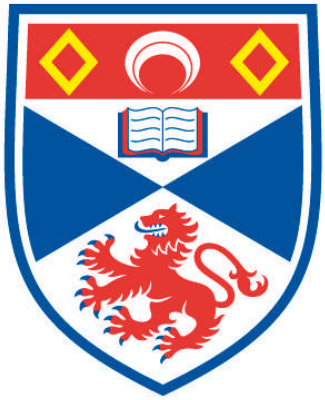
TO MOVE, TO PLEASE, AND TO TEACH: THE NEW POETRY AND THE NEW MUSIC, AND THE WORKS OF EDMUND SPENSER AND JOHN MILTON, 1579-1674

Scott Anthony Brooks

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



2014

To Move, to Please, and to Teach:

The New Poetry and the New Music,

and the Works of Edmund Spenser and John Milton, 1579 - 1674.

Scott Anthony Brooks

A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of St Andrews

School of English

3 June, 2013

ABSTRACT

By examining Renaissance criticism both literary and musical, framed in the context of the contemporaneous obsession with the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Horace, among others, this thesis identifies the parallels in poetic and musical practices of the time that coalesce to form a unified idea about the poet-as-singer, and his role in society. Edmund Spenser and John Milton, who both, in various ways, lived in periods of upheaval, identified themselves as the poet-singer, and comprehending their poetry in the context of this idea is essential to a fuller appreciation thereof.

The first chapter addresses the role that the study of rhetoric and the power of oratory played in shaping attitudes about poetry, and how the importance of sound, of an innate musicality to poetry, was pivotal in the turn from quantitative to accentual-syllabic verse. In addition, the philosophical idea of music, inherited from antiquity, is explained in order elucidate the significance of "artifice" and "proportion".

With this as a backdrop, the chapters following examine first the work of Spenser, and then of Milton, demonstrating the central role that music played in the composition of their verse. Also significant, in the case of Milton, is the revolution undertaken by the Florentine Camerata around the turn of the seventeenth century, which culminated in the birth of opera. The sources employed by this group of scholars and artists are identical to those which shaped the idea of the poet-as-singer, and analysing their works in tandem yields new insights into those poems which are considered among the finest achievements in English literature.

THESIS DECLARATIONS

I, Scott Anthony Brooks, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 74,000 works in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September, 2008 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in September, 2009; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2008 and 2013.

Date signature of candidate

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date signature of supervisor

In submitting this thesis to the University of St Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and the abstract will be published, and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker, that my thesis will be electronically accessible for personal or research use unless exempt by award of an embargo as requested below, and that the library has the right to migrate my thesis into new electronic forms as required to ensure continued access to the thesis. I have obtained any third-party copyright permissions that may be required in order to allow such access and migration, or have requested the appropriate embargo below.

The following is an agreed request by candidate and supervisor regarding the electronic publication of this thesis: access to printed copy and electronic publication of thesis through the University of St Andrews.

Date signature of candidate signature of supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all those without whose support and encouragement the completion of this thesis would not have been possible, I extend my deepest gratitude. I have enjoyed greatly my time in St Andrews, among some of the best people I have known. My thanks to Jesse Sharpe and his family, for making me feel so welcome, and to Rachel Holmes, whose friendship never ceased to be stimulating and entertaining. I must thank, also, Cris Longo and Georgina Mosquera for many happy days, and Heather Walker-Dale, for her brilliant and indefatigable company. It is for me a source of great joy to think of you all as my friends. To the staff of Younger Hall I extend my warmest regards. To Derek Gowling, Michael Downes, and Paul Stanwood, I owe many cheerful and enlightening conversations about music and other sundries, and they have been diligent and motivating in their support and in discovering many exciting opportunities for me. Sandra McDevitt, the postgraduate secretary at the School of English, must be singled out as well; her patience, expertise, and compassion, were invaluable. To Professor Neil Rhodes, for his unfailing endorsement of me, for his wisdom and patience, I am forever indebted. For their insightful critique and support of this project I must also thank Professor David Lindley and Dr. Philip Parry, without whose heroic efforts this thesis could not have achieved its present form. To my family I send my thanks for your unflagging encouragement.

CONTENTS

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

In line with contemporary scholarly practice, I have modernized spelling in the following cases: *i*/*j*, *v*/*u*, and the long s.

I

PROPORTION, RHETORIC, AND RIME: MUSICAL HUMANISM AND POETRY IN THE VERNACULAR

In the mid- to late-sixteenth century, poetry in England was undergoing a dynamic transformation. The great surge in classical scholarship that was the Renaissance, and a particular enthusiasm for the ideas of Plato, was exerting a powerful influence on those in Elizabethan society who thought themselves responsible for the task of steering the course of civilization. The result of this renewal of interest in the classics was an intense scrutiny of what poetry could and should be. Plato's banishment of Homer from the ideal state set a precedent for many of poetry's would-be detractors, while others who would have defended poetry sought recourse to manifestations of it that were sure to provide only the loftiest intellectual satisfaction, in accordance, they felt, with Plato's highest intentions. Art could be virtuous if it kept as its aim the ennoblement of the soul and the formation of the model citizen, rather than appealing merely to the senses by means of vulgar devices such as, in the case of poetry, rhyming and alliteration. From the outset there was, on both sides of the poetry question, a mutual condemnation of the present state of English verse, and as such those who set themselves the task of saving poetry had first to discover ways of improving it.

Central to the belief in poetry's power to ennoble the soul was its close relationship with music, and so it was that defences mounted on poetry's behalf made frequent appeals to this relationship. This dissertation will chart the course of these defences, and the works that consequently emerged, examining in minute detail the poetic devices employed with music "in mind", as well as comparing specific poets' thoughts on music to those theories that were codified in Classical and contemporary criticism. Edmund Spenser, taking Vergil as his model, establishes himself as England's "New Poet", and sets the precedent for the Vergilian poetic career that would be imitated by later generations. His works emerge directly out of the period being discussed, in which the very necessity of poetry and poets was being questioned. Also under discussion was whether poetry should be composed in the vernacular, as opposed to Latin, and whether it should be allowed to rhyme. How the poet situates himself in dialectic with these

questions is central to understanding the fundamental relationship between music and verse in English. John Milton, as the author of English literature's seminal epic, and himself a musician, provides the strongest example of an individual poet's debt to music, both performative and philosophical. His connection with the musical innovations of seventeenth-century Italy, specifically what were called the *nuove musiche* and the *stile rappresentativo*, plays a critical role in comprehending his view of himself and his work. These innovations bear, in their philosophical origin, a striking close similarity to the establishment of poetry in early modern England. For this reason, careful attention will be paid to the emergence of what would become early Italian opera, to Milton's exposure to it, and to how a deeper understanding of it can improve our appreciation of his work.

Owing, however, to the Renaissance tendency to conflate many of the ideas it attempted to assimilate from ancient Greek and Roman thought there is a considerable degree of ambiguity that must be resolved as to the particular role "music" plays in a given discussion. The present chapter sets itself the task of resolving these ambiguities by describing the historical and philosophical backdrop to the discussion of the relationship between music and poetry. Of equal importance when examining the persuasive power of poetry is its close affinity with the theory and practice of rhetoric. Many treatises that deal with how poetry resembles music also address themselves to poetry's debt to rhetorical techniques and devices, and so equal attention will be paid to the goals of rhetoric and how they find their way into the heart of the idea of the poet-as-singer. Rhetoric, like the ideal music, sets itself the task of guiding the soul – though the means may differ greatly – with the aim of creating the model citizen or statesman, of fashioning a gentleman. Ultimately what emerges as the nexus of these various lines of thought is the Orpheus figure, plastic at the best of times, but credited as the father of music, poetry, and rhetoric. His character stands as an avatar for the aspirations of every poet who believes in the enlightening powers of art, one who, through the power of his voice, redeems the human race from an existence of utter brutishness, who finds himself at odds with the world, who challenges and triumphs over the gods, and is finally rewarded with the immortality only poetic fame can provide.

Discussions which addressed how poetry is "musical" or which employed musical terminology to describe poetic effects (and in the case of the Florentine Camerata, how music resembles rhetoric) derived from the belief that poetry and music were once united as a single art-form. This belief is founded in part on the Orpheus myth and speculation about the performance of poetry and drama in ancient Greece, and partly on the mathematical discoveries attributed to Pythagoras and handed down to subsequent Greek and Roman philosophers, finding their main codification, in that period, in Plato's *Timaeus*. On the one hand, Orpheus was held to have been the father of poetry and music, who first introduced civilization and nobility to man:

> *Orpheus, Linus…* may justly chalenge to bee called their Fathers in learning: for not only in time they had this priority… but went before them, as causes to drawe with their charming sweetnes, the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as *Amphion* was sayde to move stones with his Poetrie, to build Thebes. And *Orpheus* to be listened to by beastes, indeed, stony and beastly people.[1]

Using Orpheus as a model, Renaissance literary commentators appropriated to poetry and music the power to raise man up from his former, brutish state. Variously his power is attributed to his skill with the lyre, the beauty of his song, and the eloquence of his poetry (or, in some cases, his discourse).[2] Orpheus is most typically regarded as a singer, and although he figures prominently in nearly every discussion of the power of poetry or music to stir the soul, whether in Classical or Renaissance criticism, by far the most extensive account of him is to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book X, which became paradigmatic for a number of reasons, for both Spenser and Milton, to be addressed later. In any discussion of poetry, he is situated at both the beginning and the end, being both the antecedent for all poetry that follows, and the ideal to which all poets aspire.

The "science" by which his feats of persuasion were achieved derived from Pythagoras and Plato, and their description of how the human soul, through music, related to the cosmos. The tale of how this came about has been told many times,[3] but is an interesting and relevant

---

[1] Sir Philip Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie* (London, 1595), f. B2-3.

[2] This idea is extensively explored in Charles Segal's *Orpheus: the Myth of the Poet* (London, 1989); of particular relevance is the discussion of Orpheus' Renaissance manifestations, on pp. 168-71; see also Heinrich F. Plett, *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin, 2004), pp. 399-410.

[3] See Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Ancient Greek Music Theory* (Munich, 1988).

one. Early Greek mathematicians did not use decimals. Rather, they expressed fractions as ratios between whole numbers, and the simplest ratios were regarded as the "purest". The oldest myth of Greek music theory depicts Pythagoras playing with a monochord, and discovering that by dividing it by the simplest ratios he was able to produce the most pleasing musical intervals:

> Certain intervals, such as the octave, fourth and fifth, were shown to result from the dividing of the string in the most "perfect" ratios, such as 1/2, 2/3, etc… Since these intervals *happened to play significant roles in the tonal system of Greek music as it was already developing*, it was concluded that these "consonant" intervals were most pleasing to the ear because they were most "harmonious" or perfect, mathematically speaking.[4]

This, of course, was purely a coincidence. The octave, fourth, and fifth are the most consonant intervals and the most easily discovered (that is, the most commonly-used because of their simplistic consonance with one another). It is only natural that they play a central role in the "tonality" of any system of early music. It just so happened that, when expressed as proportional divisions on a chord, they coincided with a cornerstone of Greek mathematics. Nevertheless, Pythagoras went on to reason out an entire cosmology based on them, and thence we have inherited from the earliest authorities on the nature of the universe an intimate conflation of "harmony" and "proportion". The Greek *harmonia* is actually a horizontal relationship between consecutive intervals – i.e.: a musical scale – rather than, as we have it, a result of the vertical relationship between pitches sounded simultaneously.[5] Pythagoras was able to observe the step-wise ascent from one sphere to the next using the *harmonia.* Closing an octave required six whole-tones (six intervals between seven pitches), which was mirrored by the seven heavenly bodies known to the ancient world: the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

A further and even more fortuitous coincidence, philosophically speaking, was the natural flaw in the tonal system based on the ratios that Pythagoras discovered. As Pythagorean geometry deals only in whole numbers, the fractions that could be reduced to the smallest possible terms were deemed the most "perfect". A ratio of 2:1 produces an octave, 3:2 a fifth, 4:3 a fourth, and a whole tone with the ratio 9:8 (9:8 being derived from the difference between 3:2

[4] John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500-1700* (London, 1970), p. 28.
[5] Ibid., p 26.

and 4:3). The flaw occurs when one attempts to count up an octave in six whole tones, expressed by 9:8; the result is that one does not arrive at the ratio 2:1, but rather the octave is slightly exceeded, by the interval 531,441:524,288 (called the Pythagorean comma). Although this discrepancy is inaudible by itself, it becomes painfully apparent when one attempts to count through an entire cycle of fifths using the ratio 3:2 (the purest fifth possible). The last fifth will be so dissonant as a result of the accumulated discrepancies that it came to be known as the "wolf interval" (it seems to howl).[6] In other words, the Greeks were well aware that "mortal" music could never be perfectly consonant – it was mathematically, fundamentally flawed. In any case:

> Tones were thus measured in space. This discovery was thought to reveal all harmoniousness in the universe. It was on this hypothesis that the Pythagoreans postulated a music of the spheres, and by reading back into man-made music assumed the stringed instrument to be an imitation of the celestial lyre.[7]

There being nothing extant of Pythagoras' own work (and indeed some skepticism as to justification of these and other attributions to him), Plato's work is the earliest complete source we have on this material,[8] and *Timaeus*, through a Latin translation by Calcidius, was the only Platonic dialogue to remain known even through the Dark Ages,[9] enabling it to continue exerting its influence over Mediaeval conceptions of the universe and the relation of the soul thereto.

It is in *Timaeus* that Plato explicates the link between celestial music and the human soul. Since the proportional relationship in music was mirrored, apparently, in the heavens, it must have seemed only natural to infer that the soul, itself derived from the heavens, would share in that relationship. It is due to this dialogue that musical ideas of "harmony" and "proportion" came to be accorded great mystical significance, conflated as they were with geometry, mathematics, and astronomy, passing via the Neoplatonists into Christian theosophy, so that they found discussion in the works of St. Augustine, and codification by Boethius, until, in the

---

[6] Guy Oldham and Mark Lindley, "Wolf", *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30489. Consulted on 15 May, 2009.

[7] Gretchen L. Finney, "Music: A Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England", *Studies in the Renaissance* 6 (1959), p. 48.

[8] James Haar, "Music of the Spheres", *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19447. Consulted on 15 May, 2009.

[9] Joscelyn Godwin, *The Harmony of the Spheres* (Rochester, 1993), p. 4.

Renaissance: "Musical proportions were given practical application by… architects and painters, who went to music to find the secret ideal of beauty".[10]

De institutione musica, written by Boethius in the sixth century, presents the clearest distinction between the music of the spheres, audible music, and how each relates to the soul, and it remained a central authority through the Middle Ages and up to the seventeenth century.[11] In fact, Boethius was drawing heavily on an earlier treatise, *Manuale harmonices* by Nicomachus (now lost), intending to preserve Greek learning for future generations, but we owe to Boethius alone the division of music into three categories, which would inform the contemplation of music in general for the next thousand years: *mundana*, that music which pertains to the harmony of the spheres; *humana*, the harmonious relationship between body and soul; and lastly, *instrumentalis*,[12] the music produced by earthly means.[13]

Musica instrumentalis is given a polite amount of attention, but Boethius makes it clear that in his view the ideal "musician" is the man that devotes himself to the study and contemplation of the universal harmony, and its numerical proportionality:

> From these accounts it appears beyond doubt that music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free from it even if we so desired. For this reason the power of the intellect ought to be summoned... [I]t does not suffice for musicians to find pleasure in melodies without also coming to know how they are structured internally by means of ratio of pitches.[14]

The obsession with numerical interrelations that these and other words like them produced in Mediaeval composers and musical theorists has led to commentary of this kind (concerning rhythmic modulations): "These changes can hardly be detected, let alone identified, by the ear of even the most careful listener. Such musical composition makes it clear that

---

[10] Finney 1959, p. 51.

[11] Hollander 1970, pp. 24-5. See also Philipp Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France*, Michael J. Curley and Steven Rendall (trans.) (Baltimore, 2013), pp. 152-4.

[12] In a footnote of his own, Hollander helpfully explicates the Platonic/Boethian view of *musica instrumentalis*: "merely 'actual', and hence, 'unreal' - merely an imitation of *musica mundana*", Hollander 1970, p. 25, n. 6.

[13] Gottfried Friedlein (ed.), *Boethii De institutione musica libri quinque* (Leipzig, 1867), p. 187.

[14] This translation out of Friedlein 1867, p. 187, is quoted from Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek music and music theory in antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Nebraska, 1999), pp. 631-2.

proportional writing is often not a matter of music but of a higher understanding derived from music".[15]

Boethius is credited with having first coined the term "quadrivium",[16] the level of education encompassing arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, (he announces his intention to preserve the wisdom of Pythagoras in his preface to *De institutione arithmetica*[17]) which one reached after having passed through the "trivium" (encompassing grammar, logic, and rhetoric). Music's place alongside the other three "liberal arts" seems a dubious one, until consideration is given to the vast rift carved by Boethius' treatise, sundering "speculative music" from "practical music" in terms of curriculum. Hence the title to Morley's manual, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597), for example, necessarily contains the word "practical" in order to avoid confusion. Insofar as the quadrivium was concerned there was no practical music. Nevertheless, Boethius' own take on the attuning of the soul returns us to the contemplation of what can be good and ennobling, even in the sensual:

> What Plato rightfully said can likewise be understood: the soul of the universe was joined together according to musical concord. For when we hear what is properly and harmoniously united in sound in conjunction with that which is harmoniously coupled and joined together within us and are attracted to it, then we recognize that we ourselves are put together in its likeness.[18]

Here we are presented with a unification of the tripartite division Boethius has made. We, in hearing *musica instrumentalis,* have our own *musica humana* effectively re-attuned to the *mundana*. Again note, however, that *musica instrumentalis* is necessarily the only way in which to experience "what is properly and harmoniously united in sound". The study of these three categories fell under the title *musica speculativa*, while composition and performance belonged to *musica practica*. But it is important to keep in mind that discussion of *musica speculativa* necessarily included mention, at least, of Pythagoras' monochord for the sake of reference. Little enough of music theory was audible in the physical universe, but the original conceit of the

---

[15] Michael Masi (trans.), *Boethian number theory: a translation of the De institutione arithmetica* (New York, 1983), p. 25.

[16] Penelope Gouk, "The role of harmonics in the scientific revolution", in Thomas Christensen (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Western music theory* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 225.

[17] Friedlein 1867, p. 7.

[18] This translation out of Friedlein 1867, pp. 179-80, is quoted from Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, body, and desire in medieval culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford, 2001), p. 13.

monochord as the string of the universal lyre persisted in even the most abstract analyses. Likewise, composers and authors of musical treatises, "practitioners", as it were, understood speculative music intimately, and, at least in thought, were influenced by its ideas, so that even Claudio Monteverdi would discuss *gli affetti*, when offering explanations for the innovations he was introducing to the music of his time.[19]

Even so, the categorization of music into these two disciplines was a rigid one, and the Humanist tradition that accompanied the Renaissance re-invigorated the dialectic between them.[20] It is true that the purely "practical" musician had no time for speculation on the relationship between the chords he played and the sympathetic vibrations of the human soul,[21] while the most conservative admirers of Plato took that philosopher at his word and would have banished audible music altogether:

> Pythagoras bequeathes them a Clookebagge, and condemnes them for fooles, that judge Musicke by sounde and eare. If you will bee good Scholers, and profite well in the Arte of Musicke, shutte your Fidels in their cases, and looke up to heaven: the order of the Spheres, the unfallible motion of the planets…[22]

But speculative music, if it wanted to comment on the means by which our own *musica humana* could interact with the harmony of the spheres, would find it necessary to discuss practical music, the ear still being the only means by which sympathetic vibration could be achieved. "Indeed, it is impossible to discuss intervals and their tunings on the one hand or mensuration on the other without discussing numerical relationships; and even in discussion of modes and counterpoint theorists sometimes incorporate numerology to a greater or lesser extent".[23] When, however, the subject at hand turns to poetry, and how poetry can be like music, the highly metaphorical nature of the discussion leads to a great deal of conflation. The twin aspects of "number" and "proportion", and how to represent them in poetry, lead into discussions

---

[19] Heinrich F. Plett, *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin, 2004), p. 373.
[20] "The increasingly close dialectic that constituted Renaissance *theoria* and *practica* is paradigmatically evident in the area of tuning", Christensen 2002, p. 7.
[21] "Mere performers – those who could play or sing but had no understanding of the underlying mathematical principles, the eternal truths, of music – were usually condemned by speculative theorists", Erik S. Ryding, *In Harmony Framed: musical humanism, Thomas Campion, and the two Daniels* (Missouri, 1993), p. 4.
[22] Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (London, 1579), pp. 14-5.
[23] Jan Herlinger, "Music Theory of the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries", in *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages*, Reinhard Strohm and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.) (New York, 2001), *The New Oxford History of Music*, 10 vols., v. 3, I, p. 297.

of how poetry can imitate proportions in a more visual manner, but also how poetry composed with proportion in mind might reach the ear. These matters would fall entirely under the category of *musica speculativa*, even though the immediate subject was the hearing of a poem:

> Music activates the inherent mathematical forms in the human soul as Timaeus had explained them (*Timaeus* 35A-37C), causing it to reverberate sympathetically and thereby awakening an awareness of its own nature as a microcosm participating in the divine scheme of things. This theory also underlies the efficacy of David the psalmist when he played before the deranged Saul. To the extent that poetry exhibits mathematical ratios, it also submits to this theory and enjoys this efficacy.[24]

That the close relationship of music to poetry was sincerely believed is borne out by the fact that those apologists for poetry made frequent recourse to it in order to justify poetry's existence. "Poets were just as interested as musicians were in the fabled effects of ancient Greek music… Artists envied music its position in the quadrivium".[25]

Music's pride of place, and its intimate connection to poetry, came from ancient sources. Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (AD 95) affirms the need for the effective orator to cultivate musical talent, describing the essential components of music and comparing them to the requirements of a successful speech. Public speaking demands "the raising and lowering or inflection of the voice... For, as we know, different emotions are roused even by the various musical instruments, which are incapable of reproducing speech".[26] Shortly thereafter Quintilian cites the need to understand oratory in order to read poetry, but then doubles back on his argument: "They (i.e. those "of a duller muse") will at any rate admit that the poets should be read by our future orator. But can they be read without some knowledge of music?"

Quintilian's introduction to his argument is full of praise for the study and practice of music. Replacing the poets, "those who were musicians were deemed also prophets and sages". Orpheus is cited, as per the convention, but he is here praised as a musician only, "because he

---

[24] S. K. Heninger, *The Subtext of Form in the English Renaissance* (Pennsylvania, 1994), p. 24. For a comparison of David to Orpheus see Hollander 1970, p. 239.

[25] Bonnie J. Blackburn, "Music Theory and Musical Thinking after 1450", in Strohm and Blackburn 2001, pp. 302-3.

[26] H. E. Butler (trans.), *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian* (London, 1920), p. 171.

soothed the rude and barbarous minds of men by the wonderful effect of his strains, as having drawn after him not only wild beasts, but even rocks and woods". After reprimanding himself for going on at length in praise of music, Quintilian states he will resume his argument, but not before apparently taking for granted the fact that poetry and music were once one and the same:

> So far I have attempted merely to sound the praises of the noblest of arts without bringing it into connection with the education of an orator. I will therefore pass by the fact that the art of letters and that of music were once united; indeed Archytas and Euenus held that the former was subordinate to the latter.[27]

That the art of letters (i.e.: *grammatice*) could be subordinate to music, even in theory, suggests that the power to move the affections, as it was imagined in the study of rhetoric, would be conceived as having initially stemmed from music, and only later been appropriated to language – that is, the persuasive power of poetry and rhetoric is drawn from their degree of similarity to music. So it is that Samuel Daniel (1562-1619) could write in *Musophilus: Containing, a general Defence of Learning* (1599):

> And as for Poesie (mother of this force)
> That breeds, brings forth, and nourishes this might,
> Teaching it in a loose, yet measured course,
> With comely motions how to goe upright:
> And fostring it with bountifull discourse,
> Adornes it thus in fashions of delight,
> What should I say? Since it is well approv'd
> The speech of heaven, with whome they have commerce,
> Thar onely seeme out of themselves remov'd,
> And do with more than humane skills converse:
> Those numbers wherwith heav'n & earth are mov'd,
> Shew, weakenes speaks in prose, but powre in verse.[28]

"Those numbers wherewith heav'n & earth are mov'd" refers to the proportional relationship of the harmony of the spheres, but is here appropriated to poetry and its power to move the soul. Poetry being "well approv'd/ The speech of heaven", it must partake of the same beauty of proportion as does the music that binds the universe together. To be "out of oneself removed" is to be moved profoundly by the power of the verse – i.e. to transcend one's own

[27] Butler 1920, pp. 167-9.
[28] Samuel Daniel, "Musophilus", in *The Works of Samuel Daniel* (London, 1601), ff. A-C, lines 969-980.

body, a kind of ecstasy: "The term 'ekstasis' means a state in which the soul exceeds itself. To the Neoplatonist philosophers it stood for a union of the self with the One, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'ecstasy' was frequently used to mean literally a separation of soul from body".[29]

Allusions of this kind, that is, to the ecstatic or ravishing power of music, are common in the works of Elizabethan poets and of Milton, so much so that it becomes difficult to differentiate between instances of metaphor and instances of expressed, literal belief.[30] But the case persists that, regardless of the level of similarity between music and poetry, the one's key elements of artifice cannot be mapped with perfect consistency onto the other, with instances arising in which even Milton himself makes occasional references which can be vexing: for example, the music played by the devils in Hell:

> Others more milde,
> Retreated in a silent valley, sing
> With notes Angelical to many a Harp
> Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless fall
> By doom and Battel; and complain that Fate
> Free Vertue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
> Thir Song was partial, but the harmony
> (What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
> Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
> (For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense,)…[31]

Earlier, during their procession into Pandemonium, the devils march to the "Dorian mood", the musical mode prescribed by Plato as being the most warlike (and therefore one of the few permitted in his republic). This would be perfectly natural to the devils and is harmless enough. The music described in the above passage, however, owing to its harmony, which draws its power from the fact that the devils are "immortal" (a metonymy for their Heavenly origins), is able to suspend hell by ravishing its audience. The beauty of the music and its celestial harmony

---

[29] Gretchen L. Finney, "Ecstasy and Music in Seventeenth-Century England", in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 8 (1947), p. 153.
[30] Ibid., pp. 182-6.
[31] John Milton, "Paradise Lost" (1674), in Roy Flannagan (ed.), *The Riverside Milton* (New York, 1998), p. 397, II, lines 546-56. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Milton's works, whether poetry or prose, will be drawn from this edition, hereafter abbreviated as *Milton.*

are able to charm the devils and grant them temporary relief from their anguish, via their senses, so Milton says. It would have been expected that, the devils being fallen, the music they played would have had no power to stir their souls as of old (in fact, the music of the spheres is inaudible, owing, variously, to our fallen state, or merely our desensitization to it[32]).

This would seem to run against more "orthodox" ideas about *musica speculativa*, which relate directly to the universal harmony and therefore, in Milton's cosmology, to God – we would hardly expect the devils to derive any comfort from such an encounter. But, as will be seen later, Milton, himself a musician, often treats music as a powerful but ultimately sensual and therefore neutral force, and that it falls to the poet-as-singer to add to music's power over the senses the means by which a listener might derive intellectual or spiritual profit. Not all examples of music as it is featured in the finest works of English literature allow us to take the Neoplatonic view at face value: there is a strong precedent for this to be found in Shakespeare's handling of music in *The Tempest*. David Lindley exposes Prospero's use of music as a controlling, but far from benign or enlightening, force. It is, here, the source of his magic, his power, and whatever his ultimate goals there is no question that it is to his will that the listeners are bound, not only in rapture at their connection with the divine harmony. This highlights some of the tension about music that clearly alarmed Plato himself (though few who spoke of the harmony of the spheres remembered it):

> For if, in the myth most often used to support the Neoplatonic view of music, Orpheus made rocks, stones, and trees move, it says much for music's power, but indicates also the involuntariness of the response to it, and therefore the potential danger of its effects in the hands of an unscrupulous manipulator.[33]

As with that of rhetoric, "[Music's] power exists, and may be harnessed for good or for ill".[34] There is no indication of any skepticism as to this power, either from Milton or Shakespeare (in whose works one frequently sees musicians being brought in to ease the suffering of those on stage), but it is true that their handling of it is demonstrative of more than just blind acceptance.

---

[32] Hollander 1970, p. 29.
[33] David Lindley, "Music, masque, and meaning in *The Tempest*", in *The court masque*, David Lindley (ed.) (Manchester, 1984), p. 50.
[34] Lindley 1984, p. 57.

These examples aside, Elizabethan literary criticism found *musica speculativa* to be a convenient repertoire for terminology and devices which could be related to poetry, in order to extoll the virtues thereof, and its power to move the soul. By far the most prominent, and frequently quoted, example of this tendency is George Puttenham's (d. 1590) *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589).[35] The treatise, on the whole, is an extensive anatomy of contemporary poetry, supplying definitions of poetic and rhetorical devices as much in use now as ever. For the present purpose, Puttenham's conflation of musical "proportion" with what is consonant or beautiful in music and poetry is the most relevant:

> It is said by such as professe the Mathematicall sciences, that all things stand by proportion, and that without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful… Hereupon it seemeth the Philosopher gathers a triple proportion, to wit, the Arithmeticall, the Geometricall, and the Musical… Of all which we leave to speake, returning to our poeticall proportion, which holdeth the Musical, because as we sayd before Poesie is a skill to speake & write harmonically: and verses or rime be a kind of Musical utterance, by reason of a certaine congruitie in sounds pleasing the eare, though not perchance so exquisitely as the harmonicall concents of the artificial Musicke, consisting in strained tunes, as is the vocall Musike… And this our proportion Poeticall resteth in five points: Staffe, Measure, Concord, Scituation and figure.[36]

In the sense that poetical proportion "holdeth of the musical", the context still being a discussion of divine proportion, this last remark does indeed return poetry to its place as an imitator of the harmony of the spheres; partaking through its form, "verses or rhyme", poetry strikes a concord with the universal music.

Puttenham goes on to describe many of poetry's essential parts using essentially musical terminology. It is clear that his interest is primarily in sound, and "proportion" acquires an almost motivic significance through its repetition and transposition into various contexts. Although clearly Puttenham uses it to evoke a whole host of meanings, attaining "proportion" in poetry is the ultimate goal of the musical poet, through which the main functions of poetry are

---

[35] Authorship of the treatise is disputable due to insufficient evidence, but as to the work's wide recognition in its time there is no debate. See Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (eds.), *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham; A Critical Edition* (New York, 2007), pp. 17-9.

[36] George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie, Contrived into three books: the first of poets and poesie, the second of proportion, the third of ornament* (London, 1589), pp. 53-4.

achieved (and, according to Puttenham, for the most good and noble reasons). In most instances his employment of the word "proportion" could more accurately be filled by "number". By "proportion", and certainly by its context as supplied by the introduction quoted above, we should suppose Puttenham to be referring to ratios, to the relations between numbers, or, in any case, to proportion as it refers to the shape of a thing. But instead, when speaking of, for example, "proportion in measure", the subject at hand is simply "Meeter and measure… the quantitie of a verse, either long or short".[37] Whereas the section dealing with rhyme and rhythm, "Of Proportion in Concord, Called Symphonie or rime", employs comparisons with music that, while making mention of "numerositie", focus on the aural:

> There is also a musicall or audible number, fashioned by stirring of tunes & their sundry times in utterance of our words, as when the voice goeth high or low, or sharpe or flat, or swift or slow: & this is called *rithmos* or numerositie, that is to say, a certaine flowing utterance by slipper words and sillables such as the toung easily utters, and the eare with pleasure receiveth, and which flowing of words with much volubility smoothly proceeding from the mouth is in some sort *harmonicall* and breedeth to th'eare a great compassion.[38]

It will be seen from these examples that while *musica speculativa* occupies a prominent position in how poetry is contemplated, the cross-over is largely metaphorical. When the subject turns to various forms in which a stanza may be of a particular shape, Puttenham, still more concerned with poetry's aural qualities, argues: "it so falleth out most times your occular proportion doeth declare the nature of the audible: for if it please the eare well, the same represented by delineation to the view pleaseth the eye well… this is by a naturall *simpathie*, between the eare and the eye".[39] As Finney writes, speaking of the emblematic quality of music with reference to the Renaissance fascination with musical "artifice": "In one sense music is an auditory image illustrating and completing the words of a song to which it is lovingly 'coupled'… These signs, in themselves, often had a significance that did not depend on sound".[40]

But its ancient relationship to music, whether speculative or practical, was not poetry's only source of authority. Just as poetry and music had become sundered, so had discourse itself

---

[37] Ibid., p. 55.
[38] Ibid., pp. 63-4.
[39] Ibid., p. 70.
[40] Finney 1959, p. 40.

become sundered from poetry – yet one more step removed from the ideal – so that, as in Quintilian, an appreciation of music was necessary to one's ability to be an effective orator. This rapport was wholly reciprocal, however: the study of rhetoric in the Humanist tradition was equally important, and its goals in society (because they ultimately derived from the same source) ran parallel to those of music. As a result of the mania for the invocation of classical authority, the very basis for the "new poetry" that our critics were attempting to hammer out became the techniques of rhetoric. Brian Vickers furnishes us with a list of the most commonly used sources: Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (c. 370 BC); the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c. 80 BC); Cicero's works; and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (AD 95).[41] Also accorded canonical status was Horace's *Ars Poetica* (c. 18 BC).

By far the most famous treatise to address these points in the Elizabethan period is that of Sir Philip Sidney. *An apologie for poetrie*[42] was written by Sidney in 1580-1, and circulated among his friends in manuscript form, only being published, nine years after his death, in 1595.[43] It is, of course, difficult for us to estimate the contemporary impact of any one of these treatises, but Sidney's *Apologie* has received exceptional critical attention, being considered the most sound and eloquent argument in its vein. Furthermore, it is a testament to Sidney's status as an authority among his contemporaries that Spenser chose to dedicate his own *Shepheardes Calender* to him, and that his untimely death was so widely bewailed by the poets of England.[44]

Vickers draws attention to a point made by Sidney in the *Apologie*, introduced at first in support of the poet's superiority, over either the historian or the philosopher, as a teacher, wherein the connection between poetry and rhetoric is made: "*mooving*[45] is of a higher degree then teaching... that it is wel nigh the cause and effect of teaching".[46] "Moving", in its juxtaposed position to "teaching", refers to those rhetorical concepts defined by Cicero:[47] *docere*, to teach; *delectare*, to please; and *movere*, to move the emotions;[48] they are later appropriated by Horace

[41] Brian Vickers (ed.), *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford, 1999), p 11.
[42] Also published in the same year as *The defence of poesie.*
[43] Vickers 1999, p. 336.
[44] "Over 200 poetic memorials to him appeared", Vickers 1999, p. 336.
[45] My italics.
[46] Sidney 1595, f. E3.
[47] E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (trans.), *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*, 28 vols. (London, 1967), v. 3, p. 281.
[48] Vickers 1999, p. 15.

for use in the *Ars Poetica* (lines 99-100): "Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunto/ et, quocumque uolent, animum auditoris agunto".[49] As for *docere*: the ennobling power of the word, as inherited from Orpheus and Amphion, is a central motivator for the Humanist movement; there was no loftier goal than the crafting of a work that would lead to the betterment of mankind.

Another early source of the close relationship between poetry, rhetoric, and morality, is Strabo's *Geographica* (*c.* AD 17), which, too, was well known to the Elizabethan critics. After taking a moment to describe how the Greeks use poetry to educate their youth Strabo launches into a justification of this custom: "Rhetoric is, to be sure, wisdom applied to discourse"; and further on, adopting a Socratic tone: "For what is so much a part of rhetoric as style? And what is so much a part of poetry? And who has surpassed Homer in style?" Strabo then goes on to state, very much in earnest, that it was poetry that existed first, and that it was only subsequent writers who degraded literature (Strabo names Cadmus, Pherecydes, and Hecataeus), first by eschewing metre, and then little by little removing those essential elements that constitute "style" until only "prose" remained. Therefore, according to Strabo, the original form of argument, description, and expression, was poetry, and it was only lamentable sloth or expediency that brought us so low that we now employ prose instead. Of key interest is the connection Strabo makes when trying to illustrate how far prose has fallen from its origins:

> And further, the fact that the ancients [i.e. Homer] used the verb "sing" instead of the verb "tell" [φράζειν: *phrázein*] bears witness to this very thing, namely, that poetry was the source and origin of style, I mean ornate, or rhetorical, style... Therefore, since "tell" was first used in reference to poetic "style" and since among the ancients this poetic style was accompanied by song, the term "sing" was to them equivalent to the term "tell".[50]

"Φράζειν" ["*Phrázein*"], according to Jesper Svenbro in *An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, possesses a very distinct meaning, evidently understood by Strabo, which is "to show" or "to illustrate" through the use of gestures and the body, rather than the voice: "The nonacoustic nature of φράζειν is abundantly clear in the expression αντι φονες χειρι φράζειν

[49] "It is not enough that poems should have beauty; if they are to carry their audience with them, they must have charm as well", Betty Radice and Robert Baldick (eds., trans.), *Classical Literary Criticism* (London, 1965), p. 82.

[50] Horace Leonard Jones (trans.), *The Geography of Strabo* (London, 1930), p. 65.

[*antì phōnês kheirì phrázein*] 'to show something with the hand instead of the voice' ".[51] For Strabo, then, the point of distinction between prose and poetry is that poetry "sings", and prose merely "shows", and in such a bland way that we do not even describe it in a way related to the voice.

Heinrich F. Plett discusses the rhetoricization of music during the Renaissance at length. He pays close attention especially to the work accomplished by the Florentine Camerata, that group of Italian musicians and theorists who, at the end of the sixteenth century developed the *stile rappresentativo,* which would evolve into early opera. The motivation behind these innovations was a desire to achieve greater textual clarity, heightening the emotional communicability of song. Plett aptly demonstrates that notions about rhetoric and the affections were critical to the way in which Renaissance composers thought about their music, and he goes on to list a number of treatises that dealt with the appropriation of rhetorical concepts and their transposition onto musical devices, the best-known of which was Joachim Burmeister's *Musica Poetica* (1606), "the first musical theory to systematically explore the connection between rhetoric and music".[52]

The study of rhetoric being very nearly the basis for Renaissance learning, theoretical interpretations of abstract concepts such as musical theory or poetics must necessarily be colored by a theorist's grounding in rhetoric itself. What Plett brings to light with his exposition on the rhetoricization of music is the vast applicability of Cicero's *docere*, *delectare,* and *movere*, in the Renaissance mind. The goal of the Florentine Camerata was to reinvent music based on its theories about Greek (practical) music. But in trying to recapture the technical aspects of that music, the Camerata's members could not forget the theoretical aspect – that is, what about music pertained to the affections, and by what means those were accessed. By the same token, a wholly reciprocal approach was taken in the course of Elizabethan literary criticism: just as musical theorists began to appropriate rhetorical terms to describe their ideas, literary theorists made use of the Pythagorean and Boethian terminology to describe the mechanisms of poetry, and instances in which the language of rhetoric is employed only occur after a more fundamental

[51] Jesper Svenbro, *An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1993), pg. 15.
[52] Ibid., p. 378.

connection, between poetry and music, has been articulated. While rhetoric was employed in musical criticism to describe the power of music to sway the soul, music was being used in literary criticism to describe poetry's power to sway the soul. *Musica practica* is understood to be imitated, or "counterfeited", by poetry both in its ability to produce sweet and concordant sounds (i.e. "proportion"), and in its ability to reproduce on a microcosmic level the mathematical perfection of the universe (i.e. "proportion"). *Delectare* is accomplished first, through the sensuous devices of *musica instrumentalis*, at which point we attain *movere*, the swaying of the passions, and when our (as Sidney calls it) "infected will", or in Boethian terms the *musica humana*, is sufficiently seduced by what it is hearing, then *docere* takes place, the realignment of the soul with the *musica mundana*, the ultimate goal of art in the Elizabethan period.

But there was still another court of appeal in which verse in English would find its native qualities examined, criticized, and improved, and this was in versification itself, and how it could be made more "artificial". This was seen as a necessary step. In the critical opinion of Sidney and many of his contemporaries, poetry in Elizabethan England was in a sorry state. Take, for example, some incidental remarks from E. K. in his preface to Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579). Speaking first of our "new Poete", E. K. briefly digresses to heap condemnation on his contemporaries:

> For what in most English wryters useth to be loose, and as it were ungyrt, in this Authour is well grounded, finely framed, and strongly trussed up together. In regard whereof, I scorne and spue out the rakehellye route of our ragged rymers (for so themselves use to hunt the letter) which without learning boste, without judgement jangle, without reason rage and fome, as if some instinct of Poeticall spirite had newly ravished them above the meanenesse of common capacitie.[53]

The artless simplicity of rhymes and iambic metre was inexcusable, both for its ease of enjoyability and its ease of reproduction. Sidney refers to the pedlars of such trinkets as "bastard Poets".[54] "He valued the discipline and artifice of an abstract metrical system, valid to the mind even if not audible to the ear; English verse, with its small number of patterns, mostly iambic,

[53] Richard A. McCabe (ed.), *Edmund Spenser: the Shorter Poems* (London, 1999), p. 28. All quotations of Spenser's work, including the dedicatory epistle and E. K.'s gloss, come from this edition, hereafter abbreviated as *Spenser* (exceptions, such as *The Faerie Queene*, will be noted).

[54] Sidney 1595, f. I3.

and its governance by speech-stress, which needs no scholarship to perceive, had nothing comparably complex to offer".[55] G. Gregory Smith takes these critical opinions into account when he describes the context in which the greater debate about vernacular poetry in English was taking place:

> But the chief support to this hatred of the fooleries and lies of the Muse lay in the record of English poetry. With the exception of Chaucer, and there was no reason why the sterner minds should except even him, there was little or nothing of poetry, as they knew it, to be commended, except by professional friendship, and certainly nothing sufficiently outstanding to win over the more open-minded of that party. The defenders [i.e. "Sidney and his friends"] are the first to admit this, but on that admission they founded an argument for the revival, not for the suppression of the Art.[56]

This "revival" is rooted in the Elizabethan educational curriculum: every student was expected to know the rules for Latin prosody, and to be able to apply them to the reading of classical verse. " 'Prosodia' was one of the four divisions of grammar in the traditional arrangement, and as such formed part of the book that served as the basis for school education".[57] As Derek Attridge in his *Well-weighed Syllables* (1974) points out, this led to the average reader of poetry being unable to comprehend the structures underpinning "vulgar rime"[58] in English: "In short, there was no art of English poetry", and even should the principles thereof be explained, there was precious little enjoyment to be reaped:

> Our [hypothetical] Elizabethan might even find the rhythmic beat of English verse (especially the monotonous regularity that prevailed in the third quarter of the century) itself crude and distasteful, so different from the sound of Latin verse, with its accentual irregularity, leavened only occasionally by bursts of rhythmicality.[59]

---

[55] Winifred Maynard, *Elizabethan Lyric Poetry and Its Music* (Oxford, 1986), p. 85-6.
[56] G. Gregory Smith (ed.), *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (London, 1904), p. xvi.
[57] Derek Attridge, *Well-Weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres* (London, 1974), p. 41.
[58] It is here necessary to point out the distinction between "verse" and "rhyme" (or "rime"). Attridge 1974, pp. 94-6, gives a detailed account of the etymology of our word "rhyme". Referring to Roger Ascham, he writes: "But because, like many people in the sixteenth century, he saw rhyme as the essential difference between classical and modern verse, the word used in the former sense retained at the same time its meaning of 'non-quantitative verse'". To refer to classical (quantitative) verse, the Elizabethans simply used the word "verse".
[59] Attridge 1974, p. 92.

