in both Wert and Marenzio’s settings of Solo e pensoso. Wert employs
exaggerated fifth leaps in his opening and Marenzio utilizes a climbing chromatic line in the canto voice. Both
rupture established polyphonic conventions for descriptive and dramatic effect. For a thorough discussion of the
mannerist gestures in both settings, see McClary, Modal Subjectivities, 125-43. A number of madrigals could
illustrate Gesualdo’s mannerisms, but his overt chromaticism in Asciugate i begli occhi provides one clear example.
rhythms and harmonic clashes, emphasizing his “imitatio and self-conscious reassemblage, dependency coupled with contrivance.”

One further consideration places Gesualdo into a distinct category of musical Mannerism: his emphasis on startling novelties. Maniates describes shock value as an overarching tenant of Mannerism, stating: “Above all, Mannerism wants to startle. When the shock value of a device wears off, mannerists move on to yet more startling effects.”

Though Gesualdo seems to fulfill the required criteria for aligning his aesthetic goals with mannerist visual artists, the extent to which Wert or other madrigalists embodied this notion remains open for consideration.

Mannerism remains a concept of interdisciplinary value and debatable potency. While certain aspects of its definition relate strongly to expressive techniques used by Wert and other late Renaissance madrigalists, its relevance is often incomplete or short-lived. Within this discussion, I have endeavored to provide a working definition of Mannerism, as well as its cultural history in Mantua, in order to frame Wert’s relationship to the artistic movement. Considerations regarding when and how the idea relates to Wert broaden our understanding of the social currents penetrating his stylistic development.

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109 Maniates, Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 5.
CHAPTER 2

DEATH AND SEPARATION: WERT, MONTEVERDI, AND THE LAMENT

Wert’s Influence on Monteverdi’s Fourth and Fifth Books of Madrigals

Claudio Monteverdi achieved immortality between the years of 1607 and 1608, premiering two operas that would revolutionize a new intimacy between dramatic expression and musical practice: *L’Orfeo* (1607) and *L’Arianna* (1608). Massimo Ossi rightly considers the peculiarity of Monteverdi’s success, noting the novelty of the *favola per musica* as a genre, and the fact that the composer was forty years of age when *L’Orfeo* made its maiden voyage in Mantua.\(^\text{110}\) That an established composer should take so rapidly, and propitiously, to such an avant-garde medium raises a significant question: what prepared Monteverdi—primarily a madrigalist by trade up to this point—to so effectively command pathos and represent character subjectivity in these settings? In addressing this question, I emphasize the *Il pastor fido* madrigals comprising Monteverdi’s Fourth and Fifth Books (1603 and 1605) as the composer’s workshop—a proving ground for auditioning *seconda pratica* gestures forming his new dramatic language. In building this language, engineered for conveying the text’s emotional content and subjective state of its characters, I consider Giaches de Wert, Mantua’s renowned madrigalist and *maestro di cappella* at the ducal chapel of Santa Barbara from 1565 to 1592.\(^\text{111}\) Wert’s fortitude in expressing plaintive texts provided Monteverdi with gestures to explore and adapt toward new aesthetic goals in first-person dramatic texts, and ultimately, the lament.


In this section, I consider the stylistic influence of Giaches de Wert upon Claudio Monteverdi’s Fourth and Fifth Books of madrigals, locating specific conventions used for expressing the emotional state of lamenting characters. Following this line of inquiry, I extend previous scholarship concerning Wert’s impact on Monteverdi’s earlier madrigals, tracing a lasting effect upon the composer during his formative years of constructing a more dramatic musical discourse. This comparison provides insight into gestures emerging after Monteverdi’s eleven-year publication silence—the interval between the printings of his Third (1592) and Fourth (1603) Books of madrigals—fundamental for identifying *seconda pratica* cultivation relating specifically to a language for lament. *Ah, dolente partita* and *Cruda Amarilli*, texts drawn from Guarini’s tragicomedy, *Il pastor fido* (1590), are the primary madrigals under consideration. Because both composers set the same texts, this analysis isolates their efforts in musically conveying the emotional state of individual subjects. Through their first-person narratives and graphic descriptions of grief, these texts function as significant vistas in tracing Monteverdi’s burgeoning rhetoric for this dramatic paradigm.

In exploring Monteverdi’s adoption and expansion of Wertian gestures in his Fourth and Fifth Books, it is useful to first examine the channel of artistic mentorship existing between the two composers prior to these publications. Wert’s influence concerning text selection and dramatic style surfaces in Monteverdi’s Third Book of madrigals (1592), published after the young composer’s move to Mantua in 1590.112 Monteverdi was recruited into the *cappella* as a singer, instrumentalist, and composer, and as Roger Bowers explains, would have served a dual function in secular or sacred performances in any of the three court venues: the church of Santa

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Croce, the chapel of Corte Vecchia, and the basilica of Santa Barbara. During this time, Monteverdi began straying from the lighter, *canzonette*-madrigals of his first two books—which were strongly influenced by Luzzasco Luzzaschi and Luca Marenzio—embracing a weightier style commensurate with representing the emotional gravity in his poetic selections from Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581). It should be noted, and scholars have demonstrated, that Wert’s influence had already appeared in Monteverdi’s compositional practices prior to his Third Book, manifesting itself in devices for depicting similar poetic ideas in Tasso’s works.

In his Seventh and Eighth Books of madrigals, published in 1581 and 1586, Wert set fourteen *ottave* from Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* that were primarily drawn from the narrative’s emotional peaks, such as Tancredi’s lament at the tomb of Clorinda (*Giunto alla tomba*) in his Seventh Book (Table 2.1). Monteverdi’s Third Book sets two cycles of six *ottave* from *Gerusalemme liberata*: Vattene pur, crudel, con quella pace and Vivrò fra i miei tormenti e le mie cure (Table 2.2), displaying both the influence of Wert’s text selection and the desire to musically represent the emotional state of a grieving individual.

A comparison between Wert’s *Giunto alla tomba* (Example 2.1) and Monteverdi’s *Vivrò fra i miei tormenti* (Example 2.2), illustrates Monteverdi’s adoption of one of Wert’s dramatic gestures: harmonic stasis for establishing the narrative foundation for a lamenting character. Though Monteverdi’s

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115 Ibid., 50-51. Tomlinson points out the similarities between Wert’s “Vezzosi augelli” (Book 8) and Monteverdi’s “Ecco mormorar” (Book 2), first noting the kinship between the poetic landscape in both texts and Monteverdi’s adherence to the same tonal area, then the clear use of Wert’s distinctive technique of juxtaposing lines of text with contrasting motives. See also Geoffrey Chew, “‘Ecco mormorar l’onde’ (1590),” in The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi, eds. John Whenham and Richard Wistreich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 45-52.
117 Ibid., 58.
118 Tomlinson argues the similar use of contrast between harmonic stasis and frantic polyphony in Monteverdi’s 1592 *Liberata* cycles and Wert’s *Liberata* settings. See Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance*, 68.
piece begins in rhythmic imitation, as opposed to Wert’s strict homophony, the pitches remain melodically stagnant for three measures, closely resembling the limited mobility of Wert’s example. As I will demonstrate, this rhetorical structure becomes a foundational device in Monteverdi’s expressive language, recurring in madrigal laments throughout his later books and forming an essential component for representing character interiority.\(^{119}\) It is not exclusively the contrast between homophonic declamation and polyphony that I am concerned with; rather it is the rhetorical paradigm of beginning a lament from a unified foundation, then rupturing its stability for expressive purposes. This device is refashioned at times, though its consistent placement at the beginning of plaintive madrigals indicates its significance in Monteverdi’s discursive framework.