Thomas Campion (1567-1620), a poet and composer himself, comments in *Obsvervations in the art of English poesie* (published in 1602, but entered in the Stationers' Register in 1591[60]):

> Old customes, if they be better, why should they not be recald, as yet flourishing custome of numerous poesy used among the *Romanes* and *Grecians*: But the unaptnes of our toongs, and the difficultie of imitation disheartens us; again the facilitie & popularitie of Rime creates as many Poets, as hot sommer flies.[61]

By "old customes", Campion is referring to Greek and Latin versification, wherein poetic metre is not measured in accent, but in duration. At various points in their careers, Sidney, Spenser, and Campion, among others, explored the idea of applying the rules of Latin prosody to poetry in English, hoping, in this way, to emulate in metrical complexity the works of those poets they had been educated to admire above all: Homer, Vergil, and Horace. All European languages, it was felt, had fallen into abuse since the collapse of the Roman empire. In contemplating the past, something almost prelapsarian was imagined (or at least pre-Babel):

> The world is made by Simmetry and proportion, and is in that respect compared to Musick, and Musick to Poetry: for *Terence* saith speaking of Poets, *artem qui tractant musicam,* confounding musick and Poesy together. What musick can there be where there is no proportion observed? Learning first flourished in *Greece*, from thence it was derived unto the *Romaines*, both diligent observers of the number, and quantity of sillables, not in their verses only, but likewise in their prose. Learning after the declining of the *Romaine* Empire, and the pollution of their language through the conquest of the *Barbarians*, lay most pitifully deformed… In those lack-learning times, and in barbarized *Italy*, began that vulgar and easie kind of Poesie which is now in use throughout most parts of Christendome, which we abusively call Rime, and Meeter, of [sic] *Rithmus* and *Metrum*.[62]

In the context of all that has been discussed so far, Campion's remarks on "simmetry and proportion" with direct reference to poetry play perfectly into his point about the virtues of "quantity" in classical versification. Of the poets whose work we have on the subject, it was Campion, the composer, who took the matter the most seriously: "He was intuitively aware that principles of accentuation, as yet not clearly identified and defined by Elizabethan poets and

---

[60] Ryding 1993, p. 84. A full exposition of Campion's arguments as they relate to musical humanism, and Samuel Daniels' responses thereto, is given on pp. 83-92.
[61] Thomas Campion, *Obsvervations in the art of English poesie* (London, 1602), p. 4.
[62] Campion 1602, pp. 2-3.

theorists, govern the spoken English language and therefore its native verse, and he did not wish to oppose or overlay them; his aim was to increase the variety of metres available for English verse by drawing upon classical measures, only those 'which by my long observation I have found agreeable with the nature of our sillables' ".[63] *Observations* contains by far the most complete and reasoned-out list of rules for how English prosody could be adapted to quantitative verse, and shows a sensibility turning constantly on the qualities of sound and musicality that can be brought to light thereby.

Sorting out how rhymed verse emerges in England, as in France,[64] as the "most musical" form for poetry is complicated by early modern criticism's tendency to equate "quantity" with rhythm, and rhythm with music. Sidney illustrates the distinction perfectly when he writes of "the Auncient [i.e. quantitative verse], (no doubt) more fit for Musick, both words and tune observing quantity, and more fit lively to expresse divers passions, by the low and lofty sounde of the well-weyed silable".[65] When Sidney says "more fit for Musick", he means to describe how the verse can be set more easily to a tune. The words and time observe "quantity" by having a specific duration connected with their orthography or position in the line, which determines whether a syllable will be long or short. In fact, he is correct, for we know that ancient Greek music required no rhythmic notation in setting text, since the poetry itself dictated the rhythm by the varying durations of its syllables.[66] Sidney follows immediately with this: "The latter likewise, with hys Ryme, striketh a certaine musick to the eare; and in fine, sith it dooth delight, though by another way, it obtaines the same purpose". This "certaine musick" is quite distinct

[63] Maynard 1986, p. 96.

[64] Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532-1589) was, only a decade or two earlier, working on the same project, applying quantitative metre to French poetry, which he dubbed *vers mesurés à l'antique*. There were problems similar to those faced in England: "Their metre was meant to be quantitative, but owing to the nature of the French language this was impossible. They did, however, come near to achieving an accentual version of the metrical patterns of Greek and Latin verse... "musique mesurée", the settings of these verses, is much of it good music and may well be of considerable importance in the history of musical style. The great majority of these settings followed the metre of the verse exactly, a long always being given a minim and a short a crotchet", p. 91; "The musical and poetic theory and practice...are dominated by two principles: first, that music and verse are to be firmly united; secondly, that this union is to produce a revival of the ethical effects of ancient music. This union differed from any previously proposed in that it was uncompromisingly hellenistic", D. P. Walker, "The Aims of Baïf 's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*", in Penelope Gouk (ed.), *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance* (London, 1985), p. 92.

[65] Sidney 1595, f. L1-2.

[66] "The quantities of the syllables of the lines of poetry, the very prosodic feet themselves, constitute the metrical and rhythmic notation of the music. Greek music was notated by pitch signs alone", Hollander 1970, p. 22.

from the "music" of quantity, for it is a thing emerging purely from sound, and for which the words on the page are merely a cue.

While it may be true that in Greece quantitative verse was the most natural, and the most "fit for music", the same cannot be said of English quantitative verse. Attridge's retelling of the "quantitative movement's" origins and results ultimately demonstrates the incongruity of quantitative metre imposed upon a language the poetic heritage of which was thoroughly accentual-syllabic, and upon a culture not predisposed to hearing specifically durational syllables. Above all, his description of how an Elizabethan would have been able to experience English quantitative verse takes the movement in a direction precisely opposed to one that emphasizes music, or any sort of aural involvement at all. "Artifice", "quantity", and "proportion", are all conflated into a single notion about the true form poetry should take, but the comparisons and similes used to describe the mechanism are visual, and primarily architectural.[67]

Attridge points out that the adoption of this attitude towards poetry was an extension of Renaissance humanism; art in all its forms was intended to imitate the divine, and the mathematical means by which this could be achieved had already been clearly described by Pythagoras and Plato. The idea that a dome capping a cross-shaped cathedral would symbolize the unification of earth and heaven originates with *Timaeus*. "Harmony", in the Pythagorean sense in which it came to be understood, had almost nothing to do with sound. Hence:

> Quantitative metre, with its theory of exact proportions of duration, its attention to every letter, and its careful and testable patterning, obviously accords with these ideas much more than accentual verse, particularly as it was understood in the sixteenth century. The motives which encouraged Spenser and Sidney to organize their poems on strict numerological principles… were similar in many respects to those which lay behind their experiments in quantitative verse – most notably, a desire to fulfil the poet's function as a creator of order and proportion.[68]

It is not the focus of the present study to analyse the various merits or demerits of the "quantitative movement", however, this subject having been amply covered by Attridge, and again in a broader context in O. B. Hardison's *Prosody and Purpose in the English Renaissance*

[67] Attridge 1974, pp. 114-9.
[68] Ibid., pp. 115-6.

(1989). Rather, the subject at hand is the manner in which certain participants in the cultivation of Elizabethan prosody argued in poetry's defence, since whether one was for or against rime, the same arguments were invariably used. Preoccupations with visual "artifice" aside, even arguments about proportion and number revolve around the sound of the poetry, as opposed to its merely excellent construction. It is therefore important to re-situate the discussion around the decidedly oral/aural emphasis that, for the most part, takes precedence in discussions about poetry.

We have seen how, while the Neoplatonists did perceive a division between speculative and practical music, the role of sound, of *musica instrumentalis* could not be overlooked. Cicero, too, believed in the music of the spheres, but held them to be inaccessible except by way of music heard: "This celestial harmony has been imitated by learned musicians both on stringed instruments and with the voice, whereby they have opened to themselves a way to return to the celestial regions".[69] Likewise, when the notion of a celestial music is grafted onto poetry, it is taken for granted that the "music" is always audible – that is, heard. Poetry can mimic divine proportions in some respects – notably, as will be seen later, in the disposition of rhymes and key ideas on specific lines that form a ratio according to one of Pythagoras' fundamental proportions – but the main accomplishment of fixating on a divine music in poetry is the creation of a poetry that is itself more pleasing to the ear and the intellect. By pleasing the ear, the poet-as-singer gains access to the intellect of his listener, and thence to the soul. The aspects of the affective triad of rhetoric, *movere*, *docere*, and *delectare*, do not occur in a succession – rather, they are all aspects of the same illuminating force. *Delectare* alone is reprehensible, the very reason Plato distrusted poets. *Docere* without any beauty is plodding and tedious, and has no power to enlighten. *Movere*, far from being merely a shadow of itself outside of the triad, can hardly be said to exist at all if severed from its partners. It follows, then, that the aim of pleasing the ear is not merely *delectare*, but rather it is via the ear that the illuminating power of music penetrates the soul. If it is truly beautiful, if it truly possesses harmony and proportion, it will be good, and will move, please, and teach those who hear it.

---

[69] (*Somnium Scipionis* [54 BC]) Francis Barham, Esq. (trans.), *The Political Works of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, 2 vols. (London, 1841), v. 1, p. 305. For a lengthier discussion of music from Cicero, see C. D. Yonge (trans.), *Tusculan Disputations: On the Nature of Gods, and On the Commonwealth* (New York, 2005), pp. 17-27.

It is out of this seemingly tumbling and overlapping arrangement that the Orpheus figure re-emerges. In him every commentator on the subject of music or poetry found the ideal, the man who through the power of his voice brought civilization to men. As a semi-divine, he can draw, in his singing, directly from the celestial harmony, and with that power ennoble the human race. As such, he embodies every aspect of those things that have been at issue: he combines in himself the virtuosity of the poet-as-singer with the ability to charm and move the hearts of men for their own betterment. In this very important sense, Orpheus is also a prophet, one who can provide to others access to the divine. It will be seen how, in subsequent discussions, Orpheus' character fills a vital role, one which, now, has been properly illuminated.

Therefore the poetic analyses that will ensue in the following chapters will focus most strongly on the oral/aural dimensions of the poems. Both Spenser and Milton address themselves directly to the question of what role the poet should fill in society, and both identify strongly with Orpheus when he is at his most expanded. The philosophical notions derived from *musica speculativa* are in the background at all times, describing, in their silence, the right path to heaven, but the permutations into which these notions are canalized must take a physical, audible form. Close readings of the poems will reveal how nuanced and subtle, how inventive and intellectually challenging, "rime" became, as it evolved to absorb the principles of musical humanism. As previously mentioned, instances of "proportion" will be examined as well, in addition to larger structural forms, such as Spenser's organization of *The Shepheardes Calender*. The multi-faceted notion of "artifice", as illustrated by the exploration into quantitative verse, is itself descended from Neoplatonism, and ultimately Pythagoras' discoveries on his monochord. In this sense, the seasonal organization of the *Calender* is as much "music" as the poems themselves. But praxis, by nature, involves some degree of practicality. With specific regard to the works of Spenser and Milton, distinguishing between simplistic examples of *musica practica* and more complex examples of applied *musica speculativa* will also form part of the focus of this dissertation. Equally important will be the particular thoughts of the poets with regards to music as each saw it, his own work, and his place in society, with the overarching intent that their unique poetic idioms find new exposure, in the context of a music of poetry, as they imagined it.

II

THE "NEW POET": FOUNDING THE ENGLISH POETIC TRADITION

In the previous chapter I looked at some of the literary criticism that was being produced in Elizabethan England, and we saw how integral music was considered to be, either aurally or mathematically, in understanding the mechanisms of poetry and of rhetoric. The majority of the material that stimulated this line of reasoning found its source in ancient Greece and Rome, and even Cicero, the rediscovery of whose texts would prove so important to the Renaissance, was a firm believer in the harmony of the spheres, and music's power to charm the soul. While the Romans clearly treated these arts separately, it is well understood that, for Plato and Aristotle, music and poetry were unified arts, and our business now is to investigate how poetry in English was conceptually reincorporated with music at the close of the sixteenth century in keeping with the tenets of Humanism. Whatever developments poetry underwent between the fall of Rome and the advent of Dante and Petrarch (although an analysis of mediaeval oral traditions in comparison with what we can infer about Ancient Greek performance poetry would be spectacular), the influx of Classical texts and their consequent influences wrought upon Europe a total, self-conscious transformation. "Poetry" was reinvented from the ground up and, as has been observed in the previous section, anything masquerading as English poetry that preceded this reinvention was despised, with only the frequent exceptions of Chaucer and Skelton. Ever the Bloomian late-comer, England was last in Europe to revaluate the question of poetry in the vernacular. More than two hundred years earlier, Dante had already settled the matter for Italian, and even without his unfinished treatise, *De vulgari eloquentia* (~1302-05) (ironically written in Latin), his work and Petrarch's served to preserve, for all time, vernacular verse from further scepticism.[1] Owing to its tardiness in joining this debate, as well as that pertaining to whether or not the adoption of classical metres was a viable pursuit, England was placed in the unique position of being able to draw upon not only the Classical texts that worked such riot on the

[1] England was late in experiencing the impact of the Italian Renaissance, but it more than made up for it in the range and quality of the literature which it produced. However, in some respects England never caught up with Italy, due to the great social and cultural differences between the two countries. "Italy…had had a major literature for over two centuries…The great changes in the English language in the course of the sixteenth century, and the sporadic printing of mediaeval literature, deprived our writers and critics of any meaningful sense of a literary tradition, as we can see from the vagueness of references to Chaucer, Lydgate, or Skelton", Vickers 1999, p. 4.

Continental imagination, but also upon the works that were derived from them. The formulation of the English poetic identity, then, stands in contrast to all others as one thoroughly bound up not only in this feeling of "us too", which generated a great deal of curiosity for Continental literary achievements, but also in England's emergent pride as an active player in European affairs, that it needed its own, distinct poetics, one unpolluted by the influence of either "barbarians" or Catholic anti-Christs, for English itself was frequently admitted, with some shame, to being young, rude, and in need of improvement. The man in whose works this entire, paradoxical conflict is encapsulated, crystallized, and ultimately resolved, is Edmund Spenser.

The Shepheardes Calender is a conscious attempt to declare a new direction for English verse, and to demonstrate to its audience the potential for poetry in rhyme. In the scope of its undertaking, and especially in its explicit, self-conscious engagement with the issues confronting contemporary poetry, Spenser's first independent publication is the inauguration of England's "New Poet",[2] and the first of his many efforts to find for poetry its rightful exalted place in Elizabethan society. Sidney's somewhat cool[3] reference to the work, in his *Apologie*, notwithstanding, critics, such as Puttenham, were greatly encouraged by Spenser's virtuosic use of "rime". The *Calender*'s incorporation of so many varied forms, genres, and subjects, united under the banner of "New English Poetry", establishes Spenser as the primogenitor of Renaissance English verse, while simultaneously establishing a new English poetic identity, both for Spenser himself and for those that would follow in his footsteps. At the heart of this new tradition is the idea that poetry and music are intrinsically linked, and that it is in the persona of the musician-poet that a poet identifies himself in relation both to his predecessors and to society, and provides the basis upon which future poets may construct their own identities.

Spenser's most immediate precedents for this idea were the various members of the Pléiade, who in their turn would inspire the founding of the *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*,

---

[2] Spenser is first referred to as England's "New Poet" in E. K.'s dedicatory epistle to *The Shepheardes Calender*; see *Spenser*, p. 25.

[3] Sidney 1595, f. I3: "The *Sheapheards Kalender* hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues: indeede worthy of the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of his stile, to an old rustick language, I dare not alowe, sith neyther *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in Latine, nor Sanazar in Italian, did affect it". Spenser is mentioned by Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie* as being among "the most commended of writers in our English poesy" as "that other Gentleman who wrate the late shepheardes Callender" – ironically, alongside Sidney himself (Puttenham 1589, F. I ii,).

under Charles IX of France. The pursuit by de Baïf of his *vers mesurés à l'antique*, led to the development of a monadic musical form similar to that being developed at the same time in Italy, by the Florentine Camerata – though, as in the case of the composer Claude Le Jeune (1528/30-1600), much of the *musique mesurée* produced by the *Académie* was homophonic choral music; the attention and primacy due to a poem's text was the same, but there was no corresponding emphasis on drama.[4] While de Baïf's mission ultimately failed, the fact of its attempt does point up one of the directions that was being taken in response to the groundwork laid down in the treatises and poetry coming from the Pléiade, from which he drew his inspiration, and which, correspondingly, warrant a closer look with reference to Spenser.

The comparison has been made between the treatise of Joachim du Bellay, *Deffense et illustration de la langue françoyse* (1549), and *The Shepheardes Calender*, that both texts undertake similar aims regarding the ennoblement of poetry in their respective vernaculars: "[Spenser] brought out his own self-presentational work, *The Shepheardes Calender*, with fanfare that recalls du Bellay's inaugural acts and with introduction and notes that repeatedly echo du Bellay's *Defense* [sic]. Clearly, Spenser's very sense of himself as a poet, his sense of what a poet should be and do, owed much to his ambitious French predecessor".[5] From his work with van der Noot's *Theatre for Worldlings* (1569) we know that Spenser was, from an early age, intimately acquainted with du Bellay's poetry, and Richard Mulcaster's *Elementarie* (1582) shows strong traces of influence from the *Deffense.* Moreover, Spenser's later return to du Bellay in *Complaints* (1591) is indicative of more than just the acknowledgement of a predecessor, the concluding dedicatory sonnet going so far as to name du Bellay "first garland of free Poësie". While we have no concrete grounds on which to assume that Spenser himself was familiar with du Bellay's treatise, nevertheless through his attentive tutor, Mulcaster, we may read into Spenser's work some of the ideas that du Bellay was trying to introduce to poetry.[6]

---

[4] Even so, some influence of what was taking place in Italy made its way to him; see: Isabelle His, "Italianism and Claude Le Jeune", *Early Music History* 13 (1994), pp. 149-170.

[5] Richard Helgerson (ed., trans.), *Joachim du Bellay* (Philadelphia, 2006), p. 34.

[6] Some commentary goes so far as to assume Spenser's having read the critical treatises of the Pléiade: "'Enfranchisement' is a somewhat ironic expression since it suggests Frenchification, and as it happens both Du Bellay's *Deffence de la Langue Francoyse* (1549) and Ronsard's *Abrege de l'Art Poetique Francois* (1565) influenced Spenser's championing of the English vernacular". Willy Maley, "Spenser's languages", Andrew Hadfield (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 172.

The contexts from which the two works emerge share a number of pertinent similarities. Both men are trying to expand the potential scope of their work, to educate their audiences in such a way as to allow for greater creative flexibility, and to create for poetry a wider base of sub-genres which in their turn would serve to stimulate the imaginations of poets for subsequent generations. E. K.'s[7] "hot summer flies" remark warns us that there was no shortage of poetasters and upstarts, but rather a dearth of variation and ingenuity. A kind of *enfranchisement* of English verse was desperately needed, and the distinctly nationalistic flavour of these undertakings was ubiquitous. When apologizing for Spenser's choice of "*Æ*glogues" for his inaugural work, for example, E. K. suggests one of the poet's intentions to be "to furnish our tongue with this kinde, wherein it faulteth".[8]

Whatever substance there is to theories about Spenser's relationship to Sir Philip Sidney, the Spenser-Harvey correspondence (itself regarded by modern criticism as one of the earlier "treatises"[9]) points up the pertinence of the earlier-mentioned "quantitative question" in Spenser's own mind. But while modern scholarship has vindicated Harvey from much of the scorn he endured in life,[10] he may still owe to Spenser criticism a greater debt than has previously been recognized for creating the myth of Sidney's Aereopagus. Nor is Spenser himself clear of culpability on the matter, for both men seem more interested in publicizing their desire for greater intimacy with Sidney, and to be recognized as major figures of literary criticism, than they are in answering the questions Sidney took it upon himself to address. The likelihood that career and reputation are of greater concern casts a dubious light on the extent to which we may credit either man's sincerity in the dialogue (particularly Spenser's). Of far

[7] On the identity of E. K. there is little common consensus. *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, for example, contains numerous disparate opinions tacitly inserted by its various contributors, ranging from "most definitely Spenser" to "almost certainly someone other than Spenser". For the present purpose E. K. will be referred to as a separate entity, but whether or not he, in fact, was is not a necessary consideration regarding his views as distinct from those of Spenser himself. The ideas posited in *The Shepheardes Calender*, whatever their individual source, are considered to come from Spenser. "It is perhaps E. K.'s greatest achievement that his voice first helps to define for us Spenser's own", David R. Shore. "E. K.", A. C. Hamilton, Donald Cheney, W. F. Blissett, David A. Richardson, William W. Barker (eds.), *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, (Toronto, 1990). Richard Rambuss offers this summary: "Some have suggested that E. K. is Edward Kirke, a classmate of Spenser's at Pembroke Hall. Gabriel Harvey is another, perhaps more likely candidate. Even more likely is that Spenser - brandishing the same faculty for self-promotion so evident in the Letters - collaborated on, or even himself composed the gloss, thereby providing his poem with both built-in directions for reading and its own pre-scripted critical reception". Richard Rambuss, "Spenser's life and career", Hadfield 2001, p. 23.

[8] *Spenser*, p. 29.

[9] Both Brian Vickers and Smith include the correspondence in their compendia of Elizabethan critical essays.

[10] See Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia and Library* (Oxford, 1979).

greater use is *A View of the State of Ireland*, which offers a good deal of comprehensive insight into Spenser's idealized vision of the poet interacting with society. The fictional dialogue between Irenius and Eudoxus looks pointedly at the place of the poet in Irish society, making regular comparisons to Greek sources, providing a clear view into Spenser's ideal picture of the poet-musician, as well as making language and nationalism integral to the poet's ability to communicate with his people. Taken as a companion piece in critical commentary to *The Shepheardes Calender*, it serves nicely to situate Spenser quite self-consciously in the centre of a dialogue concerning the role of the poet, and the shape that English verse was going to take.

As to the specific context of du Bellay's treatise, Spenser criticism has already seized on a number of details and used them to expand further on the legend of the Aereopagus. Indeed, critical enthusiasm for contextualizing Spenser has even, on the English side, enlarged the importance of the Pléiade far beyond what it is now considered, in its own field, to have possessed.[11] Nevertheless, they were prolific: each member of the Pléiade produced, at some point in his career and in some cases in response to that done by another member, a critical treatise on French verse. Central to their own debate was, predictably, the place rhyme should have in high French poetry, whether to attempt to adopt Classical versification (though even less feasible in French than in English) and, both integral and incidental to the afore-mentioned, the relationship between poetry and music.

De Baïf's tangential response to the groundwork laid down by the Pléiade can itself be taken as indicative of the central position that music assumed in the commentary about what poetry should be. Ronsard, for example, invariably composes in the persona of the musician-poet. Isadore Silver thoroughly investigates the extent to which Ronsard identified himself as a musician while being a poet, and explicates the frequent troping of musical instruments as metonymic of poetry or his own poetic voice, the lyre (or whatever instrument he chooses to substitute for it) taking the role of a vehicle or medium through which he would communicate. While the bulk of Ronsard's explicit attention paid to "practical music" consists of his thoughts on how poetry can be accompanied by musical instruments, his principal fascination lies with the

[11] "The membership varied according to Ronsard's whims, and few of the poets enrolled seemed to attach any importance to the group, but it nonetheless remained a fixture in French literary history", Laura Willett (ed., trans.) *Poetry and Language in 16th-Century France: Du Bellay, Ronsard, Sébillet* (Toronto, 2004), p. 6.

potential resurrection of a poetry reminiscent of that of Ancient Greece, demonstrated here by his fixation on the lyre: "& ferai encores revenir (si je puis) l'usage de la lire aujourdui resuscitée en Italie, laquelle lire seule doit & peut animer les vers, & leur donner le juste poix de leur gravité".[12] He was a man thoroughly dedicated to (as he saw it) the reunification of poetry and music. Pontus de Tyard, another member now completely overshadowed by Ronsard and du Bellay, wrote two treatises in dialogue form, the second of which, *Solitaire Second ou Prose de la Musique* (1555), is a detailed exploration of Platonic and Pythagorean theories about music, complete with diagrams and mathematical analyses, and includes a serious discussion of the "Poëte-musicien" and the importance of resurrecting the Orphean ideal.[13]

Robert J. Clements gathers together the various approaches that each of the Pléiade's members took towards poetry and their conceptions of themselves. What remains ubiquitous is the idea that a poet was, even in spite of a total lack of knowledge concerning practical music, through and through a musician. Clements, after exploring the various musical figures of speech the Pléiade's members employed to speak of each other and of their work, summarizes their thinking in three points:

> I. Lyric poetry must offer a psychagogic experience; it has or should have the function of thrilling the soul and the senses…The poet who can satisfy our sense of hearing will be perforce a musician.
>
> II. Among the ancients, lyric poetry was either song or recitative. The soul of poetry was music…Musical poetry was an inevitable consequence of humanism. If poetry was to be musical, the creator could be considered, with some license of the imagination, a musician.
>
> III. To the Pléiade, poetry was no longer written to be read in the silence of the study or the chamber; it was written to be heard.[14]

Concerning du Bellay in particular, his thoughts on rhymed verse in relation to quantitative verse can now be seen to emerge quite logically from the system of thought that the Pléiade was devising. Chapter VII of the second book of his *Deffense* is titled "De la Rythme et des Vers sans Rythme", and contains three very relevant comparisons. The first of these contains

---

[12] Pierre de Ronsard, *Préface des Odes*, I, 48; cited from Isadore Silver (ed., trans.), *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France, Part II: Ronsard and the Grecian Lyre* (Geneva, 1981), p. 76. "…and I will bring about a return (if I can) of the lyre, today resurrected in Italy, which alone can and must animate poetry, and give it its true pitch and gravity" (my translation).

[13] Cathy M. Yandall (ed.), *Solitaire Second, Edition critique* (Geneva 1980), p. 243.

[14] Robert J. Clements, *Critical Theory and Practice of the Pléiade* (New York 1970), p. 149.

his only mention of quantitative versification in the treatise: "Quand à la rythme, je suy' bien d'opinion qu'elle soit riche, pour ce qu'elle nous est ce qu'est la quantité aux Grecz et Latins".[15] That du Bellay gives no attention to the question of quantitative verse, but rather appropriates rhyme as quantity's vernacular equivalent (thereby indicating that, to his thinking, the two are mutually exclusive), is telling of his devotion to the enrichment of his vernacular as a nationalistic mission, and that this mission is to be accomplished through the emphasis on how poetry sounds. Shortly thereafter he compares the sound of rhyme to that of music: "bref, elle sera telle, que le vers tumbant en icelle ne contentera moins l'oreille, qu'une bien armonieuse musique tumbante en un bon et parfait accord".[16] Finally, when speaking of unrhymed verse, he tellingly uses the visual analogy of painting and sculpting in order to describe the effort necessary to make it beautiful: "Mais tout ainsi que les peintres et statuaires mettent plus grand' industrie à faire beaux et bien proportionnez les corps qui sont nuds, que les autres: aussi faudroit-il bien que ces vers non rymez feussent bien charnuz et nerveux, afin de compenser par ce moyen le default de la rythme".[17]

In the following paragraph, du Bellay discusses the difference between sounded rhyme and merely orthographical rhyme, placing further emphasis on the primacy of sound over any visual aspect of how one should compose (or experience) poetry. This can be taken as an extension of point III, cited above, that poetry existed to be recited aloud, not read in solitary silence: while an orthographical rhyme might be pleasing to the eye, it is of no use to those listening in a hypothetical audience. The poet, then, is most like a poet when he is reading his (rhymed) poetry aloud and simultaneously, in the Pléiade's view, most like a musician. However, we cannot take everything du Bellay says for granted, nor expect it to be reflected in Spenser's work. While Spenser pays due homage to both Chaucer and Skelton, respectively by referring to Chaucer as England's Vergil and adopting as his alias the name Colin Clout, du Bellay acknowledges no fit predecessor more recent than the Romans: "The *Deffense* constitutes the place where Du Bellay proclaims himself the rightful heir of an ancient poetic tradition, and

[15] "As for rhyme, I am altogether of the opinion that it should be rich, since it is for us what quantitative metre is for the Greeks and Latins", Helgerson 2006, p. 386

[16] "It [i.e. rhyme] will, in short, be such that the verse, falling into it, will please the ear no less than thoroughly harmonious music when it falls into a good and perfect accord", ibid., p. 386.

[17] "But just as painters and sculptors work harder to make beautiful and well-proportioned naked bodies than others, so these unrhymed verses must be especially well fleshed out and sinewy so as to compensate in this way for the lack of rhyme", ibid., p. 386.

in doing this, he rejects his own national poetic heritage".[18] Both poets may be concerned with *enfranchisement*, but part of Spenser's task in taking up rime in the context of the pastoral remains the vindication of more than just his vernacular, but his native poetic style.

The Shepheardes Calender is bound together by the seasons, and the idea of "number" and "proportion" applies equally to the weaving-in of such astrological symbolism as it does to Pythagorean musical number. Insofar as Pythagorean mathematical harmony is concerned, Spenser's organization of the *Calender* in imitation of astrological symbolism can be considered a "musical" device. However, owing to later distinctions made between the various kinds of music, for example by Boethius, the poet-as-singer can be said to accomplish aims similar to those attempted through said devices simply by reciting his poetry, on the basis of its analogous accordance with practical music (which, in turn, harmonizes the soul with the *musica mundana*). In other words, the "desire to fulfil the poet's function as a creator of order and proportion"[19] is subsumed under the greater heading given variously by both Sidney and Spenser (through E. K.'s commentary) as *vates*,[20] in which the poet's duty is to guide mankind, and the principal means by which this is achieved is aurally, through the music of poetry.

The *enfranchisement* of English poetry needs to begin with the poet's establishment of his identity, both in relation to himself, and to society. Patronage is an essential question to Spenser because, at this early stage in his career (and, indeed, for the entirety thereof), he perceived himself in contrast to those Continental and Ancient poets who were sharply defined not only by their accomplishments, but also by the rewards they reaped thereby. As E. K. says: "So flew Theocritus, as you may perceive he was all ready full fledged. So flew Virgile, as not yet well feeling his wings. So flew Mantuane, as being not full somd. So Petrarque. So Boccace; So Marot, Sanazarus, and also divers other excellent both Italian and French Poetes, whose foting this Author every where followeth, yet so as few, but they be wel sented can trace him out. So finally flyeth this our new Poete, as a bird…"[21]

---

[18] Eshan Ahmed, "Du Bellay, Sebillet, and the problematic identity of the French humanist", *Neophilologus.* 75 (1991), p. 185.
[19] Attridge 1974, p. 116.
[20] Sidney writes: "Among the Romans a poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a Diviner, Fore-seer, or Prophet", Sidney 1595, f. B3. E. K.'s note can be found in *Spenser*, p. 133, n. 21.
[21] *Spenser*, p. 29.

The career path of the Elizabethan courtier, even that distinct from the poet himself, was not uninfluenced by that of Vergil, who won his fame and patronage in the court of Augustus. But the mind of the Renaissance poet, and especially the English poet, becomes sharply divided when his view of himself comes to include the careers of both Vergil and Ovid – as indeed is inevitable at any stage in his own career, but perhaps most painfully and enduringly at its beginning – wherein a nascent poetics prescriptive of one's own identity attempts to accommodate the dichotomy of the state-funded, state-sanctioned poet-Laureate, and the endlessly jibing, endlessly questioning poet-exile. Both are vatic personae, both necessary aspects of the true poet, yet at odds with one another, provoking the poet into a state of internal conflict.[22]

In addition to Spenser's usual discussion of the financial difficulties of the poet and the need for patronage, the conversation between Piers and Cuddie (in whom "is set out the perfecte paterne of a Poete") in the *Calender*'s October eclogue focuses on the function of the poet in society, his importance and his power. While there is some ambiguity as to the specific identity of Cuddie as distinct from Colin, further complicated by E. K.'s equivocal remark, "So that some doubt, that the persons be different", it is observed by McCabe that on a formal level *October* imitates Colin's monologue in *January*, and that Cuddie would have been Colin, but for the generic nature of the eclogue, which is specifically satirical, and therefore inappropriate to the love-sick Colin's particular voice. The conflict of interests that emerges over the course of *October* between the materialistic needs of the poet and his duty both to himself and to society is a manifestation of the poet's own struggle for self-actualization through his labours. Since the

[22] "Spenser, Sidney...These were the men who got English poetry going again after nearly two centuries of only sporadic accomplishment. Yet the roles they assumed – the roles of lover, prodigal, and shepherd – revealed a tension between their literary undertaking and the claims of the state to whose service both their humanist upbringing and the exigencies of the "new monarchy" had directed them. One way of dealing with this tension...was to enclose and depreciate their own poetic accomplishment, to label their poems as the outbreak of licentious youth, something they would gladly renounce in favour of more worthy employment...Another way of dealing with the tension, the way taken by poets of laureate ambition, such as Spenser, Daniel, and Drayton, was to make poetry itself serve, if not the state, then the nation. In chivalric romance, historical narrative, and topographical description, these poets sought to articulate a national community whose existence and eminence would then justify their desire to become its literary spokesmen", Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago, 1992), p. 2.

poet is defined in relation to society poetry for poetry's sake is insufficient grounds on which to construct an identity. One cannot be vatic, nor a singer, without an audience.

Cuddie makes this very point when he describes, not without envy, Colin's skill (lines 88-90):

> For *Colin* fittes such famous flight to scanne:
> He, were he not with love so ill bedight,
> Would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne.

And Colin himself admits this fault of self-indulgence in *June*, lines 70-6:

> I never lyst presume to *Parnasse* hyll,
> But pyping lowe in shade of lowly grove,
> I play to please my selfe, all be it ill.
>
> Nought weigh I, who my song doth prayse or blame,
> Ne strive to winne renowne, or passe the rest:
> With shepheard sittes not, followe flying fame:
> But feede his flocke in fields, where falls hem best.[23]

If Spenser's pastoral avatar could transcend himself, and turn his gaze outward, he could then become a true poet, "and sing as soote as Swanne".[24] Cuddie, in any case, is not a poet yet, but merely the "paterne of a Poete", one whose unique voice has still to be formulated. He presents a microcosmic view of Colin's own struggle, ironically recast in a distinctly societal vein. The invocation of Colin through the persona of Cuddie, in addition to the formulaic imitation of the eclogues which feature him, creates a framework of internal allusion that is critical to unlocking the *Calender* as a whole. The parallel is emphasized even in the similarities between the characters' particular manners of speaking; in the quotations above, for example, Colin's "shepheard sittes not, followe flying fame", and according to Cuddie, "Colin fittes such

[23] Ibid., p. 89-90.

[24] Soote – "sweet". It bears pointing out that "*le doux*" or "sweetness" (i.e. "tunability" or "consonance" was one of the highest praises that the members of the Pléiade could bestow upon one another, and that they enjoyed frequent comparisons between themselves and swans, these being the birds that, so it was alleged, sang most beautifully at the moment of their deaths. It is possible that this line of Spenser's is an indication of his assimilation of the Pléiade's critical self-contemplation – although, as E. K.'s own note on the line seems to suggest, this was a commonly-held idea, occurring even in Ovid. See Clements 1970, p. 123 for "*le doux*", and p. 150, concerning swans as a descriptive motif of the singer-poet, as well as E. K.'s note on line 90, in *Spenser*, p. 136.

famous flight to scanne". That fame, or a career path, is a flying thing, and that poets are song-birds (perhaps swans) has, of course, been hinted at by E. K. as well, in a passage quoted earlier.[25]

Colin's despair at being unheeded (i.e. "Uncouthe, unkiste", and therefore "unkent"[26]) by Rosalind is an allegorical description of the English poet that Spenser is aspiring to become. At the same time, Cuddie is both more general and more pointed in his complaints about the state to which poetry has sunk – in England. Just as Colin could, if on him "some little drops would flowe", "teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde", so could Cuddie "if on [his] temples were distaind with wine", "How [he] could reare the Muse on stately stage,/ And teache her tread aloft in buskin fine". The explicit prerequisite to these transformations, however, is reciprocation and the validation of the poet as a poet.

October, then, is more than just a description of "the perfecte paterne of a Poete"; it is the boiling-down of the entire *Calender*, the forum wherein is discussed, under the complex overlapping of the poet's own identity deliberately problematized, the paradoxical Vergilian-Ovidian dichotomy which itself asserts the original, ineluctable definition of the Renaissance poet. Moreover the devices which it employs, E. K.'s references to music and Orpheus, the invocation of *vates*, an extensive framework of allusion based on poetic "voice", and the attempts to describe how poetry interacts with the soul (whether that of poet or auditor), function as prescriptions from Spenser as a resolution to these internal conflicts. Spenser's struggle to describe (and become) the "New Poete" takes place here, and it is in the persona of the poet-as-singer, and by demonstrating an intrinsic music of poetry, that he accomplishes it.

October's gloss includes in its preface the eclogue's distinction of having a style "more loftye then the rest, and applyed to the heighte of Poeticall witte".[27] While "the rest" of the *Calender* is concerned with unrequited love, politics, ecclesiarchy, and various pastoral conventions, *October*, even given the veil of being "made in imitation of Theocritus" (thereby

[25] On "the myth of the winged poet" and its recurrence and significance to Spenser's career, see Patrick Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career* (Toronto, 1993).
[26] *To His Booke*: Goe little booke: thy selfe present,/ As child whose parent is unkent", *Spenser*, p. 24.
[27] *Spenser*, p. 133.

being justified with a precedent) asserts its individuality on the strength of its subject matter, commentary, and form. E. K.'s own comments are pointedly lofty in their considerations and, moreover, while he is never economical when not taciturn, the *October* gloss is not only the largest of the twelve, but also the most disproportionately large, spanning several pages against the eclogue's mere 120 lines. A further distinction attached to the eclogue by the use of the word "lofty" may also be read into E. K.'s later application of it: i.e., with reference to Vergil, and the ennobling of his own style when he was impelled by Augustus to compose his epic (see below).

Included in the gloss are a few notable discussions about music and its impact upon the listener, with specific reference to poetry. Indeed, while it is very much a poetic convention, both of Spenser and others, to refer to poetry as "song" or by other, similar terms, the manner in which E. K.'s first mention of Pythagorean and Platonic harmonies takes place is curious if one does not presuppose a much more literal than figurative relationship between poetry and music. When Piers, in lines 21-4, describes the honourable position accorded to the poet,

> to restraine
> The lust of lawlesse youth with good advice:
> Or pricke them forth with pleasaunce of thy vaine,
> Whereto thou list their trained willes entice,

E. K. appends a considerable footnote which goes so far as to describe the very origins of poetry, and the revered status accorded to the first poets, and which posits music as poetry's forerunner or perhaps even its original means of transmission. *Vates* is the title granted one who possessed "speciall gyftes of wytte and Musicke", by whose performances, "men being astonied and as it were ravished, with delight, thinking (as it was indeed) that he was inspired from above", is accorded a principal position in social gatherings; but poetry receives no mention that does not link it very closely with music in this primordial phase. It is music which "be of many kinds, some sadder, some lighter, some martiall, some heroicall: and so diversely eke affect the mynds of men", and poetry correspondingly puts on this power when the two are linked. This delicate juxtaposition of ideas includes also, as Vickers' annotations on *October* point out, the invocation of Cicero's rhetorical triad: "the duty of the orator/poet is to blend *docere* and *delectare*, making

moral instruction pleasant to receive by the use of narrative and literary resources".[28] *Movere*, not mentioned by Vickers, is equally applicable in consideration of the relationship between music, the emotions, and the soul.

That *docere*, *delectare*, *vates*, and music should all receive mention with reference to the above-quoted stanza is indicative of the density of Spenser's considerations concerning his poetic ideal. This kind of introduction is demonstrated to be only too necessary, for Piers, in the following stanza, compares Cuddie's skill to that of Orpheus, effectively consummating in an individual (albeit a mythical one) these essential qualities. Before Orpheus is given centre stage, however, E. K. includes another digression about the power of music, on line 27 ("their soule of sence bereave"), relating the tale of Alexander the Great, and how strongly his behaviour was affected by his minstrel's variations in musical mode, the cause whereof being "that the mynd was made of a certaine harmonie and musicall numbers, for the great compassion and likenes of affection in thone and in the other". To have the notion of sympathetic vibration with the cosmic harmony posited with reference to poetry goes well beyond the figurative. As mentioned above, Platonic harmony and "number" were hardly considered to possess aural qualities in and of themselves, but E. K.'s invocation of them here, in addition to the relating of an experience which was clearly auditory (though, strictly speaking, only "witnessed"), connects the act of reciting one's poetry to an audience with that of the transmission of divine order and proportion. "Vates" and the musician are one and the same in the person of the poet.

It is only natural, then, that Orpheus should follow upon the discussion of these matters immediately. For Piers to say that Cuddie is "All as the shepheard" pulls this description of "musicks might" back into focus, and places at its centre the man who is credited as being the progenitor of poetry. Though the extent of Orpheus' power transcends hyperbole his being referred to as a "shepheard" invites a more direct consideration of his role in society as well, and of his power to reshape it. While in the context of the pastoral it is only to be expected that the players be shepherds, *docere* has already been strongly invoked, and the placing of Orpheus alongside Colin and Cuddie in their professions as well as their passions equates "poet-musician" with "shepheard" in an unequivocal fashion.

[28] Vickers 1999, p. 184, n. 33.

When considering a poet's interactions with his people, it is helpful to imagine him, and them, partaking of the same soundscape, however one chooses to describe its boundaries.[29] A poet's unique attunement to language and sound place him in a position of ascendency relative to his acoustemological context. Effectively, a poet exists perpetually within his own soundscape, one which displaces all others when he is given the opportunity to recite his poetry. Certain aspects of an acoustemological environment can be transformed when certain participants interact with it (and its inhabitants) differently:

> As a maker of sound himself, the listener is never separate from this environment. Rather, he projects sound into the environment – clumping along as he walks, spitting, even exhaling – at the same time that he listens for what the environment communicates to him. And he depends on that interaction. If the environment is so noisy that he can't hear his own footfalls, much less his own speech, he is apt to feel isolated. A soundscape consists, therefore, not just of the environment that the listener attends to but of the listener-*in*-the-environment. It constitutes an ecological system, and like other such systems it can be balanced or unbalanced, viable or dysfunctional.[30]

How exactly the poet-musician becomes the shepherd of his flock is a matter of his ability to dominate soundscapes through the power of his music. Wes Folkerth, in *The Sound of Shakespeare*, relates an episode of this very nature, again returning us to Orpheus:

> While singing one day Orpheus is attacked by a crowd of women he has doubly enraged…Sound turns out to be the decisive weapon in the astonishing scene of violence that follows. Orpheus apparently defends himself with his music, which functions like a science-fiction force field. The lances and stones the women hurl at the singer are strangely affected by his music, and fall harmlessly at his feet, 'vanquisht with his sweete / and most melodius harmonye'[31]…The tide of battle turns, however, once the women gain control over the soundscape with their own instruments and vocalizations.[32]

---

[29] Soundscape: "The sonic environment. Technically, any portion of the sonic environment regarded as a field for study. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an environment", R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, 1994), p. 274.

[30] Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (Chicago, 1999), p. 44.

[31] Folkerth's quotations come from Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid, a text with which Spenser was contemporary; Arthur Golding (ed., trans.), *The .xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meter, by Arthur Golding Gentleman, A worke very pleasaunt and delectable* (London, 1567).

[32] Wes Folkerth, *Sound of Shakespeare* (London, 2002), p. 88.

Here, Orpheus' domination of his soundscape through the power of his music allows him to ensure his safety. But, as Folkerth elsewhere argues, "In the early modern experience of physicality, the ear is considered an unregulated bodily orifice, a site of vulnerability… characterized by its continuity with the outside world".[33] Orpheus is in control only so long as his music dominates the soundscape; when the Bacchantes raise their own clamour, louder than his, they displace his dominance by drowning him out. It is in the moment that neither they, nor he, can hear his music any longer that Orpheus is defeated.

That an individual's unique soundscape is prescriptive of their identity is posited by Smith. In addition to describing the notion of sympathetic vibration as the central philosophical vantage point of an "internal acoustemology" in early modern England, Smith describes the external acoustemology as one defined by culture and language:

> Sounds from the world beyond make sense only in terms of the English language. Thomas Gainsford, for one, is particularly suspicious of music that is imbued with the sounds of foreign tongues. "Poetry animated by musicke," he observes, "are dangerous companions amongst the working spirits, and barbarous nations: witnesse the bardes and rimers of *Ireland*, and *Wales*, whose Siren songs have excited such hellish treasons, and horrible tumults.[34]

Smith concludes by uniting both the internal and the external under the new, Protestant-defined attitude: "'In the beginning was the Word': the acoustemology of early modern England was, from the top at least, radically logocentric. Even music, or so the theory demanded, should be imbued with the power of *logos.* Along the compass of sound from [o:] to [o:], the official acoustemology of early modern England was firmly centred on language".[35] In other words, as Smith describes it, one's native language plays a considerable role in bringing about sympathetic vibration with the divine harmony, and is, naturally, simultaneously strongly prescriptive of one's own identity. A soundscape dominated by a poet-musician, uniting language and music under poetry, can become the vatic source of an individual's self-perception. Amusingly, the best confirmation of this idea in Spenser's work (though we fully intend to return to our reading of

[33] Ibid., p. 87.
[34] Smith 1999, p. 297.
[35] Ibid., p. 297.

October) comes from his *A View of the State of Ireland* (written before 1598, printed 1633).[36] Smith, too, identifies this and its relevance to his argument, but has already moved in a more politically-minded direction by the time he reaches the text.[37] For the present purpose, Spenser's description of how a sense of identity is irrevocably engendered by the language dominating the soundscape of one's upbringing can be said equally to apply to speakers of English as to those of Irish – indeed, this is part of his point, referring, as he does, to the corruption of native (i.e. "genealogically") English people through linguistic indoctrination:

> I suppose that the chiefe cause of bringing in the Irish language, amongst them, was specially their fostering, and marrying with the Irish, the which are two most dangerous infections; for first the childe that sucketh the milke of the nurse, must of necessity learne his first speach of her, the which being the first inured to his tongue, is ever after most pleasing unto him, insomuch as though hee afterwards be taught English, yet the smacke of the first will allwayes abide with him; and not onely of the speach, but also the manners and conditions.[38]

Spenser's expressed sympathy for Irish "Bardes"[39] follows shortly after this, and serves to put into a poetic context his thoughts about a sense of identity intrinsic to language. The Irish poet is said to be accorded the best and most natural position of the poet in society, "had in so high regard and estimation amongst them, that none dare displease them for feare to runne into reproach thorough their offence, and to be made infamous in the mouthes of all men. For their verses are taken up with a general applause…"[40] As Eudoxus' reply points out, this would be a good and wholly natural thing, as he has read to have been the case "in all ages", but Irenius rejoins by saying that although typically, yes, poets "thorough the sweete baite of their numbers… steale into the young spirits a desire of honour and vertue", "these Irish Bardes" instead use their power to engender an Irish (and therefore anti-English) sense of identity, finding the "most dangerous and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition" and of them "to yong men make an example to follow". A strong case is here made for the poet's role in society as one's source of identity. The Irish young, "being (as they all be brought up idely) without awe of parents, without precepts of masters", have only the bards to

---

[36] Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds.), *Edmund Spenser. A View of the State of Ireland. From the first printed edition (1633)*. (Oxford, 1997), p. xi.
[37] Smith 1990, p. 310.
[38] Hadfield 1997, p. 71.
[39] Christopher Highley, *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 36.
[40] Ibid., p. 75.

look to for guidance. In the absence of awe for either parents or masters, the vatic poet becomes sole prescriber of cultural destiny, so that, in Ireland, "if he [i.e. one of the Irish young] shall finde any to praise him, and to give him encouragement, as those Bardes and rythmers doe for little reward…then waxeth he most insolent and halfe madde with the love of himselfe and his own lewd deeds".

This picture of the vatic poet functioning as a substitute for any more traditional authority figure conflicts with the passage quoted above which deals with mother's [Irish] milk. The grievance with intermarriage between English men and Irish women as the engendering of a cultural identity linked to careful (and perhaps surreptitiously rebellious) maternal ministrations establishes an unbreakable link between the language of an individual's upbringing and his cultural sympathies. However, the concern over the abuse to which poetry and language are put in the case of the Irish bards places blame squarely on their own shoulders, and attempts to vindicate poetry itself as a neutral thing without inherent political bias. Irenius offers a description of a hypothetical individual whose reprehensible actions are rendered praiseworthy through the (purchasable) songs of the bards, "borrowed even from the praises which are proper to vertue it selfe". We learn, moreover, from Irenius' following remark, that Irish poetry itself, though lacking in "the goodly ornaments of poetry",[41] is nevertheless "sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their naturall device, which gave good grace and comlinesse unto them, the which it is great pitty to see abused, to the gracing and wickedness and vice, which with good usage would serve to adorne and beautifie vertue".[42]

Irenius prefaces these observations by saying that he has "caused divers of them to be translated", which would indicate that he could partake of nothing aural in his experience of Irish poetry. The act of translating the poems from Irish into English neutralizes them, removing whatever efficacy they would normally possess to enflame the listener to rebellious sympathies, rendering them merely pretty and somewhat quaint.[43] The contrast, too, between "goodly ornaments" and "naturall device[s]" is a further indication of their harmless simplicity; lacking any kind of numerological resonances, the poems have no power to align the soul with the divine

[41] I.e.: "artifice".
[42] Hadfield 1997, p. 77.
[43] Smith 1999, p. 309, notes that the translated poems would have been "in the process, presumably written down".

harmony. Could it be that those "goodly ornaments" were lost merely in the act of translation? While it would be folly to infer from this passage alone that Spenser equates all of poetry's power to achieve sympathetic vibration with its aurality, especially considering the levels of numerological complexity he achieves in his work,[44] E. K.'s notes on *October* could suggest this very thing. The efficacy of a numerological resonance could depend upon an aural effect to punctuate or actually transmit it.

The equation between one's "mother tonge" and mother's milk would have been familiar to Spenser's readers, for it gets its first mention in E. K.'s dedicatory epistle: "of their owne country and natural speach, which together with their Nources milk they sucked, they have so base regard and bastard judgement, that they will not onely themselves not labor to garnish and beautifie it, but also repine, that of other it shold be embellished".[45] The context of the two remarks is strikingly similar; again, Spenser's concern is with a nationalistic maternity that has seemingly been scorned or abandoned in favour of another language. The difference between the two passages is that E. K. is thinking specifically about poetry. Dedicated as Spenser is to the *enfranchisement* of English, the observation that an English-born individual should rather speak or write in Latin is a wound in his side, and an indication of the whole nation's lack of solidarity. Without a single language to function as a unifying medium, there can be no single national identity. Spenser's ambivalence towards the Irish could be not necessarily sympathetic so much as envious, for at least they keep their faith and passion for their mother tongue, while the English are falling away on all sides, aping Classical versification or (worse, presumably) Irish customs and sympathies. Both are cancerous to the health of the nation and undermine the vatic poet's due of authority.

Consider, for example, the act of translation: if all of poetry's "goodly ornaments" and aural qualities are irretrievably lost in translation, then never and in no way can a translated poet be unto a people such as these Irish bards are to theirs. While the power of ancient music, and of the harmony of the spheres, was believed in universally, alongside music's powers of healing

[44] Regarding numerology in Spenser's poetry, see: Alastair Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* (London, 1964).
[45] *Spenser*, p. 27.

both of mind and body,[46] this power was understood to have been lost with the knowledge of Greek musical modes[47] in the same way that the craft of Classical versification had been lost with the replacement of Latin by the vernacular (recoverable only through careful adaptation): efforts to reproduce either effect were failures; when the aural aspects of poetry are ignored – or sacrificed – in favour of visual aspects undertaken in fulfilment of the pursuit of "artifice", said poetry loses all of its mystical power to charm the senses (in the same way that music loses all capacity for *delectare* [and therefore *docere*] when its audible consonances are replaced with abstract mathematical interrelations). "Translation" is a secondary response to poetry, and while artful poetry in one's native language can have the same ennobling effect as a sojourn out of Socrates' cave, the interposition of the translator removes the immediate aurality of the experience so that, as is the case with Socrates' sojourner re-encountering those he left behind, those to whom the poetry is related, not directly as an aural experience, but rather prosaically, as a thing experienced, will respond with scepticism and contempt, not with ennobled awe or a desire to recreate the experience for themselves. No poet can be a prescriber of identity if his poetry is unable to dominate the soundscape in which it is presented, a thing only possible if its acoustemology is connected ineluctably with an already-given cultural identity intrinsically linked to said culture's native language.

Returning to E. K.'s gloss to *October*, we see in the description of poetry's origin[48] that music is considered to have preceded poetry, and what music possessed in terms of its power to bereave the senses was appropriated by poets in order to act as a medium for the matter of their verses (part of this passage is quoted above, but is repeated here for the sake of expedience): "which kinde of men afterward framing their verses to lighter musicke (as of musicke be many kinds, some sadder, some lighter, some martiall, some heroicall: and so diversely eke affect the mynds of men) found out lighter matter of Poesie also". It is a given musical mode, not the matter itself, which affects the minds of men in this early example.

---

[46] Spenser's tutor, Richard Mulcaster, for example, believes strongly in music's healing powers: "If the constitution of man both for bodie and soule, had not some naturall, and nighe affinitie with the concordances of *Musick*, the force of the one, would not so soone stirre up, the cosen motion in the other. It is wonderfull that is written, and strange that we see, what is wrought thereby in nature of *Physick*, for the remedying of some desperate diseases", William Barker (ed.), *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (Toronto, 1994), p. 48.

[47] "If no longer a physical reality, the translation of cosmic order into sensible sound remained a psychological factor in how people listened to music", Smith 1999, p. 296

[48] *Spenser*, p. 133, n. 21.

Separating *docere* from *delectare* by breaking down poetry into its component parts may yield some insight. "Poetry", according to the gloss, is born when words are set to music, and there is a complementary relationship between the mode and the matter which is noted by poetry's placement as a consequent product of men "framing their verses". Aristotle argued against the existence of music that was not complemented by words as being lascivious, and Gosson makes a similar observation in *Schoole of Abuse* (although he goes so far as to condemn anything even remotely pleasurable as lascivious). But while purely sensual music was highly suspect, music sanctioned by language is considered the noblest of things, consisting in equal parts pleasure and instruction. This would seem to suggest that music, the aural side of poetry, was the engine of *delectare*, and words, the matter, contributed *docere*. A shepherd cannot lead his flock simply by talking to them (sheep do not care much for simple prose); he must play his pipes, and sing to them, capture their senses with music first, and by this means guide them down the proper path.[49]

Some confusion must arise, then, when one considers that it is *musica mundana* that binds the world together, and that it is, as was hinted above, by bringing the soul, *musica humana*, into alignment with the *musica mundana* by means of *musica instrumentalis* that a human being is civilized and ennobled beyond the state of brutishness (as formulated by Boethius). If, however, we continue to bear in mind Aristotle's reservations about the sensuality of merely instrumental music, we may escape the inference that it is by a purely aural experience of music alone that sympathetic vibration is achieved, and instead return to the Orpheus figure as the primogenitor: the "true" vatic musician was a singer, "true" music was song, and "song" is merely an early form of poetry.

[49] Spenser himself places special importance on *delectare* in the *Letter to Raleigh* when, offering an explanation for his having chosen to speak through allegory, he writes: "To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then this cloudily enwrapped in Allegorical devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfied with the use of these days, seeing all things accounted by their shows, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence", p. 715-6; all quotations from *The Faerie Queene*, and its associated dedications, are taken from A. C. Hamilton, Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki (eds.), *Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene*, (London, 2007) hereafter abbreviated as *FQ*.

E. K. posits this very interpretation in his note to line 118 of *October*[50]: "Charme) temper and order. for Charmes were wont to be made by verses as Ovid sayth. Aut si carminibus".[51] Cuddie's use of the verb "charme" is ostensibly merely a substitution for "play", but E. K.'s note firmly locates the act of playing upon one's pipes (figuratively speaking) in the realm of *docere* / *delectare*, for to "temper and order" of course refers the act back to Piers' own description of Cuddie, wherein he is said "to restraine…(etc. – see above)". Moreover, as McCabe's annotation points out, while "charme" does possess the meaning E. K. gives it, it also partakes of magical (or simply "supernatural") properties, and, more importantly, of an etymological heritage leading back to "song" in Latin. Of course, a bemusing contradiction arises when one considers the impossibility of singing while playing a pipe (Aristotle would not approve), but Spenser's use of the pipe, or his "Oaten reeds",[52] as metonymic for his poetry is not only ubiquitous, but can be interpreted along lines similar to those along which Ronsard's metonymy is interpreted; more pointedly, Spenser concludes the first stanza of his opening invocation to *The Faerie Queene* by referring to the poem as "my song", even after referring to his "Oaten reeds".

In his mapping of the "O factor" Smith locates music as a consequent of speech and, as mentioned above, notes the logocentricity of early modern England. In addition, his reading of a passage from *Timaeus*[53] includes the following interpretation: "The qualifying phrase 'as is adapted to the sound of the voice and to the sense of hearing' locates the Real power of music in Ideas". The discussion that follows looks at the commentary of both Thomas Morley and Thomas Campion, noting variously "One can read early modern writing about music in general… as a sustained attempt to reconcile Platonic theory with latter-day realities", and "Humanist philosophy kept alive the ancient contrast between *logos*-inspired song and the merely sensuous appeal of music played on the pipe or flute".[54]

---

[50] [Cuddie:] "Here we our slender pipes may safely charme".
[51] McCabe's own annotation on E. K.'s note follows: "*Charmes*: magic spells. *Aut si carminibus*: 'Or if in songs' (not in Ovid)", *Spenser*, p. 564.
[52] *FQ* I.pr.i.4, p. 29.
[53] Smith 1999, p. 295, cites "Plato 1937, 2: 28".
[54] Both quotations from Smith 1999, p. 296.

If we attempt to locate the mind of the poet somewhere on the map of transmission between the divine harmony and a given soundscape we see that *vates* exists in parallel with God, at the point of intersection between *logos* and *musica mundana*. "God" is our starting point, the common origin of the universe, with whom, in the beginning, was *logos*, and from which emerges the divine harmony which frames the universe; the act of Creation is effectively a song. The poet emerges out of a given soundscape and, inspired from above, transmutes his experience of the divine song into an audible, interpretable form dependent upon his acoustemological landscape. As *vates* he witnesses the divine, partakes of a theophanic experience, and reproduces it as an epiphanic experience which is projected back into the soundscape from which he has emerged.

The Renaissance mind is a constant battle for reconciliation between Platonic mysticism and later Christianized corruptions of the same mysticism. Down the path of the centuries, through the Middle Ages, these ideas became sharply separated, and their return to a state of harmony is only achieved in the contemplation of their common origin, and the appropriation of that origin by a Christian doctrine. Just as Orpheus was happily likened to David,[55] so the truly Christian (and in Spenser's case, of course, this necessarily includes "English Protestant") poet becomes so only when his work is able to encapsulate the majesty of God through *logos*, and transmit it to his people via musical devices which themselves are imitative of said majesty. Poetry lies somewhere between music and speech in acoustemological terms,[56] but the process of inspiration, interpretation, reformulation, and performance, begins and ends with the indivisible notion of "song", manifested in poetry, and personified by Orpheus himself.

That the Christianized Orpheus represents Spenser's ideal model of revision for the Vergilian *rota* is precisely what Cheney argues in his own reading of *October* (though he effectively accords to Spenser somewhat remarkable powers of prophecy in the process): "Spenser *reinvents* the Virgilian Wheel. Rather than the narrowly circumscribed Virgilian idea of pastoral and epic, the New Poet works from the Orphic ideal of pastoral, epic, love lyric, and hymn".[57] But the reconciliation of the New Poet with his sundry predecessors begins not merely

[55] For a comparison of David to Orpheus see Hollander 1970, p. 239.
[56] Smith 1999, p. 45.
[57] Cheney 1993, p. 7.

with a figurative self-identification with birds of song. Rather, it is enacted by identification with the primordial poet-as-singer as one comes to understand oneself as a musician, and emerges through a process of oral self-representation in which the individual poetic voice is transfigured by various other, latent poetic presences. In addition to describing verbally the Orphic career, in *October*, Spenser enacts it, through the transformations undergone by his poetic voice, and simultaneously demonstrates the indivisibility of *docere* and *delectare* in the music of poetry.

Through the independent "voices" of Piers and Cuddie, Spenser begins *October* with a fragmented (and necessarily self-contradictory) version of himself. As mentioned earlier, E. K. drops a bit of a red herring for the would-be detective when he refers rather cryptically to Cuddie's possible identification with Colin (or Spenser), and some interpretations have opted to place Cuddie in relation to Colin as Colin relates to Spenser himself[58] - somewhat like a Matryoshka doll. But it has also been argued that this approach is limiting, and that in fact Piers and Cuddie represent two opposed halves of Spenser's own mind,[59] even though only the one is referred to as a potential poet, the other being (seemingly) merely a well-wisher. Certainly, it is *October* itself, and therefore both of its participants, that adapts Colin's soliloquy form from *January* and *December*, and not Cuddie alone when he responds to Piers. Of all the satirical eclogues, just as E. K. points out, *October* does indeed employ the loftiest style, being ostensibly a dialogue but appropriating to itself a form understood by the listener to belong to Colin's songs; of all the dialogues, it is pointedly the most song-like – it is a dialogue sung in a single voice, Colin's voice, the voice of the poet.

When a poet temporarily adopts a fragment of another poet's voice in order to make a particular reference we generally refer to the technique as allusion. Allusion, of course, takes many forms and can be employed to achieve a variety of different effects, even, in some complex intertextual relationships, to reference the entire body of another poet's work in one sweep. With a single phrase, a whole host of ideas can be animated in the mind of the listener, to walk alongside him like benevolent ghosts, guiding him down the path towards correct interpretation.

[58] "It is surprising to find Cuddie, rather than Colin, described as 'the perfecte paterne of a Poete'...Through this complex presentational device Cuddie is made to stand in relation to Colin as Colin stands to 'the author selfe'", *Spenser*, p. 559.
[59] Cheney 1993, p. 37.

When, however, the poet addresses himself to the very question of his own identity, who the poet is, what he is supposed to be, and he volunteers to the listener a series of overlapping allusions that are intended not to evoke a particular work or idea, but rather the entirety of another poet's life, his career and his personality as it speaks through his own work, and what is evoked stands in contrast to the listener's present understanding, then we, as listeners, are charged with the task of interpreting the device as more than allusion. The poet has not merely summoned a ghost; he has resurrected a predecessor within himself, and employed the energy thereby attained to inform us of something vital.

Normally, or perhaps in more benevolent circumstances, we would refer to this particular type of allusion as "copresence". In the instance at hand, however, Spenser has layered his allusions, which could still be referred to as "presences", in such a way as to demonstrate them to be embodiments of external influences that, in the emergent conflict between the poetic ideal and social necessity, are unavoidable. Beyond this, however, Spenser is also demonstrating his virtuosity in his mastery of various genres (as if the whole of the *Calender* were not enough), beginning with his own (or Colin's) voice, and then troping the Vergilian and Ovidian voices over top of it, alerting his listeners to certain qualities inherent to a style suited for "epic", and demonstrating, just as E. K. describes, that poetry's particular power over its listeners is as much a question of "mode" as "matter".

The Vergilian voice emerges with Piers' suggestion that Cuddie adopt epic as a means of earning more than just praise for his poetry (lines 37-54):

> Abandon then the base and viler clowne,
> Lyft up thy selfe out of the lowly dust:
> And sing of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts.
> Turne thee to those, that weld the awful crowne,
> To doubted Knights, whose woundlesse armour rusts,
> And helmes unbruzed waxen dayly browne.
>
> There may thy Muse display her fluttrying wing,
> And stretch her selfe at large from East to West:
> Whither thou list in fayre *Elisa* rest,
> Or if thee please in bigger notes to sing,
> Advaunce the worthy whome shee loveth best,

That first the white beare to the stake did bring.

And when the stubborne stroke of stronger stounds,
Has somewhat slackt the tenor of thy string:
Of love and lustihead tho mayst thou sing,
And carrol lowed, and leade the Myllers rownde,
All were *Elisa* one of thilke same ring.
So mought our *Cuddies* name to Heaven sownde.

The first stanza is vigorous and forceful in its power of suggestion. The brightness of the assonance in "abandon" makes the line sparkle, especially in contrast with the dour mellowness of the line of Cuddie's which preceded it: "Sike words bene wynd, and wasten soone in vayne". The difference in tone is instantly noticeable, and the feeling is carried forward by Spenser's persistent use of bright vowels on strong beats, with "base and viler clowne". Line 38 offers the opportunity to hear a trochee on "Lyft up", encouraged by the use of the word in the imperative, creating a strong rhythmic link with the subsequent line, with which it shares its rhyme, effectively making of the pair a heroic couplet.

The poetic imperative "And sing" which begins line 39 places an interesting burden on Cuddie. In *Melodious Guile*, Hollander observes: "The commands to the muses to 'sing' the Iliad and the Odyssey… are tropes of commands to the poems themselves to start up, to the singer to start singing".[60] Vergil, Hollander notes, "resists Homer's initial epical command", and replaces the invocation of the muse with a statement about his own intentions: "Arma virumque cano" – "Arms and the man *I sing*".[61] Piers' imperative towards Cuddie, one shepherd commanding another shepherd to "sing" as though he were a muse himself, would imply that, were Cuddie to compose his own epic, he would begin it by stating "I sing", rather than by calling up his muse. Colin's superiority over, and independence of, the muses is noted earlier, in *June*, when Hobbinol recalls having seen them, at the sound of Colin's piping, forgo their own music-making and flock to him, only to draw back, "as halfe with shame confound,/ Shepherd to see, them in theyr art outgoe" (lines 63-4). If we return to the interpretation that Piers and Cuddie represent opposed voices of Spenser's internal dialogue, we can see that, in troping the poetic imperative, it is as though Spenser is trying to urge himself to take up the garland of the muses. While

[60] John Hollander, *Melodious Guile: Fictive Pattern in Poetic Language* (London, 1988), p. 66.
[61] To preserve comparable rhythmic intensity I have quoted from John Dryden's translation.

recalling Vergil, here, by resisting the direct involvement of the muses in a moment of epic bravado, reaffirms Spenser's identification with the "Romish Tityrus", it also alerts the listener to the process by which a poet subsumes into his own voice the voices of his predecessors. The device serves its allusive purpose by invoking epic convention, but goes further than that in its troping of said convention, demonstrating Spenser's insertion of himself into a poetic tradition of which he considers himself to be the next generation.

While the extent of Spenser's intimacy with Homer is believed to be less than that of Milton's, Spenser is nonetheless considered to view himself with some reference to Homer. Owing to Homer's place at the head of the epic tradition, the complete absorption of his work into that of his Renaissance descendants makes it difficult to isolate what, in a specific poet's work, could have come out of the general corpus of Western literature, and what could have come directly from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Spenser is described as "the first English poet to read Homer in Greek",[62] but his debts to Homer are far more superficial than those to his nearer predecessors, Vergil and Chaucer. By displacing the muses as the source of his inspiration Spenser does seem to be aligning himself with Vergil more directly, but let us not forget that these lines follow hard on Piers' comparison of Cuddie to Orpheus, so that this trope of the epic/poetic imperative can be taken as a further revision of the epic tradition, as Orpheus, himself Calliope's son, was very much his own singer, and poetry's father, of which epic is merely a part (or another stage in the poet's career).[63] As Hollander notes, Spenser will continue in the vein that the poetry is his to command, even if supplication must be made for inspiration. After invoking the muses, and several gods, in the proem to Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser last of all calls on Elizabeth, his principal inspiration. But "while the queen herself is *asked* to give political, financial, and moral support to the poet who is her subject, the fiction of her is *told* to give originality to the poem which is inventing that fiction. Here again, the poet commands his own poetry to produce itself".[64]

[62] "But no poet before Milton could appreciate at first hand Homer's artistic subtlety and formal integrity", Gordon Teskey. "Homer", in Hamilton 1990.

[63] A further, entirely apocryphal, story warns that Homer himself was not even a superior singer, having once lost a singing contest to the far more pastorally-aligned Hesiod.

[64] Hollander 1988, p. 71.

Even the matter which follows line 39's imperative is, in its mode of transmission, a trope of epic or formalized style. Spenser's use of the word "of" plays on a common method of subject matter introduction. "And sing of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts" describes the material of a chivalric epic, but does so in that prefatory way all too familiar to readers of epic poetry. And, again, Spenser is playing on metrical regularity in order to add emphasis to specific words. "Of" is not only a weak syllable, it also serves the purpose of throwing light on the word that follows it. One can even read into it an example of what, in Puttenham's treatise, is called "auxesis; or, the advancer", whereby "we go still mounting by degrees and increasing our speech with words or with sentences of more weight one than another, and [it] is a figure of great both efficacy and ornament".[65] While the war-god, Mars, might be accorded greater status than a joust, we can see Spenser narrowing his scope from merely battle-related material down to the loftiest representation of chivalry, so that in the vatic sense, "giusts" are of the utmost importance. Coupled with the commas that punctuate each successive foot, "of giusts" acquires grammatical and musical significance upon its arrival that reflects back on the preceding lines, as though the essence of the chivalric epic were captured in a single sentence. It should also be noted that in Vergil's own preface to the *Aeneid*, the poet's progress is concluded with "now I turn to Mars", so that Piers' vision of Cuddie's own career seems to begin where Vergil's left off. "Turn thee to those" plays once again on the imperative, allowing the listener to hear a trochee, which, owing to the free-standing strength of the previous lines (including, and this rarely happens elsewhere, the mid-stanza conclusion of a sentence), introduces an almost entirely new thought. It emerges as a logical consequence of that which preceded it, but the rhythmic tension generated within the stanza forces a reliance on rhyme-memory to make a unified whole. The listener must depend more on his ear in order to hear the stanza's final cadence than is the case in Spenser's more easy-going, pastoral verses. The assonance on "awful crowne" serves to forewarn the ear of the clowne/crowne rhyme, but we are nevertheless held in greater anticipation of the closure of the sequence than is typical.

What is demonstrated here is the efficacy of coincidence between sound and sense that can only be achieved in the epic voice through the use of rhyme (at least until the vindication of

[65] Vickers, 1999, p. 265; n. 155 adds the source, Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*: "('Style may be heightened… if one progresses continually from one grave term to another more grave') (Lat. *Incrementum*)".

blank verse). We have already looked at the aural ineffectiveness of quantitative verse in English, as well as established that poetry in translation is but a shadow of its original self. Spenser is exhibitioning original English epic in rhyme, and he is doing so through a reliance on his power to exploit the music of poetry, the power to use sound and sense simultaneously and accord to both a greater significance thereby. The Vergilian voice emerges in response to concerns about career and financial gain, but once Spenser reminds us that it is still he who is singing we are made alert to certain of the devices of epic, and how those may be freely adopted to achieve particular effects. Spenser the singer is still the ultimate source of his poetry.

E. K. drops the hint that a certain amount of "presence" is inevitable when, in the dedicatory epistle, he is offering an explanation for Spenser's archaisms:

> And firste of the words to speake, I graunt they be something hard, and of the most men unused, yet both English, and also used of the most excellent Authors and most famous Poetes. In whom whenas this our Poet hath bene much traveiled and thoroughly redd, how could it be, (as that worthy Oratour sayde) but that walking in the sonne although for other cause he walked, yet needs he mought be sunburnt; and having the sound of those auncient Poetes still ringing in his eares, he mought needs in singing hit out some of theyr tunes.[66]

But while, as Sidney's response seems to indicate, some justification for this "old rustic language" might have been expected, the description of the process given by E. K. goes beyond what would have been strictly necessary.[67] Rather what Spenser is doing with the critical apparatus constructed around *The Shepheardes Calender* is making of his listeners accomplices in his devices. Much as he has adopted a Vergilian/epic voice in *October* in order to demonstrate that some of that voice's nuances can be accommodated by rhyme, so he is here inviting the audience to look deeper at his choice of language, and, tellingly, he has done so by using singing as a metaphor to describe the inheritance of voice – while "our Poet" is said to be "thoroughly redd", it is still "the sound of those auncient Poetes" that rings in his ears.

This returns us to the earlier notion that soundscapes are prescriptive of identity, or that it is through a process of defamiliarization towards sound in our environment that we learn to hear

[66] *Spenser,* p. 26.
[67] And, as noted in Vickers 1999, p. 380, n. 181, the classical precedent was already there: "Renaissance scholars recognized that Virgil's style in the *Eclogues* attempted to render a country dialect, appropriate to shepherds".

and interpret it in new ways. One important aspect of identity that Spenser is trying to illustrate as bearing on soundscapes remains nationalism, which is attended by E. K. when he says of "the words", "yet both English, and also used of the most excellent Authors and most famous Poetes", and language and nationalism are later attended in the Spenser-Harvey correspondence, when *Immerito* (i.e. Spenser) says of the hexameter "that it will easily and fairely yeelde it selfe to our Moother tongue".[68] But while engagement with his audience on nationalistic grounds is a necessary first step to excite interest, it is once Spenser has our attention that he really goes to work, creating of his listeners all critics and analysers, as neatly summed-up by Hollander: "the reader [listener] is told: *You are one of us. We have to do our logoanalytic work together*. The mode of transference and countertransference are one".[69] That Spenser believes particular musical modes to be a dominating factor in a listener's interaction with his acoustemological environment, and therefore to have an impact on his/her identity or personality, is revealed in Eudoxus' mention of Aristotle's observations on Cyrus, and his treatment of those whom he had conquered: "…in stead of their warlike musick, appointed to them certain lascivious layes, and loose jigs, by which in short space their minds were so mollified and abated, that they forgot their former fiercenesse, and become most tender and effeminate".[70]

We become even more closely attuned to this strategy when, in the second stanza of Piers' speech, we are offered two choice examples for vatic exaltation: Elizabeth and Leicester. While Piers is ostensibly just throwing out subjects for Cuddie to consider, he is himself doing so in the epic voice – for this brief moment, Piers *is* the epic poet, and in so becoming he is performing the role thereof, even as he prescribes it as a possible career path. The reader is here alerted to the multitude of purposes that can be undertaken through the troping of voice, feeling

[68] Smith, 1971, p. 98. However, it is immediately after this observation that Spenser begins to decry "Accente" in English, and its intractability towards adaption to quantitative verse, using the images of various "lame" animals. He finishes with an oft-misquoted line, "For why, a Gods name, may not we, as else the Greekes, have the kingdome of oure owne Language[?]" Taken in context, this outcry actually undermines all of the championing of the English language that Spenser has undertaken in *The Shepheardes Calender*, and will do later in *A View*. For this reason, except insofar as it demonstrates Spenser's interest in exciting critical engagement with poetry, the Spenser-Harvey correspondence should be accorded considerably less weight than his other, more independently (E. K.'s identity notwithstanding) crafted works and should rather be regarded with some cautious scepticism. See also: Maley 2001; Helgerson 1992.

[69] Hollander 1988, p. 8.

[70] Hadfield 1997, p. 73. It should be noted that this is the only mention of Aristotle, the quintessential authority, in the treatise.

as they do the effect of the chosen mode, and perceiving how Elizabeth and Leicester are, by their very mention as subjects worthy of epic, re-imagined as subjects worthy of imitation.

Spenser assists this feeling of an "arrival" at the proper place with his careful attention to word-choice. "There may thy Muse" is, again, a trochee followed by an iamb, the perfect way to slow the rhythmic pace which can otherwise, with an unbroken succession of iambs, weary the ear to the point of deafness. But Spenser here creates a phonetic progression towards "Muse" by alternating "th" and "m", and moving through various open vowel-sounds until arriving at the close "yew" in "Muse". This has the effect of giving Spenser's Muse pride of place in the stanza, a glorious bird of song with pinions outstretched "from East to West", whose exalting influence is conferred on those upon whom she chooses to rest. Even as Spenser's Irish bards are the voices who make idols of villains for the Irish mob, so it is the epic poet's (or perhaps merely Spenser's) voice that makes of Elizabeth an object of worship. The poet is set in a position of authority over the monarch, and Spenser is making this clear not only by ticking her off as a possible poetic subject, but by creating of her a perch for his muse. And this point is driven home by certain rhythmic devices which complement specific moments in the imagery. "Whither thou list" rhythmically isolates the line, even as we envisage Spenser's swan (or whatever have you) coming to rest, and suddenly we take off again, singing "in bigger notes" to a march of iambs that carries us to the end of the stanza, concluded in a suitably violent image, itself an important allusion and political statement.[71]

This march of iambs slows its pace in Piers' last stanza, while keeping its energy through the use of heavy alliteration on "st" and "str". "Stroke of stronger" falling in between "stubborn" and "stounds"[72] employs assonance on "o" in all three words, to make a cell of the phrase and intensify the energy of the line even as, through the sequence-swapping of the consonants (st, stro, stro, st), our return to the beginning of the series is suspended until we reach its close. Playing on the alliteration/consonance already established, Spenser, in the stanza's second line (line 50), fragments "st" into "somewhat" (an extension) and "slackt" (a re-contraction). The

[71] I.e.: that Leicester should be either equal or greater as an object worthy of imitation, even though by this time he had fallen out of favour with Elizabeth. See E. K.'s note to line 47, as well as n. 47 in *Spenser*, p. 563 (i.e.: McCabe's note).

[72] "Stound" – "moment of pain or trial, fit, shock, pang, stroke" – *Spenser*, p. 742.

brightness and abruptness of "slackt" contrasts so strongly with the rounder, preceding vowels as to make of the word a caesura, just before the close of the alliterative sequence on "string". "Tenor" here literally refers to tension or tautness,[73] but puns on the idea of "voice" or perhaps even "undersong", referring as it does to a constant, sustained pitch employed in Mediaeval music to act as an anchor or point of gravitation for a given mode. Given Spenser's familiarity with Vergil, it is not unlikely that he intends the further pun on the idea of "a career", conflating in a single word the ideas of "voice", "music", and poetic career. The "tenor" of his "string" is at once his unique voice, his mode of expression, and his path to fame.

By slowing the pace of his verse without (as yet) slackening it Spenser generates in the ears of his listeners an anticipation for some yet-to-be-revealed point of arrival, as when a broad-pinioned bird approaches its next perch after a long flight, and beats its wings with deliberate force against the ground so that it may land with grace and dignity. "Of love and lustihead tho [i.e. "then"] mayst thou sing", lustily rewards this anticipation, with a pointed rhyme on "sing". One can choose to read the line in straight iambs, and not lose the effect already ordained by the preceding two lines, but Spenser offers another opportunity: to read it with an dactyl on "lustihead", which, while preserving the rhythmic integrity of the line, places a caesura before "tho", so that "love" retroactively acquires greater significance for its having participated with "lustihead" in the newly-created cell, and forcing the singer, in order to maintain forward momentum, to recite "tho mayst thou sing" almost as two spondees or, at the very least, a trochee and an iamb. "Tho", as a result, becomes, both grammatically and "musically", the anticipated point of arrival, releasing the drawn-out tension built up by the heavy alliteration in the previous lines, and "mayst thou sing" falls all the more sweetly for having been eased of the line's full burden, bringing us gently out of the epic mode, and into a more carefree world.

"And carrol lowde" is an enjambment carried over from the previous line, imposing a caesura while anticipating "rownde". While, grammatically speaking, the enjambment problematizes the above reading, from a "sound and sense" perspective it serves very well to

[73] *Spenser*, p. 561, n. 50. Also: "Tenor (from Lat. *tenere*: 'to hold') In polyphony between about 1250 and 1500, the structurally fundamental (or 'holding') voice, vocal or instrumental...1. Early uses of the word: The word is found only once in Cicero but more often in Virgil, Livy and later writers, with the meaning of 'a holding fast' and thence of 'an uninterrupted course' or 'a career' ", David Fallows, "Tenor", in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 2001)

reaccustom our ears to the mode more suited to songs of "love and lustihead". Carolling, moreover, is quite a distinct style, suited far better to those more whimsical modes than to that of epic – one could not carol of bloody Mars, wars, or jousts. E. K.'s note to line 50, on "Slack", provides the cue for this change: "that is when thou chaungest thy verse from stately discourse, to matter of more pleasaunce and delight".[74] "Leade the Myllers rownde", means, according to the gloss, to lead "a kind of daunce",[75] placing the poet-singer in the position of an accompanist to others' festivities. But let us not imagine that Spenser would miss this opportunity for double-entendre; the music, or carols, still come from the poet, and it is by his power that the "millers" are animated in dance. The pattern of the dance may be fixed in a round, like a constellation, but those who follow it are led by poetry and song, not by the abstraction itself.[76] Here as elsewhere, it is the poet's ability to transmute patterns into sensible experience that re-attunes the body and the soul, and the dancers are guided in their acting-out of a pattern by the music of poetry. Somewhat shocking in its derring-do is the following line, "All [i.e. "although"] were *Elisa* of thilke same ring", which places even the queen, known for her love of dance, under the poet's power and, moreover, in no way elevated above the other dancers while that power is active. By music's might, even a queen who enters into a soundscape dominated by the poet is moved to dance. It should be noted, too, that the subject of the songs or carols coming from the poet and guiding his listeners are "of love and lustihead", an interesting irony in consideration of *Aprill*, which praises Elizabeth's chastity and subtly admonishes her to be careful of her public image.

Spenser's dalliance with the epic mode ends. In its course, he has adopted and then troped various commonly-known epic conventions, as well as demonstrated his mastery of rhythmic and syllabic variation in order to achieve musical effects which accord with the mode given. Never once, before the end, and then deliberately, does he allow his intensity to slacken; rather in a clear, evocative tone well-befitting the matter of Elizabeth and Leicester, Spenser leads us through the progress of the epic poet towards his final reward: fame, and liberation from dependence on the patronage of monarchs, whereupon he is able to assume his rightful place,

[74] *Spenser*, p. 134.
[75] *Spenser*, p. 135, n. 52.
[76] And Richard Mulcaster himself believes that the power of dance coincides with that of number and proportion: "But howsoever *daunsing* be or be thought to be, seing it is held for an exercise, we must thinke there is some great good we must seeke to get, and praie those maisters, which fasion it with *order* in time, with *reason* in gesture, with *proportion* in number, with *harmonie* in *Musick*, to appoint it so, as it may be thought both seemely and sober", Barker 1994, p. 82.

firmly above them. As was mentioned earlier, part of what is accomplished during this progress is the subsumption of one poet's voice into another's, here Vergil's voice, as Cuddie's response indicates, into Spenser's. Spenser has adopted the epic mode, and then played upon it, transfiguring its conventions and revising them for use by the New Poet. Since one of the issues at hand is patronage (even fame is of limited value to Cuddie, "Syke words bene wynd") it is then interesting to note that in Spenser's epic progress, even the potential patrons – normally accorded pride of place in a kind of "Special Thanks To" section – are here presented as items on a list and, moreover, at the close of Piers' speech, Elizabeth is placed in the company of dancing millers. To "rest" in "fayre *Elisa*" would be to use her as subject matter and win some gains of her thereby, but she and Leicester both are included rather as means to an end, than an end in itself. It is the poet who, by the poet's labours, is finally exalted, not the monarch. This implication stands in stark contrast to one of the traditionally-accepted functions of epic, and certainly one wholly believed to have been on Vergil's agenda, to raise up "the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine".[77]

The rhythmic variations Spenser has employed to such great effect also point up one of the commonly-perceived parallels between music and poetry that we have been exploring up to this point. As Sidney's distinction between the musical qualities of quantitative verse and of rime indicates, the feature which he deems makes verse "more fit for music" is its observance of "time". By this he intends, as noted above, that the metrical feet of the lines possess specific durations, allowing the words to be set to music more easily. But while accentual-syllabic metre may not possess fixed duration, per se, it does possess a *pulse*, a steady, underlying beat generated by the march of iambs,[78] and accentuated by the variations Spenser inserts into it. A strong modern example of this metrical phenomenon can be found in James Joyce's *Ulysses.* Stephen Dedalus articulates this very idea after observing first the ineluctable modality of the visible:

---

[77] From *Letter to Raleigh*, *FQ* p. 716.

[78] "Pulse: Used synonymously with Beat to refer to regularly recurring articulations in the flow of musical time...Pulses need not be phenomenally present in music, though they typically are. Rather, the sense of pulse arises through the listener's cognitive and kinaesthetic response to the rhythmic organization of the musical surface...A clear sense of pulse is a necessary condition for musical metre, as it forms the temporal anchor for higher levels of metric structure (measures or bars marked by downbeats) as well as smaller levels of metric subdivision. Beats or pulses must fall within a certain temporal range, close to what historical discussions of *tactus* have defined relative to the average heartbeat rate of a resting adult...The pulse of musical passage is a crucial, though not the only, aspect of our sense of tempo", Justin London, "Pulse", in Sadie 2001.