Table 2.1: Torquato Tasso, *Giunto alla tomba* from *Gerusalemme liberata*, XII. 96 (first ottave)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giunto alla tomba, ove al suo spirto vivo dolorosa prigione il Ciel precrisse, di color, di calor, di moto privo già freddo marmo al marmo il volto affisse. Al fin sgorgando un lagrimoso rivo, in un languido oime proruppe, e disse: O sasso amato tanto, amaro tanto, che dentro hai le mie fiamme, e fuori il pianto.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When he arrived at the tomb, where Heaven had ordained a sorrowful prison for her living spirit—deprived of colour, of warmth, of motion, already cold marble—he fixed his gaze on the marble. At last, pouring forth a stream of tears, he broke out in a languishing ‘Alas’ and said: ‘O stone so beloved and so bitter that holds my flames within and my tears without.’(^{120})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{119}\) As to where Wert might have learned this technique, it seems a likely convergence of the Flemish polyphonic training of his youth coupled with his exposure to Cipriano de Rore in Ferrara and his experience with music for theater. MacClintock rightly considers the persistent recitando and theatrical qualities in Wert’s madrigals as an outgrowth of longstanding involvement in courtly productions of eclogues, *intermedi*, and comedies. See MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 189. Though theatrical underpinnings justify his use of declamatory homophony for narrative speech, the genesis of Wert’s sudden textural contrasts for conveying subjectivity in narrative laments remains open for consideration.

\(^{120}\) This version of the text and the English translation are drawn from Owens, “Marenzio and Wert read Tasso,” 562. Owens derives the Italian from Marenzio’s 1587 setting for four voices, and adapts the English translation from Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, trans. Ralph Nash (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 341.
Table 2.2: Torquato Tasso, Vivrò fra i miei tormenti from Gerusalemme liberata, XII. 77-79 (first four lines)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vivrò fra i miei tormenti e le mie cure,</td>
<td>Still must I live in anguish, grief and care,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mie giuste furie, forsegnato, errante;</td>
<td>furies, my guilty conscience which torment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paventerò l’ombre solinghe e scure</td>
<td>the ugly shades, dark night, and troubled air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>che’l primo error mi recheranno inante,</td>
<td>in grisly forms her slaughter still present:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e del sol che scopri le mie sventure,</td>
<td>madness and death about my bed repair;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a schivo ed in orror avrò il sembiante.</td>
<td>hell gapeth wide to swallow up this tent:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temerò me medesmo; e da me stesso</td>
<td>swift from myself I run, myself I fear,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sempre fuggendo, avrò me sempre appresso.</td>
<td>yet still my hell within myself I bear.121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.1: Giaches de Wert, Il settimo libro de madrigali (1581): Giunto alla tomba (prima parte), mm. 1-4

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121 This translation is drawn from Claudio Monteverdi, Songs and Madrigals, trans. Denis Stevens (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 222-23.
Monteverdi and Wert’s settings of *Ah, dolente partita* contain similar elements of dramatic expression, indicating a line of influence between Wert’s Eleventh Book (1595) and Monteverdi’s burgeoning *seconda pratica* style. *Ah, dolente partita* is taken from Mirtillo’s role, drawn from Act III, Scene 3 of *Il pastor fido* (Table 2.3). In this scene, Amarilli—the demigod nymph for whom love-stricken Mirtillo is prepared to die—casts Mirtillo away from her presence so that he might live. Mirtillo, on the other hand, cannot reconcile himself to a life
without Amarilli, stating that only death can offer respite from his torments.122 The text provides fertile ground for dramatic representation, as the lament comprising *Ah, dolente partita* allows the audience a window into Mirtillo’s emotional turmoil.123

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mirtillo:</th>
<th>Mirtillo:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ah, dolente partita!</em></td>
<td><em>Ah, sorrowful parting!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ah, fin de la mia vita!</em></td>
<td><em>Ah, end of my life!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Da te part’ e non moro? E pur io provo la pena de la morte,</em></td>
<td><em>I leave thee and do not die? Yet I experience the pain of death,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>e sento nel partire un vivace morire che dà vita al dolore,</em></td>
<td><em>and feel in parting a lively dying which gives life to sorrow,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>per far che moia immortalment’ il core.</em></td>
<td><em>and makes my heart die immortally.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Monteverdi and Wert’s madrigal settings begin with the canto and quinto voices entering homophonically and alone, presenting a stable foundation that encounters a jarring contrast when that stability is ruptured in the following measures (Examples 2.3 and 2.4). In Wert’s example, the two voices enter in thirds, maintaining intervallic stasis during their melodic descent, until meeting at a unison G before the cadence in m. 4.125 Monteverdi goes a step further, starting on a unison E that persists for three measures until an incremental suspension chain begins in m. 4, progressing from a minor second to a minor third, then a major second to major third. The jarring dissonances created by this opening gesture focalize the entire madrigal

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123 MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 128. Hartmann Jr. notes that although *Il pastor fido* was an extremely popular source for madrigalists in the late sixteenth century, seven excerpts were particularly favored: *Quell’ augellin che canta, Crud’ Amarilli che col nome ancora, O misera Dorinda! Ov’hai tu poste, O Primavera gioventù dell’anno, Ah, dolente partita, O Mirtillo, Mirtillo, anima mia, and Udite, lagrimsi.* Of these texts, *Ah, dolente partita* by far contains the most settings, with over thirty-three accounted for. For further discussion, see Hartmann Jr., “Battista Guarini and ‘Il Pastor Fido,”’ 423.


125 The designation of “measures” will appear as signifiers throughout analysis sections of this paper. However, the author recognizes that this term only has currency regarding edited transcriptions, and not within the original part books themselves.
around harmonic tension, a rhetorical schema useful for drawing the listener into the subject’s emotional condition.¹²⁶

Example 2.3: Giaches de Wert, *L’undecimo libro de madrigali* (1595): *Ah, dolente partita*, mm. 1-9

Example 2.3: (Continued) Mm. 10-18

Example 2.3: (Continued) Mm. 33-35
Example 2.4: Claudio Monteverdi, *Il quarto libro de madrigali* (1603): *Ah, dolente partita*, mm. 1-12

Example 2.4: (Continued) Mm. 13-18
Monteverdi further illustrates ruptured stability by his text underlay in the canto and quinto voices. He breaks the unified declamation at the same moment the intervals begin their expansion (m. 4), thus intensifying the gesture by accelerating the upper voices’ text delivery, forcing the quinto to lag behind contemplatively. Though textual displacement is commonplace within Renaissance polyphony, Monteverdi’s artful deployment intensifies his introductory gesture, adding a secondary layer to Mirtillo’s anguish. Monteverdi maintains Wert’s idea of a homophonic structure between the canto and quinto at a stationary interval, but exaggerates the gesture, beginning from a unison instead of thirds, setting the stage for greater contrast (and pain) when the voices eventually separate. Monteverdi elaborates Wert’s model of contrasting thirds by oscillating between seconds and thirds in both major and minor qualities (mm. 4-5), enhancing the portrayal of Mirtillo’s inner turmoil. McClary comments on the barrage of conflicting impulses that Mirtillo experiences within this short poetic verse, stating, “Multiple passions—longing, abjection, disbelief, anguish, resignation—assail him from within, finally to
condense into the oxymoron of ‘un vivace morire.’” Monteverdi thus portrays a greater spectrum of emotions in the two primary melodic voices, but does so by building upon Wert’s initial gesture. Although the text itself (“Ah, sorrowful parting”) virtually necessitates beginning from a unified point for illustrating the impending separation, the similarity between Monteverdi and Wert’s voice pairings and homophonic recitation is striking.