> …Shut your eyes and see.
>
> Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the *nebeneinander* ineluctably! I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. My two feet in his boots are at the ends of his legs, *nebeneinander*. Sounds solid: made by the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*. Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand? Crush, crack, crick, crick. Wild sea money. Dominie Deasy kens them a'.
>
> *Won't you come to Sandymount,*
> *Madeline the mare?*
>
> Rhythm begins, you see. I hear. Acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop: *deline the mare*.[79]

This rhythmic *nacheinander* (one after another) imposes a modality on whatever variables are inserted into it; in Stephen's ears, after a time, the whole world resonates with the hammer of the creator at the forge. The ear makes rhythmic sense even of irregularities when there is a dominant pulse (whether the tap of one's cane, the crunch of one's steps, or the acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching). When Spenser begins a line with a trochee (or dactyl), the pulse is carried over from the preceding line with the left-off weak beat perceived as a rest. Rather than hearing two consecutive strong beats, the dominant (ineluctable) modality of the audible encourages the perception of a weak beat falling between the iamb and trochee. It still occurs, in terms of time, but as audible silence. Stephen himself perceives this effect at work when he mulls over the two lines of verse prompted by his remembrance of Mr. Deasy. The second line begins on a strong beat, but in order to maintain the integrity of the pulse, the listener must perceive a weak beat falling before it. The feeling of an iambic modality is reinforced by the inclusion of a slight deviation. The ineluctability of rhythmic modality is made more palpable in the lines that follow, however:

> Rhythm begins, you see. I hear. Acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop:
> \ - - \ - \ - \ \ - - \ - - \ - - - \ - \ - \ - \ -
> *deline the mare*.
> - \ - \

[79] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Oxford, 1998), p. 37.

An iambic pulse is established by beginning the line on a strong beat, before moving into a sequence of iambs – aided, here, by cues provided in punctuation. When the dactyls of "acatalectic tetrameter" are reached, an effective duration has already been ascribed to the individual metrical feet, so that (for example) if one taps one's foot to the strong beats in the line, the dactyls, though composed of three syllables, possess the same duration as the iambs. I would argue, however, that although the dominant pulse is an iambic one, the means by which Joyce is able to accustom our ears to a series of trisyllabic feet (even including a tetrasyllable) in what is supposed to be a march of iambs is the retroactive (or retrospective) effect of the troping of metre in this way; originally the line was perceived as beginning with a trochee followed by an iamb, but if one re-reads the line with the approaching trisyllable feet in mind, the preferred method of modal accommodation is to hear a dactyl first, and in the following series of (what would then be) trochees, to imagine each weak beat subdivided into two weak beats – i.e.: as a continuing series of dactyls with "silent" second or third syllables – an effect which then persists through the actual dactyls and on to the end of the line:

> Rhythm begins, you see. I hear. Acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching. No, agallop:
> \ - - \ (-) - \ (-)- \(- -)\ - - \ - - \ - - - \ - (-) \ - (-) \ (-)- \ -
> *deline the mare*.
> - \ (-) - \ (- -)

The ineluctable modality of the audible is the tendency of the ear to sometimes compress, and sometimes imagine, weak syllables in order to accommodate the desired pulse. Similarly, the lone tetrasyllable is absorbed into pulse with its two middle beats requiring the duration normally accorded to one only. Aural perception seeks order, even of the ostensibly disordered or irregular. Regarding a metrical effect that can only be attained through retrospection, this is, indeed, an integral part of Joyce's own ideas concerning the relationship between language and rhythm: "In his definition of rhythm Joyce plays with notions of 'parts' and 'end' in a manner that introduces another dimension into the pattern, a sort of retrospective dimension: he emphasizes a concept of differed, or after-, *effect* insofar as significance is then constructed from the end backward. Parts are what you start from, but their rhythm and significance is revealed only in their final coincidence".[80] It is possible that the inner rhythms of the English language are

[80] Jacques Aubert, *Introduction à L'Esthétique de James Joyce* (Paris, 1973); revised English-language edition, Jacques Aubert (trans.), *The Aesthetics of James Joyce* (Baltimore, 1992).

here themselves being troped; whether heard in triple or duple metre, the pulse Joyce establishes is based on the essentially *trochaic* (not iambic) nature of the words he is using, and so problematic is this conflict with our preference for iambs that Stephen needs to chop off the initial "Ma" in his line of verse to achieve the desired effect. Melodic lines, too, commence on strong beats, and accommodating iambic verse to music typically requires a "pick-up note" in order to compensate.

Hollander speaks of troping as a device employed in order to make of the listener an accomplice in the poetic process – "*We have to do our logoanalytic work together*". It is by means of his virtuosity and exhibitionism that Spenser is trying to generate direct engagement with English poetry. What Attridge voices as the common complaint of the advocates of quantitative verse, "True verse, then requires both deep learning and great effort, and the ease with which lines of native verse can be turned out counts strongly against it",[81] is answered by Spenser's ability to subsume into "rime" what had originally been ordained to the realm of "verse": lofty matter and style, the function of *vates*, a high level of conceptual complexity that rewards careful analysis, and the winged messenger of poetry: music.

With this exultant exit from the epic mode, both musically and in terms of matter, Spenser gives the cue for Cuddie to strike up his refutation. The Ovidian voice becomes tenor for the second half of the eclogue, and, while reinforcing Spenser's arguments on the value of poetry, and the close relationship between its worth and the worthiness of its subjects, by these very means deconstructs the veneer of grandiosity that has thus far been cultivated, and demonstrates its potency by railing against its impotence. Cuddie begins by answering Piers in like tones (lines 55-60):

> Indeede the Romish *Tityrus*, I heare,
> Through his *Mecœnas* left his Oaten reede,
> Whereon he earst had taught his flocks to feede,
> And laboured lands to yield the timely eare,
> And eft did sing of warres and deadly drede,
> So as the Heavens did quake his verse to here.

[81] Attridge 1974, p. 96.

Emerging from the charming of flocks and fields with his "earst", the poet begins to "sing of warres and deadly drede" and the verse briefly resonates with epic intensity, ending with a hint at sympathetic vibration between "the Heavens" and the poet's song (with a possible trochee on "So as") – emphasizing the importance of aural participation once again. But the correlation between the ascent from pastoral to epic and the ability to find patronage is made abundantly clear. It is only "Through his *Mecœnas*" that Vergil leaves his "Oaten reede".[82] While the poetry itself imitates the ascent, including a revision of "heare" to "here" from a sub-clause telling of a rumour heard into Heaven's own act of participation with the poet's craft, Cuddie's own *a priori* scepticism and E. K.'s footnotes function as a forewarning that the epic voice is here being reanimated as a trope only, and that some transformation is sure to follow. That transformation begins in the second stanza of Cuddie's response, and takes the form of a jeering, mocking revisitation of Piers' suggestion, employing a metrical regularity that possesses an almost subversive, sing-song-like quality. While Spenser moves through the matters of both patronage and dearth of derring-do, the metre seems to mirror the lack of substance, in perfect iambic pentameter, commencing with a fey, "But ah..." The first strong beat in the stanza is a sigh – a stark contrast to the clarion trumpets of Piers' imperative, "Abandon..." Not only is Elizabeth denied mention, here, as a potential patron, but her analogous monarch, "great" Augustus, is given the dubious distinction of being dead, and therefore of no use to the would-be poet (Vergil himself, however, is not spoken of as being either faded or dead – he has outlived his patrons). Cuddie rebuts Piers point for point, dismissing his suggestion that either "Elisa" or Leicester could furnish him with worthy material, whether financially or in terms of deeds, and with lines 67-70 draws upon Piers' own hints as to the state of decay to which nobility has sunk (their armour and helms being rusted) to make his complaint (lines 72-8):

> But after vertue gan for age to stoupe,
> And mighty manhode brought a bedde of ease:
> The vaunting Poets found nought worth a pease,
> To put in preace emong the learned troupe.
> Tho gan the streames of flowing wittes to cease,
> And sonnebright honour pend in shamefull coupe.

[82] And E. K. charts the entire progress in his notes to lines 55 and 57 (*Spenser*, p. 135); "[55] The Romish Tityrus) wel knowen to be Virgile, who by Mecænas means was brought into the favour of the Emperor Augustus, and by him moved to write in loftier kinde, then he erst had doen"; and "[57] Whereon) in these three verses are the three severall works of Virgile intended. For in the teaching his flocks to feede, is meant his Æglogues. In laboring of lands, is hys Georgiques. In singing of wars and deadly dreade, is his divine Æneis figured".

Spenser is careful to provide as much negative emphasis on the difference between Piers' speech and Cuddie's as he can. "But after" resonates with the listener's memory of the wistful "But ah", maintaining Cuddie's mode of resigned despair. Lines 65 and 66, the last two of the preceding stanza, provide a vision of brighter days, long gone, forewarning some regretful turn in much the same way as "And eft did sing of warres and deadly drede,/ So as the Heavens did quake his verse to here" (the word "drede", used on both stanzas' penultimate lines, may even be receiving a trope here as a catch-all for ancient epic, juxtaposed with the paltry state of the present). Now as then, Spenser's "But ah..." is the singer-poet's sigh as his consciousness returns to the waking world. Our expectations are drawn into anticipating disappointment through the use of clever repetition, a play on our memory of specific sounds in specific contexts, coinciding perfectly with the matter at hand. The alliteration on the strong beats of "mighty manhode" again contrast the tones of the epic voice with the prevalent bemoaning here taking place; what is nostalgically highlighted by strategic placement is reduced by the end of the line to a stooped and ultimately bed-ridden thing – and whether through ailment or decadence, altogether pitiable. While the immediate subject is potential poetic matter, the would-be poet's own fate is here forewarned; "vaunting Poets", falling on the same beats as "mighty manhode", pursues a comparable progress, sharing its destination in the form of rhyming couplet, "ease/pease". While his earlier employment of the epic voice frequently rewarded what it anticipated in terms of mode and matter, Spenser is here toying with the ear's expectations, playing strong notions on strong beats against a weak finish. Even the assonance between "brought" and "found nought" is interrupted and ultimately disappointed by the contrasting and interposing peas, which receives its own alliterative echo in "put in preace". "Tho gan", also beginning a new sentence, can possibly be heard as a trochee, and serves as the point of arrival for Cuddie's pessimistic descent. After the close of "the streames of flowing wittes" on "cease", "sonnebright honour", again falling on the first strong beat in the line, flickers briefly in a succession of three strong beats, before finishing, "pend in shamefull coupe". Cuddie's final stanza draws out the bleakness of his view to a strong and bitter end. The relentless use of conjoining words, "and, yet, or, and, or", prevents either singer or listener any clausal reprieve until the final line, completing the poet's descent into ignominy (lines 79-85):

> And if that any buddes of Poesie,
> Yet of the old stocke gan to shoote agayne:

Or it mens follies mote be forst to fayne,
And rolle with rest in rymes of rybaudrye:
Or as it sprong, it wither must agayne:
Tom Piper makes us better melodie.

"And if" automatically forewarns the listener that what is to come will be a direct consequence of the penning-up of sun-bright honour. "Buddes of Poesie", comparing might-have-been poets to unflowered buds, recants on Spenser's normal terms of description, birds of song. Those whose muses were, in Piers' speech, broad-pinioned and noble creatures are here reduced to things that grow up from the earth, full of promise but fragile, clearly under-nourished, and ultimately disappointed. Though they might be scions of "the old stocke" they have nothing to feed them, nor anywhere to grow – not, for example, in Elisa's garden. Beginning the stanza's second line with "Yet" not only maintains the dominant effect Spenser is trying to attain, that of something slowly, inevitably withering, it also provides a trochee that matches the stanza's one reference back to the days when poetry had her proper place. While, step-by-step, the descent down to "Tom Piper" continues, there is, once again, this brief stirring of nostalgia brought on by a slight metrical deviation. "Stocke", with its combination of an open vowel and healthy complement of consonants could also be read as a strong beat. Hearing this in conjunction with the afore-mentioned notion of a pulse established by strong beats, the line nearly grinds to a halt, resuming its skip-along pace again as Cuddie relates the frivolous uses to which poetry has been put:

Yet	of	the	old	stocke	gan	to	shoote	agayne
/	-	-	/ (- -)	/ (- -)	/ (-)	-	/ (-)	- / (- -)

The "hunting of the letter" that occurs in the following two lines, especially strong in "rolle with the rest in rymes of rybaudrye", is a deliberate act of self-satire. Up until this point, Spenser has put alliteration to highly effective use, sometimes affecting scansion, sometimes emphasizing specific words or ideas, with purely oral cues. Here, especially with the unfortunate use of the word "ryme", already held to be the lowest poetic genre, E. K.'s comment in the dedicatory epistle is recalled: "I scorne and spue out the rakehellye route of our ragged rymers". Or, rather, since the critical apparatus of *The Shepheardes Calender* can only have been written after the poetry, E. K. foreshadows this line, evidencing his familiarity with the text and with

Spenser's intentions therein. Clearly, to have written the gloss, E. K. would have to have studied the work quite closely, but the sympathy he exhibits in trying to complement Spenser's ideas at every turn, even, as here, drawing inspiration for a comment in the epistle from yet another trope, demonstrates, to me, his understanding of the *Calender*'s true purpose: to prove the viability of rhymed verse in English by educating and defamiliarizing the audience to the point whereat they themselves become critics and analysers of the poetry. "Rymes of rybaudrye" can hardly reward repeated re-readings – a distinction from them which the *Calender* makes very clear for itself.

"Or it mens follies mote be forst to fayne" serves as a warning about the dangers of poetry ill-used, in much the same way as the Irish bards can be hired to compose lyrics in praise of vicious men. But while Ireland cannot be said to have been much in Spenser's mind in 1578, the line does serve as yet another inversion of Piers' ideas about the function of epic. Cuddie's subject is explicitly the present and, not content to simply reject Piers' proposed candidates as ingloriously slothful or aged, he conjures up a hypothetical situation in which the poet is forced (either under duress or for need of money – if there is a difference) to exalt an individual for deeds they have not performed, and to conceal the follies they have committed. Not only is this a woefully low service for poetry, it is, in consideration of *vates* and the poet's ideal role in society, extremely bad for a people, who will be given a villain for an idol. As Aristotle observes, music can be used to sway the minds of citizens, whether in one direction or another. The poet's command of his soundscape carries with it the responsibility to use it with temperance, to "restraine" and ennoble (i.e. "docere"), rather than to trumpet the virtues of the powerful in exchange for money. Spenser, through Cuddie, is verging, here, almost on a rejection of the potential success promised by Piers in favour of higher moral ground.

"Or as it sprong", followed by a comma, is the final pause, the last flicker of life, for those "buddes of Poesie", concluding Spenser's flower motif. The consequent phrase, made even more dour by the inverted syntax on "wither must" which places the imperative on a strong beat, effectively closes the stanza's thought. The tension drawn out by the repetitious use of conjoining clauses is released, and the fate of poetry is fully mapped-out. "Tom Piper" is given a sentence of his own, abrupt and inevitable, and arrives with such finality that Piers' reply, when it comes, shocks the listener. Cuddie does not bother to analyse how Tom Piper makes a better

poet than the buds of the old stock, but E. K. references the comment back to "rude wits" that prefer such doggerel to more learned and artificial verse. A vicious cycle is described by the stanza, in which true poetry is unable to flourish for lack of a sophisticated audience or worthy subject matter; instead, preferring in their ignorance "rymes of rybaudrye", the people choose for themselves a Tom Piper who, with either lascivious or simple tunes, will over time deaden their ears to more nuanced verse. In the same way that Orpheus is defeated by the Bacchantes only when they succeed in drowning him out with their cacophony, in a world where Tom Piper is placed in the centre of the soundscape, even a true poet has no power to charm the ears of his people. Matching in form what he describes in language, Spenser has employed relative metrical simplicity, and even deliberate abuse of poetic device, to transform his listeners' perception of Piper-like rime by troping it against itself, playing on what he has accustomed the listener to hearing, and variously teasing or disappointing those expectations. He is ironic, subversive, and emphasizes death and decay as physical and cultural inevitabilities, expressing as the final outcome nothing more worthwhile than a voluminous stream of bad poetry. In a world without real poets, nothing endures but mutability.

The reconciliation between the Vergilian and Ovidian "presences" can only begin when Piers' question, and, indeed, the *Calender*'s question, is answered: "O pierlesse Poesye, where is then thy place?" With *The Shepheardes Calender* Spenser has set in motion the beginnings of a foundation for a new English poetic tradition, but, as the morose conclusion of *October* demonstrates, alongside the equally morose conclusion of *December* and the *Calender* as a whole, poetry has not yet found its place either in society or in the poet himself. The New Poet is still uncouth and unkissed. Music has been, both explicitly and subliminally, at the root of Spenser's poetic cause from the outset, providing a storehouse of motifs and devices fully usable neither in quantitative "verse" nor in lowly "rime". What was originally the domain of lofty poetry – artifice and conceptual complexity – has been subsumed into a rhymed accentual-syllabic pastoral, and it is through careful attention to the aural effects that rhyme and metre can have that Spenser is able to accomplish this so well. Moreover, as Piers and Cuddie agree, the true personification of the vatic poet is Orpheus, and the means by which he commands the hearts and minds of those around him is song, the intricate interweaving of mode and matter. Just as Orpheus civilized mankind and Amphion raised the walls of Thebes through the power of

their music, so has Spenser set himself the task of civilizing his own people, restoring their faith in their language and in their native poetry, through music of his own devising. The next chapter will examine how, in the Mutability Cantos, Spenser assumes the role of *vates* and, through the use of copresences, completes his musical formulation of the English poetic identity, laying the groundwork for his successor in epic, John Milton. I will go on to examine other, more actively-musical influences on Milton's later style, with the aim of demonstrating how it is through music that a poet dominates his soundscape, and how central music is to those works achieved in English verse.

III

MUSIC AND MUTABILITIE: SPENSER'S CODA TO *THE FAERIE QUEENE*

Troping another poet's voice over one's own transforms the poetic act into one more introspective and self-analytical than is normally the case. While poetry, as Spenser aptly demonstrated to his peers, can handle a broad spectrum of subjects and genres, even within the scope of a single work, and can serve very lofty psychagogic ends, the poet's first and last struggle remains with himself. This Odyssean journey begins with troping. Traditionally, a trope follows a fairly conventional definition within rhetoric, "the use of a word or phrase in a sense other than that which is proper to it".[1] Quintilian defined "tropus" as "the artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another".[2] Both the Latin use of the word and its English descendent retain traces of their original antecedent, the Greek *τρόπος* [*tropos*], which meant (physically) "a turn". Ironically, however, the troping of *τρόπος* seems to reach back further than any written record we have, and its earliest use is in a highly metaphysical form, rife with complex meaning – i.e.: in the very first line of Homer's *Odyssey*, the first adjective used to describe Odysseus, variously translated as "wily", "crafty", or "clever", is *πολυτρόπως* [*polytropos*], literally "of many turns".

For such a word to be used to describe a man whose duplicitous nature at one point leads him to identify himself as *Οὖτις* [*Outis*] ("no one" – the name Odysseus gives the Cyclops so that, when the giant's brothers ask him who put out his eye, he can only say "No one did it"), effectively troping his own name, there must be some larger awareness of the problem of identity that emerges when one assumes the role of the poet. Homer seems to be troping the act of storytelling, at the very least, when he has Odysseus of many turns assume the role of narrator for the first third of the poem. How can we, the listeners (for Greek epic was an aural experience), not question Odysseus' honesty, when he always seems so willing to lie in order to achieve his ends? It is at this point that the listener realizes that everything he is hearing is fiction, every one of Homer's words a fabrication. The story-within-a-story, recounted by a

[1] "Trope, *n.*", *OED*.
[2] "Tropus est verbi vel sermonis a propria significatione in aliam cum virtute mutatio", Butler 1920, pp. 301-1.

dubious narrator, tropes the act of story-telling, defamiliarizing the listener from a state of simply hearing the poem, to a state of curiosity about the devices of poetry and story-telling. But this is a tertiary effect, for it is the man, the poet himself, whose livelihood revolves around troping, who experiences the greatest degree of defamiliarization: that is, from himself. The poet fears the fate of Orpheus, to be drowned in a sea of voices (that is, various poetic identities of his own devising), and shorn to pieces.

While it cannot reasonably be supposed that Spenser was on intimate terms with Homer, he was reputed by his friend Lodowick Bryskett to have been "perfect in the Greek tongue",[3] and the various applications and transformations of *τρόπος* could well have intrigued him. If not, then the Latin form of the word certainly would have. As is evident in every discourse on the subject of language or literature, the Elizabethan critics were never able to resist an opportunity to posit their theories on the etymologies of this or that word. What is of primary interest is the parallel between the original and inherited meanings of *τρόπος*, and Spenser's own use of the words "turn", and "verse". Literal inheritances of *τρόπος* by literary terminology began almost immediately: "strophe" comes from the Greek *στροφή* [*strophe*], which referred, at the time, to the physical movements of the chorus, and *ἀντιστροφή* [*antistrophe*], the chorus' return to its original position; the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes: "hence these terms became the designations of the portions of the choric ode sung during these movements respectively".[4] "Strophe", originally meaning "turning", is now used synonymously with "stanza", to refer to "a series of lines forming a system". Dozens of words have been formulated from this original root, from "atrophy", a state of motionlessness, to "entropy", a state of constant change. Similarly, "verse" descends from the Latin *versus*, which meant "a line or row, specifically a line of writing (so named from turning to begin another line)", and corresponds to the French *verture*, "to turn".[5] A "verse" is a "turn".

Predictably, ideas of turning and constant change are central to the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie*. Spenser tropes again and again the word "still", and the word "turn", over the course

[3] Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life: Containing the Ethike part of Morall Philosophie* (London, 1606), p. 25. Cited from Ray Heffner, Dorothy E. Mason, Frederick M. Padelford, "Spenser Allusions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries Part 1: 1580-1625", *Studies in Philology* 68 (1971), p. 106.
[4] "Strophe, *n.*" *OED.*
[5] "Verse, *n.*", *OED.*

of the poem, evoking even on a subliminal level the inherent contradiction in a state of pure entropy, while at the same time hinting strongly at the terrifyingly inescapable, final turn: death. As with *πολυτρόπως*, a condition in which self-troping remains constant is a state of inevitable decay into nothingness. The subsumption of "turn" and "verse" into "song", is the poet's stand against the ephemeral nature of things. With the direction for new English verse firmly established, Spenser, in what was probably his last composition,[6] will go on to describe the nature of time and the universe, and the poet's place therein.

By the time the first quarter of his intended epic, *The Faerie Queene*, was published in 1590, Spenser was already established as one of England's premier poets. *The Shepheardes Calender* had run to three editions, the second being printed a little over a year after the poem's release in 1579, and the third edition coming out in 1586.[7] With the tragic death of Sir Philip Sidney in 1586, and the posthumous publication of his *Astrophel and Stella* not to come for another five years (though it had long been circulating in manuscript form), the mantle of the New Poet was laid squarely upon the shoulders of Spenser. His career had begun, and his lasting fame had been assured. "Spenser Allusions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (1971) notes a vast number of references and allusions to *The Shepheardes Calender* and its author, both in contemporary poetry and critical discourse, in the years immediately following its publication[8] – despite the fact that Spenser was at this time still largely anonymous (though, ironically, this apparently did lead some to believe that Sidney himself was the *Calender*'s author[9]).

In 1589 Spenser journeyed to England in the company of Raleigh, and on the first of December in that year "a booke intytuled *the fayrye Queene dysposed into xii. bookes, &c*" was entered in the Stationers' Register by William Ponsonby.[10] If Spenser's account of himself in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* is to be believed, he was given the opportunity to read a

---

[6] *FQ*, pp. 16-7.
[7] *FQ*, pp. xv-xvi.
[8] See Heffner 1971, pp. 4-15 (for years 1580-9).
[9] "The last shephards calendars the reputed worke of S. Phil. Sydney a work of deepe learning, judgment, & witte disguised in Shep. Rules", George Whetstone. *Sir Phillip Sidney, his honorable life, his valiant death, and true virtue* (1587?), cited from Heffner 1971, p. 11.
[10] Our knowledge of this period is conflated from references to his legal dispute with Lord Roche, and the semi-autobiographical *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595 – but with a dedication to Raleigh dated 27 December, 1591, "From my house of Kilcolman") – *Spenser*, p. 344; see also Frederic Ives Carpenter, *A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser* (Chicago, 1923), pp. 32-33 (for years 1588-92); and *FQ*, p. xvii.

portion of his epic at court, in the audience of Elizabeth, during his visit. Colin relates that the Queen (who is here referred to as "Cynthia"):

> ...to mine oaten pipe enlcin'd her eare,
> That she thenceforth therein gan take delight,
> And it desir'd at timely houres to heare.[11]

Though predictably self-effacing, both with reference to the Queen and to her court poets ("the learned throng"), Colin somewhat confusingly uses his "oaten pipe" as metonymic for his poetry, even though, by this time, he has been "enforst" to change his "Oaten reeds" for "trumpets sterne" in order to compose his epic.[12] While the motif of the oaten pipe certainly suits the pastoral context of *Colin Clout*, it is nevertheless an intriguing contradiction of ideas, if we are to assume that it is part of *The Faerie Queene* that Spenser read, and not one of his other works. Since the immediate context of Colin's relation of the episode is his praising of Cynthia, there seems little reason to speculate that he intends anything else – and the target audience of the epic, too, as stated in the Proem of Book I, is a "learned throng". Before Alexis interjects, Colin seems to be referring indirectly to the task he has set himself, when he decries the impossibility of describing that which is divine using earthly language (lines 346-51):

> Her power, her mercy, and her wisedome, none
> Can deeme, but who the Godhead can define.
> Why then do I base shepheard bold and blind,
> Presume the things so sacred to prophane?
> More fit it is t'adore with humble mind,
> The image of the heavens in shape humane.

And are we also to detect a comparison with Homer? Here is just one more example of Spenser's endless troping of his own identity, an instance in which his avatar, Colin (further complicated by Cuddie's presence at this gathering of shepherds), provides a window through which to gaze into the world as Spenser himself has witnessed it, so it would seem, only to play upon the framework of internal allusion that has been so carefully constructed around his work, and problematize the task of interpreting Spenser's actual perspective (or presence). "Who knowes not *Colin Clout*?" indeed, but we know more about Colin, insofar as a poet can be

[11] *Spenser*, p. 355, lines 360-62.
[12] *FQ*, Proem I.1.4, p. 29.

revealed through his work, than we do about Spenser.[13] "But while there is no going back to an unshaped biographical truth behind his fictions, these self-presentations show us the meaning that Spenser made of his experience. The self-representations in his poems involve both self-aggrandizement and self-reflection".[14]

Further to this point, dating the Mutabilitie Cantos has proven impossible (though, regarding Spenser's poetry, this problem is nearly ubiquitous), and a number of different theories hold varying sway.[15] At the very least, it is tempting to situate the Cantos at the end of *The Faerie Queene*'s chronology, as they serve nicely as a "coda" (a conveniently musical term) to the rest of the epic.[16] Hadfield suggests that "Spenser's harsh criticisms of the queen... perhaps ensured that the fragment would not be published in his lifetime (or Elizabeth's)".[17] In many ways, the Cantos are less a "recapitulation" than a recantation (or rechantation?) of the work that precedes them; while Dame Nature's audience on Arlo Hill effectively comprises every character previously introduced in the Spenserian canon (including the seasons and the months), many of those characters have undergone surprising revisions – or mutations. What remains constant in spite of everything, however, is the presence of the poet himself, in this final turn of his labours, and while Cynthia wavers and all that lives and breathes is placed under the sway of entropy, Spenser, in "witnessing" Nature's decree, affirms the role of the poet as divine witness, *vates*, prophet of the *logos*, and thereby paves the way for his successor.

Spenser begins Canto vi (the first of the two Mutabilitie Cantos) by establishing for his audience that he is, in fact, narrating an event which has already taken place, and at which he was present: "I will rehearse that whylome I heard say" – intending, here, to refer to what he

---

[13] For a thorough discussion of the transformations of Colin Clout from *The Shepheardes Calender* to *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, see R. Mallette, "Spenser's Portrait of the Artist in *The Shepheardes Calender* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*", *Studies in English Literature* 19 (1979), pp. 19-41. Further discussion of Spenser's self-representation can be found in: Donald Cheney, "Spenser's Fortieth Birthday and Related Fictions," *Spenser Studies* 4 (1983); and William A. Oram, "Spenser's Raleghs," *Studies in Philology* 87 (1990).

[14] William A. Oram, "Spenser's Audiences 1589-91", *Studies in Philology* 100 (2003), p. 516.

[15] See P. W. Joyce, *The Wonders of Ireland and Other Papers on Irish Subjects* (London : 1911), p. 111; Russel J. Meyer, "'Fixt in heavens hight': Spenser, Astronomy, and the Date of the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*", *Spenser Studies* 4 (1983), pp. 115-29; and David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, 1984), p. 152; Andrew Hadfield, "The Faerie Queene, Books IV-VII", in Hadfield 2001, p. 137, notes: "most scholars agree that these Cantos were probably composed just before Spenser's death".

[16] James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of* The Faerie Queene (Princeton, 1976), pp. 76-86.

[17] Hadfield 2001, p. 138.

heard said during the event. This is followed in the second stanza by Spenser's interruption of his own narrative, with "But first", in which the poet states that the background information he is supplying is

> As I have found it registred of old,
> In *Faery* Land mongst records permanent.[18]

Thus the poet arms himself not only with the authority of the narrator, but also with the authority of the written word (a device notoriously popular with Chaucer). Moreover, the word itself is elevated to a transcendent status through its manifestation here as a record "permanent", a deliberate refutation of Mutabilitie's sway over "all mortall things". "Tyme" sits at Cynthia's gates, hourglass in hand, but the word is immortal – and immutable.

Yet the word still requires voice, or song, to be its means of transmission. The music of the Mutabilitie Cantos is at once lyrical, yet arresting, transparent, yet quick to draw attention to itself, and rife with word-motifs and internal allusion which establish a tonality of their own. Given his attentiveness to rhythmic variation it is not surprising to find Spenser working carefully to avoid the risk of dulling his listeners' ears through the entrainment of a repetitious metre. To be sure, the Alexandrine offsets a risk of this nature considerably, adding a "coda" to each stanza, playing each time upon the listener's anticipation for the cadence of the rhyme, a slight, but noticeable, extenuation. It is the manner in which Spenser begins his stanzas, however, that is unique to the Mutabilitie Cantos, and which enables him to maintain his hold on the listener's attention. "But first", prefacing the narrator's self-interruption, places a caesura at the beginning of a deviation from the current direction of the plot, the use of the comma precluding the possibility that the device is meant merely to be "read over" or ignored. The imposition of an oral pause before a new narrative thread can be taken up allows the poet to re-cast his spell over his listeners; while the ear can often remain receptive to the sound of poetry being read aloud, the sense can occasionally drift from the matter at hand, or become preoccupied more with the execution of the rhyme scheme than with the signification of the words employing it. By breaking the rhythmic continuity through the use of a premature caesura, Spenser can ensure that his listeners remain attentive to the import of his words, as much as to

[18] *FQ*, VII.vi.2.3-4, p. 692.

the sound. When the narrative thread resumes in stanza 4, Spenser first guides us back to Mutabilitie with "So likewise did this *Titanesse* aspire", referring to the fortunes of her sisters, but the listener is not brought back into the "present" of the narrative until line 5, which employs another instance of the premature caesura: "And first, on earth she sought it to obtaine". Once again, when the focus of the plot shifts, a disjunction in rhythm accompanies it, so that our attention is renewed, and when the new direction is established, the march of iambs resumes, carrying the listener forward.

The device is similarly useful when Spenser wishes to elaborate on a point:

> Ne shee the laws of Nature onely brake,
> But eke of Justice, and of Policie;
> And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
> And death for life exchanged foolishlie:
> Since which, all living wights have learn'd to die,
> And all this world is woxen daily worse.
> O pittious worke of *MUTABILITIE*!
> By which, we all are subject to that curse,
> And death in stead of life have sucked from our Nurse.[19]

"Ne shee the laws of Nature onely brake" prepares the listener for what is sure to follow: a series of lines which function as conjoining clauses, forewarned by the phrase "But eke". The repetition on "and" creates the illusion that the list is much longer than it actually is. Not only are we familiar enough with the standard devices of the epic voice (or of the rhetorical voice) to expect a series of this nature, but through its being troped so often we are able to experience it before it begins, and as a result find satisfying every iteration of "and", and anticipate each "inversion" as it occurs, even as Spenser's grammatical inversion results in us knowing the end before we know the beginning. "And wrong of right, and bad of good" are interesting inversions even on an aural level; by placing the consequent before the antecedent, Spenser is able to use the much softer "of" instead of "to" or "into" (as in: "And right to wrong, and good to bad"), allowing for a more immediate juxtaposition of the sounds of the words. "Wrong of right" and "bad of good" each share similar qualities in terms of consonance, but are opposites in assonance. The metaphysical inversion is reinforced by the ear's interpretation of the words as

[19] *FQ*, VII.vi.6, p. 692.

they relate aurally to one another. "And death", when it comes, precedes "life", and is the true point of arrival for the first half of the stanza. The use of the word "exchange" is mortifying, as one typically imagines an exchange to be a transaction in which both parties are willing participants. "Since which" marks an elaboration on the invention of death. By inserting this digression Spenser sets these events deeply in the past, to the prelapsarian era. Without it, one might have supposed the "death-for-life" exchanges to be taking place on an individual basis, meaning that Mutabilitie had just been running about killing people. Instead, we are given the most fleeting of glimpses of a world that existed before death, a glimpse only made possible, here, by its mention as a time already long gone. Our presently fallen state belies our assumption as to what "death for life" could imply; being subject *a priori* as we are to mortality, our initial imaginative response cannot reach far back enough to include a time before death existed. Both aurally and in our perception, death precedes life – or, rather, death is already a fact before life begins.

Spenser evokes the mournfulness of this irrecoverable loss with his alliteration on "And all this world is woxen daily worse", with the sound of woe permeating every significant word. Moreover, we have here yet another inversion of sense with Spenser's use of "woxen".[20] While there seems to be no orthographical alteration at play for the sake of alliteration or assonance – aside from two instances in *The Faerie Queene* (I.vii.5.8 and II.x.30.5[21]) the word is always spelled "wox", and not "wax" – the use of the word still points up a transformation of literal sense through repeated troping. *OED* notes "wane" to be the "traditional antithesis", which would suggest that "wax" tends more frequently to refer, as in its definition, to growth or increase. Spenser's use of the word throughout his epic is by no means ubiquitously positive, for it can refer variously to the waxing of a character's strength or courage, or fear or madness – and this would only be natural. However, the context in which woxen is employed here is at odds with ideas of growth or increase, referring as it does to a state of decay caused by the bringing of death into the world. Through this paradox of ideas, the very meaning of the word "wox" is transformed, bringing to the fore its far more tertiary meaning: "Without the idea of growth or

[20] I.e.: past tense of "to grow" – "wax, *v.*", *OED.*
[21] "Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and slow"; and "And wearie waxe of his continuall stay", respectively. Also "Eftsoones long waxen torches weren light" (*FQ*, III.i.58.3, p. 299), but this refers to actual wax candles.

increase: To become, turn (sometimes used with reference to a sudden or immediate change)".[22] Spenser has invested a word with the meaning of its own antonym, through repeated and varied use. "Wane" is never used in *The Faerie Queene*, nor is its etymological cousin "wan" (pale, livid), but the figure of the moon, waxing and waning in perpetuity, embodied figuratively in Cynthia, is central to the Mutabilitie Cantos, and its own paradoxical relationship to changeability, permanence, and time, is key to unlocking the poem.

The outcry, "O pittious worke of *MUTABILITIE*!", with its block capitals drives home the poignancy of our fallen condition,[23] and serves as an interruption that places "worse" further in the past of our aural memory, so that when Spenser introduces the closing couplet of the stanza, again employing an early caesura in "By which" (which functions, here, as a further disjunction), the word "curse" acquires a resonance that is not merely due to its formulaic end-rhyme position with "worse". Rather, the mind, having been distracted by the poet's plaintive cry, forgets that which has come before, whereas the ear remembers. The knelling of "curse" is made heavier through Spenser's ingenuity in misleading the sense and pleasing the ear, which has the effect of increasing the significance of the word. The inversion wrought by Mutabilitie is completed in the final line: "death in stead of life" is what we suckle at birth, with "And death" recapitulating line 4 of the stanza (while both phrases, "And death for life exchanged" and "And death in stead of life" occupy the same amount of metrical space), and the coda of the Alexandrine delaying the closure of the couplet long enough for its meaning to penetrate our consciousness before the tender word, "Nurse", is turned on its head and handed back to us as the harbinger of our inevitable undoing.

While further examples of the early caesura abound in the Cantos, the last example that will here be remarked upon occurs in the first line of stanza seven:

> And now, when all the earth she thus had brought
> To her behest, and thrilled to her might,
> She gan to cast ambitious thought,

[22] "Wax, *v.*", *OED*, II.9.a.(b).

[23] It may also be taken as an example of what Puttenham is referring to here: "[Apostrophe] Many times when we have runne a long race in our tale spoken to the hearers, we do sodainly flye out & either speake or exclaime at some other person or thing, and therefore the Greekes call such figure (as we do) the turnway or turnetale, & breedeth by such exchaunge a certaine recreation to the hearers minds", Puttenham 1589, pp. 198-99.

T'attempt th'empire of the heavens hight,
And *Jove* himself to shoulder from his right.[24]

During the digression of the previous stanza, our attention was firmly in the past – the nigh-unimaginably remote past, either that of our individual births, or of the birth of our race. "And now", snaps the narrative back into focus, especially following as it does the dour lines that preceded it. Again, the placement of the caesura early in the line actually serves to prepare the listener for a change in tempo, and Spenser gratifies this expectation with an enjambment into line 2, establishing a strong iambic pulse in order to support his return to the regular narrative thread. Following the enjambment, we have no caesurae at all through the end of the sentence in line 5, an indication from the poet that the energy of the verse is not to be disrupted by pauses until the full stop. The longer stanza is, as was the case in stanza 6 (and is frequently so), broken in twain, with its respective halves functioning self-sufficiently.

This is a strong example of the carrying-forward of lessons learned while writing *The Shepheardes Calender*. Hecht notes the varying difficulty with longer stanzas that Spenser seems to have had in his earlier work and which is surmounted with great effectiveness in the shorter-stanza eclogues, particularly *October*.[25] Spenser's use of "But", in the *Calender*, tends to herald a mid-line caesura, followed by enjambment "in the softest imaginable manner", as the shepherds formulate their arguments with somewhat tedious syntax. This, in Hecht's words "conforms to a predictable and narrow set of possible choices", and "While there is nothing wrong with this, it does tend to inhibit the build-up of periods larger than a stanza, as beginning readers, not picking up on the links between sentences, end each one with an identical drop of the voice". What was identifiable in the *Calender*'s *October* as the epic voice is employed by Spenser in the Mutabilitie Cantos (as Hecht foretells) with much greater ingenuity in rhetorical and poetic variation, allowing him either to sustain tension over long periods, or to drop it with sudden turns of phrase, recapturing our attention.

An observation of this nature would not be complete, however, without a counter-example of how Spenser is, when he chooses, perfectly capable of maintaining rhythmic energy

[24] *FQ*, VII.vi.7.1-5, p. 692.
[25] Paul J. Hecht, "Spenser Out of His Stanza", *Style* 39 (2005), pp. 316-335.

from one stanza to another, particularly when a character is engaged in making a lengthy speech. Jove's speech to the gods of Olympus runs to two full stanzas (20-21), and is nicely framed by an introduction in the preceding stanza (lines 6-9), and a conclusion in the following stanza (lines 1-5):

> To whom when *Hermes* had his message told,
> It did them all exceedingly amate,
> Save *Jove*; who, changing nought his count'nance bold,
> Did unto them at length these speeches wise unfold;
>
> Harken to mee awhile yee heavenly Powers;
> Ye may remember since th'Earths cursed seed
> Sought to assaile the heauens eternall towers,
> And to us all exceeding feare did breed:
> But how we then defeated all their deed,
> Yee all doe knowe, and them destroyed quite;
> Yet not so quite, but that there did succeed
> An off-spring of their bloud, which did alite
> Upon the fruitfull earth, which doth us yet despite.
>
> Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred,
> That now with bold presumption doth aspire
> To thrust faire *Phœbe* from her silver bed,
> And eke our selves from heauens high Empire,
> If that her might were match to her desire:
> Wherefore, it now behoves us to advise
> What way is best to drive her to retire;
> Whether by open force, or counsell wise,
> Areed ye sonnes of God, as best ye can devise.
>
> So having said, he ceast; and with his brow
> (His black eye-brow, whose doomefull dreaded beck
> Is wont to wield the world unto his vow,
> And even the highest Powers of heaven to check)
> Made signe to them in their degress to speake.[26]

The introduction to Jove is executed in such a way that as soon as we hear his name there can be no doubt that a speech from his is imminent. A caesura follows the enjambment onto "Save *Jove*", which, in addition to its normal function of setting up a change in tone, emphasizes the assonance between "told", "*Jove*", and "bold". When the couplet closes on "unfold", the

[26] *FQ*, VII.vi.19.6-22.5, pp.694-5.

name of Jove has already been granted authoritarian resonance through its permeation of the rhyming vowel-sounds, and for having been isolated from the line due to Spenser's caesura. The poetry provides both a visual and an oral cue in imitation of the sense of the phrase, "Save Jove" – i.e.: "except for Jove", or "but Jove alone".

Correspondingly, Jove's speech is well-sustained. Beginning with a call for attention that, predictably, employs a trochee on "Harken", so that a strong iambic pulse can begin on the right foot, the address to the Olympians has but one caesura in the whole of its first stanza – and that, to assist in the execution of a rhetorical turn in which the speaker recants on something just asserted and, for poetic purposes, spends the remainder of the stanza elaborating on his sudden self-contradiction. By preceding this device with the phrase "Yee all doe knowe", Jove credits the wisdom of his audience (and, by extension, the poet's audience), and thereby accords to himself superior knowledge immediately after, by correcting something that was understood to be certain. By creating of the stanza's last three lines an *antistrophe*,[27] Spenser again suspends the closure of the rhyme on "succeed" – aided by the enjambment into the next line – so that in the first line of Jove's second stanza the sound still resonates with "seed". Assonance and suspended internal rhymes are used to unify two stanzas into a single speech paragraph. "Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred" then falls as a direct consequent, employing a backward reference to the previous stanza, and aided by further assonance/consonance audible in "that/bad", and "bad/seed/bold/bred" (and "bold" occurs again in the following line). The caesura on "Wherefore" on line 6 neatly divides the stanza in much the same manner as in the first example. After a period of well-sustained metre, a turn is inserted (and we would imagine, in a theatrical context, this would provide a physical cue), which re-captures the attention of the audience in time for the conclusion of Jove's speech. Whether one chooses to read "Wherefore" as a trochee or an iamb is less important than its incontrovertible function in providing a pause, at the 15/18 mark (in keeping with the theatrical comparison, an actor could even choose to read it as a spondee).

[27] The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* describes *antistrophe* ("conversio") differently, as an immediate reiterative revision on a line-by-line basis: "Conversio est per quam non, ut ante, primum repetimus verbum, sed ad postremum continenter revertimur, hoc modo : 'Poenos populus Romanus iustitia vicit, armis vicit, liberalitate vicit'", ("In Antistrophe we repeat, not the first word in successive phrases, as in Epanaphora, but the last, as follows: 'It was by the justice of the Roman people that the Carthaginians were conquered, by its force of arms that they were conquered, by its generosity that they were conquered'."), Harry Caplan (trans.), *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (London, 1964), pp. 276-77.

In each of the four stanzas quoted above (VII.vi.19-22), it may now be observed, Spenser has inserted his turn before the close of the final *b* rhyme; the rhyme scheme of a Spenserian stanza being *ababbcbc-c*,[28] Spenser allows the *b*-couplet on lines 4-5 to close fully, but then begins a new thought on either lines 6 or 7, so that in a single stanza we never perfectly hear the final closure of the *b*-rhyme on line 7; this closure falling after the beginning of a new thought, it lacks the feeling of cadence that would normally accompany it as the conclusion of a series of specific rhyme-sounds. As Hecht observes to be the case in the *Calender*, Spenser's handling of shorter stanzas is much more effective than that of his longer verse paragraphs, and we can see here that he [Spenser] is essentially employing those techniques he learned in writing the *Calender* on his 9-line stanzas in order to avoid allowing the constraints of his chosen form to dictate when and where verse-sentences will be concluded. There are no instances in which the picking-up of a new thought, after the conclusion of the old, feels formulaic. Accustomed as the ear is to hearing a "conclusion" on a rhyming couplet, to attempt to sustain metrical energy through the couplet entirely would have a numbing effect on the listener. In this case, our expectation for a conclusion on the couplet is gratified retroactively, by the conclusion of the thought up until that point being developed. The "turn" (generally a caesura), marks the end of one thought and the beginning of another, resetting the metre and then carrying the listener through the end of the stanza, and, thanks to the final *c*-couplet, further suspended through the use of the Alexandrine, the listener's expectations for full closure are completely satisfied. In much the same way as a sonnet is composed of an octave and a sestet, antecedent and consequent, so the Spenserian stanza is composed of two distinct, yet highly complementary, halves. Contrary to what might be concluded by a superficial reading of this technique, that by breaking the stanza into halves Spenser is actually disrupting the flow of his verse, the effect of using the two couplets to deal with separate thoughts in a single stanza is actually to unify that stanza and, indeed, several consecutive stanzas if need be. As noted above, the caesura/disjunction that occurs on "Yet not so quite" allows for the tying-in of assonances across the verse paragraph, which otherwise may go unnoticed by an ear so dulled it listens only for the rhyming couplets. In longer speeches, there may still be sections of eight, nine, or ten lines of verse that have no breaks or turns (in which case the *c-c* couplet fulfils a kind of prefatory role, observable in the present example), but the voice is sustained across paragraph breaks, de-

[28] "-*c*" marking the Alexandrine.

synchronized from the rhyme scheme of the stanza – as though the rhymes were, like an undersong or accompaniment, occurring incidentally to the words being sung.

A propos the word "bold", which occurs three times in the above example, it has been previously used to describe Jove himself (or, at least, his countenance), but is used twice, consecutively, in Jove's own speech, in an undeniably derogatory sense, with reference to Mutabilitie. There are fifteen uses of "bold" in Canto vi: one with reference to Cynthia, at VII.vi.12.7; one with reference to Procrustes, at VII.vi.29.5; once is Jove called bold, and Hermes once; and the remaining eleven times Spenser uses "bold" or "boldly", it is with reference to Mutabilitie or her enterprise. Canto vii contains only two instances of the word, one in the introduction (again attached to Mutabilitie, there named "Alteration"), the other with reference to July who, clad in flames, rides a lion to the congregation at Arlo Hill (VII.vii.36.4). The two primarily accepted meanings of "bold" pertain either to its complimentary sense (i.e., that it would be a term of praise) describing someone of courage or fearlessness, or to its negative sense, describing someone of brash or presumptuous character or who is, as the *OED* notes, "the opposite of 'modest'".[29] Jove even posits this derogatory meaning when he uses the phrase "bold presumption". However, the variations on the sense in which the word is employed depend on its context, or on whom it is applied, and by drawing attention to the word through repeated use, by troping it, Spenser is alerting us to how context can transform the sense of language, even when some ostensible characteristics of said context do not vary (for example, the persons or things being described may partake of a number of similar characteristics). Mutabilitie is always "bold", no matter who is speaking, but what boldness constitutes can be radically different when employed by the narrator, or by a character within the epic, depending on who or what is being described. Note, for instance, that the first and second occurrences of "boldly" are with reference to Mutabilitie and Cynthia respectively, and that, in their immediate context, we are given no reason to infer that the meaning in one use is different from the other:

> Boldly she bid the Goddesse downe descend (VII.vi.11.1);

And:

> And boldly blaming her for coming there,

[29] "Bold, *a*", *OED.*

Bade her attonce from heauens coast to pack (VII.vi.12.7-8).

Cynthia and Mutabilitie are evenly-matched in their boldness. But while these excerpted passages may suggest that the word applies equally to both parties, the aura of brashness, envy, and ambition that has been constructed around Mutabilitie up to this point affects how we hear the word itself when it is used with reference to her. "Boldness", and particularly boldness in women, has been a notably recurrent theme over the course of Spenser's epic, and it is possible to see at play, here, the troping of an idea already posited earlier, in Book III, Canto xi, the episode in which Lady Britomart enters the house of Busirane. Tellingly, while Britomart is frequently given the epithet "fayre", she is at III.xi.13.8 referred to as "the bold Virgin",[30] and if female boldness is one of the concerns of the Canto, then examples of presumptuous or overweening male boldness to allow for direct comparison are in ready supply as well, as can be observed at III.xi.25-26, when Scudamour attempts to follow Britomart through the flames blocking their way. Our bold virgin, gathering her courage, "Therewith resolv'd to prove her utmost might", and with sword and shield is actually able to cleave her way through the fire, unscathed. Scudamour "likewise gan assay", but "With greedy will, and envious desire". His attempt fails, for "cruell *Mulciber* would not obey/ His threatfull pride". Hieatt points out the differing types of boldness that Scudamour exhibits, even going so far as to compare him, when at his most brash, to Mutabilitie, but in any case he is Spenser's counter-example to Britomart:

> Scudamour has obeyed the injunction in the House of Busirane to be bold and bold; but he has now been "too bold." He has overstepped the bounds of love in asserting a passionate mastery incompatible with what he really wants, which is happy marriage...Scudamour is at one with that Cupid who rejoices in having conquered all the other gods; he is following a master who is strikingly similar to the villainess in the Mutabilitie Cantos: Cupid and she desire unique rule over the other powers, not harmonious interplay. Scudamour's boldness is really a kind of youthful brashness, and that *Keckheit* [German: "cockiness"] is to be contrasted with Britomart's temperate (if slightly schoolmarmish) encouragement of him in a moment of despair (III.xi.23-24) and with her informed boldness (III.xii.29.8-9) at the climactic point.[31]

While Scudamour's behaviour is clearly offered as a contrasting example of chivalric fervour and other characteristics – he is Britomart's foil – the variations on the word "bold"

[30] And in Canto xii, "bold *Britonesse*" (2.8) and "bold *Britomart*" (29.8).
[31] A. Kent Hieatt, "Scudamour's Practice of *Maistrye* Upon Amoret", *PMLA* 77 (1962), p. 510.

continue to be a source of puzzlement. There are, to be sure, plenty of other adjectives equally- if not better- suited to descriptions of courageous individuals and, correspondingly, one would have no difficulty in finding words to describe someone brash or impetuous. These two character types could be so strongly contrasted, without the need for this ambiguity. But, Spenser accomplishes this with ease – his characterization is not dependent upon his perspicacity. The interplaying uses of "bold" are done deliberately, with an eye to disrupting our easy interpretation of the word (or idea thereof).

Silberman interprets Britomart's confrontation with Busirane in precisely this way, as a troping of the interaction between poet and "reader", with the inscription borrowed from Mr Fox's house taking the foreground.

> Tho as she backward cast her busie eye,
> To search each secrete of that goodly sted,
> Over the dore thus written she did spye
> *Bee bold*: she oft and oft it over-red,
> Yet could not find what sence it figured:
> But what so were therein, or writ or ment,
> She was no whit thereby discouraged,
> From prosecuting of her first intent,
> But forward with bold steps into the next roome went.[32]

While our "Championesse" does not verbalize her response, she does proceed "with bold steps", essentially personifying her interpretation:

> Although the words of the inscription are plain enough, what is meant is mysterious, both because no context is provided in which to place the gnomic imperative and because the source of the inscription—the locus of authorial intention—is unknown. Britomart is unable to decipher the message over the door, but, undaunted by the absence of external validation for what she does, she obeys the command by being bold and passing boldly into the next room. In so doing, Britomart gives the inscription a meaning it did not necessarily have before her particular act of boldness and enacts a model of literary interpretation as invention—simultaneously the creation and discovery of meaning in a collaboration of reader and text.[33]

---

[32] *FQ*, III.xi.50, p. 396.
[33] Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 60.

Is a similar effect intended by Spenser's use of "bold" with reference to both Cynthia and Mutabilitie? He has supplied us not only with a plethora of instances in which boldness is a defining characteristic, either positive or negative, but also with this inscription, with a maxim the potential interpretations of which are many, and of which Britomart's, while it serves her well, may not necessarily be the "correct" (or at least "intended") one. Or perhaps the point is that there is no absolute, no "correct" interpretation of the word, but rather that if one takes upon oneself the boldness to act upon one's own interpretation, if one assumes the mantle of Logomancer, then it becomes possible to proceed without uncertainty. In the absence of what Silberman here refers to as "the locus of authorial intention", the "reader" (or listener) is free to formulate his own response. But, of course, there is a locus of authorial intention – in the poem itself. While interpreting the episode as a troping of authorial presence in order to problematize normally typical assumptions concerning authorial or narrational "intent" is viable in that it clearly serves Britomart well, this could be a dangerous simplification, it being the case that while the apparent author of the maxim is absent from the poem, the poem itself has an author, and he has chosen to import a well-known maxim from a well-known folktale, a folktale which, itself, has no author.[34] Rather, the poet has taken possession of a famous, authorless saying, one long embedded in his contemporary cultural consciousness, divested it of its original context, and reinserted it here as something new, ambiguous, full of potential significance. Like Britomart, we do not know the author of "*Be bolde, be bolde...Be not too bolde*", but the inscription lies over a door, and we have no choice but to proceed through it, regardless of our interpretation, if we wish to continue moving forward. Spenser has conjured for us a number of instances in which a single word, through repeated transfiguration, becomes ambiguous, therefore requiring interpretation, as opposed to merely offering up the potential for an interpretation independent of the "locus of authorial intent". The "intent" is precisely that this burden be thrust upon the listener. And though Busirane is not the inscription's author, he is still, this being his house, the one who wrote it down, the one who placed it in our path and, correspondingly, just as Britomart is the reader making her way through Busirane's maze, so are we, the listeners, making our way through Spenser's poem. In a truly Homeric act of authorial

[34] Mary Ellen Lamb, in "Gendered Fictions in *The Faerie Queene*", in Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (eds.), *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age* (Kentucky, 2000), p. 97, notes: "While not published until the early twentieth century, 'Mr. Fox' was apparently already an 'old tale' in the 1590s, according to another quotation noticed by Fowler appearing in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99)".

problematization, Spenser has forced us into Britomart's shoes, and placed himself, somewhat disturbingly, in Busirane's.

Though this reading corroborates Lamb's final summary, "women's narratives have won, hands down",[35] which would seem to be what Spenser is demonstrating, if Lady Britomart is intended to be the reader's avatar as she makes her way through Busirane's labyrinth then it is important to avoid interpreting her success as being due to her refusal "to interpret the meanings of the tapestries, and it is this 'lack of comprehension'...that creates her immunity to their power". Because, of course, Britomart does not refuse to interpret the inscriptions, but rather the opposite: "*Bee bold*: she oft and oft it over-red, / Yet could not find what sence it figured". Like Spenser's ideal reader (or, like the ideal reader of Spenser), she gives the words careful consideration and numerous rereadings, and even if their vagaries are nonsensical to her, this by no means discourages her from proceeding, or from acting in such a way as to illustrate that she has at least considered their import – again, Britomart formulates her own interpretation; she does not simply ignore the words. As the reader, she is empowered by her ability to respond to language, and to resolve ambiguity.

While to an extent this effect is achievable through the borrowing from Mr Fox's tale, it gains considerable strength, and hence our consideration of it in the Mutabilitie Cantos, through Spenser's transformation of the word "bold" into a recurrent sound motif. To trope the meaning of the word through repeated contextual transfiguration accomplishes one half of Spenser's objective, but the other, equally important aim, is to use the word repeatedly for its use in playing upon the memory of the ear. So frequently is the epithet employed that the listener begins to expect it, while the strength of the word itself, in terms of both assonance and consonance, ensures that in each of the instances in which it is heard, it resonates either consonantly or dissonantly with the words around it, variously expanding or contracting the degree of tension in a given line. Coupled with the manifold senses in which it could be taken at a given moment, Spenser's use of "bold" in the Mutabilitie Cantos is a true example of a verbal motif, encapsulating as it does both the aural and semantic qualities set in constant play with their context.

[35] Ibid., p. 99.

Consider the third instance in which "bold" occurs, describing Mutabilitie's answer to Cynthia's repudiation of her presumption (13.1-3):

> Yet nathemore the Giantesse forbare:
> But boldly preacing-on, raught forth her hand
> To pluck her downe perforce from off her chaire;

As noted, "boldly" reacts strongly with both "But" and "preacing-on", gaining momentum from consonance (shared also with "forbare") and then being belied by the sharp contrast produced by "preacing". Irrespective of the word's meaning the dissonance between the two words causes both to be diminished in their significance. The very fact that Mutabilitie "preaces" boldly satirizes her posturing before Cynthia, reducing her to a state of childlike impudence. A similar example of such a technique can be found in Richard III's opening address to the audience:

> And now, instead of mounting barbèd steeds
> To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
> He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.[36]

The line-end assonance between "steeds" and "adversaries" forgives the use of the "ee" sound (otherwise associated with effeminacy in this example) in its immediate context, the first two lines acquiring an almost cavalry-like forward momentum, while the lines that follow rob the words of all supposed masculinity. One might imagine Gloucester to be variously hissing or spitting out his lines, but their retroactive impact on both the aural and semantic power of the cavalry charge can only be intensified thereby. The contrast of ideas is accompanied in equal measure by the contrast in consonance and assonance, and rhythmic intensity, conjuring a mortifying image of grim-visaged War's sudden and stark transformation.

Meanwhile, this is the third occurrence of the word "bold" in as many stanzas, with a fourth before stanza 13 is concluded. Thus far the word has alternated between Mutabilitie and Cynthia, but let us consider its use with reference to Cynthia in contrast with the example just noted.

---

[36] John Jowett (ed.), *William Shakespeare: The Tragedy of King Richard III* (Oxford 2000), I.i.10-13, p. 143.

> And boldly blaming her for coming there,
> Bade her attonce from heauens coast to pack.[37]

The highly complementary aural context of Cynthia's "boldly", carrying forward even to the next line, with "Bade", makes of it a perfect counter-example to the act of boldly preacing-on, and further strengthened by the introduction Spenser gives Cynthia in this moment, still seated in all her implacable and self-assured authority (note also, with the line "by highest *Jove* assign'd" at VII.vi.12.2, an allusion to the divine right of monarchs). While the word would seem to pass back and forth (at least in this brief instance) indifferently, conferring its meaning on one and then the other in equal measure, the aural context Spenser employs transforms the manner in which we interpret it, so that the same word may attain, at variance with itself, two neatly distinct, and mutually exclusive (one being "bold", the second being "too bold"), meanings. Here, it grants Cynthia an aura of majesty merely by virtue of its resonance with the words around it. The listener may not even be conscious of the manner in which both the idea and the sound of "bold" are transfigured by its varying usage, but the effect is ineluctable. Spenser employs a specific mode in each different case that alters the listener's interpretation of the word; first by means of repetition, both in the Mutabilitie Cantos and earlier, in Britomart's episode, he has imbedded the sound of the word in our aural memory, giving it its own internal resonance; then, Britomart's struggle with boldness is central to her journey through authorial intent, and it is by triumph of an interpretive act that she is able to proceed further into the text – the troping of the word is a plot device and cannot escape notice – and through this the multiple layers of meaning, with all their consequent actions, illustrated by either Britomart or her unfortunate companion, are attached to the sound-motif Spenser has already established. While, if we proceed with the interpretation of the Britomart episode in which Spenser's text is allegorically represented by Busirane's labyrinth, our relationship with authorial intent may be problematized by the dubiousness of Busirane's motives, it remains that Britomart's triumph is the result of her successful journey through language, a quest which can only be facilitated by the poet, re-establishing the primacy of the Word, and, consequently, of *vates* also, and the importance of proceeding with a tempered notion of its significance. At the end of her journey, the listener (for by now the experience has become as much aural as intellectual) has become far more finely attuned to the malleability of words, the pitfalls of acting too rashly on a potentially

[37] (VII.vi.12.7-8) – these lines, though quoted earlier, are reprinted here for the sake of clarity.

flawed interpretation, and the rewards of careful analysis. The verbal motif, "bold" or "boldly", returns in the Mutabilitie Cantos carrying the full weight of its earlier transfigurations, this time being employed almost as a weapon, wielded by two avatars of universal motion: entropy and atrophy. But its varying use, here, begs a number of new questions, whether the listener's reaction to the word is brought about entirely through devices of authorial or musical intent, or whether the word cleaves to each to whom it is applied and adopts a meaning reflective of what is within them, or whether it is through the intent of the individual being described that the word is forced into a particular meaning, and, consequently, whether this word now so heavily troped can be re-imagined in a new, later context, or through over-use will it calcify into a few immutable meanings – that is, whether the significance of the word is now entirely dependent on the given mode.

While a significant one, the word "bold" is but one example of Spenser's use of verbal motifs, and it serves to set a precedent for the problematization of two words more directly relevant to the ideas being analysed in the Mutabilitie Cantos: "still" and "turn". In much the same way as "bold", the word "still" may partake of one meaning or another depending upon the words it describes or which describe it, and so much so are these meanings mutually exclusive that one could write the phrase "still still[38] was his glance" (for example) without there being any confusion as to what was intended (though perhaps "ever more still" would be preferable). The extension of this usage of the word enables another meaning, "With words denoting increase or progress: Ever more and more",[39] and it is interesting to note that the *OED*'s first example of "still" being used in this particular sense comes from Spenser himself: "1596 SPENSER *F.Q.* IV. vi. 18 Sir Arthegall renewed His strength still more, but she still more decrewed". The deliberately paradoxical manner in which Spenser employs "still" in the Mutabilitie Cantos is perhaps the strongest example of his obsessive word-play and masterful handling of verbal motifs. "Turn", on the other hand, resonates with ideas of verse, trope, and strophe, while simultaneously meaning "a change" or "a task" or, in some cases, "a song".[40] While never glossed as "song" in Spenser's work, certain definitions of the word and certain uses of it in his

[38] *OED* even notes this in its definition: "Still still: on every occasion; ever more and more. Obs.", "Still, *adv*., 3. b."
[39] "Still, *adv*., 3. f", *OED*.
[40] See "Turn, *n.*", and "Turn, *v.*", *OED.*

work prefigure this interpretation in some instances, and this is especially the case with reference to the Mutabilitie Cantos. Twice the words are used in conjunction.

"Still" occurs but six times in Canto vi, and a whopping sixteen times in Canto vii (along with an extraneous "distill" at 31.5), and with each usage the precise meaning of the word becomes more unstable, as though in reflection of the growing discord wrought by Mutabilitie's ambitious usurpation. The note of nostalgia struck by its first occurrence, in stanza 5, foreshadows the mournful tone of stanza 6, discussed above, that backward glance at the prelapsarian age (vi.5.5-9):

> And all the worlds faire frame (which none yet durst
> Of Gods or men to alter or misguide)
> She alter'd quite, and made them all accurst
> That God had blest; and did at first provide
> In that still happy state for ever to abide.

Here, "still" means "persistently", suggesting, naturally, that our state of prelapsarian bliss had been intended as permanent. However, here, in double contradiction with Mutabilitie, "still" not only means "persistent" or "unchanging", but also, simply, "motionless", describing a "happy state" in which those who partook were free from movement, from action, unturning. Through a simple double-entendre conjured by the use of "still" in contrast with the activities of Mutabilitie, Spenser has created for us a vision of the warring forces of the universe, entropy and atrophy, from nearly the outset of the poem. While there is no real ambiguity as to the meaning of the word, our attention is alerted to its own internal resonance, its ability to supply multiple meanings in any context, immediately, and subsequent occurrences only strengthen this impression. Also striking is the confluence of assonance and consonance in the line, of which Spenser is so fond: "In" and "still" share a vowel, while "that" and "happy" share one; at the same time "that still" prepares the ear for "state", so that each word or syllable seems to share or partake of some characteristics of those syllables surrounding it. These six beats are given a shape of their own, and in conjunction with the internal b-rhyme on "first" and the heavy use of enjambment which disrupts our perception of the regular rhyme-scheme, "that still happy state", resonating with "durst", "accurst", "blest", and "first", feels very much like the stanza's climax. It could additionally be suggested, owing to the inversion of consonance in "still", the ear being

accustomed to hearing "st" at the end of a word, especially in this stanza, owing to its use in the end-rhymes, that "still", though occurring on a weak beat, is actually a strong beat, serving the purpose of momentarily slowing the pace of the line, allowing the listener a brief opportunity to reflect on the import of the phrase.

With this auspicious introduction given, Spenser quickly moves on to further usages of the word "still". Mutabilitie's arrival at Cynthia's throne includes a reference to the entropic nature of the moon, and Cynthia's own position as its guide (vi.8.8-9):

> Ne staide till she the highest stage and scand
> Where *Cynthia* did sit, that never still did stand.

While Cynthia herself may remain seated and motionless, her very throne is the chariot of the moon, forever coursing through its orbit around *terra*. In contrast with the previous example, there are here instances of words beginning with the "st" sound (both on strong beats) in the line preceding "never still did stand". This kind of aural setup would be perfectly neat but for the caesura in the Alexandrine, on "sit", a word that, especially given its conspicuous position, fragments the consonant sound that has supposedly been repeated in order to add emphasis to the stanza's closing phrase. Through this fragmentation, Spenser alerts our attention to a hidden paradox which would otherwise escape notice; while logically the phrase makes sense – Cynthia sits, and it is her throne that moves in perpetuity through the cycles of the moon – the jarring effect of "sit", as it clashes with the expectations of the ear up to this point, introduces a dissonance that makes our return to "never still did stand" feel very much like a resolution of the line's tension. As E. K. says in his dedicatory epistle: "So oftentimes a dischorde in Musick maketh a comely concordaunce: so great delight tooke the worthy Poete Alceus to behold a blemish in the joynt of a wel shaped body". While the immediate context of E. K.'s point may be the viability of archaisms in poetry, the philosophy remains the same: the passage through discord, the *via negativa*, effects a tuning of the soul to what is consonant, and creating for (in this case) the listener a point of arrival. Our arrival at "never still did stand" is once again at a place of continuous motion, and by drawing our attention to the contradiction between Cynthia's moving-yet-motionless state, which he effects through a musical device, Spenser neatly points up the fundamental similarities between the two clashing deities, and makes us alert to what Nature

will later reveal, that all things are subject to Mutabilitie. “Still” is demonstrated in yet another instance to be able to affect our perception of the words and ideas that surround it, and to be both ambiguous and portentous in its significance.

Over the course of the rest of the Canto, and especially into Canto vii, “still” reappears again and again, and continues to demonstrate its power, or continues to be used to demonstrate Spenser’s power, to introduce ambiguity into the line, to suggest multiple layers of possible interpretation, and to affect uniquely in each occurrence the tonality of the given stanza. As has been demonstrated, the growing momentum of this verbal motif is closely linked to the manner in which it relates aurally to the words around it, and it is ubiquitously the case that Spenser’s careful attention to how words sound in relation to each other ensures that “still”, though used many times, retains or even increases in significance with each instance. By the time we arrive at Mutabilitie’s final appeal and Nature’s verdict on the fate of the universe, there have been so many contradictory or oxymoronic usages that even the “literal” or “simple” meaning intended by the word is impossible to apprehend, even while the entire Canto hums with the sound and idea of stillness. At vii.13.2, in the word’s first appearance in Canto vii, the poet utters the phrase “Still mooving, yet unmoved from her sted”, and, as earlier, despite its placement on the initial, and therefore weak, beat of the line, “still” sounds like a strong beat, and, moreover, is followed by a caesura, which accentuates it further – and to whom could this phrase refer but Dame Nature, in the stanza of her introduction? The pattern of usage that emerges once each occurrence of the word has been analysed is strongly indicative of the care Spenser has given to shaping our ability to interpret his meaning.

Mutabilitie’s speech to Nature attempts to encompass the whole of creation, and to argue that all things therein, even unto the gods, are subject to time, change, and decay. In the course of her observations about the transient condition of the Earth and its denizens she offers a few opportunities for Spenser to develop his motifs further (vii.18.6-9 – vii.20):

> And first, the Earth (great mother of us all)
> That only seems unmov’d and permanent,
> And unto *Mutability* not thrall;
> Yet is she chang’d in part, and eeke in generall.

For, all that from her springs, and is ybredde,
  How-ever fayre it flourish for a time,
  Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead
  To turne again unto their earthly slime:
  Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime,
  We daily see new creatures to arize;
  And of their Winter spring another Prime,
  Unlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise:
So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.

As for her tenants; that is, man and beasts,
  The beasts we daily see massacred dy,
  As thralls and vassalls unto mens beheasts:
  And men themselves doe change continually,
  From youth to eld, from wealth to poverty,
  From good to bad, from bad to worst of all.
  Ne doe their bodies only flit and fly:
  But eeke their minds (which they immortall call)
Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.

Spenser's handling of speeches that span several stanzas is again demonstrated here. The Alexandrine in stanza 18 serves neatly to introduce what is to come, both by virtue of its being an independent clause, and through the use of "Yet", which functions in a manner similar to that used by Jove earlier when he is speaking of Mutabilitie ("Yet not so quite..."). By contradicting the preceding statements at the close of the stanza, Spenser reengages our attention and follows up immediately with an explanation, beginning with "For..." This produces the effect of highlighting stanzas 19 and 20 as being particularly relevant. As for the matter contained therein, Mutabilitie's observations about life on earth express an interesting dichotomy: in keeping with her argument that the Earth itself is her subject, life's inevitable decay cannot end with dust, but rather from out of that dust new life must grow. The cyclical nature of this process bespeaks renewal, and Mutabilitie even goes so far as to use winter and spring as metaphors to describe it, but it belies true circularity in that there is no allowance for the possibility of a return to an original (or prelapsarian) state. This is suggested by her use of "another" to describe the Prime succeeding Winter, and "Prime" itself, though also a pun on Italian word for Spring, "primavera", does indicate a completely new beginning, as opposed to a return to something familiar. Instead of a true Spring, which would bring with it new life for those things that died during the Winter, we are given "another beginning", "Unlike in forme, and chang'd by strange

disguise". From death, we "turne again" to "slime", and the fate of the matter that formed us is described out into perpetuity: "So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise". To "turne still about" but to never experience a *re*turn is to be locked in a cycle of unending death – for, by her own words, even death itself is no end to our metamorphoses. Stanza 20 carries this notion further with its specific discussion of man. Mutabilitie's description of the changes we undergo in the course of our lives does not include any mention of a path upwards, but rather only a journey down: "From good to bad, from bad to worst of all". She even goes so far as to admit her scepticism as to the immortality of the soul, prompting the listener to ponder the full implications of what is threatened by an existence spent turning still about.

"Turn" is used twice in stanza 19, once to mean "change" or "transform", and the second time, in conjunction with "still", in a somewhat more ambiguous sense, which further complicates our interactions with both words. Although its use in line 4 is ostensibly unproblematic, Spenser's choice of preposition, "unto", does evoke a double meaning, bringing in the sense of a physical turn, and this serves, in both an aural and semantic manner, to affect how we interpret "turne they still about" in the Alexandrine. In what is by now a familiar trick, Spenser has gone to the additional trouble of isolating the ninth line, by taking advantage of the unique design of his stanza: while the ear may wait for the cadential Alexandrine, Mutabilitie's thought is fully formed by the end of line 8, and punctuated by the c-rhyme, "arize"/"disguise". The repetition of "spring" at both the beginning and the end serves to heighten this effect. "So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise" emerges as a logical consequence of the stanza, but by virtue of its position in relation to an already fully-formed thought, in addition to the purely aural relationship it possesses, being an Alexandrine, the line attains a resonance of its own, and calls the listener to further contemplation of turning, and stillness. The occurrence of "change" in the line makes somewhat redundant the interpretation of "turn" as meaning simply "to transform", and we are consequently faced with the difficulty of reconciling the idea of turning still, or being physically and metaphysically trapped in repeating the same cycles into eternity, with Mutabilitie's earlier preclusion of the possibility of renewal. Spenser has employed the resonance between these two words, which he has created through their varied repetition, in order to provoke further interrogation into the multifaceted nature of Mutabilitie's argument. Conjured for the listener is a vision of perpetual movement without progress, or without

particular direction. Being, substance, and identity are all equally subject to decay and transformation, and with each turn, being first reduced to "slime", emerge utterly unrecognizable.

In the second stanza of Canto VII, "turn" is finally used to mean "task", or "undertaking", with direct reference to the act of composing (or "singing") the poem (vii.2.1-3):

> Yet sith I needs must follow thy behest,
> Doe thou my weaker wit with skill inspire,
> Fit for this turne…

The matter of "fitness" has already been addressed by Ted Brown in his analysis of Spenser's *Amoretti*, which, after noting some of the more notorious difficulties confronting a reader of Spenser (i.e.: disentangling a reading of his poetry from the greater socio-political context into which he is constantly trying to insert it), observes: "at least equally important is the subject of language, the effort to see just what the poet can accomplish with his chosen words in this most confining yet capacious literary arena [i.e.: a sonnet cycle]. A defining characteristic of the Amoretti sequence is an emphasis on poems about the poet's craft, an emphasis here termed 'metapoetry' ".[41] What Brown means to address in this observation is the importance of engaging with Spenser's language on a level that takes into account his tendency to trope particular words in order aid us in unlocking their full import – "metapoetic devices" are the catalysts of defamiliarization, to create listeners of us all, and attune us to the music of poetry. What is "fit" matter for verse, or whether the poet is "fit" for his task, or when he himself is in a "fit" of poetic fervour, are the questions addressed to the listener through Spenser's tenacious troping of the word itself. Brown notes well how, through what he calls "floating Spenserian syntax", "fit" can be made to oscillate between two different meanings or applications:

> Sonnet 69 further advances Spenser's consideration of poetry's memorializing force. The first four lines describe how the famous warriors of antiquity erected stately monuments in which to house the records of their great deeds; line 4 includes a pun on the word 'emprize', which likely refers both to the warriors' enterprises and to the poetic inscriptions on the memorials commemorating those deeds. In the second quatrain the speaker asks 'What trophee then shall I most fit devize', to 'record the memory / Of my loves conquest, peerelesse beauties

[41] Ted Brown, "Metapoetry in Spenser's *Amoretti*", *Philological Quarterly* 82, 4 (2003), pp. 401-418.

> prise?' (5-7). (The floating Spenserian syntax of line 5 allows 'most fit' to modify either 'trophee' or 'devize', and here, as throughout the sequence, 'fit' is a key word that may work either as an adjective meaning 'appropriate' or as a verb meaning 'made' or 'created'.) [42]

Brown concludes his reading of Sonnet 69 with "Poetry is thus presented as having the power to eternize not only the lady and the poet composing verse about her but also the very act of writing itself, an act that the Amoretti anatomizes continually", and proceeds to further observations of metapoetic devices and references that are intended to draw the listener closer to the poet in terms of the creative process. Of particular interest, before we arrive at Brown's closing thoughts on "fit", are the noted references made to "two legendary mythological wordsmiths, Arion and Orpheus", since in making comparisons between them and himself Spenser returns to musical euphemisms. While the commentary closes with the observation that "In this pair of sonnets [38 and 44] Spenser thus illustrates the difficulty of poetic persuasion by depicting the poet-lover's artistic inefficacy while at the same time showing the power of verse to express the seemingly inexpressible", it is important to add that, at this critical moment of self-deprecation (Brown's "modesty topos") there is the employment of some by now quite familiar devices that highlight Spenser's musical sensitivity, especially when the matter at hand is metapoetic reflection. Specifically, in lines 3 and 5 of Sonnet 38, in which the comparison with Arion is made, Spenser echoes his own metrical deviations, right down to exact replication of syntax and positioning of his caesura, in order to drive home the differences between Arion and himself – differences made more poignant by their being ostensibly invisible, but sharply audible (lines 1-5):

---

[42] For the sake of convenience Sonnet 69 is quoted here, in full (from *Spenser*):

The famous warriors of the anticke world,
Used Trophees to erect in stately wize:
in which they would the records have enrold,
of theyr great deeds and valarous emprize.
What trophee then shall I most fit devize,
in which I may record the memory
of my loves conquest, peerelesse beauties prise,
adorn'd with honour, love, and chastity.
Even this verse vowd to eternity,
shall be thereof immortall moniment:
and tell her prayse to all posterity,
that may admire such worlds rare wonderment.
The happy purchase of my glorious spoile,
gotten at last with labour and long toyle.

Arion, when through tempests cruel wracke,
He forth was thrown into the greedy seas:
Through the sweet musick which his harp did make
Allu'rd a Dolphin him from death to ease.
But my rude musick, which was wont to please...

In both lines, "musick" is given pride of place by virtue of its immediate proximity to the caesura, and Spenser ensures that we hear its significance by upsetting the metre and slowing the pulse of the lines. "Musick", a trochee, falls on the strong fourth beat in both cases, as we would expect; however, Spenser goes to the additional trouble of inserting another stressed syllable before we hear "musick", giving the word a great deal more emphasis. In line 3, this is accomplished by beginning the line with a trochee instead of an iamb, forcing a stress on "sweet", while there can be no option to avoid the stress on "musick", so that the line scans:

Through the sweet musick which his harp did make
/ - / / - (/-) - / - /

Spenser's tendency is to prefer stress on syllables immediately following caesurae only when they are significant, and if an unstressed or unimportant syllable has to follow a caesura, then it will typically be on the fourth or sixth beat of the line, rather than the fifth. A quick example for comparison can be found in the Mutabilitie Cantos (vi.30.5-8):

I would have thought, that bold *Procrustes* hire,
Or *Typhons* fall, or proud *Ixions* paine,
Or great *Prometheus*, tasting of our ire,
Would have suffiz'd, the rest for to restraine;

Sonnet 69's fifth line presents the same problem as its partner:

But my rude musick, which was wont to please…
- / / / - (/-) - / - /

This line being an echo of line 3, we are obligated to hear "which" the same way twice, however we choose to interpret it. It being the case, however, that the placement of this particular word on a strong beat is somewhat aberrant for Spenser, it is quite tempting to hear the anapest, leading us back into a regular iambic pulse. Taken in this sense, the slowing of the rhythmic pace as we approach "musick" seems all the more deliberate, as is the contrast between

"sweet" and "rude"; heard independently of these lines, "sweet musick" and "rude musick" would scan quite inoffensively as unstressed, stressed, unstressed, which would accommodate a regular iambic line perfectly. With the forced stress on "sweet", however, the precedent is set for "rude", and while line 5 begins with an iamb, the stressing of "rude" becomes unavoidable, being further compounded by its assonance with "musick" itself. That assonance would normally be ironic, but the nuanced attention Spenser has devoted to these two lines instead forces a contemplation of the tunability of similar and contrasting syllables. There is a deliberate pause, a brief moment of reflection on the very sounds of sweet and rude music: what we hear, even on a sub-verbal level, on a purely aural level, is Spenser comparing his music with that of Arion. This brief moment of commentary is rife with musical, metapoetic devices which contribute to the argument itself – while, as always, demonstrating the poet's own highly astute ear for consonant and dissonant sounds and, in a further self-reflexive twist, reminding himself and his listeners that it was through his words that we were able, even briefly, to hear Arion's music at all.

"Fit" is, as Brown has noted, yet another example of Spenser's verbal troping. "Spenserian syntax" frequently affords a single word opportunity to refer to, and modify, several other words, and even, as in the case of Sonnet 69, to the speaker himself: "What trophee then shall I most fit devize", permits the possibility that the poet sees himself as "most fit" for the task (perhaps an unwonted show of self-confidence, but this particular sonnet could bears this out). Brown's observation that "'fit' is a key word that may work either as an adjective meaning 'appropriate' or as a verb meaning 'made' or 'created'", and the notice he gives to further usages of the word in the rest of the sequence, point to a critical aspect of Spenser's "metapoetic devices" which we have been trying to bring to light – specifically, that these devices underpin the goals the poet is attempting to achieve in composing his works; the author is transforming the experience of hearing poetry into something highly participatory, and he is accomplishing this through devices that depend greatly on the memory of the ear and the resonance of verbal motifs. Brown concludes: "This metapoetical subtext influences the overall direction of the sequence and draws the reader's attention to the empirical Spenser and his fictive counterpart throughout. The Amoretti sonnets are clearly in part about Spenser's life and love, but they are even more clearly about his poetic art". A word such as "fit" describes many different aspects of the poet's craft. It can refer to the act of composing a poem, for which there is a precedent in *October*: "For

Colin fittes such famous flight to scanne". It can refer to the trance-like or frenzied state into which the poet enters when he is composing, something Cuddie implies at the close of *October* when he wishes his "temples were distaind with wine", or as Brown notes in his reading of Sonnet 33: "'Fit' [line 11] also carries multiple meanings, suggesting both a disturbed mood and the difficulty of poetic creation, as well as presenting a common term for a section of a poem". By its varying reuse over the course of the sequence, we are gradually led to realize the full creative potential of the poet through a simple demonstration of the aptitude of a single word. In each instance in which it appears, it means something new, or is a further expansion on an already-established meaning, and each use refers in some form or another to the composition of poetry.[43]

The Canto closes with a lengthy digression on the history of Arlo Hill, in which the poet has quite deliberately lapsed into a more lyrical mode. While certain other of the verbal motifs cultivated over the course of the Cantos, and Spenser's work in general, serve purposes both musical and thematic, "fit" is linked strongly to moments of self-reflection and metapoetic commentary – and despite this very specific functionality, the word occurs frequently. Bearing this in mind, let us consider Spenser's deepest period of self-reflection to occur in the Mutabilitie Cantos, prior to the closing prayer of Canto viii, the pastoral digression on Arlo Hill, to which we are alerted by his conscious change of muse, and consideration of what is "fit" (vi.36.5-9):

> That was, to weet, upon the highest hights
> Of *Arlo-hill* (Who knowes not *Arlo-hill*?)
> That is the highest head (in all mens sights)
> Of my old father *Mole*, whom Shepheards quill
> Renowmed hath with hymnes fit for a rurall skill.

The reference to Spenser's earlier insertion of his avatar into the epic is what is initially most striking about the first of this pair of stanzas. As intended, one recalls the narrator's address to his audience (VI.x.16.4): "Poore *Colin Clout* (who knowes not *Colin Clout*?)" – which

[43] In those cases wherein the word is used to describe something else, it still remains a term denoting near-perfection, as Britomart's contemplation of her lover suggests (*FQ*, III.iv.5.6-9, p. 322):

> A thousand thoughts she fashioned in her mind,
> And in her feigning fancie did pourtray
> Him such as fittest she for love could find,
> Wise, warlike, personable, courteous, and kind.

"generates echoes not only of Spenser's pastoral persona but also more subtle ones of Cuddie's parenthetical remark in the August eclogue: 'who knowes not Rosalend?' [line 141]. The reason everyone knows Rosalend is that Colin Clout has celebrated her in his powerful poetry".[44] When Spenser asks, then, "Who knowes not *Arlo-hill*?" he is not only reanimating Colin Clout, but also reminding his listeners of the enduring power of the poet; the question is rhetorical, self-reflexive: "These people and things are famous for having been the matter of my song". But, of course, while the phrasing of the question – and, indeed, its exact metrical placement – may echo the question posed in Book VI, "Arlo Hill" is a potentially obscure reference compared to either Colin Clout or even Rosalend, and there may be any number of ways in which to interpret Spenser's meaning.[45] It is important to ask whether, in transposing the question into this new context, Spenser's sole purpose in addressing his audience is to recall Colin Clout, in order to bring our acquaintance with his history to the fore prior to launching on this lengthy digression. In terms of metapoetic commentary, these two introductory stanzas strongly echo the *Calender*'s October eclogue, over which, as here, Colin's presence hangs like a shadow. Whenever Spenser begins to probe anew ideas about voice or poetic identity, Colin is, muse-like, re-invoked, and assuming his presence over the course of this episode is key to unraveling the complicated layering of authorities that preside over the description of Arlo Hill. A more direct reference to Colin (and his earlier singing of Arlo), of course, is made in the stanza's last two lines, and for which Spenser has reserved the Alexandrine couplet and a very telling use of the word "fit":

> …whom Shepheards quill
> Renowmed hath with hymnes fit for a rurall skill.

This couplet is one of the most striking examples of the intentional instability of Spenser's syntax – a suitable setting for the word "fit". Both "Renowmed" and "fit" can here function as the clause's verb, deferring to the other the role of adjective, either to "Shepherds quill" (i.e. Colin's), or "hymnes", respectively. Colin Clout's quill, as we well know, is quite

---

[44] Derek B. Alwes, "'Who Knowes Not Colin Clout?' Spenser's Self-Advertisement in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 6", *Modern Philology* 88, (1990), p. 31.