Another point of comparison between Wert and Monteverdi’s *Ah, dolente partita* settings is the similar motive both composers use for depicting expressions of death. In m. 2 of Wert’s madrigal, the alto voice enters with Mirtillo’s second spoken line, “Ah, fin de la mia vita!,” beginning with a minor third, then ascending stepwise for “fin de la mia, ” and leaping back down a fifth for “vita,” spanning a minor sixth from G to E♭. The tetrachord sandwiched within this gesture (B♭-C-D-E♭, or T-T-S) creates the primary motive for expressing death within the madrigal, reappearing to illustrate both “la pena de la morte” (the pain of death) and “per far che moia immortalmente il core,” (causing my heart to die immortally) later within the work. This motive runs counter to the descending upper voices, forming a dissonant minor seventh between the alto and canto on the last beat of m. 2, before meeting at a D-major triad at the beginning of m. 3. Wert uses an inversion of this motive in representing “la pena de la morte” (mm. 15-17), beginning the imitative series in the upper three voices with an octave leap from B♭ to B♭ in the alto, descending stepwise down a fifth until arriving at “morte,” followed by an ascending fourth

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128 MacClintock, *Giaches de Wert*, 128. Carol MacClintock notes a similarity in the thematic contour between Monteverdi and Wert’s settings: “Both begin with a pair of high voices and towards the end of the statement bring in the second theme.” As a point of comparison, Luca Marenzio begins his 1594 setting of *Ah, dolente partita* (Sixth Book of madrigals for five voices) with a chordal, five voice texture. The canto and alto voices meet at a unison E in m. 1, then in m. 2 clash on a passing tritone, before resolving to a major third within the same measure. Thus, Marenzio illustrates a unified beginning between the top two voices, but his texture, brevity, and motivic deployment are at variance with Wert and Monteverdi’s settings.
in the quinto that encompasses a tritone in its descent from E♭ to A. The canto’s iteration in m. 17 compresses the gesture yet further, following the quinto’s ascending fourth, but also spanning a fourth in its descent from E♭ to B♭. Therefore, the imitative entries comprising the three measures express “the pain of death” on a stratified plane: inverting the signifying motive, then truncating its form by a semitone upon each repetition—from a fifth, to a tritone, to a fourth. The dissonant minor sevenths created by the sustained E♭ in the canto grate against the descending upper two voices in mm. 16 and 17 strengthening the effect of this passage. Significantly, the events of mm. 15 through 17 occur during a rare moment of silence in the basso and tenor voices; an act of focalizing the upper voices’ motivic content that only finds its counterpart in the opening two measures of the piece. In short, Wert uses a key ascending motive for expressing “end of my life” at the beginning of the madrigal, and variations of its inversion in representing “the pain of death” later within the work. By texturally isolating each occurrence, the composer is not only drawing the listener’s attention to the significance of these themes, but providing an aural roadmap for their development.

Monteverdi appropriates this same descending gesture in his own setting, first in the canto voice at m. 7 with “Ah, fin de la mia vita!” In this first statement, the motive descends stepwise, spanning the interval of a minor sixth from C to E—recalling the minor sixth in Wert’s alto motive—followed in close imitation by the alto voice which also spans a minor sixth in its descent (F to A). This motive occurs throughout the madrigal expressing phrases that contain the words “vita” and “morte,” evoking moments of panic that flare across the texture and plunge into darkness. It is often truncated to span smaller intervalllic descents and generally remains in

129 McClary describes how Monteverdi progressively redefines “vita” and “morte” throughout the madrigal, playing with their oppositional nature until eventually forming an expressive synthesis. See McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 2.
close imitation or simultaneous motion with at least one other voice, maintaining thematic struggle with the non-participating voices. McClary describes how these gestures persist throughout the madrigal, conflicting with the steadier, more gradual textures in the other voices: “Still, ‘Ah fin de la mia vita’ does register as a motivic unit, and as the madrigal progresses, this gesture will repeatedly rip—even if impotently—against the exquisite languor of the other voices.” One finds an example of this motivic conflict when the tenor enters with a sluggish ascent of a third that spans five measures on “Da te part’e non moro,” beginning at m. 10, and likewise in the gradual ascent of the bass in mm. 25-28. These contrasting ideas dramatize Mirtillo’s internal struggle, and along with the turmoil of the madrigal’s opening motive, help make his subjective condition accessible to the audience. Giuseppe Gerbino summarizes this theatrical trend in the madrigals of Wert, Marenzio, and Monteverdi at the end of the sixteenth century: “The shift in emphasis from psychological introspection to dramatic representation of emotions was one of the defining moments in late-Renaissance musical aesthetics…Again, the emphasis shifted from the inside to the outside, from the inside perception of the performer to the outside reception of the audience.” When one considers the unique expressivity found in Wert and Monteverdi’s Ah, dolente partita settings, in relation to both composers’ involvement in productions of Il pastor fido surrounding the time of their composition—as will be discussed below—it becomes easy to view the assimilation of similar dramatic gestures in both madrigals as a link between Wert’s theatrical techniques in his Eleventh Book and Monteverdi’s seconda pratica style.

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130 McClary, Modal Subjectivities: Self-Fashioning in the Italian Madrigal, 27.
131 Ibid., 26-27.
Cruda Amarilli, another of Mirtillo’s plaints from Il pastor fido (Table 2.4), also appears in Wert’s Eleventh Book, and contains elements revealing further links between Wert’s methods for poetic representation and Monteverdi’s dramatic innovations appearing after his eleven-year publication silence. While direct analogues between Monteverdi and Wert’s settings are not as pronounced as in Ah, dolente partita, the relationship between Wert, Marenzio, and Monteverdi, and their similar motivic treatment of this text reveals a gestural line of Wertian origin. Ossi argues that Monteverdi looked primarily to Marenzio for a model in setting the text, establishing an aesthetic link to Marenzio’s style at the forefront of his Fifth Book, thereby gaining more desirability amongst Ferrara’s progressive circle of composers.\textsuperscript{133} Ossi presents compelling information regarding Monteverdi’s appropriation of Marenzio’s textures and motives within the madrigal, and in his replication of Marenzio’s thematic organization of madrigals comprising his Seventh Book (1595).\textsuperscript{134} He also notes the similarity between Monteverdi and Marenzio’s opening rhetorical gestures, where “Cruda Amarilli” is stated once, ending in a cadence, then immediately repeated before continuing with the next line of text (Examples 2.6 and 2.7).\textsuperscript{135} This deviates from Wert’s imitative beginning, where the canto and quinto cycle through the text three times before locking into a more unified texture in m. 9 (Example 2.5), and progressing to Mirtillo’s next words. Despite their initial textural differences, all three settings of Cruda Amarilli—Marenzio’s, Wert’s, and Monteverdi’s—use the same descending-fourth motive for expressing Mirtillo’s scornful declamation of Amarilli’s cruelty. In Wert’s setting, the alto descends from a C to a G, followed in close imitation by the quinto and canto, which only descend to a third before retreating back upwards. Likewise, Marenzio begins with the tenor and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{133} Massimo Ossi, “Monteverdi, Marenzio, and Battista Guarini’s ‘Cruda Amarilli’,” \textit{Music and Letters} 89 (2008): 312. \\
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 323. \\
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 318, 323.
\end{flushright}
alto descending in parallel sixths; the tenor following the same C to G outline as in Wert’s setting. Monteverdi follows suit, with the alto and canto descending in parallel thirds, while the accompanying voices fill out the quasi-homophonic texture. Comparing the three examples in this order, one finds a textural progression from Wert to Monteverdi: Wert uses imitative polyphony and staggered entrances, Marenzio sets his imitative voices in pairs, and Monteverdi removes imitation but maintains Marenzio’s vocal pairing. The three madrigalists also employ a similar homophonic *recitativo* treatment for Mirtillo’s phrase, “Amarilli, del candido ligustro,” further illustrating a pervasive influence within the composer’s dramatic conception of the text. If these qualities are present in all three madrigals, then tracing a line of influence will identify the source of the dramatic gestures, provided that one can establish a reliable chronology.