[45] "Or perhaps witty in prompting a rhetorical question in response: 'Apart from a small circle of friends, who could possibly know that Arlo Hill is Spenser's name for Galtymore, the highest peak of the Galtee mountains, about 30 km north-east of his residence at Kilcolman Castle, especially since he transfers to the mountain the name of the glen Aherlow, a notorious haunt of rebels, beneath?' Or it may be defiant: readers ought to know that Spenser is the shepherd who praises the Mole in *Colin Clout* 104-05 as 'that mountain gray/ That walls the Northside of *Armulla* dale', also known as the Awbeg valley", *FQ*, p. 697, n. 36.6-9.

sufficiently renowned itself – though, clearly, Spenser can never resist probing the idea of the fame of the poet. Intriguing is the possibility suggested by our taking "Renowmed" in the role of a verb, since this would be a corroborating example of one of the interpretations for "Who knowes not *Arlo-hill*?", that the poet, or in this case his quill, brings renown to those things he treats as matter for his verse. In adopting this approach, "fit" becomes an adjective, but even in this case it is not entirely stable, since one can place an imaginary comma either before it or after, and alter how exactly it modifies "hymnes", as so: "…whom Shephards quill / Remowmed hath with hymnes, fit for a rural skill"; or: "…whom Shephards quill / Remowmed hath with hymnes fit, for a rural skill". In the first sense, "fit" describes merely how the particular hymns composed by Colin in praise of Arlo Hill are well suited to a pastoral mode. However, in the second sense, Colin's hymns are composed for a "rural skill" – they are composed in the pastoral mode – but they are themselves "fit", and, while still dependent on their aptitude for a rural skill, what defines them as "fit" is a loftier, intrinsic quality, recalling, perhaps, E. K.'s architectural praise of the works of our New Poet: "well grounded, finely framed, and strongly trussed up together".[46] And there still remains the interpretation of "fit" as the clause's verb, in which case, as mentioned, Colin's quill is itself renowned, and the matter of Arlo Hill has been fitted to pastoral hymns. Using the verb "fit" in order to refer to the act of treating a subject poetically introduces an additional insight into the creative process: if Arlo Hill has been "fitted" to Colin's hymns, this would suggest that the hymns themselves existed *a priori* to Arlo Hill's being treated as a subject for poetry; and since Arlo Hill itself is the subject, the matter, and, strictly speaking, the very words of the poem, there remains nothing to constitute Colin's hymns independently of their subject but music alone. While calling into question what the nature or quality of poetic "fitness" is, Spenser teasingly offers a hint at the compositional process. What is additionally convoluting about addressing the possibility of some absolute, pre-extant poetic "music" is the unbreakable connection between these particular hymns and "rural skill" – the pastoral mode (assuming this it was Spenser means, and not, rather, intending another self-deprecating slight to the lowly Shepherd). In the previous chapter, while analysing the October eclogue, we addressed the connection between mode and matter. Given the strict lines along which Spenser has generically divided his poetry, allocating to each particular muse her own subject-matter – and this he will demonstrate thoroughly in the following stanza – there is already a strong connection

[46] *Spenser*, p. 28.

between the various poetic presences Spenser animates over the course of his work and the material he is attempting to treat. Taken together, this passage and others like it – wherein, similarly, it is what is "fit" that is being addressed, whether that be a subject, a given mode, or the poet himself – point up a strong connection between mode and matter, and the poet's own identity as expressed through his voice's participating in that same music which has been played from poetry's earliest beginnings. If the act of poetic composition is itself an act of self-troping, then it is when the poet approaches a given mode, one which is possessed of its own, eternal music, and inextricably intertwined with the animating personalities of its past, who have added their voices to it, that he is most strongly called upon to assert what is natively his own voice.

Spenser's revision of Ovid in both this episode and over the whole of the Mutabilitie Cantos has been well-documented.[47] Typically, and conspicuously, absent from critical discussions of Book VII, however, is the name of Spenser's other Classical forebear, Vergil; and, correspondingly, criticism that has tended to focus on Spenser's career and his cultivation of his public image, including his relationship to Vergil, make scant mention of the Mutabilitie Cantos. Miller's essay[48] is a notable exception, which, while examining the arc of Spenser's career in view of the necessary "reciprocity" in the relationship between poet and patron (and public), takes into account both the Vergilian public image of the poet and the self-reflexive nature of his endeavors, noting: "A poet, then, is a maker of texts that in turn 'make' him"; and concluding with a discussion of Book VII, particularly the Canto "unperfite". What Miller diligently notes, above all, is Spenser's carefully situated internal references which serve to recall, in the Mutabilitie Cantos, earlier moments in his poetry – for example, the similarity between God as described in the *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie* and Dame Nature, in that both may only be perceived as through a glass darkly. Miller begins by quoting the opening proem to *The Faerie Queene*, interpreting its use of "language directly imitated from the archpoet's archpoet Virgil" as the poet's revelation of himself to his audience at large, and concludes his essay by saying of Spenser's conclusion to his own career, Canto viii of Book VII, "Now, however, it is at once

[47] "As has long been noted, Spenser's 'Two Cantos' are heavily dependent on Ovid. From the Pythagorean sermon in book 15 of the *Metamorphosis* comes the pageant of the elements of the earth, the story of nature's ceaseless change, and Nature's final statement of endless renewal", Anne D, Hall, "The Actaeon Myth and Allegorical Reading in Spenser's 'Two Cantos of Mutabilitie'", *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995), p. 562. See: Michael Holahan, "Iamque Opus Exegi: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability", *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976), R. N. Ringler, "The Faunus Episode", *Modern Philology* 63(1965).

[48] David L. Miller, "Spenser's Career, Spenser's Vocation", *ELH* 50 (1983), pp. 197-231.

more immediate, more openly personal in tone, and more openly eschatological, looking directly to last things without the mediation of Virgilian topoi", perceiving the poet as turning, finally, away from preoccupations with "historical" or worldly matters. For the present purpose, it is important to append further discussion of Spenser's internal referencing as an act of self-revision in full consideration of his use of verbal motifs and his keen sense for the memory of the ear: even as the poet achieves peace with both the Vergilian and Ovidian presences at the end of his career, it is primarily through the music of poetry that this all-encompassing reconciliation is possible.

While Mutabilitie walks the earth, bringing change and consequent decay to all creation, the poet is fully-engaged in his work of self-revision and self-troping, and while the Mutabilitie Cantos themselves indeed serve as a revision of Spenser's entire canon, it is in stanzas 36 and 37 of Canto vi and the ensuing digression that, for the poet himself, the matter comes to the fore. Colin's presence has been invoked, and the question of what is "fit", whether it is poetry in general or merely hymns suitable for a rural skill, has been planted in the listener's mind. This done, Spenser offers, in stanza 37, a revision of Piers' words to Cuddie, spoken in a by-gone October:

> And, were it not ill fitting for this file,
> To sing of hilles & woods, mongst warres & Knights,
> I would abate the sternenesse of my stile,
> Mongst these sterne stounds to mingle soft delights;
> And tell how *Arlo* through *Dianaes* spights
> (Beeing of old the best and fairest Hill
> That was in all this holy-Islands hights)
> Was made the most unpleasant, and most ill.
> Meane while, ô *Clio*, lend *Calliope* thy quill.

"Abandon then the base and viler clowne…Turn thee to those, that weld the awful crowne", Piers had said. But here, Spenser quite consciously turns back, echoing that great declamation on the career of the New Poet while recanting on it, and in very short order. While the subject of what is "fit" for poetry is usually given lofty consideration, the question posited by Spenser's use of the conditional, "were it not" is immediately answered by the digression that ensues, and seems, as a result, quite off-handed. Nevertheless, what is heralded is a return to

metapoetic introspection. We are offered, in justification, the subliminal, aural transfiguration of Piers' speech, and it is by this means that the question of what is "fit" in the context of epic is settled. "And sing of bloody Mars, of wars, of giusts" is recalled not only in the metrical positioning of "sing" and "wars", in line 2, but even to the extent of its caesura, while at the same time, though the subject-matter referred to by "warres & Knights" remains the same substance for Vergilian endeavor, it has nevertheless suffered a reduction in scope, the loftier aspects of Mars, a god, and "giusts", episodes of chivalric conduct, having been removed in order to accommodate in the space of a single line the opposing pair of metonymic articles, "hills & woods". Situated on either side of the line's caesura, the pairs, after the nature of their respective poetic authorities and the muses that preside over them, are starkly separated, the pastoral set conspicuous in having replaced some essential aspects of the epic genre. Even as he recalls to mind a moment of what was, in its original context, exultation through the singing of epic, Spenser transforms our perception of it, reducing Piers' impassioned words to a matter with which the narrator seems somewhat eager to dispense. Lines 3 and 4 make use of the same alliteration heard in Piers' third and final stanza, achieving the same effect, with one important extension: the final dissolution of the alliterative motif. The repetition on the hard consonants of "sternenesse", "stile", "sterne" (again), and "stounds", brings about a slackening of the metrical pace, while line 4, beginning with "Mongst" (also repeated from line 2), an inverted use of the alliteration, sets up a spondee on "sterne stounds". As Piers foretells: "when the stubborne stroke of stronger stounds / Has somewhat slackt the tenor of thy string…" then the poet may return to pastoral matters, and lead even Elisa around in a ring. The echoing of "stounds" as once again the metonymic representation for the entire body of subject matter makes the reference to October even more direct. It should be noted, too, that as a word meaning "conflict" or "battle",[49] "stound" occurs quite frequently in *The Faerie Queene*, almost invariably attached to an extremely dire adjective, whether "baleful", "bitter", "cruell", "wrathfull", or "wofull". Spenser's troping of these lines concludes with a transition so gentle as to almost be surprising: the transfiguration of "sterne stounds" into "soft delights". Fragmenting the hard consonant that has so far driven the metre of these two lines into such a word as "soft" is a clear and deliberate gesture of farewell, and the stanza from this point on is eased into a less urgent mode. This contrasts starkly with the Spenser's earlier handling of this particular alliterative motif; whereas

[49] *FQ*, p. 697, n. 37. 4.

in the October eclogue the slackening pace of the metre lost none of its vigour, here "soft" introduces a measure of calmness that instantly dispels impressions of doughty knights or the stamping hooves of cavalry. While "sterne" is the best choice for echoing October's "stronger", this is, of course, the last time a listener will hear the word "stound" uttered in the epic, and that we should then hear it dissolve, permanently, into "soft delights" is yet another example of Spenser's self-revision through the troping of a verbal motif.

These two stanzas include the reuse of end-rhymes, uniting them more tightly. Stanza 36's b-rhymes ("wights", "Rights", "hights", "sights") are heard again as the b-rhymes for stanza 37 ("Knights", "delights", "spights", "hights"), while the c-rhyme ("hill", "quill", "skill") is blended by the phrase "ill fitting" into "file",[50] carried forward via "hills" to "stile", and on to the end of the stanza ("Hill", "ill", "quill"). When one returns to examine stanza 36 in consideration of the suspended rhymes Spenser has used, another point of interest emerges: in terms of syntax and the beginning of the introduction of Arlo Hill, only the last five lines of stanza 36 are used, the first four being given over to setting up the listener for the introduction; these added to the nine lines of the following stanza, carefully bonded together by both mode and matter, comprise a fourteen-line stanza unto themselves – effectively a sonnet. The a-rhyme of stanza 36, which would have been aberrant in the sonnet's scheme, is neatly cut off, and what remains is ababbcacaababb. The octave concludes with the close of the c-rhyme on "file" and "stile", and the sestet, the "turn", commences with the slackening of the metrical pace and the dissolution of the hard alliteration used so memorably to evoke the epic mode. While the rhyme on "ights" serves to complement the device as a whole, the placement of "ill fitting" is made much more conspicuous by its participation therein.

By inserting a sonnet by way of an introduction to a change in mode and matter Spenser is going to great lengths to intimate, even on the level of form itself, the stark differences between the pastoral and the epic. The phrase "ill fitting", hovering over the sonnet through the strong assonance on "ill" that runs the whole length of its fourteen lines (perhaps even evoking "still" – a word totally absent from the Arlo Hill episode), comments on the transition with typical Spenserian irony. As with all instances of metapoetic commentary, and especially when

[50] "Thread (Lat. *filum*) or course of the story, referring to the 'records' of 2.4", *FQ*, p. 697, n. 37.1.

Colin is present, the poet is highly self-effacing, even while taunting us with his virtuosity and almost intimate awareness of how we interact with his verse. While the sonnet's middle four lines, comprising a development section in which, as illustrated above, justification for the transition is offered through the use of self-revision, trope and almost parody Spenser's Vergilian voice, they are less a gesture of hostile rejection than a prelude to the more explicit evocation with which the sonnet concludes. The recollection and transfiguration here enacted constitute a retroactively Ovidian visitation of the October eclogue in the same way that, macrocosmically, the Mutabilitie Cantos themselves are an Ovidian visitation of *The Faerie Queene*,[51] but here as there what actually takes place is a mere setting aside of one poetic identity, and the taking up of another. That Spenser accomplishes this with such grace bespeaks a sense of great relief. The sonnet, in supplying the listener with a brief introduction to the episode, also serves to recall the *Amoretti*, a work which, in its preoccupation with metapoetic introspection and troping of "fit", resonates strongly with the transition Spenser is trying to achieve. While the matter of love poetry may be unsuitable insofar as it bears on the story of Faunus, the inclusion of an internal sonnet nevertheless emphasizes the distinction Spenser is making between his work up to this point and what is to follow.

This transition re-summarizes itself in a single, elegant line, not only cashing in fully on the assonance built up over the whole "file", but also helping to explicate the disparate poetic voices with which we have been struggling: "Meane while, ô *Clio*, lend *Calliope* thy quill". Roche has convincingly argued, based on the hierarchy of the muses, that the poet is here asking Calliope ("holy Virgin chiefe of nine"[52]), the muse of epic to lend her quill to Clio, muse of history,[53] in order for him to continue his tale. This is further corroborated by the traditional associations of the muses themselves, of course; that Calliope should be connected to Vergil is clear enough. Ovid's link to Clio may be less immediately obvious, but the author of the *Metamorphoses* certainly takes upon himself the role of a chronicler. The existence of Ovid the

[51] Freeman concludes the introduction to an essay on Book VII by adding, "Since I read the Mutabilitie Cantos as Spenser's culminating analysis of *The Faerie Queene*, the larger poetic project is made vulnerable by these Cantos, which cast doubt on the poem's potential to mediate between man and transcendent values", Louise Gilbert Freeman, "Vision, Metamorphosis, and the Poetics of Allegory in the Mutabilitie Cantos", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 45 (2005), pp. 65-95 (quoting from p. 66).

[52] *FQ*, Book I, proem 2.1.

[53] Thomas Roche, "Spenser's Muse", *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance*, eds. George Logan and Gordon Teskey (Ithaca, 1989), pp. 162-88 (see p. 185).

historian has been pointed out by a number of scholars already, and Hardie even goes to the length of observing that it is along historical lines that Ovid and Vergil differ: "Ovid writes the long historical epic that Virgil self-consciously had abjured. To call this repository of mythological marvels a *historical* epic might seem to fly in the face of common sense. But the compact four-line prologue signals, among other things, that we are embarking on a historical *magnum opus*…Ovid's work will stretch from the beginning of the world to the poet's own time".[54]

While some commentators have noted that the invocation, such as it is, may be "deliberately ambiguous",[55] the lengths to which Spenser has seemingly gone already in order to mark this moment as a point of departure from the epic mode belie what is initially unclear. Considerations of Spenserian syntax problematize easy interpretation, but, as ever, the convoluted syntax here also enables a beautiful conjoining of sounds that have been building in significance over the course of the sonnet. The syllable "ill" undergoes varying repetition as well as resonating with the sonnet's c-rhyme ("file" and "stile"), and is used in "line 13" (line 8 of stanza 37) to punctuate a suddenly dark tone that emerges quite unexpectedly out of the promise of a movement away from any further "stounds": "Was made the most unpleasant, and most ill". Even the "Meane while" which precedes the invocation of Clio bespeaks a brightening of mood, harkening back to the c-rhyme, and prefiguring the troping of the "ill" syllable that the line undertakes. The variations that follow serve as a recapitulation of the assonance so far developed by the sonnet, even while the sense of the line itself describes, in a single gesture, how the voice of historical poetry will be borrowing the floor from that of epic.

In his reading of *Virgils Gnat* Miller essentially identifies the cultivation of a Vergilian persona in Spenser's career as a necessary step towards attaining legitimacy within the community:

> The poem begins with an informal address by Virgil, the putative author, to Augustus Caesar. He offers the poem as an interlude of no consequence in his

[54] Philip Hardie, "The Historian in Ovid. The Roman History of *Metamorphoses* 14-15", in D. S. Levene and D. P. Nelis (eds.), *Clio & the Poets, Augustan Poetry & the Traditions of Ancient Historiography* (Boston, 2002), p. 191.
[55] *FQ*, p. 697, n. 37.9.

> poetic career, but the progression to epic is repeatedly invoked as Virgil characterizes his present style, subject, and Muse in opposition to their epic counterparts. He asks his imperial patron to "come sliding soft, / And favor my beginnings graciously" because they are not yet epic verse (Gn. 37-39) – implying, like the Calender's prologue, that well-favored beginnings are a prerequisite to distinguished ends.[56]

After noting the "predicament on entering the theatre of poetic self-presentation" Miller concludes:

> …the sacramental order persists within the political as a vision of possibility, and the two compete for human energy in a sort of unending mutual erosion. The poet himself appears caught between a vision of poetry as attenuated ritual – an aid to and product of the meditative fixing of selves and signifiers – and his recurrent need to manipulate them, exploiting their variability where he would deny it.
>
> Because of this split poetics Spenser may sometimes look like the butt of his own satire.[57]

The upshot of this dichotomy is that it is the Vergilian/epic persona, the voice which called to Cuddie years earlier, and the voice which echoed the introduction to the *Aeneid* in the proem to Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, that becomes conflated with a poetics inherently governed by a preoccupation with self-presentation (lines 1-3):

> Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
> As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,
> Am now enforst a far unfitter taske…

By asking his listeners, "Who knowes not *Arlo Hill*?", Spenser is recalling to mind all of those moments in his career in which he had been able, quite consciously, to set aside the persona of the would-be poet Laureate. Note that even while donning Vergil's mantle by borrowing from him directly Spenser cannot help, at the mention of the "Shepheard", indulging in a little metapoetic commentary, in which yet again the idea of what is "fit" is brought to the fore (with characteristic self-deprecation); and, at the same time, "enforst" bespeaks a task undertaken with great reluctance. The difference, then, between Spenser's poetic personae is their capacity for introspection and self-analysis. In reality, while caught up, rather, in the

[56] Miller 1983, p. 210.
[57] Ibid, p. 213.

"theatre of self-presentation", performing his epic, Spenser is unable to engage honestly with himself, and it is his role and its relation to the greater community (especially, of course, Elizabeth I) that prescribes his identity. The retreat to Arlo Hill, as with other moments in which Colin Clout's voice is again heard, is a conscious putting-off of the role of court poet, and the adoption of another personality more conducive to the close examination of the self. Spenser's engagement with Ovid in the Mutabilitie Cantos is the conjuring of a protective presence – not protection from Vergil *per se*, but from the imposition of the role engendered by his position in history (and created, in very large part, by the poets themselves[58]).

Freeman interprets the Mutabilitie Cantos as a retroactive critique of allegory as vehicle for the psychagogic aims of poetry, saying:

> [It] is the work in Spenser's oeuvre in which his own anxieties about the accessibility of the divine (or even the ideal) through the instrument of poetic allegory come closest to the surface. Here the poet reflects, self-critically, on his own program of allegory in a more explicit way than he has elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*. In doing so, Spenser associates poetic invention with metamorphosis.[59]

In adopting this regard there can be no doubt that in composing the Mutabilitie Cantos as a revision of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser is abandoning the persona of the epic poet, which, over the course of his career, he had so carefully cultivated, and exchanging it for the relative freedom of the Ovidian voice, the "historical" approach. Spenser's "revision" of Ovid in the Faunus episode, then, is not undertaken in a spirit of anxiety – rather, it is undertaken with Ovid's help, precisely in an attempt to resolve his anxieties. Whether or not Spenser views himself to be at the "end" of his career during the time in which he composed these three Cantos, he has nevertheless addressed himself to the task of offering a revision of his previous work, and this cannot be done in the same mode as that work itself. Singing through Ovid, Spenser creates a forum for the analysis of his own work not afforded by any previous episode in his epic. Many other instances in *The Faerie Queene* take up, allegorically, the subject of literature, or art, and its complex

---

[58] "…the Muses' children are dispossessed heirs in the kingdom of modern letters, forced to appear as outsiders whose birth secures no special place. They have lost what was, in the idealized antiquity of Renaissance humanism, their birthright: Spenser calls it "coun tenaunce", meaning public estimation or repute (as well as, more specifically, the state one maintains at court)", ibid., p. 214.

[59] Freeman 2005, p. 65.

relationship to society and politics, but the description of the self-troping act of poetic composition itself through the allegories of mutability and metamorphosis can only be attempted under the aegis of Ovid. The whole of the Mutabilitie Cantos is occupied with this turn, as is demonstrated by both the deliberate revisions of subject-matter already treated in Spenser's earlier works and by the incessant, destabilizing verbal troping, but the scope of the allegory and its presentation as a further instalment in *The Faerie Queene* necessitate a grandiosity of style appropriate to epic – while Spenser's subject is the "history" or Mutability, the mode must remain "Vergilian". By including the "Ovidian-style" digression on Arlo Hill (so reminiscent of the *Metamorphoses*, in which transitions from one story to the next are accomplished by the phrase "There was a hill", or "There was a cave", and, true to the subject of "history", every digression supplies further background information), Spenser is narrowing our focus, briefly, in order to provide himself with a respite from the matter of titans and world-altering changes, and to adopt a more lyrical mode.

With Clio invoked and the intention to embark upon a pastoral digression announced, Spenser turns to the setting of the scene, and it is clear from the particular use of internal rhymes as well as the high level of assonance that ties the opening stanzas together that the poet is exerting all of his power to establish a more melodic tonality than what has so far been permitted him in the context of epic (VII.vi.39-41):

> But mongst them all, as fittest for her game,
> Either for chace of beasts with hound or boawe,
> Or for to shroude in shade from *Phoebus* flame,
> Or bathe in fountaines that doe freshly flowe,
> Or from high hilles, or from the dales belowe,
> She chose this *Arlo*; where shee did resort
> With all her Nymphes enranged on a rowe,
> With whom the woody Gods did oft consort:
> For, with the Nymphes, the Satyres love to play & sport.
>
> Amongst the which, there was a Nymph that hight
> *Molanna*; daughter of old father *Mole*,
> And sister unto *Mulla*, faire and bright:
> Unto whose bed false *Bregog* whylome stole,
> That Shepheard *Colin* dearely did condole,
> And made her lucklesse loves well knowne to be.
> But this *Molanna*, were she not so shole,

Were no lesse faire and beautifull then shee:
Yet as she is, a fairer flood may no man see.

For, first, she springs out of two marble Rocks,
On which, a grove of Oakes high mounted growes,
That as a girlond seemes to deck the locks
Of som faire Bride, brought forth with pompous showes
Out of her bowre, that many flowers strowes:
So, through the flowry Dales she tumbling downe,
Through many woods, and shady coverts flowes
(That on each side her silver channell crowne)
Till to the Plaine she come, whose Valleyes shee doth drowne.

Again, "Arlo" is, even for Diana's purposes, "fittest". The name is given pride of place in the stanza for partaking of the b-rhyme ("boawe", "flowe", "belowe", "rowe"), and being followed by a caesura which forces an enjambment into the following line. As a result, the ear somewhat misses the unprecedented "resort" on line 6, and is instead borne to "rowe", so that "Arlo" is effectively inserted into the stanza's rhyme scheme. The "O" vowel, in its various manifestations, unites these three stanzas to such a point that its continued resurgence effects a kind of accompaniment or "undersong". "Molanna" recalls it in stanza 40, line 2, and in line 5, in yet another reference to *Colin Clout*, the name of Spenser's "Shepheard" is included in the tonality that has been establish. True to the dictates of good taste, however, the device is not too heavily abused while it is being established. Both stanza 39 and 40 reserve the Alexandrine couplet for a contrasting rhyme, offering a temporary relief that allows Spenser to play further on the memory of the ear. Stanza 41, in its second line, recalls the dominant vowel with a show of complementary consonance: "a grove of Oakes high mounted grows", foreshadowing the motive's return by playing on the expectation entrained in the listener by his familiarity with the Spenserian stanza. Hopefully, by this point, it may be presumed that a word used in a stanza's initial b-rhyme will allow the listener to anticipate the recurrence of its sound. What Spenser accomplishes by using "Arlo" in an internal rhyme towards the close of the stanza, he achieves in reverse effect in stanzas 40 and 41, respectively using "Molanna" to anticipate "Mole", and "grove of Oakes" to anticipate "growes". It is the utterance of "Arlo" that sets up the device, but it is its recurrence after periods of contrast that intensifies it – so different, in delicacy of handling an attention to vowels rather than consonants, from the "rakehellye route of ragged rymers" reviled by E. K! "Hunting of the vowel", the essence of rhyme, brings to Spenser's

verse, when he chooses, a rich unity and internal resonance that can only be described as musical. The climax of the motive comes in lines 5-9 of stanza 41. Using "bowre" and "flowers", and in line 6 "flowry", a new permutation of the vowel is introduced, further enhanced by the enjambment from the previous line (as well as the line previous to that). "Downe", the first occurrence of the stanza's c-rhyme, is cunningly anticipated, and the two versions of the motive are united, as two rivers flowing together, on line 7, via the coincidence of consonance and assonance in "flowes". The close of the Alexandrine couplet, culminating this intricately developed motif, makes the description of Molanna one of the most lyrical passages in Spenser's canon, creating in the mind of the listener a profound emotional attachment to the character, even as we are made aware of her faults (being, as she is, "so shole"[60]).

In this continuing, lyrical strain, Spenser interrogates the role of the poet for the last time. Freeman notes, of Diana, that she:

> resonates with a contemporary Renaissance mythographic tradition and that the poet is playing on such models of transcendental vision, especially since Diana is a figure so heavily fraught with implied meaning. She is Chastity: she is Elizabeth: she is naked truth: she is beauty: she is imperial power: she is divinity: she is the object of sexual desire. Moreover, her presentation in the Faunus episode is also particularly overdetermined insofar as it is a culmination of earlier archetypal scenes in *The Faerie Queene* itself, scenes in which male viewers or voyeurs gaze at spectacular, iconic women.[61]

The character of Faunus has been interpreted in a number of ways,[62] as commentators have attempted to probe Spenser's allegory in the episode. Freeman, analysing Spenser's critique of allegory as a vehicle for poetic psychagogia, abandons a traditional allegorical reading of

---

[60] I.e. "shallow" (*FQ*, p. 698, n. 40.1), an interesting pun, considering she is both "Nymph" and river – "shole" also rhymes with "shoal", "A place where water is of little depth" ("shoal", *n*., *OED*), though in these days of unfixed orthography distinguishing a synonym from a homonym is not uncomplicated.

[61] Freeman 2005, p. 11.

[62] "Because of Faunus' obvious narrative function as a tempter, commentators have been quick to interpret him as a wicked Satan figure. But they have also interpreted him as a version of the boisterous and beautiful Mutability. According to a third interpretation, Faunus is a low-comic version of Venus/Nature; he is Pan, the god of all things, and his delight in the naked body of Diana is the delight of all creatures in the sheer joy of living. These three interpretations slide from the clearly negative to the comic-negative to the comic-positive. Faunus the tempter is the figure who brought all human misery to this earth; Faunus as Mutability is an irresponsible adolescent; but Faunus as the wood god whose seed must forever live is blessed nature", Hall 1995, p. 562 (on p. 567 Hall notes that this third interpretation is actually posited by E. K. in the April gloss to *The Shepheardes Calender*).

Faunus in favour of explicating the piece's overarching message. Her focus is on Spenser's revision of his means, and not of himself. But in addressing the failure of allegory, and, by extension, the failure of epiphanic vision, it is important also to attend to the poet's analysis of himself – the poet is the source of the poetry, after all. In consideration of this, and in agreement with Freeman's interpretation of the Faunus episode as an examination of the frank realities of a so-called epiphany (i.e. witnessing Diana bathing, naked), I interpret Faunus as a representative of Spenser himself.

It seems an obvious step. Though a too in-depth political analysis of Spenser's canon would be inappropriate here, Spenser's sense of himself is undeniably linked to his place in Elizabethan society, and especially the differences between that and what he felt should have been his place. If the Mutabilitie Cantos are intended as a revision of *The Faerie Queene*, a "demystification"[63] of the allegorized Elizabeth I, it would only be appropriate for this reversal of expectations to include the expectant spectator. A revision of an allegory, and more especially a revision of allegory itself as a means, must include the maker. The Faun's laugh, at bearing witness to the simple humanity beneath Diana's trappings, is the suggested alternative poetic response to the epiphanic experience. It is:

> A breach between Diana's informing idea and her realized image, between her alleged divinity and the graphic physicality of her visible manifestation. The stripped Diana becomes a figure for an allegory divested of its power to signify.[64]

In other words, it is precisely the opposite to the composition of an epic in honour of a monarch. That Faunus must his "owne conceit areed" puns on the idea of reciting a poem aloud, "areed" meaning here to "announce" or "make known", but being etymologically descended from "reading".[65] Also bearing traces of divination or soothsaying, giving the word appropriately vatic overtones, another definition, to advise or offer counsel, is credited to Spenser himself (among others), listed under the heading "Later archaistic senses, formed on 'read'". While, as Freeman points out, Sidney disapproves of laughter as an inappropriate response to "delight",[66]

---

[63] Harry Berger, "The Mutabilitie Cantos: Archaism and Evolution in Retrospect", *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics* (Berkeley, 1988). pp. 243-73 (see pp. 252-62, specifically).
[64] Freeman 2005, p. 12.
[65] "Aread", *v.*, *OED*.
[66] "As Philip Sidney argues, the two responses are incongruous: 'for delight we scarcely do but in things that have a

the complexity of Faunus' reaction here, as suggested by Spenser's choice of "areed", places it well above the merely vulgar. Even if the episode is a critique of allegory, it nevertheless functions as an allegory (conjured, it must be remembered, by the poet), and if laughter is an immediate, semi-voluntary (i.e. not entirely involuntary) response, instantly detected, its coupling "areed", a verb that encompasses both psychagogia and the use of letters, nevertheless elevates it – if were present, not to witness Diana's nakedness but rather to have the Faun's laughter "areed" to him, he would find the experience edifying. For Faunus to have sung would have made things too easy, but it should also be noted that, being a satyr, he would never be found without his pan pipes, an instrument which, of course was made of reeds – a fine pun suggested by "areed" and the ironically metonymic representation of the poetry of Colin Clout.

The ultimate fate of Faunus is particularly intriguing, viewed in this light. Actaeon's fate is given direct reference in stanza 45, as would only be appropriate. While there is some disagreement as to whether, in Spenser's version of the tale, the hapless hunter is actually transformed into a stag,[67] he is nevertheless killed. For those commentators who hold that Spenser is revising Ovid by denying the metamorphosis, there remains the problem of why Actaeon's own hounds devour him if he still looks like Actaeon. Since the Faunus episode makes no secret of being based on Ovid's tale, there seems less a reason to offer up a revision of the original than to make mention of it in its true, unaltered form (ironically), in order to point up the differences between how Actaeon was dealt with and how Faunus is dealt with. The explicit attention paid to Actaeon's story makes the variation on Diana's treatment of Faunus more interesting if we interpret Spenser as having left it alone. Unlike Actaeon, Faunus is neither torn apart – rather, he is shaken "Nigh all to peeces" (47.8) – nor is he metamorphosed – but rather "clad" in "Deares skin" (50.8); i.e. dressed up to resemble a deer. The sanctity of his purpose preserves him from (arguably) the worst of the fates the nymphs could devise: "The faun is evidently protected by an authority higher than Diana's own, which she and her nymphs must

---

conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature; laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. For example, we are ravished with delight to see a fair woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter: we laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight' ", Freeman 2005, p. 11, quoting: J. A. Van Dorsten (ed.), *Philip Sidney, A Defence of Poetry* (Oxford, 1966), p. 68.

[67] VII.vi.45.5 states that Actaeon is killed in "Hunters hew". *FQ*, p. 699, n. 45.5 interprets this merely as "in the shape of a deer to be hunted", but Freeman reads "Hunters hew" to mean "still in the guise of a hunter" – or, untransformed. See Freeman 2005, p. 5.

heed: 'Some would have gelt him, but that same would spill / The Wood-gods breed, which must for ever Hue' (VII.vi.50.3-4)".[68] That Faunus escapes *sparagmos* as well is Spenser's gift to him, for although the nymphs opted not to castrate him, they are by no means pleased that he is able to outrun them and escape what would certainly have been his death (52.4-53.1):

> But he more speedy, from them fled more fast
> Then any Deere: so sore him dread aghast.
> They after follow'd all with shrill out-cry,
> Shouting as they the heauens would have brast:
> That all the woods and dales where he did flie,
> Did ring againe, and loud reeccho to the skie.
>
> So they him follow'd till they weary were.

By avoiding *sparagmos* Faunus is also set apart from Orpheus. This distinction, even were it to constitute a form of martyrdom, may be surprising given Spenser's frequent use of Orpheus as poetry's great prophet. However, ideas of fame and reputation are closely-linked, naturally, with the poetics of self-presentation, something that has been quite consciously set aside for the telling of the Faunus episode. Rather, it is all Faunus can do to escape with his life, and into this he evidently pours all of his effort – he is quite eager to survive, and, instead of martyrdom, he chooses, in true Ovidian style, exile. Like Spenser himself, he takes up his permanent abode near post-lapsarian Arlo Hill, far from Diana's power since being abandoned.

In the following Canto, when Spenser asks that his "greater Muse" his "weaker wit inspire./ Fit for this turne", he is in an intensely self-conscious state. Exhibiting customary reluctance to take up the epic mode once more, he has, in the first stanza, even said of his own spirit that its wings are "unfit" for such flights. It should be noted that it is only when the epic mode is being considered that Spenser makes use of the opposite of "fit" to describe his powers. Nevertheless, with the "greater Muse" (presumably Calliope again[69]) invoked, the poet's energies are directed back from "woods and pleasing forrests", to sing "in bigger noates" this "turne". With the renewal of this song, his last, Spenser will return to the troping of language that he had been pursuing – completely left off during the Faunus episode – and, in the context of a

[68] Freeman 2005, p. 15.
[69] But see Roche 1989, p. 186.

revisitation of his canon, set the scene atop Arlo Hill for the delivery of testimony of Mutability and Nature's verdict.

"Change" is used far more than "still" in the course of the Mutabilitie Cantos, a full thirty-eight times if one counts all of its various functions, whether as a name for Mutabilitie herself, or as a verb, noun, adjective, or in its derivative "exchange" (as above, in vi.6.4). In Nature's final speech, in stanza 58, "change" is used five times. The last occurrence of "still" is in stanza 57, and, meanwhile, Spenser's troping of "turn" comes full circle in stanza 56, the final paragraph of Mutabilitie's argument. The closing stanzas of Canto vii draw together all of the verbal motifs Spenser has been developing over the course of this final instalment in his epic, to the effect that Nature's decree on the fate of existence impacts upon the listener much more strongly than a strict, objective interpretation of her words could allow. Indeed, some of what she has to say is absolved of ambiguities it would otherwise possess, as a result of Spenser's troping. The paradox of entropy is pointed up first, in stanza 56:

> Then since within this wide great Universe
> Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
> But all things tost and turned by transverse:
> What then should let, but I aloft should reare
> My Trophee, and from all, the triumph beare?
> Now judge then (O thou greatest goddesse trew!)
> According as thy selfe doest see and heare,
> And unto me addoom that is my dew;
> That is the rule of all, all being rul'd by you.

"Universe" when broken down essentially means "a single turn". The word's first appearance in Latin is in the *De rerum natura* of Lucretius, intended as "everything turning as one",[70] and evokes the cosmology of the celestial spheres, complete with their divine harmony. At its very bottom, the universe is but a single, harmonized thing, perhaps rotating endlessly, but always returning to its point of origin. And what are we to make of Spenser's sensitivity to double-entendre? "Verse", though conspicuously absent from the Mutabilitie Cantos, appears so frequently in the self-conscious metaliterary discussions in *The Shepheardes Calender*, represented as the great means by which the poet achieves his fame, that those whose experience

[70] Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1879), pp. 1933, and 1977–1978.

runs the gamut of Spenser's work are absorbed into the contemplation of what verse is, and how it interacts with society and with the soul.

Additionally, as earlier with the use of "turn" and "change" in conjunction, the occurrence of both "turned" and "transverse" forces the making of a distinction between the two words, when if used independently of one another they could be interchangeable. *OED* includes Spenser's use of "transverse" as the only example of its kind: "[L. *per transversum*], in a transverse position, crosswise; athwart. *Obs. rare*".[71] Taken from the Latin *transversus*, meaning "lying across, moving across",[72] we could take it to mean "contrary motion", or "by turning against the direction of the universe". Mutabilitie has already contradicted herself more than once on a more literal level – particularly by choosing selectively to judge whether a thing is mutable either by its appearance or through an interrogation of the motions of its lifecycle – but her unfortunate use of "Universe" to describe the whole of creation puts her actual conception of reality into conflict with her view of how things ought to function. Spenser rhymes "verse" with "verse" in order to draw our attention to the prefixes that modify the root, and "uni", describing a world turning as one, foretells Nature's verdict about the ultimate immutability of things, while simultaneously hinting that all existence, history, and life, are but "one poem" – in either case, inexorable motion forward, towards an eventual "return". "Transverse" then comes to signify the act of "turning against" the natural course of the universe, but the concept is subsumed under the all-encompassing notion of "a single turn" owing to the sensitivity with which the listener has been endowed through Spenser's careful attention to how words resonate with each other.

Mutabilitie's contradictory interpretation of existence is further problematized by her use of the word "Trophee" to signify her deserved authority. Used in Latin as *tropaeum*, meaning "trophy; monument, victory", [73] it occurs frequently in Ovid's works, particularly *Heroides*, and in Vergil's – including a full five times in Book XI of *the Aeneid*. While the *OED* notes in its definition that a trophy is a physical thing, erected to commemorate a victory, the word is still inherited from *τρόποϛ*, and in essence still means "a turning".[74] Spenser again provides the first

[71] "Transverse", *a*., 3, B, 2, *OED*.
[72] "Transversus", *a*., *The Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary*.
[73] "Tropaeum", *nt*., *The Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary.*
[74] "Trophy", *n*., *OED*.

listed usage of the word in English, in a particular sense: "Anything serving as a token or evidence of victory, valour, power, skill, etc.; a monument, memorial"; for which *Visions of Bellay* is quoted: "She raisde a Trophee over all the worlde".[75] The manner in which Mutabilitie intends her usage of "Trophee" is identical, only problematized by the word's resonance with ideas of turning: while a trophy would be the fit object to memorialize Mutabilitie's ascension to supreme authority over creation ("That is the rule of all"), we know well that the philosophy of perpetual decay to which she subscribes is one that can only include her in its foretold ultimate unravelling of the universe. The idea of a trophy, of something physical and permanent, erected in order to preserve the memory of an event – a turning – is set against the absolute impermanence of all material existence.

Meanwhile the repetition on "still", though one final utterance is withheld for Nature, culminates in stanza 55, bearing heavily on the motions of the heavens (55.5-6):

> Onely the starrie skie doth still remaine:
> Yet do the Starres and Signes therein still moue.

Reinforced by the strong consonance on "starrie/Starres" the recurrence of "still", now, impacts heavily upon the ear even while, being used in conjunction with the loftiest conceit of permanence, the heavens, it points up the paradox of mutability and perpetual motion. The stars follow the "sundry motions of [the] Spheres" – in much the same way as the months and the seasons, the movements of the stars are circular, utterly cyclical in nature. While Nature herself will soon point this out, it is important that Spenser uses the occasion of Mutabilitie's last use of the word "still" to posit the idea. The months and seasons, though they form an endlessly repeated cycle, yet are rather more grey in their permanence, since one of Mutabilitie's arguments has been that birth, death, and rebirth, fall under her dominion, especially in consideration of the transformations mortal dust undergoes when it is absorbed by the earth and then redistributed as food or new creatures. The Spheres, however, are far different, representing

[75] While *OED* cites from *Visions of Bellay* XI, in various editions of Spenser's work, depending on how the additional sonnets are worked in, XI will appear as XV, as is the case in the first edition of *Complaints* – see: Edmund Spenser, *Complaints Containing sundrie small poemes of the worlds vanitie. Whereof the next page maketh mention* (London, 1591). It should also be noted that the *OED*'s reference is a paraphrasing of two lines from the sonnet (7-8): "She by a rivers bancke that swift down slidd,/ Over all the world did raise a Trophee hie".

as they do the universal harmony and their precise repetition of the patterns in which they move. No subject could be better described by Spenser's richly-cultivated phrase, "still moue". If it were at this point necessary, this contradiction alone would be sufficient to undermine her case, but what has truly been accomplished by this repeated troping is the provocation of the listener to the contemplation of the still moving heavens. Mutabilitie's case has been built alongside the development of these verbal motifs precisely so that the words themselves may come to embody the philosophical ideas they were selected to complement. While stirred to the pondering of mutability, of worldly impermanence and the vanity of trophies, the listener is finally led, via the music of poetry, to the contemplation of "stillness".

Nature's final judgment and the outcome of Mutabilitie's case are foreshadowed by the powers of the poet. The culmination of the Cantos' verbal motifs in the stillness of the heavens and the use of the term "Universe" draw together to form a commentary on the ephemeral nature of worldly pursuits, particularly power and fame, even before Mutabilitie has finished speaking. Nature's pronouncement is a short but complex rendition of the Cantos' argument which, without the elucidating aid of Spenser's motifs, would be a far more difficult matter for interpretation. As matters stand, Spenser has situated the malleability of language – not changeable or destabilizing, but rather cumulative, evolving alongside the awareness of the listener – and the poet himself as maker, as *vates*, between veiled Nature and naked Diana, and the community. The functionability of allegory, and by extension those things that once enjoyed its power to exalt them, has undergone demystification, but poetry, the union of *Logos* with the harmony of the spheres, remains, its purpose renewed for its having been employed in the interrogation of the poetics of self-presentation. Faunus' abstention from fame by choosing exile over martyrdom, his decision to share his bed with Molanna and rest, forever, in the form of a river, anticipate Spenser's own closing prayer in the Canto "unperfite", in much the same way that the closing of the "still" motif has elevated the listener to the consideration of loftier matters. By this means Spenser has recreated the poet at the end of his career, closing one door, and opening another. Even as he prays to be allowed to rest from the turnings of his verse, he suggests the possibility of new and greater vistas for poetic contemplation (VII.viii.1.6-2.9):

> Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
> And love of things so vaine to cast away;

Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short *Time* shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
Of that same time when no more *Change* shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie*:
For, all that moveth, doth in *Change* delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
O thou great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.

IV

SETTING THE STAGE: MILTON, MUSIC, AND TEXT IN THE FIRST AND SECOND PRACTICES

In the previous chapters we looked at the degree to which Spenser's poetic identity and his conception of his own works was informed by his interpretation of the role music had to play in society and the inner workings of the soul. His appropriation of the identity of the poet-as-singer exerted considerable influence on the manner in which he constructed his poetry, made use of certain devices in order to achieve particular effects, and, on the whole, determined in his imagination the position of the poet in the world around him. While specific information about Spenser's life is scant, therefore making it difficult to ascertain whether particular pieces of music or the work of certain composers formed a part of Spenser's conception of music, considerable insight is nevertheless possible via the extrapolation of a philosophy of music from texts which Spenser is either known, or at least can reasonably be assumed, to have read. The contrastingly well-documented nature of Milton's life, however, provides a host new of grounds on which to explore the degree to which music can play a role in a poet's conception and construction of his work.

Milton's own poetry, from the earliest to the latest, demonstrates an intimate knowledge of, and affinity for, music, both abstract and practical – that is, in Boethian terms, a knowledge of both *musica mundana* and *musica instrumentalis* (the middle portion of this triad, *musica humana*, being strongly implied), also delineated as *musica speculativa* and *musica practica*. While concrete evidence of what was taught at St. Paul's School in Milton's time has been lost,[1] the reputations and treatises of its masters leading up to the period when Milton attended suggest that music had attached to it a good deal of importance: Richard Mulcaster, who was High Master of St. Paul's from 1596 to 1608, makes frequent reference to music in both his *Elementarie* and his *Positions*, for its virtues in education and mental, spiritual, and bodily health; and from Mulcaster's successor, Alexander Gil, who was Head Master while Milton was

[1] "The school and all its records, together with the cathedral and much of the City, perished in the Great Fire of 1666", Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford, 2008), p. 19.

attending,[2] we have the *Logonomia Anglica* (1619),[3] a text dealing with rhetoric, grammar, and prosody, in English, which quotes heavily from Spenser's poems in order to provide examples (referring to him as "our Homer"). In addition, it is well understood that the doctrine of Boethius' quadrivium still had its role to play in Milton's later education, at Cambridge.[4] Alexander Gil's *Sacred Philosophy* (1635), though published long after Milton left St. Paul's, also stressed the importance of studying Boethius alongside Aristotle.[5]

Of Education, a pamphlet published in 1644, offers significant insight regarding Milton's own thoughts on music's specific place in the fashioning of youth. He suggests for the students that

> The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travail'd spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of musick heard, or learnt; either while the skilfull *Organist* plies his grave and fancied descant, in lofty fugues, or the whole Symphony with artfull and unimaginable touches adorn and grace well studied cords of some choise composer; some times the Lute, or soft organ stop waiting on elegant voices either to Religious, martiall, or civil ditties; which if wise men & prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshnesse and distemper'd passions. The like also would not be unexpedient after meat to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send their minds backe to study in good tune and satisfaction.[6]

This passage is distinctive in its prescriptions for a number of reasons. Though this is perhaps obvious, it should be observed that the music to which Milton here refers is entirely of

---

[2] "No extant record includes the dates of his attendance at St. Paul's; he must have left near the end of 1624, but he may have entered the school any time between 1615 and 1621. The evidence is contradictory", Campbell and Corns 2008, p. 19.

[3] *Logonomia Anglica Qua gentis sermo facilius addiscitur. Conscripta ab Alexandro Gil Paulinae Scholae magistro primario*, Alexander Gil (London, 1619); a second edition, with considerable corrections, was published in 1621: "The second edition, though less handsome than the first, has corrected many typographical errors which foul the first, and corrects many of its own errors with a page of Errata", Donald Lemen Clark, "Milton's Schoolmasters: Alexender Gil and His Son Alexander, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 9 (1946), p. 125.

[4] "As for Boethius' influence in the Renaissance, it is safe to say that enthusiasm for the *Consolation* and its teachings, and the influence of Boethius' Pythagoreanism as put forth in the *quadrivium*, did not wane in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries", Barbara Hart Wyman, "Boethian Influence and Imagery in the Poetry of George Herbert", *Studies in Philology* 97 (2000), p. 65. The persistence of Boethius' importance even into the Renaissance is well documented by Margaret Gibson (ed.), *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence* (Oxford, 1981).

[5] See Harris France Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, 2 vols. (Urbana, 1956), v. 1, pp. 226-7.

[6] John Milton, *Of Education* (1644), *Milton*, p. 985.

the *instrumentalis* type, the "divine harmonies of musick *heard*, or learnt", as opposed to abstracted mathematical study. The pamphlet is concerned with "the end [i.e.: goal] of learning", and Milton describes the process by which this is achieved in decidedly loaded terms. A notorious logomancer, Milton is credited by Gavin Alexander with over six hundred original coinages.[7] For someone who employed language in so deliberately conscientious a manner that he is responsible for more neologisms than any other English poet, it can absolutely be depended upon that certain words appearing in *Of Education* do so with the utmost consideration paid to their broader overtones.[8]

The entire section in which this explicit discussion of music appears, "*Their Exercise*", is introduced as being a distinct improvement upon the educational models described by Milton's classical predecessors; the tract having begun "likest to those ancient and famous schools of *Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle*", "it shall exceed them, and supply a defect". This is with reference to his intention that youths receive as much training in matters of war as in those peace, but what makes the section intriguing for the present purpose is the implication that this period of exercise and weapons training is to take place alongside the students' progress through the prescribed intellectual curriculum. Up to this point the programme has been described sequentially, one thing after another, but this added dimension is implied as being simultaneous, or concurrent to the entire progression. With this in mind, consideration of the position that music is given becomes all the more important. Not only does it form a significant portion of the students' day (following after every period of daily exercise and also "after meat" – i.e. twice a day), but, far from being a time for repose, it is instead described in highly constructive terms, and to have been such from the very beginning of the pupils' studies. The suggestion that the music be either "heard, or learnt" indicates that Milton envisages the students' participation to be quite active. Rather than a merely passive experience in which the listener quietly rests with music in the background, these sessions are spent "recreating and composing their travail'd

[7] Gavin Alexander, "Why Milton Matters", *John Milton, 400th Anniversary Celebration* (2008), at http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400/matters.htm#language ; consulted on 18 January 2011 at 14:20.

[8] Indeed, this tract alone contains a number of original usages, including "babblement", "seminary", "unsweat", "Kicshoe", and a distinctive employment of "couched", meaning "at the ready" (*Milton*, p. 984). Flannagan observes "he is, throughout the pamphlet, pushing the limits of meaning in most of the nouns he uses", *Milton*, p. 981, n. 7.

spirits" – referring as much to their deeper spiritual being as to their awareness of physical fatigue.

The distinction between passive forms of musical experience and active forms, then, is apparently an important one. It suggests that the re-atunement of the soul can only truly take place if the listener is labouring in conscious pursuit thereof. This is, of course, somewhat different from the spell-binding power of Orpheus's music, with its ability to enslave anyone able to (clearly) hear it, but serves as an elucidating point with regards to Milton's thoughts about poetry and song. He wants his listeners to engage voluntarily with the experience. While retaining the spirit, or the philosophical principles behind music, Milton is clearly breaking away from the more mystical elements that characterize the mediaeval attitude towards it. And in more ways than one: though careful to specify that the music be of high quality – the organist is "skilfull", the symphonic music comprises "well studied cords of some choise composer" – Milton places none of the modal bans on music instituted in Plato's *Republic*, even when obliquely invoking his authority ("which if wise men & prophets be not extreamly out"). Music, then, in this imagination of the ideal school for the shaping of youth, forms an integral part of the daily exercise, in which "dispositions and manners" are smoothed, and "rustic harshnesse and distemper'd passions" are gently dispelled, so as to "send their minds backe to study in good tune and satisfaction" – "in good tune" making for a decidedly apt pun – but contains none of the allegedly harmful elements (of which, according to Plato, there were many) that are liable to corrupt or infect the unwary.

Earlier in the tract Milton employs a reference to the Orpheus myth merely as a rhetorical device: "I will point ye out the right path of a virtuous and noble Education... so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sound on every side, that the harp of *Orpheus* was not more charming".[9] But couched in this hyperbolic comparison is a deeper reference, to the role of Orpheus in his original myth. The sound of his harp is not being evoked merely for its beauty, but for its fame in having played an accompanying role in elevating man from the status of brute in his earliest beginnings. This serves as an indirect comparison between the power of Orpheus' primordial music, and the process of true "education" – while, as ever, Milton is at ease boasting of the

[9] Ibid., p. 981.

superiority of his method, whatever the matter at hand, over that of the Aonian Mount, there is nevertheless a pointed nod in its direction. What had originally been the domain of Orpheus, the ennoblement of man, has been re-appropriated to education as a whole, and the explicit goal has been markedly transformed. The preoccupation is no longer with man's former brutishness, but rather his present brutishness, and "education" is directed towards the re-atunement of the mind to its prelapsarian state:

> to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.

This conflation of ideas is intriguing. Far from, as in the Orphic myth, "adding" something to the state of man, improving him, Milton's view of education is rather of a process of reacquiring something lost long ago. While the goals are essentially the same, God's inclusion as the ultimate object of attainment alters the hierarchy of elements involved in the process; music has its place as part of the students' exercise regime: it is considered a physical activity. That Milton insists on its inclusion so that it might "send their minds backe in good tune" demonstrates his belief in its power to increase mental receptivity. However, in much the same way that the harp is subservient to the player, and to the song, so music in the role laid out for it here is situated below the Logos itself. Its function is to smooth the coarser dispositions of the students for their return to study, so that their minds are duly prepared to be able to absorb the higher lessons prescribed in Milton's curriculum. "Language is but the Instrument convaying to us things usefull to be known"; without proper spiritual guidance and intellectual tempering, the process is merely so much wasted effort, and can lead to the vain preoccupation with the unravelling of words alone, irrespective of their greater sense or worth. Though more must be said of this later, the Son's words to Satan in Book 4 of *Paradise Regain'd* make it clear that Milton carried this conviction to the end of his life:

> However many books
> Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
> Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
> A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
> (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)
> Uncertain and unsettl'd still remains,

Deep verst in books and shallow in himself.[10]

It follows that, being the wedding of language and music, poetry should come last of all in the programme being outlined – which it does, if one considers the chronological progression of the programme rather than the particular order in which its elements are described. "It is only after the acquisition of such knowledge that history, heroic poetry, and tragedy can be understood".[11] Rajan notes that in Prolusion VII Milton identifies the aim of learning to be to become a prophet, possessing power even over the elements,[12] suggestive of the powers of the poet, or *vates*. What is crucial is the situating of poetry in relation to rhetoric, and, indeed, all other forms of literacy covered in the steps of one's education: "To which Poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less suttle and fine, but more simple, sensuous and passionate... From hence and not till now will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be fraught with universall insight into things".[13]

Rajan has addressed the not unchallenging task of unravelling Milton's meaning here: "Poetry is subsequent to rhetoric in the educational scheme. It is precedent in its value, its intrinsic dignity". As Rajan discusses, there is an apparent contradiction inherent in the elevation of poetry above rhetoric on account of its sensuous and passionate nature. The suggested resolution to this paradox is the Renaissance love for action – quite satisfactory, especially in consideration of Milton's invective against "cloistered virtue" in *Areopagitica* – but this is to disregard the ineluctable necessity of awareness of the body that finds its way into much of Milton's thinking, the unabashed prelapsarian celebration of love-making in *Paradise Lost* being the most obvious example. Indeed, "sensuous" is another Miltonic neologism (something which Rajan overlooks), first coined in *Of Reformation* (1641), according to the *OED*, "to avoid certain associations of the existing word *sensual*".[14] Those "certain associations" pertain to the lascivious delights available to the senses, having accrued to the word for its having frequently

[10] *Paradise Regain'd* (1671), IV.321-7, *Milton*, p. 773.
[11] Balachandra Rajan., "Simple, Sensuous and Passionate", *Review of English Studies* 21 (1945), p. 292.
[12] In which, too, is a mention of how, hating ignorance and preferring wisdom, "even the trees, bushes, and whole woods once tore up their roots and hurried to hear the skillful strains of Orpheus". This is yet another comparison between the Orphic myth and the end of learning. See: Prolusion VII, *Milton*, p. 872.
[13] *Milton*, p. 984.
[14] "Sensuous", *adj.*, *OED*.

been used pejoratively, associations of which Milton is acutely conscious, evoking them specifically in *A Maske* in 1634:

> And they, so perfect in their misery,
> Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
> But boast themselves more comely then before
> And all their friends, and native home forget
> To roule with pleasure in sensual stie.[15]

Clearly it is important to avoid any connection with pleasures available solely to those who have been forcefully robbed of their humanity and reduced to the status of mere animals. In other words, Milton is employing this word "sensuous" with the specific intention that it purely describe something "derived from the senses" or that can only be experienced with the aid of the senses. What this would imply is that one of the very characteristics of poetry that elevates it above the study of rhetoric or logic is that it must be heard in order to be experienced – it is more than a purely intellectual experience.

Even taking this into account and setting it alongside Milton's placement of music in the programme, it is not, at this point, quite safe to infer the kind of equality (or interchangeability) between poetry and song that animates Spenser's work. Rather, Milton's thoughts on the matter are very specific. The Orphic myth, while evidently very much on his mind, is treated more as a rhetorical device than anything else. While serving to illuminate some ideas and emphasize certain points, it is not situated at the forefront in the way that, for example, it was in E. K.'s gloss. However, the necessity of passing through the senses in order to reach the soul remains, and music very pointedly retains its powers to soothe the savage breast, forming an integral part of Milton's ideal curriculum. At the same time, the study of poetry, the crown of the programme, is the final step in elevating a pupil to the state in his or her intellectual development whereat able writing and composing is finally possible – and note, too, that while the act of "composing" can very easily take the place of "writing" of just about any kind, both acts are listed by Milton, limiting the number of connotations "composing" can have. That active study of music should be key to the entire curriculum and poetry should come last of all must be significant. Armed with "universall insight into things", it is only at this point that the student can begin to emulate the

[15] *A Maske*, lines 73-7, *Milton*, p. 126-7.

way of God. As Rajan nicely summarizes, "To say in this context that poetry is 'more simple, sensuous and passionate' means that its transforming intelligence permeates even the frontiers of reality, that the security of a perfected understanding orders the scope and grandeur of its utterance. The result... is to discover virtues where Plato found defects".[16]

But these are later formulations, and in order for them to be comprehensively elucidating it is necessary to situate them in the greater context of Milton's own musical life, the beginning of which is supplied by his father, John Milton (1562-1647). Ernest Brennecke's book, *John Milton the Elder and His Music* (1938), paints an intimate portrait of an Elizabethan scrivener-and-composer whose own, personal claim to fame was usurped (though unbegrudgedly) by that of his namesake.[17] His having been roughly contemporaneous with some of England's better-known composers, among whom were William Byrd (1539/40-1623) and John Bull (1562/3-1628), cannot help matters in this regard, but is significant insofar as Milton the younger is concerned, and what has seemingly yet to be attempted is the extrapolation of a philosophical attitude towards music, based on these and other, equally significant factors, which informs the younger Milton's poetry, both early and later. These were exciting times in the development of music, and the respective positions of the two John Miltons in this period are revelatory.

From John Milton the elder we have a total of twenty known compositions. *Aubrey's Brief Lives* notes that he composed "a Song of fourscore parts, for the Lantgrave of Hess", in 1647 (the year he died), for which he was rewarded "a medal of Gold",[18] while Edward Phillips wrote in 1694: "he sometimes found vacant hours to the Study (which he made his recreation) of the Noble Science of Musick...[H]e Composed an *In Nomine* of Forty Parts: for which he was rewarded with a Gold Medal and Chain by a *Polish* Prince".[19] While Phillips avers that he had this from "our Author himself", both his and Aubrey's claims should be, and are, regarded with a great deal of scepticism. Even so, he was a sufficiently well-regarded composer to make contributions to a number of collections, particularly William Leighton's *The Teares or*

[16] Rajan (1945), p. 295.
[17] "Many students of poetry, to be sure, honor him for his sheer luck with his son and namesake… But his extended musical works, of which a fair number survive, have been widely disregarded", Ernest Brennecke, *John Milton the Elder and His Music* (New York, 1938), p. ix. Brennecke's work should be taken with a grain of salt, however (see below).
[18] Quoted from *Milton*, p. 4.
[19] Ibid., p. 19.

Lamentacions of a Sorrowfull Soule (1614), which sets his work alongside that of John Dowland and William Byrd. To Thomas Ravenscroft's *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1621) he contributed harmonizations of the Norwich and York psalm tunes, applied to Psalms 5, 55, and 102, and 27, 66, and 138, respectively, as well as "A Prayer to the Holy Ghost", also set to the York tune. The collection also contains harmonizations by Thomas Tallis, and Dowland. Intriguingly, Ravenscroft, in his preface to the publication, after discussing the impossibility of recreating the original Hebrew melodies, these being "too farre removed from our understanding", ventures the suggestion that, whatever they were, "there is no question but they were *concordant* and *harmonious*, which could not be, had they not beene divided in parts".[20]

"How did the music of the elder Milton affect his son?" The Campbell/Corns account of Milton's childhood poses the question after a brief synopsis of the senior Milton's musical career. Milton the poet is recorded to have practiced music under his father from the outset, and, in addition to being a fine part-singer, to have played the organ and bass viol. While none of Milton senior's keyboard music survives (assuming he wrote any), the wholly domestic bent of his compositions complements his son's reputed musical abilities nicely, and it is pleasant to picture the Miltons of Bread Street standing in a circle around a part book,[21] singing together Milton senior's madrigals, or those of other composers. As is to be expected, all of the elder Milton's compositions are consistent with the musical trends dominant in England at the time: his style is in the same contrapuntal vein of his contemporaries, with nothing revolutionary about it. What is characteristic about the music here referred to as the *prima pratica* is its highly contrapuntal, polyphonic style, in which multiple voices, usually ranging from four to six parts, intricately interweave in order to create dense harmonic progressions, leaving little room for the exploration of any sense of the text. Each voice handles the same phrases simultaneously, but will enter at different points in the music, and frequently employ lengthy melismata,[22] uniting only with the utterance of the final syllable on a cadence. A prime example can be found in Tallis' *Spem in alium*, a motet written for forty parts (eight choirs of five voices each), which is

[20] Both quotes from: Thomas Ravenscroft, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (London, 1621), pp. i and iii, respectively.
[21] It was common for vocal music published for domestic use to be printed with each part polarized to a side, so that a group could read from a single sheet by standing in a circle, rather than crowding around a single page. See Campbell 2008, p. 11 for a facsimile example from Leighton's *Tears or Lamentacions*.
[22] "A group of more than five or six notes sung to a single syllable", Richard L. Crocker, "Melisma", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18332. Consulted on 10 January 2011.

considered the pinnacle of Renaissance polyphonic composition – to be sure, an overwhelmingly beautiful piece, but definitively "sensual", in consideration of its complete obfuscation of the meaning of the text. The particulars of this practice could take many different forms, but it is with the apparent disregard for the meaning of the words that innovators of the time would take greatest exception. "The passionate idiom of the *seconda practica* had advocates in England, and some English composers were writing light-hearted pieces, but the music of Milton... drew on a more conservative tradition and articulated the traditional values of the *prima practica* in its seriousness, abstraction, deployment of counterpoint, and even choice of instrument".[23]

The employment of these particular terms, *prima* and *seconda pratica*, in this context is significant, and in order to elucidate their relevance with regards to the Miltons, it is necessary to place them in the context in which they were initially formulated – early seventeenth century Italy. Composers and theorists of this period, and slightly earlier, were occupied with a near-total transformation of music as it had existed up to that point. While considerable leaps forward had already been made in the mid-sixteenth century, the task of finally liberating music from the constraints of Mediaeval polyphony fell to the succeeding generation, particularly the members of what is remembered as the Florentine Camerata and those whom they influenced. It being the case that all of these men were a part of the same musical humanist tradition their appeals to authority were necessarily to the same texts – ideologically their aims were little different. What ended up being of defining importance was the particular relationship between text and music, and the implications thereof, culminating in the invention of opera. It was at just the time that this new movement was taking hold in Italy that Milton was born, and that his father was an active composer in England (the range of publication dates for his works is from 1601 to 1621). While there will have been no impact on Milton's childhood education as a result of this synchronicity, these disparate circumstances do eventually converge during and leading up to his trip to Italy in 1638-9, with significant poetic ramifications.

Thus far, the possibility of a meaningful connection between Milton and early Italian opera has not been sufficiently explored. Commentary[24] that has not registered indifference has

[23] Campbell 2008, p. 10.

[24] *The Riverside Milton* contains two minor errors on p. 97 (possibly the result of a single typographical oversight): that Monteverdi's *l'Orfeo* was first performed in 1608 (it was actually 1607) and that it contained the aria

been polarized along lines of naïveté and stony, outright rejection. Mary Elizabeth Basile's *The Music of* A Maske (1993) expresses the firm conviction that not only was Henry Lawes, Milton's composer for *A Maske*, exposed to opera very early on, but that John Milton the elder, too, had "associations with English composers, such as Giovanni Coperario, who were imitating Italianate forms", based on which "we know that Milton himself [i.e.: the son] was familiar with current Italian music such as 'dramma per musica' and the new opera".[25] On the other side, John Harper's *"One equal music": the Music of Milton's Youth* (1997), constitutes an attempt to dispel any belief in the possibility that Milton was ever exposed, or if he was, ever paid any attention, to music of the *seconda pratica* at all, and decries Basile, among others, as having "implied knowledge, experience and influences of music of the *seconda practica* which cannot be supported by biographical information or evidence from surviving musical sources".[26] Harper does come off as a bit of a wet blanket, castigating the slightest flicker of imagination – though in spite of this he goes so far as to quote Stephen Gosson's comments on music in *the Schoole of Abuse*, seemingly preferring to overlook the fact that Gosson's opinion of poets was no more favourable[27] – but he nevertheless draws attention to the amount of glossing-over and assumption that has been employed in establishing a connection between Milton and opera thus far. In actuality a careful laying-out of the details suggests very reasonable grounds on which to assume that, at least after a certain point in his life, Milton would have deliberately sought out opportunities to experience this "new music", and that the very important unification between *musica speculativa* and *musica practica* along with the greatly increased emphasis on text in musical settings played a definitive role in his attitude towards his poetry, and himself as a poet-singer.

"Lament of Arianna". "Arianna", of course, is the Italian rendering of "Ariadne", a personage who most certainly has no business appearing in an opera about Orpheus and Euridice. The aria in question, *Lasciatemi morire*, belongs to the otherwise-lost opera of 1608, *l'Arianna.* The mention of *l'Orfeo* on *Milton*, p. 112, does not duplicate the errors.

[25] Mary Elizabeth Basile, "The Music of *A Maske*", *Milton Quarterly* 27 (1993), p. 89.

[26] John Harper, "'One equal music': the Music of Milton's Youth", *Milton Quarterly* 31 (1997), p. 1, n. 4. Speaking later of Milton's father, Harper notes of Brennecke 1938: "It is 'a full and fanciful account' (William R. Parker, *Milton: a biography*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968, p. 693), pitted with speculation often masquerading as fact", p. 4, n. 27 (a wholly reasonable critique).

[27] While it would be nice to think that by Milton's time people were no longer reading the thing, "Renaissance antipoetic sentiment" was as prolific then as when Gosson was writing: "John Milton came to personal and poetic maturity with antipoetic sentiment as a fact of life. Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* was a relatively novel event when it first appeared, but the attacks that followed in the early to mid-seventeenth century had the additional authority of an established genealogy", Peter C. Herman, *Squitter-wits and muse-haters: Spenser, Sidney, Milton, and Renaissance antipoetic sentiment* (Detroit, 1996), p. 173.

The term "seconda pratica" (and by consequent contrast "prima pratica") initially appeared in the sense in which it was to be subsequently used as part of the title of a proposed treatise by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), on modern music: *Seconda pratica, overo Perfettione della musica moderna*.[28] This was in 1605, in the preface to his volume, *Il quinto libro de' madrigali a cinque voci.* Monteverdi was responding publicly to the criticism of one Giovanni Artusi (1540-1613), a musical theorist and composer in his own right, who decried the liberal use of dissonance, among other things, that characterized the "new music" then taking hold in Italy, in an exchange that has become known as the "Artusi-Monteverdi controversy". While Artusi might not have been highly regarded by posterity based on his own merits, he earned himself a place in history by provoking from Monteverdi an explication of his theoretical thinking (at least in part), something without which "Monteverdi's youthful creative thrust would have left a blunter mark in history. His stylistic profile without Artusi's criticism would be set less boldly in relief".[29]

Monteverdi would never write the treatise he proposes in the 1605 preface, but as Palisca asserts, the meagre shreds of insight into the composer's thought are still valuable in their promise and later development: "let them be assured concerning consonances and dissonances that there is a different way of considering them from that already determined which defends the modern manner of composition with the assent of reason and the senses. I wanted to say this both so that the expression *Seconda pratica* would not be appropriated by others and so that men of intellect might meanwhile consider second thoughts concerning harmony".[30] The next instalment in this response came in the form of a further retort actually written by Monteverdi's brother, Giulio Cesare (1571-1630/1), appended to the composer's *Scherzi musicali a tre voci*, published in Venice in 1607: "Dichiaratione della lettera stampata nel Quinto libro de' suoi Madregali".

The tone of Giulio Cesare's dichiaratione, highly retaliatory, has doubtless contributed to the largely unfavourable view of Artusi; it certainly conveys the spirit of one raised to furore

---

[28] "Prima Pratica", Claude V. Palisca, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22350. Consulted on 14 November 2010.
[29] Claude V. Palisca, *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory* (Oxford, 2001), p. 57.
[30] Ibid., p. 81. Facsimile in Gian Francesco Malpiero (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi, Tutte le opera* (Asolo, 1922), v. 10; modern edition in Domenico De' Paoli, *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni* (Rome, 1973).

over the unjust maligning of a gifted but gentle soul whose feelings are too hurt to make a stern reply of his own: "seeing that he pays attention to deeds and takes little notice of the words of others, and being unable to endure that his works should be so unjustly censured, I have determined to reply to the objections raised against them".[31] Consequently, scholars have been more than happy to overlook the fact that this is a mere gloss on Claudio's modest rebuke of Artusi, which constitutes a liberal expansion on what was only hinted at in 1605. As Giulio Cesare himself says, his brother was seemingly content to let his music speak for itself,[32] but the verbalization of his thinking is invaluable for the sake of criticism and the identification of the humanistic impulse behind the changes that were being undertaken in the musical world. The definitions of the terms *prima* and *seconda pratica* are set forth in his annotation to Claudio's mention of his never-to-be-published treatise:

> To the old music he has given the name of First Practice from its being the first practical usage, and the modern music he has called Second Practice from its being the second practical usage.
>
> By First Practice he understands the one that turns on the perfection of the harmony, that is, the one that considers the harmony not commanded, but commanding, not the servant, but the mistress of the words... [a list of composers follows, among whom are Josquin Desprez and the theorist Gioseffo Zarlino].
>
> By Second Practice...[again a list of composers is inserted, including Jacopo Peri and Giulio Caccini[33]] 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.

---

[31] Quoted from Oliver Strunk (ed., trans.), *Source Readings in Music History: from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era* (New York, 1950), pp. 405-12; original text: Giulio Cesare Monteverdi, "Dichiaratione della lettera stampata nel Quinto libro de' suoi Madregali," in Claudio Monteverdi, *Scherzi musicali a tre voci* (Venice, 1607), published in facsimile by Gian Francesco Malpiero (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi, Tutte le opera*, X (Austria, 1927), pp. 69-72. For a complete record of publications and translations, see: David Damschroder and David Russell Williams, *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: a Bibliography and Guide* (New York, 1990), pp. 208-9. (It has been republished a number of times, but Strunk's is the only translation available).

[32] And, indeed, he decries those who would do otherwise: "using only words to oppose the deeds of another is *nil agit exemplum litem quod lite resolvit* [the example that, settling one dispute by another, accomplishes nothing]. Then let him allow the world to be the judge, and if he brings forward no deeds, but only words, deeds being what commend the master, my brother will again find himself meriting the praise, and not he".

[33] Giulio Caccini (1551-1618) was one of the Florentine Camerata's leading figures. A singer himself, he was an important influence in ensuring the primacy of the vocal line in the developments undertaken by the Camerata, and in their creation of a more declamatory style of singing. It is to the title of his volume, *Le nuove musiche* (1601) that the new style initially owed its name. See H. Wiley Hitchcock, "Giulio Romolo Cacchini", *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40146pg1. Consulted on 20 September, 2012.

That "the words be the mistress of the harmony" is one of Plato's stipulations for his republic, as Giulio Cesare notes a little earlier:

> Of this Plato speaks as follows: "The song is composed of three things: the words, the harmony, and the rhythm"; and, a little further on: "And so of the apt and the unapt, if the rhythm and the harmony follow the words, and not the words these". Then, to give greater force to the words, he continues: "Do not the matter of the diction and the words follow and conform to the disposition of the soul?" and then: "Indeed, all the rest follows and conforms to the diction".[34]

The distinctions Giulio Cesare draws over the course of the gloss are not, as he is intent on making clear, ones of quality or merit, but simply of approach. While he attacks Artusi's obtuse view of the matter, he is unsparing in his commendation of Zarlino (1517-1590) (under whom Artusi was a pupil), whose *Le institutioni harmoniche* (1558) is still considered one of the most important works in the formulation of music theory. Strunk, for example,[35] says of Zarlino in the introduction to his excerpted treatise:

> He was the first to grasp the full implications of just intonation and to produce classical authority for it, the first to deal with harmony in terms of the triad rather than of the interval, the first to recognize the importance of the fundamental antithesis of major and minor, the first to attempt a rational explanation of the old rule forbidding the use of parallel fifths and octaves, the first to isolate and to describe the effects of the false relation; it was at his suggestion that the first printed edition of the *Harmonics* of Aristoxenus (in Latin translation) was undertaken. His writings bear witness to the extraordinary range and depth of his reading and to the understanding with which he read.[36]

Having assimilated every source and commentary on music from Pythagoras onward, he reformulated it into a work that essentially ended the dominance of Mediaeval church modes and reset Western thinking with regards to intervals and, consequently, harmony – by breaking with the limited number of divisions of the monochord prescribed by Pythagoras, Zarlino actually increased the number of intervals that could be considered "consonant" in the common practice

---

[34] Strunk notes that G. C. M. is here quoting from Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation, and in his own excerpt, Strunk 1950, pp. 4-7.

[35] But the opinion is ubiquitous; see Claude V. Palisca, "Zarlino, Gioseffo", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30858. Consulted on 14 November 2010.

[36] Strunk 1950, p. 228.

style (whereas, to the Greeks, only the fourth, the fifth, and the octave were deemed "perfect"[37]). This he managed to accomplish while at the same time leaning heavily on the authority of both Plato and Horace. His was a definitively humanistic approach. But although his work, alongside that of others, helped bring music out of the Middle Ages, it remained limited in its philosophical attitude, being thought mainly useful for the delight of the senses, and in its attitude towards text, "in contrast to the newly fashionable Aristotelian concept of moving the hearers to various emotions in order to purge them of these emotions".[38] Even in the section of his treatise dealing with text, "How the Harmonies Are Adapted to the Words Placed Beneath Them", Zarlino's only concern, again supported with a quote from Horace ("Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt"), is that the composer "use joyful harmonies and rapid rhythms in joyful matters, and in mournful ones, mournful harmonies and grave rhythms, so that everything may be done in proportion".[39] Despite making direct reference to the same section in Plato's *Republic* that G. C. Monteverdi uses, Zarlino arrives at a completely different conclusion (in terms of practice).

From Plato, Zarlino only extrapolates that the text, or the matter of the text, dictate whether a song is "joyful" or "mournful" in tone – in other words, the difference comes down merely to questions of mode and "mood" (insofar as rhythm is expressive of mood). By contrast, G. C. Monteverdi, speaking for his brother, determines that Plato intended the sense of the words to govern the melody entirely. But Zarlino is not poetically or metrically oblivious, either. In fact, he goes on, in the same section, to specify that, at the very least, the composer should avoid "making short syllables long and long syllables short as is done every day in innumerable compositions, a truly shameful thing", and follows this with a detailed section on the proper setting of syllables to music. What, then, is the main point of distinction between these two attitudes towards music that resulted in practices so divergent that the respective practitioners thereof were forced to attack one another?

---

[37] This is owing to the fact that, in Pythagorean theory, these intervals were expressible as the simplest ratios, e.g. 4:3, 3:2, and 2:1, respectively. While Aristoxenus would reject the use of mathematical ratios to define musical intervals, he still withheld consonant status from any but those three (and their potential enharmonic derivatives from combination with the octave, for example the twelfth (an octave plus a fifth); see: Aristoxenus, "Elementa Harmonica" (late fourth century BC), in Andrew Barker ed., *Greek Musical Writings, Volume II: Harmonic and Acoustic Theory* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 119-84.

[38] Barbara Russano Hanning, *Of Poetry and Music's Power: Humanism and the Creation of Opera* (Michigan, 1980), p. 8.

[39] Gioseffo Zarlino, *Le institutioni harmoniche* (Venice, 1558), in Strunk 1950, p. 256. The Horatian quote is from line 89: "A theme for comedy refuses to be set forth in the verse of tragedy", n. 48.

Girolamo Mei (1519-1594), a historian of Greek music, was the first man to theorize that tragedies and comedies in ancient Greece were sung in their entirety, which he put forward in the fourth book of his *De modis musicis*, which, though widely read by the interested parties, remained unpublished until 1990.[40] An important humanist in his own right, "Mei is remembered today mostly because he inspired Galilei to promote a reform of music in the direction of monody and provided fuel for Bardi's critique of the current polyphonic method of composition".[41] Vincenzo Galilei (1520s-1591) – the father of the astronomer Milton would later claim to have met – would take this idea, and extend it into a criticism of music as it existed in his time, arguing in his *Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna* (1581) that the reason music no longer had the impact on the listener fabled among the ancients was its decadent obsession with counterpoint and polyphony. In the form of a dialogue he retells the story of the development of Mediaeval polyphony as one engrossed in the formulation of rules and their implementation, "making reason subject to sense, the form to the material, the true to the false".[42] While a necessary aspect of this stance is the deconstruction of many of Zarlino's principles, Galilei does not neglect to commend his teacher's labours. Nevertheless his tone is polemical, even as it acknowledges Zarlino's work: [referring to counterpoint and harmony] "There is no one who does not consider these rules excellent and necessary for the mere delight the ear takes in the variety of the harmonies, but for the expression of conceptions they are pestilent, being fit for nothing but to make the concentus varied and full, and this is not always, indeed is never suited to express any conception of the poet or the orator". He shortly thereafter describes the delight being pursued by this ignorant music as mere "tickling" (a euphemism later echoed by Caccini in his own treatise). Indeed, Galilei is so zealous in his invectives that even the practice of word-painting, the act of using music to literally imitate or represent an idea, is decried as utterly vulgar. One can see how, even considering merely the ancient sources invoked by Zarlino, above, it would be possible to construe as a role for music the *visual* reflection of images at work in the text: for example, in Josquin Des Prez's (1440s-1521) motet setting of

[40] That is, in Donatella Restani, *L'itinerario di Girolamo Mei: dalla 'Poetica' alla musica con un'appendice di testi* (Florence, 1990), and then Tsugami Eisuke (ed.), *Girolamo Mei, De modis*, Tsugami Eisuke (Tokyo, 1991). Restani's book contains only book 4 of Mei's treatise, as an appendix. See: Claude V. Palisca, "Review", *Early Music History* 11 (1992), pp. 303-13.
[41] Palisca 1992, p. 306.
[42] Vincenzo Galilei, "Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna" (1581), in Strunk 1950, p. 311.

Psalm 129, *De profundis clamavi*, a canon, every iteration of the word *profundis* is set to a drop down by a fifth, in order to recreate the idea of depth, or of the voice emerging "from the depths". But Galilei attacks these childish theatrics as being "so remote from the ancient music and so unlike it as actually to be its contrary and mortal enemy". As he describes it, it must be admitted, the practice of word-painting would be exactly the type of device that Plato and Aristotle reviled above all, that of direct mimicry of that which is vulgar and low, for if music does have the power to sway the passions, then the musician who is willing to "weep", "laugh", "shout" or "shriek", or perhaps even imitate the noises of animals, would be the most morally dangerous.[43]

The key point of distinction, and the great failing of all music since the loss of our ancient and former wisdom, is process "without further thought of the conception and sense of the words... Their ignorance and lack of consideration is one of the most potent reasons why the music of today does not cause in the listeners any of those virtuous and wonderful effects that ancient music caused". In fact, in his discourse addressed in 1580 to Giulio Caccini, Giovanni de' Bardi (1534-1612), the original patron and founder of the Florentine Camerata, offers a definition of music, "according to Plato (a definition in which Aristotle and the other scholars concur)",[44] that requires text and song be included, whereas purely instrumental music is, according to Aristotle, "artificial and wholly useless". So, it is not merely that the "mood" of a piece of music must reflect that of the text, but rather that music must at every point and turn imitate the sense of the words, effectively wedding music to rhetoric. In *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture*, Plett bases his entire discussion of the confluence of rhetoric and music on the works of the Camerata, quoting Giulio Caccini (who invented *stile rappresentativo*), Jacopo Peri (who composed *Euridice*, the first complete surviving opera, in 1600), and (Claudio) Monteverdi, in their own discursions and prefaces to compositions they undertook after the

[43]What is being described is almost a kind of musically-expressed onomatopoeia. Completely disentangling the use of word-painting from compositional practice is not actually quite so simple, and it has arguably persisted in art music even to the present (as well as in the works of Monteverdi and other practitioners of the *seconda pratica*). See: Tim Carter, "Word-painting", *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30568. Consulted on 4 March 2011.

[44] Giovanni de' Bardi, "Discorso mandato a Caccini sopra la musica antica e 'l cantar bene", in Strunk 1950, p. 292.

manner prescribed by Bardi and Galilei,[45] pointing to the emphasis placed on the affections and the absolute necessity of the primacy of text.

Despite never getting around to publishing his own treatise, Monteverdi did, as a foreword to his eighth book of madrigals, published in 1638, add some of his own words to the matter of music and rhetoric. Oddly, while he purports to be quoting from "Plato in the third book of his *Rhetoric*",[46] his source is actually *the Republic*. Even so, his attention is focused on describing how agitated (*concitato*) speech may be reflected in the music, this being the third of the affections described by "the best philosophers" (he also quotes Boethius), the other two being humility (*molle*) and temperance (*temperato*). He proceeds to describe how the integration of the *concitato* style into the music of his time is his "rediscovery", in admiration of which he was widely imitated. The text has its place in making clear Monteverdi's humanistic impulse in his innovations, and is important in highlighting the direct correlation between music and rhetoric that underpinned them.

However, the slightly condescending tone of this foreword, which does not conceal the author's belief that he had, in doing his own readings and research, arrived at his own conclusions quite independently, is significant. Correspondence between Monteverdi and Giovanni Battista Doni (1595-1647), dated a few years earlier, reveals that Monteverdi himself took very little stock of the treatises published by Galilei.[47] Whenever the matter turns to his own compositional process, he is quite at ease taking all the credit for himself, except insofar as the basis for his innovations relies on the authority of Plato. In reality, Monteverdi's own use of the term *seconda pratica*, while it has been widely adopted by later criticism, is limited entirely to references he makes to his compositions only, taking no stock whatever of his position in the greater musical revolution taking place. *Divining the oracle: Monteverdi's seconda prattica* (2003) opens by surfacing the discrepancy in compositional techniques between Monteverdi and his contemporaries following Galilei: "Given Monteverdi's unequivocally contrapuntal compositional technique, which is evident in his continued cultivation of the ensemble madrigal

[45] Plett 2004, pp. 369-74.
[46] Claudio Monteverdi, "Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi" (Venice, 1638), in Strunk 1950, p. 413.
[47] For a complete collection of Monteverdi's correspondence see: Denis Stevens (ed., trans.), *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 443.

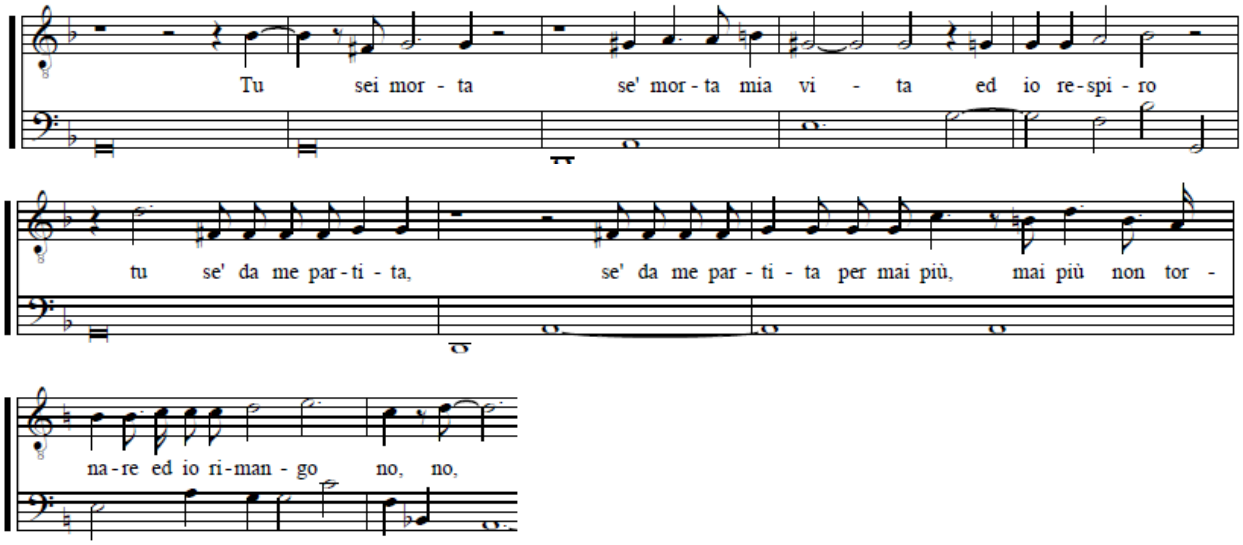
long after the dispute with Artusi and which informs even such 'monodic' works as the 'Lamento' from *Arianna*, it is questionable whether his view of the *seconda prattica* had much in common with Galilei's treatises".[48] Even discussions of Monteverdi's early works note in his handling of the sixteenth century madrigal the symptoms of a growing tendency towards innovation. But while in explaining himself he often had recourse to classical authority, his lack of regard for the music of antiquity (to which he referred as a "poca cosa") would lead Doni to assess him as "not a man of letters, no more so than any of his contemporaries" – Ossi closes by noting that the book on musical theory that Monteverdi is known to have owned is a copy of Zarlino's *Institutioni harmoniche*. [49]

What can be gleaned from the snippets of prose proffered by Monteverdi make clear the distinction between the *seconda pratica* and the *nuove musiche*, at least in conscious, ideological terms. A very self-aware innovator, Monteverdi chose to distance himself from the work being done by the Florentine Camerata, but it is possible that Doni's view of him as unscholarly is merely symptomatic of the quality Giulio Cesare cites in defence of his brother, that Monteverdi was rather a man who preferred to prove himself with deeds, and even his early *favola in musica*, *l'Orfeo*, is strongly demonstrative of his conscious implementation of his thoughts on the *ut rhetorica musica*.[50] Given his repeated emphasis on the works of "the best philosophers" it is clear that he at least wanted to couch his innovations in the prescriptions of Plato regarding the relationship between words and music. There is no denying that *l'Orfeo*, in its use of the *stile rappresentativo*, however much it improves upon its predecessor, is modelled on Peri's *Eurdice* of 1600.[51] But even if Monteverdi did not take to heart everything postulated by Galilei and Girolamo Mei, the overwhelming success of the work nevertheless attests strongly to the viability of their philosophical approach. Much must be said for the individual talent of the composer in taking an idea of which there had been relatively few demonstrations (though it is

[48] Massimo Michele Ossi, *Divining the oracle: Monteverdi's seconda prattica* (Chicago, 2003), p. 7.
[49] Ossi 2003, p. 251.
[50] It is theorized that G. C. Monteverdi's "Dichiaratione" was appended to the *Scherzi musicali* in order that its publication coincide with the first performance of *l'Orfeo*; see: Massimo Ossi, "Claudio Monteverdi's 'Ordine novo, bello et gustevole': The Canzonetta as Dramatic Module and Formal Archetype", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45 (1992), pp. 261-304.
[51] Both Gary Tomlinson, "Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi's 'via naturale alla immitatione'", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981), pp. 60-108, and Hanning 1980, offer thorough comparisons between the two works, from the specific textual divergences of Monteverdi's libretto (by Alessandro Striggio) and Peri's (by Rinuccini), to the differing styles of musical handling in specific scenes common to both operas.

believed that Monteverdi was present at the performance of *Euridice*, along with his master Francesco Gonzaga, to whom *l'Orfeo* was dedicated[52]) – Monteverdi's triumph is very much his own. But the similarities between his work and that of his "peers", as well as the identical references to Plato, the use of the same sources, and the desire to attain the *via naturale* in the recreation of sung speech, all point to the profoundly similar influence a careful, musically-receptive reading of Plato and Aristotle can have on the output of a creatively-inclined individual.