Table 2.4: Giovanni Battista Guarini, *Cruda Amarilli* from *Il pastor fido*, I. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mirtillo:</th>
<th>Mirtillo:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cruda Amarilli che col nome ancora d’amar, ahi lasso, amaramente insegni; Amarilli, del candido ligustro più candida e più bella, ma de l’aspido sordo e più sorda e più fera e più fugace, poi che col dir t’offendo i’ mi morrò tacendo.</em></td>
<td>Cruel Amaryllis, who teach with your own name to love, alas, bitterly; Amaryllis, whiter and lovelier than whitest privet, but deafer than the unhearing adder, more bestial and fleeting, since I offend you with my words I shall die in silence.(^\text{136})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2.5: Giaches de Wert, *L'undecimo libro de madrigali* (1595): *Cruda Amarilli*, mm. 1-13
Example 2.5: (Continued) Mm. 19-26
Example 2.6: Claudio Monteverdi, *Il quinto libro de madrigali* (1605): *Cruda Amarilli*, mm. 1-11

Example 2.6: (Continued) Mm. 28-33
Example 2.7: Luca Marenzio, *Il settimo libro de madrigali a 5 voci* (1595): *Cruda Amarilli*, mm. 1-12
Although *Cruda Amarilli* appears in both Wert and Marenzio’s 1595 madrigal publications, Ossi suggests Wert as potentially the first to set the text, due to his close working relationship with Guarini for the 1592 Mantuan production of *Il pastor fido*. Furthermore, due to his activities in Ferrara from 1584 to 1589 it is likely that Wert had exposure to Guarini’s manuscripts before the work’s publication in 1589. Regarding this possibility, Gerbino explains: “In 1586, *Il pastor fido* had not even been published yet, although copies of the manuscript, or at least parts of it had already begun to circulate. We know that Guarini showed drafts of his pastoral to friends and colleagues on more than one occasion, possibly as early as 1585.” Therefore, due to Wert’s increased involvement in Ferrara in the late 1580s, coupled with his role in preparing the Mantuan production of *Il pastor fido* beginning in 1590—which included composing madrigals during this time that would eventually become a part of his

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137 Ibid., 315-316.
138 Ibid., 315.
139 Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy*, 244.
Eleventh Book—it is likely that Wert’s setting of *Cruda Amarilli* is the generative locus for the primary expressive gesture found in Marenzio and Monteverdi’s settings.

The madrigals discussed above reveal significant advances in Monteverdi’s developing language for lament during the 1590s, elucidating Wertian gestures as cornerstones of his new rhetorical framework. Analysis of two plaintive madrigals, *Ah, dolente partita* and *Cruda Amarilli*, demonstrated several of these features. Having established a clear stylistic connection between the two composers, relating to character expression and motivic content within dramatic peaks of Guarini’s *Il pastor fido*, I now extend the Wert-Monteverdi connection to a formative moment in Monteverdi’s *seconda pratica* development: the *Lamento d’Arianna*. 
Arianna and the Polyphonic Lament: The Apex of the seconda pratica

In continued examination of Wert’s influence on Monteverdi’s dramatic vocabulary for lament, I now extend the previously examined techniques in the Il pastor fido madrigals to the apex of Monteverdi’s seconda pratica cultivation: the Lamento d’Arianna. Within his Fourth and Fifth Books of madrigals, Monteverdi introduced new expressive devices that expanded the madrigal’s dramatic capabilities, famously placing him at odds with Artusi, and the established notions of proper counterpoint—stemming from Gioseffo Zarlino’s (1517-1590) codifications.

In composing the settings contained in these volumes, Monteverdi cultivated a vocabulary suitable for realistic portrayals of human emotion, enhanced by the theatrical climate permeating Mantua at the end of the sixteenth century. Gary Tomlinson affirms this notion with regard to Monteverdi’s Il pastor fido madrigals, stating, “The theatrical orientation of Monteverdi’s Pastor fido settings is worth stressing because, as I have suggested, these works were the proving ground for a new language fully mastered only in L’Arianna of 1607-8.” Monteverdi later clarified his preference for representing human subjects rather than intangible forces (winds, specifically) in his 9 December 1616 letter to Alessandro Striggio (1573-1630), stating, “Arianna led me to a just lament, and Orfeo to a righteous prayer, but this fable [Le nozze di Tetide (1616-17)] leads me I don’t know to what end.” This supports his ethos of “the text as mistress of the harmony,” beyond superficial imitation, grasping to impart the text’s feeling by translating its expressive demands into compelling drama.

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141 Tomlinson, Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance, 118.
143 Massimo Ossi rightfully notes the slippery nature of defining seconda pratica beyond Artusi’s technical criticisms and Claudio and Giulio Cesare’s terse justification of obeying the text’s expressive demands. However, he
during this time, Ossi argues that he surpassed in his compositions and thinking those centered on comprehending his practice: “Monteverdi’s conception of the seconda prattica by 1603 had evolved beyond mere dissonance treatment, to which the ‘Lettera’ of 1605 and ‘Dichiaratione’ [Giulio Cesare’s ‘declaration’ attached to the Scherzi Musicali of 1607] modestly circumscribe it, and was already headed toward the ‘crisis’ accompanying the composition of Arianna that Monteverdi later singled out as the most significant period in its formation.”  

144 In mentioning the crisis, Ossi makes reference to Monteverdi’s 1633 letter to the theorist Giovanni Battista Doni, in which he recalls composing Arianna’s lament as a new frontier for constructing “the natural way of imitation.” 145 Monteverdi cites Plato as his only beneficial guide, famously admitting his preference for achieving modest praise as an innovator, rather than greater praise through continuing ordinary practices. 146 Tellingly, this admission takes place as Monteverdi is explaining to Doni the rationale behind his pending seconda pratica treatise, recalling the encounter with Artusi as the impetus for justifying his new compositional methodology. 147 Concerning this, Monteverdi writes:

I promised, as I said before, in a printed work of mine to let a certain theoretician of the First Practice know that there was another way (unknown to him) of considering music, and this I called the Second Practice. The reason for this was that he had been pleased to criticize (in print!) one of my madrigals, as regards certain of its harmonic progressions, on the basis of tenets of the First Practice (that is to say, the ordinary rules, as if they were exercises written by a youth beginning to learn the first species of counterpoint) and not according to a knowledge of melody. 148

also indicates that Monteverdi’s compositions quickly move beyond the discourse, moving towards deeper aesthetic considerations preceding the Lamento d’Arianna. See Ossi, Divining the Oracle, 6.
144 Ossi, Divining the Oracle, 5-6.
145 Ibid.
146 Monteverdi to Giovanni Battista Doni, Venice, 22 October 1633, in The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi, 421.
147 Ibid., 420-421. Though Monteverdi often spoke about this treatise in his letters, the work never came to fruition within his lifetime.
148 Ibid., 421.
Thus, from the composer’s words we can distinguish two significant factors concerning the *seconda pratica*: Monteverdi understood it as an alternate way of considering music—both aesthetically and compositionally—and the *Lamento d’Arianna* forced Monteverdi to solidify his compositional means of achieving natural imitation.

If the *Lamento d’Arianna* indeed represents the *seconda pratica’s* consummation—or at least an aesthetic turning point—then Monteverdi’s reworking of the operatic solo into a madrigal within his Sixth Book (1614) offers insight into his process of expressing a theatrical lament polyphonically. Though *L’Orfeo* and *L’Arianna* inaugurate Monteverdi’s official beginning as a composer for theater, he was by no means alien to the intimacies between music and staged drama within the Mantuan court environment of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga (r. 1587-1612). It is likely, in fact, that Monteverdi participated in the 1598 Mantuan staging of *Il pastor fido* as either a singer or instrumentalist. Tomlinson cautions against accepting Monteverdi’s *Il pastor fido* madrigals as receiving performance within the play itself, though he notes Monteverdi’s ability to easily transfer between solo song and five-voice versions of the same musical content. James Haar likewise comments on this trend, stating, “Some of Monteverdi’s later madrigals are really harmonized monodies or solo songs with choral interjections; and it is not very surprising that Monteverdi and others actually made polyphonic madrigals out of preexisting monodies, the reverse of earlier-sixteenth-century practice.” While Haar’s point is certainly valid for a madrigal such as the *Lamento della ninfa* in Monteverdi’s Eighth Book (1638), that functions mainly as a monody with choral accompaniment, the complex interactions

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149 Ossi, *Divining the Oracle*, 8.
between all voices in the polyphonic reworking of the *Lamento d’Arianna* reveals a closer kinship to the original monody than merely a transcription. In other words, the madrigal version seeks its definition as a madrigal, rather than a reconfigured monody. In this sense, one might consider the *Lamento d’Arianna*, in both its guises, more conceptually oriented toward a polyphonic mindset than the monodic orientation of the *Lamento della Ninfa*. Further, though Monteverdi was certainly adept at translating a solo-voice composition into madrigal form, the *Lamento d’Arianna* would have to negotiate a shift from dramatic to narrative function in order to maintain efficacy outside of the opera’s diegetic framework. It is precisely this exchange—and what it reveals about Monteverdi’s notions of character expression—that is my primary concern regarding the *Lamento d’Arianna*.

One must consider that Monteverdi’s primary compositional medium up to this point had been the madrigal, and his expressive vocabulary developed within and from the language of Renaissance polyphony. Nigel Fortune rightly notes that Monteverdi remained faithful to the polyphonic madrigal at a time when solo-song compositions were considered the primary medium for disseminating the new style praised by the Florentine Camerata. Viewing Arianna’s lament as an outgrowth of a polyphonic mindset sheds light on the dramatic representations found in the madrigals preceding *L’Orfeo* and *L’Arianna*. With this in mind, I now turn my attention back to the relationship between Monteverdi and Wert. Monteverdi’s polyphonic setting of Arianna’s lament—inaugurating his Sixth Book of madrigals—contains gestures bearing a strong relationship to Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita* from his Eleventh Book.

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These similarities reveal vestiges of Wert’s influence at the height of Monteverdi’s progression toward a musical vocabulary for actualizing plaintive drama, and ultimately, the lament.

Table 2.5: Ottavio Rinuccini, *Lasciatemi morire* from *L’Arianna* (1608)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Lasciatemi morire.</em></th>
<th>Leave me to die.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>In così dura sorte,</em></td>
<td>And who do you think will console me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>in così gran martire?</em></td>
<td>when my fate is so hard,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lasciatemi morire.</em></td>
<td><em>in such bitter torment?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Leave me to die.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first significant correlation between Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita* (Example 2.3) and Monteverdi’s *Lamento d’Arianna* occurs in the opening measures of the *prima parte: Lasciatemi morire* (Table 2.5, Example 2.8). In terms of motivic deployment, voice groupings, and entry patterns, the two madrigals contain similar introductory gestures. This connection not only reveals Wert’s lasting influence within Monteverdi’s compositional language, but also the rhetorical devices both composers used for expressing the internality of lamenting characters. As discussed previously, Wert’s madrigal begins with the canto and quinto voices entering homophonically in parallel thirds (though the quality changes from major to minor upon descent), inaugurating the lament with a motive of isolated stability—a device Monteverdi expanded in his own setting of the same text in his Fourth Book. In *Lasciatemi morire* (Leave Me To Die), Monteverdi begins Arianna’s lament with a revival of this opening gesture: the canto and quinto enter homophonically in minor thirds, though the upper voices are now

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introduced and supported by the basso, which begins on an A, then retreats stepwise down to G, moving in a separate rhythmic pace from the upper two voices until m. 2, where all three parts rhythmically converge.\textsuperscript{154} In both examples, the upper voices maintain the interval of a third between them—though Monteverdi’s voices contract to a second before m. 3—while melodically progressing downwards from an established high point. Wert establishes his summit in complete stability: a dotted pulse in melodic stagnation, persisting for a measure and a half before initiating descent. Monteverdi complicates Wert’s structure, introducing his motive on the offbeat and progressing with angular descent, introducing motion on weak pulsations and regaining stability on downbeats. Wert’s rounded lines are thus remodeled into a series of platforms. Significantly, all three madrigal introductions—the Lamento d’Arianna and Wert and Monteverdi’s Ah, dolente partita settings—begin with this exordium: a motive initiated by the canto and quinto in unified motion, undercut by a stepwise, secondary motive. This rhetorical device is an intensification of its previous form in Monteverdi and Wert’s Ah, dolente partita settings, whereby inner conflict is personified through ruptured stability.

\textsuperscript{154} The basso’s static parlando recalls Wert’s tenor entrance in m. 3—especially regarding the sustained “ah” vowels changing on weak beats—though Monteverdi’s basso supports cadential motion, rather than the expository function of Wert’s tenor.
Example 2.8: (Continued) Mm. 13-24
The significance of this opening gesture in *Lasciatemi morire* extends well beyond its introductory function, acting as the central unifying device of the *prima parte*. The inaugural gesture, spanning mm. 1-8, appears in its complete form, reaching a cadence on A in m. 3, then arriving at a stronger cadence on D in m. 8. This eight-bar gesture is then truncated when it recurs in mm. 16-19: the antecedent portion of the gesture (mm. 1-3) forms a refrain, reestablishing stability after the contrasting declamatory section (mm. 9-16) that releases the
flow of Arianna’s thoughts beyond stunned stagnation. The gesture finally returns to its full eight-bar structure to conclude the madrigal in mm. 27-34. Full iterations of the opening gesture function as bookends for the madrigal, while the truncated form acts as a stabilizing refrain within the middle. The contrasting declamatory sections are interspersed between these events, personifying Arianna’s emotional state as a struggle between inquisitive outbursts and resignation. In summary, one observes Monteverdi’s use of a gesture strongly grounded within Wert and his own settings of Ah, dolente partita, in constructing the rhetorical foundation of Lasciatemi morire. With Wert’s setting of Ah, dolente partita appearing at the beginning of his Eleventh Book, Monteverdi’s appearing at the beginning of his Fourth Book, and Lasciatemi morire inaugurating Monteverdi’s Sixth Book, this gesture often finds itself as a figurehead for the two composers’ dramatic collections, by turns introducing audiences to Mirtillo’s anguish in Il pastor fido and Arianna’s betrayal in the Lamento d’Arianna.

That Lasciatemi morire should, in its expressive foundations, contain vestiges of Wert’s influence gains further credence when considering the content and context surrounding Monteverdi’s Sixth Book. Tim Carter reveals a stylistically retrogressive bent to this publication, noting that Monteverdi’s opening madrigal is set in a more conservative polyphonic scoring, seemingly out of step with the progressive nature of the madrigals in his subsequent volumes.155 Carter continues, emphasizing a shift from five-voice madrigals to newer forms in his Seventh Book (1619)—such as solo songs and duets—and that the Sixth Book reflects distinctly Mantuan themes, such as his opera, L’Arianna, and the sestina text that was seemingly commissioned by Duke Vincenzo to commemorate the death of Caterina Martinelli (1608), the singer originally

slated for Arianna’s role in the opera. With Mantuan reflection viably present within the composer’s mind, I argue that the possibility of including homage to Wert (his late colleague) within the polyphonic *Lamento d’Arianna*, becomes an idea not wholly implausible.

The relationship between Wert and Monteverdi’s motivic schema in the discussed madrigals implies a connection extending beyond compositional mechanics, warranting use of a similar rhetorical paradigm. Thematically, *Ah dolente partita* and *Lasciatemi morire* depict related dramatic scenarios: a lover’s torment inextricably bound to separation and death. The similar gestures and motivic interaction between the two madrigals suggest a kinship between these moments, inviting comparison regarding *Ah, dolente partita* and, by extension, *Il pastor fido*’s relationship to the lament. Further consideration may thus provide significant insight into how both composers understood and expressed this particular emotional state through music.

**Pathos and the Internality of Characters**

Through the previous analyses, I have explored compositional traits in Wert’s Eleventh Book of madrigals and Monteverdi’s Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books. The significance of these gestures, beyond mere stylistic comparison, concerns their relationship to text expression and both composers’ search for generating musical pathos in laments. Throughout this chapter, I have adopted a narrative placing Wertian gestures at the forefront of Monteverdi’s *seconda pratica* cultivation. I posit the older *maestro di cappella* as a strong influence on the younger composer as he sought new styles with which to accomplish his aesthetic goals of musically imitating human emotions in the last decade of the sixteenth century. In demonstrating this

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156 Ibid. Further regarding Carter’s assessment, he notes the Sixth Book’s lack of a dedicatee, and that its publication occurred after Monteverdi’s departure from Mantua in 1612 and subsequent appointment as *maestro di cappella* at St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice in 1613. See Carter, “Beyond Drama,” 2.
relationship, I have profiled madrigals revealing significant connections between the two composers. The parallel texts, *Ah, dolente partita* and *Cruda Amarilli*, provide glimpses into how both artists represented the internal turmoil of a singular character—Mirtillo—through two plains occurring at emotional peaks within *Il pastor fido*. Furthermore, Monteverdi positioned these settings as the opening madrigals of his Fourth and Fifth Books, further establishing a connection between Wert’s Eleventh Book—which contains both madrigals and opens with *Ah, dolente partita*—and Monteverdi’s formative ventures into new expressive terrain. In Monteverdi’s *Lamento d’Arianna*, I traced vestiges of Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita* gestures, in terms of motivic deployment and textural relationships, to Monteverdi’s primary structural device within *Lasciatemi morire*. By highlighting these compositions, I have established a teleology that places the *Lamento d’Arianna* at the peak of Monteverdi’s *seconda pratica* development through the 1590s and early 1600s, and the *Il pastor fido* madrigals as formative milestones in building a vocabulary suited for delivering affective drama.

Beyond use as a purely structural device, questions emerge regarding the strong motivic connection between Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita* and Monteverdi’s *Lasciatemi morire*: namely, what rhetorical purpose did Wert’s model serve in Monteverdi’s lament, and how does this gesture express the internal state of Mirtillo and Arianna? In addressing these questions, I first explore Wert’s relationship to musical pathos within the madrigal, showing his preference for achieving *gravità* in the major poetic works within the last decades of the sixteenth century, unique among his contemporaries. Wert’s setting of *Giunto alla tomba* from Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* is profiled within this discussion as a striking example of musical pathos, and for its relationship to the primary gesture contained in Monteverdi’s *Lasciatemi morire* and Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita*. 
Of the fourteen ottave included in Wert’s *Gerusalemme liberata* settings within his Seventh and Eighth Books (1581 and 1586), Tomlinson notes only two selections not drawn from emotional climaxes within the poetry: *Vezzosi augelli* and *Usciva omal dal molle e fresco grembo*—though, as we have already explored, Wert still creates theatrical interplay in *Vezzosi Augelli*. Wert’s notable inclination towards humanistic drama sets him apart from contemporaries such as Luca Marenzio, who, as Newcomb explains, tended to use stylistic innovation in the 1580s for greater vocal displays or pictorial tone painting. Further, numerous scholars, such as Carter, Tomlinson, and Alfred Einstein, note Wert’s stylistic influence upon Monteverdi’s *Gerusalemme liberata* settings within his Third Book (1592), and his concomitant gravità suited to the poetic content. Evidence thus supports Wert’s preference for expressing distinctively human events in his later books, a guiding tenant of Monteverdi’s own *seconda pratica*.

Beyond proximity, Wert likely influenced Monteverdi’s *seconda pratica* due to his efficacy in setting plaintive texts drawn from emotional high points in poetry, using intensified declamation and gestures unique among his contemporaries. Einstein, in discussing musical pathos within the Italian Madrigal, regards Wert as a revolutionary, noting his unrestrained subservience to expression within his *Gerusalemme liberata* madrigals. Einstein designates Wert’s setting of *Giunto alla tomba* from Tasso’s epic poem as an example of capturing inner drama to the extreme: “Everything in these two stanzas is extravagant: the staccato recitation,

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158 Newcomb, *The Madrigal at Ferrara*, 82; quoted in Owens, “Marenzio and Wert read Tasso,” 557. I further discuss the aesthetic relationship between Wert and Marenzio in Chapter Three of this thesis, within the context of the *concerto delle donne* and the madrigal as a concert experience within Ferrara.
shot through with rests; the imagery of *sgorgando* and *pianto*; even the harmony with its sixth chords and false relations, although this admittedly avoids extreme tones and modulations.”

Significantly, Wert’s *Liberata* madrigals contained in his Seventh Book (1581) were among the first published settings of Tasso’s work. This factor suggests the composer’s inclination towards plaintive drama, as the narrative captured within *Giunto alla tomba* depicts Tancredi’s lament at the tomb of his beloved Clorinda—after having mistakenly slayed her in a duel—where at last his tears gush forth in a stream (“al fin sgorgando un lagrimoso rivo”).

![Example 2.9](image)

Wert expresses this moment of tearful catharsis in a melismatic cascade that breaks from the chordal declamation preceding it (Example 2.9). Though the famous gesture is a brilliant display of text painting, I contend that it is Wert’s use of contrast between structure and fluidity—unity and separation—that carries rhetorical effect and bears a strong resemblance to

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162 Ibid., 569.
the madrigals discussed above. Haar also points out the dark chordal sonorities and low tessitura within the texture leading up to the melismatic display, further embellishing the moment of contrast.\footnote{Haar, Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 136.} The plodding recitation leading up to this moment creates a solidified base making the sudden departure all the more effective, just as Monteverdi and Wert’s \textit{Ah, dolente partita} settings, and Monteverdi’s \textit{Lasciatemi morire}, begin with a unified canto and quinto gesture that is destabilized within the texture for dramatic expression. Regarding Wert’s form in “Giunto alla tomba,” Gerbino relates the structure to “a narrative frame [that] sets the affective tone and introduces the direct speech of the hero or heroine.”\footnote{Gerbino, Music and the Myth of Arcadia in Renaissance Italy, 271.} Through this lens, the listener observes a musical narrative describing Tancredi’s arrival at Clorinda’s tomb through the declamatory setting of the first stanza, then enters Tancredi’s subjectivity in the second stanza with the arrival of a contrasting texture, motive, and timbre. Thus, I argue, similar to the function of aria and recitative within opera, Wert uses distinct musical styles for delivering narrative progression and the subjectivity of the character’s emotional state. Monteverdi famously expands this concept in his setting of Ottavio Rinuccini’s \textit{Sfogava con la stelle} (Fourth Book), where he uses the contrast between free-moving \textit{falsobordone} and polyphony to illustrate the shift between narrative and the subject’s exclamations.\footnote{Einstein traces this element in Wert’s expressive language back to his First Book of madrigals for five voices (1560), positing his setting of Petrach’s sonnet, “Pien d’un vago pensier,” as potentially the first instance of “…polyphony as a specific means of poetic expression and not as a neutral instrument for musical development.” See Einstein, The Italian Madrigal, 515.} It is my contention that in \textit{Ah, dolente partita} and \textit{Lasciatemi morire}, Wert and Monteverdi employ this concept for expressing Mirtillo and Amarilli’s subjectivity and transmitting narrative context.\footnote{Carter, Music in Late Renaissance & Early Baroque Italy, 141-142.}
In Wert’s *Ah, dolente partita* and Monteverdi’s *Lasciatiemi morire*, the introductory gestures encapsulate the narrative and emotional state of Mirtillo and Amarilli. As previously discussed, their similar gestures of stability and rupture personify both characters’ emotional distress in separating from their respective lovers. However, both settings also use this exordium to delineate between direct speech and self-reflective inquisition. In *Ah, dolente partita*, Wert’s introduction sets Mirtillo’s two exclamations: “Ah, dolente partita! Ah, fin de la mia vita!” (Ah, sorrowful parting! Ah, end of my life!). When the opening musical gesture concludes in m. 11, Mirtillo’s next line is introduced with a contrasting musical texture and motive, moving to homophonic declamation (Example 2.3). The line accompanying this shift is the rumination, “Da te part’e non moro?” (I leave thee and do not die?). Thus, Wert uses a technique similar to his *Giunto alla tomba* setting or Monteverdi’s *Sfogava con la stelle*, highlighting textural and motivic contrast to distinguish between Mirtillo’s outward exclamations and inward reflection, just as the other madrigals used this contrast to distinguish between narrative and speech.

Likewise, in Monteverdi’s *Lasciatiemi morire*, the opening rhetorical gesture sets Arianna’s commanding statement: “Lasciatiemi morire” (Leave me to die). When this passage concludes in m. 8, a distinct shift in texture, timbre, and motive accompanies Arianna’s reflective inquisition: “E chi volete voi che mi conforte in così gran martire?” (And who do you think will console me when my fate is so hard, in such bitter torment?). Thus in *Ah, dolente partita* and *Lasciatiemi morire*, the gesture examined previously within this chapter functions both as a window into Mirtillo and Amarilli’s emotional turmoil, and as a vessel that distinguishes exclamatory speech from reflective introspection.

In summary, this chapter has examined Wert’s influential relationship to Monteverdi’s *seconda pratica* development, isolating Wertian gestures within parallel texts from Guarini’s *Il
pastor fido, that became significant means of expression and structure in Monteverdi’s Lamento d’Arianna. The thematic kinship among all three texts—first-person plaints occurring at dramatic zeniths within their surrounding narratives—helps reveal a concord in the two composers’ aesthetic goals and the means of forming an expressive vocabulary for imitating human emotions in music. By illuminating Wert’s voice within Monteverdi’s developing language for lament, the seconda pratica’s building blocks solidify, enhancing not only Monteverdi’s genius as an innovator but also as a colleague and craftsman.
EPILOGUE
THE AESTHETIC CRISIS OF THE LATE RENAISSANCE

It is perhaps unsurprising that Orphic mythology surrounded musical innovation in sixteenth-century Italy. Due to his abilities in musically persuading beasts, nature, and human emotions, Orpheus symbolized the medium’s dramatic potential in the late Renaissance.\textsuperscript{167} His mythology recalled Greek and Roman antiquity, aligning with humanistic revival of the period; at the same time, his command over music's power resonated with compositional experimentation in rhetorical effects. The shift in musical ideology from a mathematical to a linguistic discourse throughout the sixteenth century profoundly shaped compositional development. Though the Roman writer Boethius (c. 480-524) was still regarded as a philosophical source for the laws governing music theory, his significance to theorists and composers became less associated with the practical grounding for composition, and more for his link to Greek and Roman music aligning with humanistic currents. This phenomenon, as Claude V. Palisca notes, is rooted in the early Middle Ages, when Guido of Arezzo (c. 991-1033) broke from the tradition of the ninth-century authors of \textit{Musica enchiriadis} and \textit{Scolica enchiriadis}, initiating a departure from the practice of composers and the philosophical reading of Boethius still maintained at universities.\textsuperscript{168} In the sixteenth century, cultural currents such as literary Petrarchism and humanism deepened the schism between music’s place within the \textit{quadrivium}—along with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy—to an art form closely associated with

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\textsuperscript{167} I am referring mainly to the prevalence of Ovid and Virgil’s tales of Orpheus in the development of early opera: Jacopo Peri and Giulio Caccini’s settings of \textit{Euridice} by Ottavio Rinuccini in 1600, as well as Monteverdi’s \textit{L’Orfeo}—with libretto written by Alessandro Striggio—that premiered in 1607.

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rhetorical persuasion and emotional expression. I posit that behind Wert’s and Monteverdi’s advances in transmitting the meaning of words with novel effectiveness was a philosophical notion rooted in the dichotomy between emotional potency and theoretical rationalization. This ancient idea resurfaced in contemporary aesthetic debates surrounding both composers’ stylistic choices.

Debates concerning music’s affective power in relation to its physical manifestation in the natural world have persisted from antiquity. The negotiation between mind and body in music, as Mark Evan Bonds has explored, is described in Plato’s Republic as able to disrupt (or corrupt) state function, and in Aristotle’s Politics as essential for shaping the harmony of one’s character. Bonds employs the term “isomorphic resonance”—the idea that the world operates according to mathematical ratios which also dictate musical sound—in describing a Pythagorean-Platonic concept persistent in western thought from antiquity through the Renaissance. Under this conception, music’s power—and those able to wield it—was most potent when aligned with the ratios governing the natural world and the beings within it. However, this worldview began to unravel toward the middle of the sixteenth century, with the

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171 Bonds, Absolute Music, 30.

172 Ibid.
growth of humanistic rationality and music’s closer alignment with rhetorical expression, as opposed to mathematic, Pythagorean principles.\textsuperscript{173}

In the 1580s, Torquato Tasso spoke out concerning the relationship between poetry and music, drawing justification from Aristotle for his aesthetic grounding.\textsuperscript{174} In 1587, Tasso published his dialogue \textit{La Cavaletta, overo della poesia toscana}, which contained a request imploring Wert, Luzzaschi, and Alessandro Striggio to return music to its former gravity and seriousness.\textsuperscript{175} Within the dialogue, Tasso states that the canzona, as a poetic genre, needed music as seasoning; the seasoning, however, should benefit serious men and ladies instead of lascivious youth.\textsuperscript{176} This statement likely addresses the virtuosic madrigals blossoming in Ferrara during the 1580s, demonstrating Tasso’s concern for musical settings that relegated poetry to a medium for displaying a composer’s library of pictorial gestures, rather than conveying the poet’s voice and respecting his intentions. Strengthening this assessment is the fact that Tasso does not include Luca Marenzio—a madrigalist known for his pictorial excess—in his list of composers, though he was active in Ferrara at the time, and highly popular.\textsuperscript{177} Though Marenzio’s settings were rhetorically effective, and apparently popular with consumers, his lascivious style was not grounded in tradition and theoretical rationalization, and therefore Tasso deems it to be malignant. Though Tasso regards the canzona as a desirable poetic form, he holds the epic in higher esteem, stating that it benefits from musical settings, but does not require it, referencing Aristotle for justification.\textsuperscript{178} Thus for Tasso, forms established upon Greek principles

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{173}] Ibid., 49.
\item[\textsuperscript{174}] Though Tasso published numerous cultural dialogues, he rarely addressed music specifically.
\item[\textsuperscript{175}] Tasso’s dialogue was written between 1584 and 1585, then printed in 1587. See Treloar, \textit{The Madrigals of Giaches de Wert}, 142.
\item[\textsuperscript{176}] Torquato Tasso, \textit{La Cavaletta}; quoted in Bizzarini, \textit{Luca Marenzio}, 251.
\item[\textsuperscript{177}] Tomlinson interprets this omission as a possible stance against the lighter style exhibited in Marenzio’s canzonetta-madrigals. See Tomlinson, \textit{Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance}, 46.
\item[\textsuperscript{178}] Treloar, \textit{The Madrigals of Giaches de Wert}, 142.
\end{itemize}
overshadow more recent Italian trends in the canzona and virtuoso singing, illustrating a view comparable with Boethian theoretical grounding. As Tomlinson notes, Tasso includes in his discourse only the poetic forms contained in Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, demonstrating a reverence for literary tradition and echoing Petrarch’s sentiments concerning Latin antiquity. In Tasso’s dialogue, the interlocutor designated as the “Neapolitan Foreigner” comments that certain music has devolved into an effeminate and soft discourse, and desires the return of a grave mode that Aristotle described as consistent, magnificent, and “suitable to the lyre.” Summarizing Tasso’s view of regaining the lost nobility in madrigal settings, the Neapolitan Foreigner concludes that lasciviousness is the counterfeit of music. One therefore finds in *La Cavaletta* an ideology that is rooted in antiquity and will be echoed by Artusi at the end of the following decade: namely, that art should maintain the balance and sophistication established by its forebears, not yield to novel conceits that amuse and overwhelm the senses.

Certain factors suggest a kinship between Tasso’s plea in *La Cavaletta* and Wert’s compositions, demonstrating a connection between aesthetic discussions and stylistic choices within the composer’s output. First is Wert’s inclination for setting Tasso’s poetry and his preference for depicting its serious emotional subjects. Owens notes that Wert was the first madrigalist to publish settings from Tasso’s epic poem, *Gerusalemme liberata*, featuring *Giunto alla tomba* in his Seventh Book of madrigals in 1581. Marenzio, on the other hand, though accustomed to setting Tasso’s poetry and active in the same Ferrarese environment, did not produce a setting of *Giunto alla tomba* until 1584. This suggests Wert’s natural inclination

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182 Ibid.
183 Owens, “Marenzio and Wert read Tasso,” 556.
184 Ibid., 557.
toward pathos-oriented subjects suiting his weightier compositional style, whereas Marenzio gravitated more toward texts that would allow his pictorial virtuosity to flourish. Newcomb confirms this assessment with regard to both composers’ experimentations in the luxuriant style of 1580s Ferrara, stating that Wert prioritized drama, initially favoring classical imitative polyphony, whereas Marenzio sought descriptive tone painting and vocal display, using canzonetta-madrigal textures and motives. Another factor supporting the aesthetic relationship between Tasso and Wert is the collegiality between the two composers, and Tasso’s admiration of Wert. MacClintock suggests a closeness between musician and poet, stating: “The association of the poet and the musician dates from not later than 1572; thereafter they met frequently at both the Mantuan and Ferrarese courts, and many of Tasso’s poems appeared in Giaches’ musical settings—undoubtedly set to music at Tasso’s request.” This relationship supports, on some level, a shared artistic vision between the two individuals. It seems unusual then, that an ideology grounded in rationalizing modern practice through antiquarian theories would profoundly affect seconda pratica development, though this is precisely the same phenomenon that led the Florentine Camerata to their advances in the stile recitativo and Vincenzo Galilei’s critique of modern counterpoint in favor of homophonic unity to recapture the effects produced by the Greeks. Haar notes that in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, closer bonds often developed between poets and composers, demonstrated in sets of madrigals devoted to a single poet, sometimes arranged in order. The association between Tasso and Wert is further demonstrated in Tasso’s poem, Ad un maestro di cappella, che aveva posti in musica alcuni

Madrigali dell'autore, where Wert appears as the likely target of praise—especially with Tasso’s inclusion of Vincenzo Gonzaga (“Del bel Vincenzo”) within the text. In summary, Tasso and Wert’s relationship as colleagues, and Wert’s compositional suitability for setting Tasso’s poetry opened a channel for the transfer of aesthetic ideals expressed in La Cavaletta. In this regard, the author and musician found common ground for advancing stylistic changes that shaped madrigal development in the late sixteenth century. Providing stark contrast to this ideal is the friction between aesthetic principles in the Artusi-Monteverdi debate.

Giovanni Maria Artusi spoke against the evolving shift in musical aesthetics at the end of the sixteenth century, scrutinizing Monteverdi’s madrigals later included in his Fourth and Fifth Books. Reactionaries such as Artusi, grounded in the Renaissance contrapuntal structures that Gioseffo Zarlino codified in his 1558 treatise, Le istitutioni harmoniche, sensed the dawn of a modern style threatening the delicate balance between musica pratica and musica theorica. The brunt of Artusi’s criticism concerns Monteverdi’s invention of expressive modes that deviated from logical assessment and theoretical comprehension. At the beginning of Artusi’s dialogue, the pupil, Luca, recounts to his teacher, Vario, a performance at which he heard Monteverdi’s new and startling compositions. Luca begins by establishing the basis of Monteverdi’s affront as a detraction from orthodox rules and natural order:

But, as Your Lordship will see, insofar as it introduced new rules, new modes, and new turns of phrase, these were, however, harsh and little pleasing to the ear, nor could they be otherwise; for so long as they violate the good rules—in part founded upon experience, the mother of all things, in part observed in nature, and in part proved by

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189 Torquato Tasso, Opere (1724) II, 452; quoted in MacClintock, Giaches de Wert, 59.
190 Ibid.
demonstration—we must believe them deformations of the nature and propriety of true harmony, far removed from the musician’s goal, which, as Your Lordship said yesterday, is delectation.194

Thus, according to Artusi, Monteverdi failed in delivering pleasure to the listener and created a stylistic monstrosity—in the word’s truest sense—in his deviation from natural principles. This discrepancy lays bare the aesthetic difference between Artusi and Monteverdi. Artusi attributes beauty and pleasure to maintaining logically sound, established practices and creating agreeable effects upon the ear—keeping in line with the Pythagorean ideology of music’s effect as a sounding manifestation of cosmic ratios. This ideology is further demonstrated when Vario turns to the monochord for explaining the interconnectedness of voices in harmony, and invokes the thirteenth-century mathematician, Erasmus Vitello, when discussing the relationship of a unison pitch to a level plane.195 Artusi’s preference for ancient wisdom and classical balance is reinforced in both the rhetorical structure of his discourse—a Platonic dialogue between a master and pupil—and his consistent references to the mathematical proportions of Pythagoras and Boethius. However, as Claude Palisca notes, the choice of a dialogue format between the more progressive student, Luca, and conservative teacher, Vario, also allowed Artusi to launch criticisms while simultaneously conceding the effectiveness of Monteverdi’s avant-garde gestures.196 Artusi’s dialogue reveals another philosophical belief motivating his attacks: the danger of extravagant gestures in corrupting the senses, and the importance of reason for deciphering improper dissonances. This notion surfaces in a discussion of new written ornamentations referred to as “accented singing,” in which Vario concludes “that sensuous excess corrupts the sense, meaning simply that the ear is so taken up with the other parts that it

194 Ibid.
195 Ibid., 396.
does not fully perceive the offense committed against it.” Artusi’s sentiment echoes the Platonic-Aristotelian notion of music’s hazardous potential to override the senses and corrupt reason. The concern that enchanting gestures could disrupt reason—one’s source for determining what is good and true in art—delineates Artusi’s aesthetic view from Monteverdi’s, contrasting the primacy of scientific rationalization, rather than emotional provocation, for classifying pleasurable sounds.

In contrast to Artusi, Monteverdi favors effects that stir emotions, breaking theoretical cohesiveness and pleasant voice leading for rhetorical purposes. Luca confirms this modern precedent among Monteverdi’s generation, stating: “They call absurd the things composed in another style…declaring that this novelty and new order of composing is about to produce many effects which ordinary music, full of so many and such sweet harmonies, cannot and never will produce.” Monteverdi’s aesthetic goals differ substantially from Artusi’s, centralizing rhetorical effectiveness over refined counterpoint. In Giulio Cesare’s “Declaration” attached to Claudio Monteverdi’s 1607 Scherzi musicali, he responds to Artusi’s prior criticisms, and distinguishes his brother’s view that words—and the meaning they signify—possess dominion over harmony. In defense of this conviction, Giulio Cesare quotes from Plato’s Republic, mirroring Artusi’s humanistic posturing, but using the philosopher to justify the primacy of words and disposition of the soul in governing compositional practice. Thus, both Artusi and

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198 Bonds, Absolute Music, 22.
199 Ibid.
Monteverdi ground their aesthetic views in antiquity, though the former did so to justify music’s relationship to reason and theoretical principles, and the latter to liberate compositional rules in the service of words and emotional representation.

As aesthetic discourse and musical practice unfolded throughout the sixteenth century, debates erupted which, at their core, centered on music’s emotional potency versus its logical reconciliation. This friction manifested in appeals to established conventions grounded in classical philosophy and figures of authority. Tasso rationalized his argument through Petrarch and Aristotle; Artusi praised Zarlino and the Platonic-Pythagorean notions of harmonic balance. However, as new forms emerged within and outside of the madrigal, music’s rhetorical capability became the asset channeled by those—like Orpheus—who could stir the human senses beyond logical comprehension. As the seventeenth century dawned, the liberation of music from number fostered invention in dramatic music, fueling the rise of opera. Thus, the composer once chastised for his aberrations against nature eventually imbued characters with a nature of their own in L’Orfeo, epitomized in powerful assertions of identity: “Io la Musica son” and “Orfeo son io.”202

202 Calcagno, From Madrigal to Opera, 40.


Watkins, Glenn E. “Gesualdo as Mannerist: A Reconsideration.” In *Essays on Mannerism in Art and Music: Papers Read at the West Chester State College Symposium on