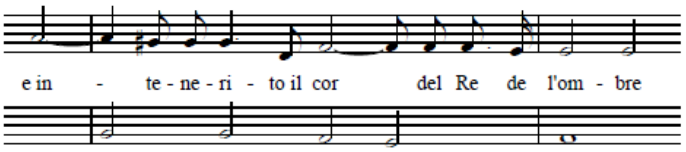
The recitative of Orpheus' lament, in Act II of *l'Orfeo*, aptly demonstrates Monteverdi's integration of the *stile rappresentativo* into his musical language, even offering significant improvements on it and expanding the versatility and expressive power of the young genre. Not only does the recitative possess a more moving, song-like quality than can be found in earlier examples, but there is also considerable melodic development based on text (mm. 219-241):[53]



With every succeeding entrance the singer's pitch and rhythm intensifies, matching the build-up in dramatic tension as we watch him slowly come to grips with the tragedy of Euridice's death. Then, taking advantage of the declamatory style of recitative, Monteverdi accents Orpheus' stubborn refusal to surrender his love by having him repeat "No!" on successively higher pitches. Not only does the text tell us what Orpheus is thinking, the music demonstrates it explicitly, showing the exact moment when his thoughts turn from despair to

[52] Mark Ringer, *Opera's First Master: the Musical Dramas of Claudio Monteverdi* (Canada, 2006), p. 16.
[53] Claudio Monteverdi, *l'Orfeo, Favola in musica* (Venice, 1615), pp. 39-40. Musical quotations are transcribed from printed sources using the musical notation program *Sibelius 7*.

determination. The second half of the aria deals with a description of his journey, and involves some use of word-painting, particularly when Orpheus sings a low C on the word "abissi" (abyss; i.e. Hell), the lowest note in the aria, to complete his line, "I will remain there, your companion in death." On the line, "I will soften the heart of the king of shadows," "will soften" is indicated by two half-steps (mm. 230-2):



The intent behind devices of this kind is to make the music imitate the declamations of human speech. Liberated from a more rigidly melodic or strophic form, Monteverdi is able to add lyricism as he wishes, or opt for a straighter, more speech-like rhythm and intonation when the drama demands it.

The story of the infiltration of this new style into England is a winding one. In *the Origins of English Recitative*[54] Walls discusses the matter with reference to the Jacobean masque, regarding which Ben Jonson, in the 1640 Folio edition of his *Works* mentions the use of "(after the Italian manner) *Style recitativo*, by Master Nicholas Lanier".[55] The statement is problematic in that it is absent from the 1617 Quarto of *Lovers Made Men*, to which it refers, but Walls' tracing of the awareness of the Italian *nuove musiche* in early seventeenth-century England is extensive, and shows a much higher appreciation therein than Harper's account of the situation would lead us to believe. This is important with regards to Milton, of course, because some parties have attempted to underrate the influence of the *nuove musiche* on Henry Lawes and, by extension, to limit the scope of possibility for Milton's having been exposed to it, at least prior to his trip to Italy (and the composition of *A Maske*, *Lycidas*, and many of the other poems in which music plays a considerable role).

Some of Harper's assertions are attributable to oversight; for example: "The modest songs of Lawes are responsive to the verse in their declamation, but in no way do they belong to

[54] Peter Walls, "The Origins of English Recitative", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 110 (1984), pp. 25-40.
[55] Walls' quotation comes from C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (eds.), *Ben Jonson* (Oxford, 1952).

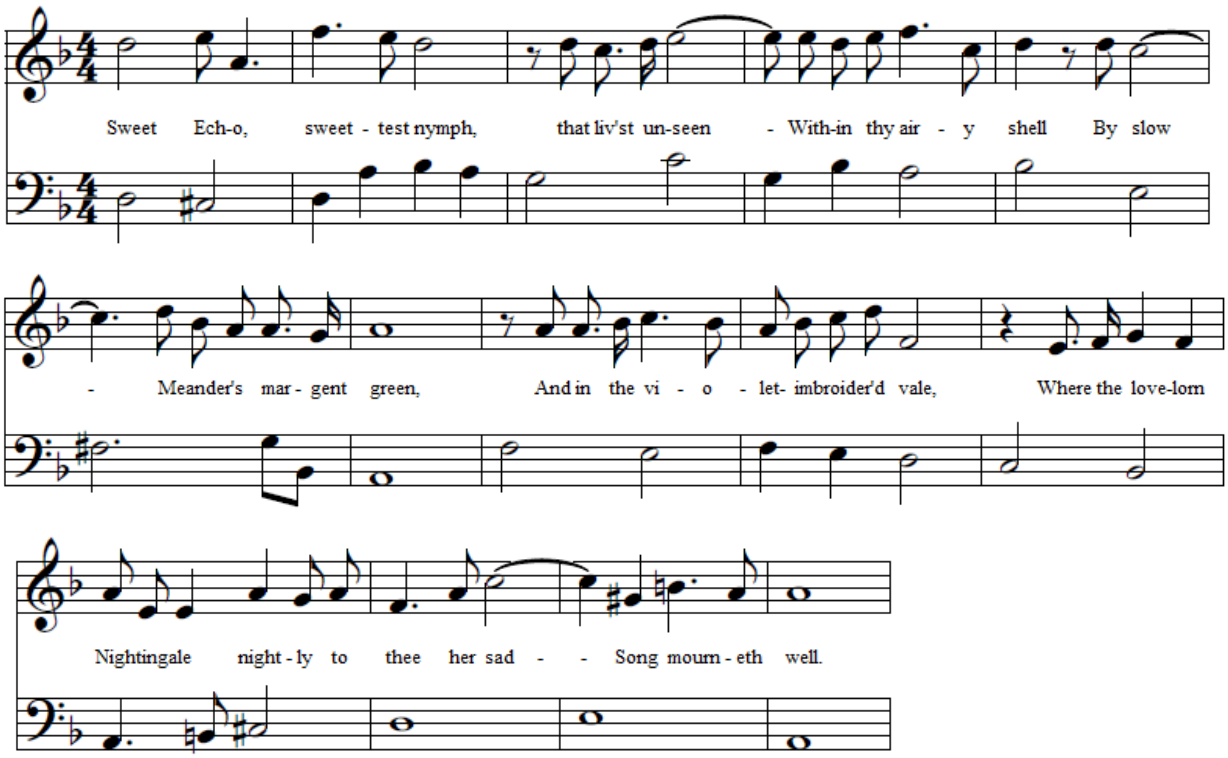
the aesthetic of the *stile rappresentativo* of the *seconda practica*. They are more closely related to the songs provided by Robert Johnson and Nicholas Lanier for the court masques".[56] This is a somewhat problematic claim for a number of reasons. To begin with, as Walls laments in his own account, there is no surviving music from the masques of the period. Italian songs in the style of the *nuove musiche* were being printed in England as early as 1610 – for example, Robert Dowland, the son of the composer, printed songs by Caccini, among them *Amarilli, mia bella*, a song still studied and performed by young opera singers today, in his collection, *A Musicall Banquet.*[57] These songs are quite distinct from *stilo recitativo* in the extent of their lyricism – they are far more melodic, but still bear the hallmarks of the *nuove musiche*'s philosophical approach to the relationship between text and music – for, indeed, their first appearance was in Caccini's volume, *Le nuove musiche*, of 1601. In addition, Galilei's *Dialogo* of 1581 is known to have been widely read; "The occurrence of Galilei's treatise at least indicates that Englishmen had some opportunity to acquaint themselves with the ideals and rationale which lay behind the new Italian style".[58] More interesting still, one account of Lawes' compositions for *A Maske* gives Milton's poetry the better part of the credit for the music's departure from the more standard lyrical framework: "Musical structure is completely dominated by poetic structure. Much of Lawes' achievement in these songs must be ascribed to the nature of Milton's lyrics".[59]

Masques were very much their own genre, and no direct comparison between a masque and opera in any form would be either valid or very fruitful. There was no place for recitative, to begin with, because the soliloquies and dialogue of the characters on stage were spoken, not sung. The incidental music performed with *A Maske* is lost, but it may safely be assumed that it bore little resemblance to the instrumental interludes of Monteverdi or his Italian contemporaries. The songs composed by Lawes, however, have survived,[60] and can at least be examined for traces of influence or similarity to the *stile rappresentativo*, especially in light of

[56] Harper 1997, p. 9.
[57] Robert Dowland, *A Musicall Banquet* (London, 1610), no. 19. The song was originally published, with many others of its type, in the collection, *Le nuove musiche*, Giulio Caccini (Florence, 1601).
[58] Walls 1983-84, p. 38.
[59] R. J. McGrady, "Henry Lawes and the Concept of 'Just Note and Accent' ", *Music & Letters* 50 (1969), pp. 92-3.
[60] For Milton's tercentenary, an arrangement of "*Comus*" was produced, but the instrumental music used in the publication was borrowed from among the compositions of William Lawes, brother to Henry, and other composers. The accompaniments to the songs are also expanded to some degree, though with the utmost loyalty to Lawes' manuscript. See Sir Frederick Bridge (arr.), *The Masque of Comus by John Milton; the original music by Henry Lawes* (London, 1908).

the fact that Milton, in 1646, composed a sonnet in praise of Lawes precisely for his "worth and skill" in having "First taught our English Musick how to span/ Words with just note and accent".[61]

The song *Sweet Echo,* is the second song in the performance version of *A Maske*. Lawes took a portion of the attendant Spirit's epilogue (lines 976-1020) and altered its first line from "To the Ocean now I fly" to "From the Heav'ns now I fly", to act as an introduction to the piece. Lawes himself performed the role of the Spirit during the performance in 1634. *Sweet Echo* is sung by the Lady shortly after her first entrance. Comus has felt her approach, and concealed himself, yet she senses danger and sings this prayer to Echo, begging for rumour of her brothers' whereabouts, that they might come to her aid (mm. 1-14):[62]



In this song can be found at least a few examples of a compositional style that is very attentive to the dramatic context of the poetry. Similar to the *stile rappresentativo,* there is no consistent, overarching melody, but rather what may be called a "lyrical declamation". Each successive line or phrase is accompanied by a new musical "thought", while the song as a whole

[61] *Milton*, pp. 252-3.
[62] Henry Lawes, "British Museum Manuscript of Five Songs (A Mask)," in Harris Francis Fltecher (ed.), *Milton's Complete Poetical Works, Produced in Photographic Facsimile*, 4 vols. (Illinois, 1943), v. 1, pp. 341-2.

preserves a consistent mood, suitable to the Lady's fearful plea for aid. Note also Lawes' faithfulness in setting strong syllables to strong beats, and weak syllables to off-beats, while he is still careful to avoid the elementary (but very typical) practice of setting strong beats only to notes of longer duration. Poetry composed of iambs set unimaginatively to music can often result in nothing more interesting than a series of dotted crotchets and quavers – a formula to be found in most simple vocal melodies. Instead, Lawes often employs shorter durations for important syllables, leaving the unimportant words or syllables to carry the melody over from one measure to the next. This can be seen even in the first measure, with his setting of "Echo". Setting strong syllables to strong beats is to be expected of any melody, but except in cases of syncopation it is less common to place a quaver before a dotted crotchet. Here, the series of notes imitates the human pronunciation of the word, whereas the converse, "E-e-e-e-cho", would be conducive to a smoother melody, but damaging to the sincerity of the character. Measures 8 and 9 ("And in the violet-imbroider'd vale") illustrate this technique as well, saving the longer minim for the open "vale", as well as the conclusion of the phrase. The placement of rests is equally effective, being used to mark only breaks or pauses natural to the manner in which a speaker would deliver the text.

Monteverdi's adaptation of the *stile recitativo* features a frequent use of repeated pitches, saving his movements to a cadence only for the ends of phrases. Much depends on the abilities of the performer for this form of declamation to seem in any way "believable", but it is an effective way to deliver large amounts of text rapidly without sacrificing either their sense, or the cohesion of the music. Measures 225-7 ("se' da me partita per mai più, mai più non tornare) illustrate this perfectly: when Orpheus expands on his thought of Euridice – "you have left me forever, never to return!" – the music is able to expand with him, from an even, if grief-stricken, intonation to one that partakes of great leaps in pitch, in order to depict his growing unrest, which presently transforms into resolution to descend into Hades.

Lawes' music, on the other hand, employs nothing resembling this recitative style, while still managing, rhythmically, to capture the stops and starts of human speech. Forming a part of the much more melodic texture, his series of repeated quavers nevertheless express the sense of the text without sacrificing its intelligibility. The lines have a deliberate progress that needs no

recourse back to a repeated melodic theme: it is instead the momentum of the text that drives them forward. The direction of the line is unpredictable, while still internally consistent, in imitation of the style of a practiced actor.

If a clear line cannot be drawn between the Florentine Camerata and Milton at Ludlow Castle, then, it can at least be demonstrated that there are certain commonalities between the *stile rappresentativo* and Lawes' songs for *A Maske*, specifically in the level of attention paid to ensuring that the music is the servant of the text, that the text is comprehensible and enhanced in its expressive power by its setting, rather than the reverse, as in the case of Renaissance polyphony. It is something difficult to appreciate four hundred years later, but the importance given to text was, then, a very new and radical idea, and not to be found in the works of contemporaneous composers, nor in the works of the preceding generation. Ultimately all of these changes and breakthroughs derived, independently or otherwise, from the same, ancient sources, but, accompanied as they were by the rise of the publishing industry, there is little reason to wonder at their ubiquity.

Ultimately, Walls leans on an argument similar to that which I have employed above in discussing Monteverdi's connection with the ideals of the Florentine Camerata: for someone of Ben Jonson's bent of mind, "The concept of recitative as elevated speech would obviously have appealed... for the possibility it offered of giving an added sense of portent to the utterance of the demi-gods and allegorical figures". The philosophical underpinnings of the *nuove musiche* exert an ineluctable appeal on any whose interests lay with the power of language. Certainly, they manifest the same attention to classical sources: Galilei even references the story of Timotheus, the musician whose song inspired Alexander to conquer Persia, a story which, let it be remembered, played an important role in E. K.'s gloss of *October* in Spenser's first publication. Harper suggests that the opposite would be true of Milton, that rather than being interested in music's potential to elevate the power of speech he would prefer the more abstracted approach of *musica speculativa*, and its manifestations in careful attention to proportion and counterpoint. Of the organ he writes: "It also served his philosophy of music; for the organ physically demonstrates the order and proportion of music. The lengths of the pipes relate proportionately

to their pitch: visual, aural and conceptual aspects of music are embodied in a single instrument, controlled with the span of a hand".

But this attitude may overlook certain aspects crucial to Milton's philosophy in general, and in particular the potential for his political or ideological leanings to bear, in some form, on his taste in music. In *Lycidas* he writes (lines 123-26):

> And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
> Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw,
> The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,
> But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,[63]

Can the man who composed these lines be a devout lover of the liturgical music in England at the time? To be "not fed,/ But swoln with wind", evokes precisely the same attitude adopted by those individuals who sought to liberate music from what they perceived as a thousand years of Mediaeval barbarism. Of a radical Puritan such as Milton, who said of the Holy Spirit, "Thou... that dost prefer,/ Before all Temples th'upright heart and pure",[64] it seems equally plausible to believe that the preference would have been more for the direct, intimate communication facilitated by the *stile rappresentativo* than for madrigals (and it should be noted that Milton's references to choral singing, with the exception of the scathing invective quoted above, are concerned solely with the music of Heaven; in Heaven there are choirs, while on earth there are singers). This comes before the other, equally important dimension of the *nuove musiche*: that it was, while perhaps imperfectly so, an attempt at a re-creation of the music of ancient Greece, the music of a time before man's fall into a state of superstition that, from beginning to end, Milton would utterly reject.

The next, and final, chapter will closely examine *Lycidas*, Milton's greatest achievement in his early career, and that poem's conceptual similarities to Italian monody. Also significant are samples from Milton's prose, both early and late, that address themselves to the role of the poet, and poetry's ultimate ideal, particularly as it relates to music. In examining these texts alongside one another and aligning them in the proper context, I hope to furnish the reader with a new and

[63] John Milton, *Lycidas*, quoted from *Milton*, p. 105.
[64] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I.17-8, quoted from *Milton*, p. 355.

greatly expanded window of insight into Milton's references to music in his poetry, and the manner in which his ideas about music can be used to appreciate in new ways what remains so uniquely compelling about his verse.

V

MONODY POETIC AND MUSICAL: SITUATING MILTON'S *LYCIDAS*

"Context" defines the field of interpretation. I could, for example, make mention of a young man who had murdered and robbed an elderly woman, had subsequently confessed his crimes, and had submitted himself for judgment; the manner in which one might respond to this story will vary greatly depending on whether I lie, saying I had read it in a newspaper, or say truthfully that the story was written by Dostoyevsky. All human discourse relies upon labels for the sake of expediency. Whether this expediency is furnished by the historical development of a single word, or whether that development takes place entirely within the context of a given poem, a word always has more life at the end of discourse than it did at the beginning, and this effect can either be intended or be merely incidental. Up to this point, our analyses of poetry have centred on two things: the abstract idea of the poet-as-singer and that idea's corresponding role in a given poet's view of himself, and the literal manifestation of this idea in the form of specific tropes and motives in one poem or another. Many of the devices we have observed hearken back to standard turns of rhetoric, the practice of which formed a keystone in the education of young men. Viewed merely as such, it could be argued that these devices possess no inherent musical significance, and this is why an equal amount of weight has been given to situating our poets' views of their own work within the context of the idea of poet-as-singer. Once re-aligned with this particular field, a whole host of new interpretations is made available. Of no poet is this more true than it is of Milton.

At a Solemn Music, not published until 1645, is richly illustrative of Milton's blending of musical imagery with musical effects in his poetry. Comprising twenty-eight lines in total, the poem can actually be divided into two fourteen-line sonnets. The sonnet, of course, consists of an octave and a sestet, or a line ratio of 8/6, and, when reduced to lowest terms, 4/3.[1] 4/3 is one of the Pythagorean "perfect" ratios, and expresses the interval of a perfect fourth. In consideration of the significance of these ratios, in conjunction with the subject matter of the poem, a more detailed numerological reading would not be bootless.

[1] P. 73, Heninger.

Blest pair of *Sirens*, pledges of Heavn's joy,
Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice and Vers,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ
Dead things with inbreath'd sense able to pierce,
And to our high-rais'd phantasie present
That undisturbed Song of pure concent,
Ay sung before the saphire-colour'd throne
To him that sits theron
With Saintly shout and solemn Jubily,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted Angel-trumpets blow,
And the Cherubick host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal Harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious Palms,
Hymns devout and holy Psalms
Singing everlastingly;
That we on Earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
Jarr'd against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd
In perfect Diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O may we soon again renew that Song,
And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere long
To his celestial consort us unite,
To live with him, and sing in endles morn of light.[2]

As with most of Milton's rhymed poetry, the rhyme scheme here is somewhat varied; while still comprised largely of couplets, Milton chooses to lean on the form of the canzone in order to "suspend" a rhyme for closure at a later point, in order to confer greater significance both to the matter and to the sound of the poem, a technique later exemplified in *Lycidas*. Line 9 ("With Saintly shout and solemn Jubily"), for example, the first line of the first sestet, does not close its rhyme until line 16 ("Singing everlastingly"). Proportionally speaking, these two lines stand in similar relation to one another, line 9 falling at the start of the first sonnet's sestet, or the 4/3 interval, and line 16 being the eighth line to follow it, closing a rhymed octave. Milton has used rhyme to highlight the rational relationship between the two phrases (in this case a relatively simple one), and attached additional significance to them by attending to their

[2] *Milton*, pp. 56-7.

proportional positions. Line 16 concludes the "sentence" begun on line 7 ("Ay sung before the saphire-colour'd throne"), as well as the first half of the poem.

In cooperation with the typical sense of a sonnet, the overall 4/3 position in the poem, line 18, incorporates a change in mood with the mention of our "disproportion'd sin", contrasting with the earlier sentiments, which dwelt happily on heavenly music. "As once we did" speaks powerfully of our post-lapsarian sense of loss. "In perfect Diapason"[3] closes the octave of the second internal sonnet, and begins the transition back towards our reconciliation with the divine music.

It is entirely possible, then, to read a certain degree of numerological significance into a poem informed by knowledge of the harmony of the spheres. However, what this poem aptly demonstrates over other poems devised merely for the sake of artifice is that music must be "rationalized" (in the Aristotelian sense) through a cooperation with language in order for it to have any meaningful or pleasing effect. The primary concern in Milton's mind is not "proportion" as it refers to number only, but the coincidence between number and beauty of which proportion is the expression. It is the manifestation of the universal harmony through what is tangible that produces a positive aesthetic response – the desired one, encapsulating the affective triad of rhetoric. In large part, the distrust that men like Gosson levelled against poetry and music was inspired by a fear that the sensuous aspects of art were able to exert a corrupting influence on the soul through subliminal device. They could make a man feel pleasure without his knowing exactly how or why. Poetry is vindicated from such allegations when it is devoted to the highest ideal, the imitation of the divine, and this imitation is achieved through the apt wedding of words and music.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the context in which Milton may first have encountered early "monody" is potentially revelatory, but has been a matter of some contention. Before the matter can be addressed directly, however, some background elucidation is required. A careful examination of the various influences involved in the founding of the "new music"

[3] "A term used by Greek theorists to designate an octave, either the interval or the scale", Edwin M. Ripin and Martin Renshaw, "Diapason", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07720. Consulted on 10 November, 2012.

revealed the surprisingly limited amount of contact between the Florentine Camerata and Monteverdi, despite the fact that it is his work which is most commonly mentioned in connection with monodic composition. More striking still is that neither Monteverdi nor the members of the Florentine Camerata ever referred to any of the music they composed as "monody" – a significant detail, when speaking of how and when Milton may have been influenced by their work. Flannagan offers a simple definition *a propos Lycidas*: "In the pastoral tradition a monody was what might be loosely called an interior monologue... lamenting the loss of someone who has died. Musically, monody is a form of operatic solo – usually a lament".[4] For us to apply either of these definitions to *Lycidas* is somewhat anachronistic, though, as it is largely in Milton's hands that the term acquired much currency at all, for the study of English literature. What "a monody" was evolved very gradually in the first half of the seventeenth century, and it is only in its application to *Lycidas* that its full meaning comes to fruition.

The term's origins are convoluted, but if anything is to be said about Milton's understanding of the word it will be necessary to untangle them. The application of "monody" specifically to the *stile recitativo* is owed to Giovanni Battista Doni (1595-1647), in his treatise, *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica* (1635), while its earliest usage in published Renaissance music theory occurs in Johann Heinrich Alsted's (1588-1638) *Encyclopaedia septem tomis distincta*, published five years earlier in Herborn. Book XX of Alsted's encyclopaedia, which dealt with music, was translated by John Birchensha (1605-1681) as *Templum Musicum*, and published in 1664 in London.[5] Alsted, however, employs the term merely to refer to "simple melodies" (*melodia simplicior*) composed of sequences of "monads" (individual pitches, as opposed to dyads and triads, two or three pitches occurring simultaneously): "Melodia est simplex, vel composita. *Illa* monodia, *hac* symphonia *dicitur*"; Birchansha renders this: "Melodie is simple, or compounded. That is called Monodie, this Symphony". Alsted recommends writing monodies as a good way for young composers to

[4] *Milton*, p. 96.

[5] Some sources list Alsted's earlier *Elementale Mathematicum* (Frankfort, 1611) as Birchensha's original: Gretchen Finney, "A Musical Background for 'Lycidas' ", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 15 (1952), p. 349; and, more significantly, Early English Books Online's full record for *Templum Musicum* ("A translation of one part, Elementale musicum, of: Elementale mathematicum. Frankfort 1611".), at http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12306028. Consulted on 14 December 2012. However, this is incorrect. *Elementale Mathematicum* does indeed devote a considerable portion of itself to the discussion of music, but it is not Birchensha's source text, and there is no mention of *monodia* (see Alsted 1611, pp. 287-312).

practice their craft before advancing to "compounded melody" (*melodia composite*). Birchensha's translation of *monodia* is, at one point, "monadie",[6] a rendering that does not seem to occur anywhere else. The change in spelling could indicate that he was not aware of the term's newly-granted significance, opting rather to alter its orthography to match its meaning given in Alsted's text: "a melody composed of monads". This would, moreover, be a closer rendering of the original Greek, which reads *μονῳδίαν*.

On the side of English literary criticism, Puttenham is the first to define *monodia*, somewhat earlier, in *the Arte of English Poesie* (1589). Speaking of poems composed for commemorations of the dead, he writes: "Such funerall songs were called *Epicedia* if they were song by many, and *Monodia* if they were uttered by one alone".[7] This definition is carried forward in a more simplified form in Henry Cockeram's *The English dictionarie: or, an interpreter of hard English words* in 1623: "*Monodies*. Mournefull songs".[8] Puttenham, as discussed earlier, draws frequent parallels between poetry and song, so his inclusion of a musical term in order to describe a type of poem is no surprise – it does, however, highlight music as an essential element in the performance of a monody as it was understood by Renaissance criticism.

Ultimately, we must return to the source, as Milton himself assuredly did, if not as a detective then at least as a true scholar of prodigious learning. M. Davies has written an article of enormous detail regarding the convoluted usage of "monody" even among classical scholars, and quotes from the text "most frequently invoked" on the subject of a definition for *μονῳδίαν*, Plato's *Laws* 764d-e:

> In the case of athletic competitions there should be the same umpires for men and horses; but in the case of musical contests there should be one set of umpires for (a) solo singing [*μονῳδίαν*] and (b) mimetic representation – I mean (a) performed by those who are rhapsodes and those who sing to the lyre and (b) those who play on the pipes and all such individuals – and another set of umpires for performers of choral song.[9]

---

[6] See Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Encyclopaedia septem tomis distincta* (Herborn, 1630), p. 1203, and John Birchensha (trans.), *Templum musicum, or, The musical synopsis of the learned and famous Johannes-Henricus-Alstedius* (London, 1664), pp. 60-63.

[7] Puttenham 1589, p. 39.

[8] Henry Cockeram, *The English dictionarie* (London, 1623).

[9] M. Davies, "Monody, Choral Lyric, and the Tyranny of the Hand-Book", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 38 (1988), p. 57. I have chosen to reproduce only Davies' translation from the Greek.

Plato is in no way concerned with a larger-scale distinction for *monodia*; the word is, quite simply, his word for "solo singing". As Davies says, "even the most enthusiastic supporters of the monodic/choral dichotomy are unable to do very much with this". The only point at which Davies goes too far is supplied when he quotes A. E. Harvey: "The modern division into 'choral' and 'monodic'... was unknown to antiquity or the Renaissance".[10] On the contrary, it is apparently to the Renaissance that we owe the origins of this multi-faceted term. It was given a lengthy entry in the Greek thesaurus compiled by Henri Estienne (Henricus Stephanus; 1528/31-1598), which was first published in 1572. The thesaurus was the mainstay of Greek lexicography for centuries after its publication, but it is also possible to say definitively that Milton owned and used a copy, because he refers to it specifically in his annotations of Greek texts that he owned.[11] Significantly, the entry for *Μονῳδέω* contains both aspects of the term: "Quum unus tantum a scena canticum recitat et non totus simul chorus" ("When only one on stage sings, and not the whole chorus"); and: "Naenia, carmen funebre" ("dirge, or funeral song").[12]

There can be little reason to doubt, then, Milton's familiarity with *monodia*, in the forms it took in these early definitions, prior to the publication of Doni's text in 1635. *Lycidas* was first published in *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago* in 1638, without the headnote, "In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend".[13] The headnote does appear, however, in the Trinity Manuscript (therein spelled "monodie"),[14] in which *Lycidas* has been dated, quite convincingly, at November of 1637.[15] The manuscript contains both fair copies and working drafts of works up to 1659, but there can be no doubt that the copy of *Lycidas* is an earlier version than the one that would appear in the 1638 publication. In the MS. the poem is very much in working draft form, containing several passages which have been crossed out and replaced with lines that would eventually make it to print. The 1645 publication, in *Poems of Mr.* John Milton, would also

[10] A. E. Harvey, "The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry", *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 5 (1955), p. 159, n. 3.
[11] See Maurice Kelley and Samuel D. Atkins, "Milton's Annotations of Aratus", *PMLA* 70 (1955), pp. 1090-1106, specifically p. 1100.
[12] Henricus Stephanus, *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1846), v. 5, p. 1192.
[13] See John Milton, "Lycidas", in Thomam Buck and Rogerum Daniel (eds.), *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago* (Cambridge, 1638), p. 20. *Milton*, p. 100, n. 1, mentions that "Milton did not include the sentence about the clergy in the 1638 *Justa*", but does not make it clear that, in fact, no part of the headnote was present.
[14] John Milton, *Poemata Miltoni Manu-scripta*, Unpublished Manuscript, Trinity College, Cambridge (also known as Trinity Manuscript), p. 31.
[15] John T. Shawcross, "Speculations on the Dating of the Trinity MS. of Milton's Poems", *Modern Language Notes* 75 (1960), p. 17.

feature an expansion of the headnote, in which Milton credits himself with foretelling "the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height". But for this chronological detail, interpreting Milton's usage of the term "monody" would have been simpler: regardless of his possible exposure to *stile recitativo* following his trip to Italy, his use of the label "monodie" hinges on whether Doni's *Compendio* could have reached him by 1637, when or before *Lycidas* was being composed: either "monody" could easily fit with Puttenham's definition (or others comparably situated among lists of poetic genres), or it refers to an entirely new use of the term, to describe an entirely new form of music.

Initial suggestions that the connection might provide a viable field of inquiry came from Clay Hunt, in 1979, and in 1991, from P. G. Stanwood.[16] Hunt overlooks the importance of dating, mentioning a "theory of monody" in connection with Lawes and the setting of *A Maske* (which is impossible). Stanwood's essay pointed up the possibility that Milton's compositional style in *Lycidas* was informed by his exposure to the *nuove musiche* of Italy, and that his decision to describe the poem as a monody is "a crucial key to understanding the poem". I intend to argue that this is correct, but some biographical information must be presented first, in order to form an accurate picture of how this might be so. Stanwood suggests the possibility that Milton and Doni met in Florence on 24 March, 1639, but, given the evidence, it is highly unlikely that this meeting took place. Louise Schleiner, in 1982, unravelled the case,[17] making it clear that there was little chance our Doni could have been in Florence at the time, but stresses the extent of common acquaintances and interests between the two men that could have all but ensured Milton's exposure to Doni's work. Milton's letter to Lukas Holste, "a long time friend and scholarly associate of Doni in the service of Barberini",[18] from Florence, on 30 March, 1639,

[16] Clay Hunt, *Lycidas and the Italian Critics* (New Haven, 1979), p. 191; and P. G. Stanwood, "Milton's *Lycidas* and Earlier Seventeenth-Century Opera", in Mario A. Di Cesare ed., *Milton in Italy: Contexts, Images, Contradictions* (New York, 1991), pp. 293-303.

[17] "[Doni's] biography and correspondence show him active in Rome at several points during the period of Milton's tour, while there is no evidence that he was in Florence then. The Doni who appears on the Florentine Svogliati minutes, which also show Milton in attendance, for March 24, 1639, reading 'a scene from his tragedy' was presumably one Niccolo Doni, a member of the academy. G. B. Doni is not known to have written any plays, and besides, if he had been in Florence on March 24, Milton would not have written to Holste five days later that Doni was still in Rome and was expected to leave there soon for Florence", Louise Schleiner, "Milton, G. B. Doni, and the Dating of Doni's Works", *Milton Quarterly* 16 (1982), p. 38. This was pointed out much earlier, as well, by Edith P. Hubbard, "John Milton and Giovanni Battista Doni", *Notes and Queries* 8 (1961), pp. 171-2.

[18] Schleiner 1982, p. 39. Francesco Barberini (1597-1679) was a cardinal in Rome during Milton's visit, and a great patron of literature and music. It was he who took Milton to hear *Chi soffre, speri*, an opera by Virgilio

seems to imply that an actual meeting was quite possible: "They tell me, however, that John Baptist Doni, who has been invited to lecture on Greek literature at Florence, is daily expected here from Rome".[19]

Much has been made, as well, of the mention of certain books Milton shipped from Italy back home to England, in Phillips' *The Life of Mr. John Milton* (1694). Phillips was Milton's nephew and long-time pupil, but is surprisingly unreliable with regards to specific facts (he gives incorrect dates for Milton's birth and death, for example). Even so, to him are owed some insights not to be had elsewhere. He writes that Milton, leaving Venice for Verona,

> Shipp'd a Parcel of curious and rare Books which had pick'd up in his Travels, particularly a Chest or two of choice Musick-books of the best Masters flourishing about that time in *Italy*, namely *Luca Marenzo*, *Monte Verde*, *Horatio Vecchi*, the Prince of *Venosa* and several others.[20]

Regardless, it should be pointed out that no discussion of Milton's possible relationship with "monody", which I have found, makes mention of the fact that the headnote describing *Lycidas* as a "Monodie" is present in the Trinity MS., making it predate any possible meeting between himself and Doni, and, indeed, his entire trip to Italy.

In his chapter titled *Discorso sopra la perfettione delle melodie*, Doni discusses the original distinction between *monodie* and *chorodie*. It includes the definition, which he derives from Plato as well, with which we are familiar: "le musiche à una voce sola (che anticamente si dicevano Monodie)... e quelle, che di più voci si compongono; alle quali in parte conviene il nome di Chorodie, usato da Platone, & altri antichi autori".[21] However, it is later in this section that Doni singles out the efforts of Caccini and the "Academici Fiorentini" as a unique triumph in the recreation of this ancient form, after describing other Italian song forms, the madrigal and canzone among them, as unable to communicate the significance of their text. His final definition

---

Mazzocchi and Marco Marazzoli.

[19] John Hall (ed., trans.), *Milton's Familiar Letters* (Philadelphia, 1829), p. 44. The letter can be found in its original Latin, in both transcribed and facsimile form, in Joseph McG. Bottkol, "The Holograph of Milton's Letter to Holstenius", *PMLA* 68 (1953), pp. 617-627.

[20] *Milton*, p. 22.

[21] "The music from one voice alone (that in Antiquity was called monody)... and that music which is composed of more voices, to which is given the name chorodie, used by Plato and other ancient authorities", Giovanni Battista Doni, *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica* (Rome, 1635), p. 96 (my translation).

of "monodie", explicitly equated with the Florentine Camerata's *stile recitativo*, is tempting enough that the few oversights committed in Milton's favour could be forgiven. Monody

> consists in singing beautifully and graciously and in making all the poetic sentiments understood without the words being lost, and not in the fullness and sweetness of the harmony which without fail would sound better for artificial instruments, e.g. flutes, than for voices; and granted, then, that in sweetness *monodie* is inferior [to madrigals], it is of little consequence... since a good comprehension of the words is much more essential and important, the goal of music being not pleasure but the arousing of the affects.[22]

By labelling *Lycidas* a monody, Milton is resituating the poem in an entirely new context, while at the same time introducing a new aspect to the definition of "monody" itself. Having been, from its origins, something of a misappropriation, the term was subjected to a number of varying interpretations, none of which could adequately describe *Lycidas*. I have registered caution in assuming the extent of Milton's exposure to early Italian opera prior to his trip to Italy, but there seems to be ample reason to believe that his use of the term, here, refers to Doni's definition, at least in part. *Lycidas* itself is a poem full of ambition, encompassing the expansion of the pastoral accomplished by Vergil while drawing fully on the English poetic tradition up to and including *The Shepheardes Calender*.[23] As Spenser did before him, Milton is declaring himself a "New Poet", and in the spirit of the *Calender*'s publication he is presenting himself as an author of erudition whose work partakes of the heritage of *vates* and of music in poetry.

The poem itself is among the best-loved in English literature, and musical analyses of it have been undertaken before. Indeed, many have noted the presence of "multiple voices" in a song supposedly for one voice alone, while other structures, both poetic and musical underlying the poem have also been identified.[24] Observations include mention of the "canzone-style" rhyme-scheme of the poem (and, indeed, a *Canzone* was published along with the six Italian sonnets in *Poems*), while it has also been argued that the greater similarity is to the Italian

---

[22] I have chosen to borrow a translation of the passage: John H. Baron, "Monody: A Study in Terminology", *The Musical Quarterly* 54 (1968), p. 463. The passage is quoted from Doni 1635, p. 103.

[23] C. A. Patrides (ed.), *Milton's "Lycidas": The Tradition and the Poem* (Columbia, 1983).

[24] See Northrop Frye, "Literature as Context: Milton's *Lycidas*" (1959), in Angela Easterhammer (ed.), *Northrop Frye on Milton and Blake* (Toronto, 2005), and F. T. Prince, *The Italian Element in Milton's Verse* (Oxford, 1954).

madrigal.[25] Both styles involve a less rigid adherence to fixed rhyme schemes, while the madrigal permits a higher number of unrhymed lines. Regardless, this added flexibility is crucial to the poem's musical appeal.

The first stanza of the poem, fourteen lines in length, scans thus: abccbbdebdebxb. Note the presence of two "incidental" rhymed couplets, and also the predominance of the "b" ("ear") rhyme, which occurs at the end of six of the lines. Since the first line and the thirteenth line do not rhyme at all, the "b" rhyme occurs in half of the stanza's lines. What is the reason for this? Although Milton has obviously included his rhymes deliberately, the irregularity of the sequence leads us to believe that he has done so without any particular attention to which syllables are chosen to rhyme where. This gives the poem a vast amount of freedom in terms of word-choice – and yet the beauty of the rhyme is not in any way hampered, but rather startlingly heightened as a result. Since the closing of each rhyme exists outside the realm of formulaic expectation, it is all the more satisfying in its resolution.

> Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more
> Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never-sear,
> I com to pluck your Berries harsh and crude,
> And with forc'd fingers rude,
> Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
> Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
> Compels me to disturb your season due:
> For *Lycidas* is dead, dead ere his prime
> Young *Lycidas*, and hath not left his peer:
> Who would not sing for *Lycidas*? he well knew
> Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
> He must not flote upon his watry bear
> Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
> Without the meed of som melodious tear.[26]

And yet, such is the grace of execution in these rhymes that they invite closer analysis. If the stanza is broken into sentences, all of which are end stops, the rhyme sequence then becomes abccb bdeb de bxb. Again excepting the first line, the "b" rhyme encloses each sentence aside from the "de" sentence, "Who would not sing for Lycidas?..." The tone of this schematically

[25] Ants Oras, "Milton's Early Rhyme Schemes and the Structure of *Lycidas*", *Modern Philology* 52 (1954), pp. 12-22.
[26] Lines 1-14, from *Milton*, p. 100.

isolated sentence is itself an interjection, that of a speaker addressing his audience in appeal, and this turn is reflected in its break from an otherwise perfectly unifying structure. From this perspective, we observe how the poem's superficial irregularity can be peeled away to reveal a deeper unity, one that deals with themes of language and intonation in a manner comparable to the recurrence of musical thematic material. Departures from this deeper unity, then, acquire an even greater significance; "Who would not sing for Lycidas?" is an address to the world; "he well knew/ Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme", actually serves to draw Lycidas down into the material, self-referential world, in which context any listener is impelled to put himself in Lycidas' place, and thereby recognise the frailty of his own mortality.

At fourteen lines, the opening stanza also imitates a sonnet, a form with which Milton always felt at home. The "de" sentence, with its sudden address to the listener, marks the change in tone which normally accompanies the onset of the sestet. Internal sonnets are a frequent occurrence in *Lycidas*, as they are in *Paradise Lost*, where, in blank verse form, they serve to isolate and highlight important soliloquies. Here, the use of a normally fixed form compounds the isolating effect that is achieved through the use of the irregular rhyme scheme. The sentences are each marked by end stops, and punctuated with "b" rhymes, while the entire verse-paragraph conforms to the tightly compressed organisation of the sonnet. It can be said, then, that even though a particular form has been followed, it has been followed in such a way that its demands give way to absolute freedom. No rhyme is merely arbitrary or incidental, nor yet are the larger scale requirements of the sonnet. Rather, the apparent irregularity of the rhyme reduces our consciousness thereof, and the language itself attains a degree of resonance, of completeness, that cannot be pin-pointed without analysis. The poem waxes most musical in these moments of "suspended rhyme." By contrast, moments of deliberate "dissonance" are created when a rhyme is not picked up. The "x" rhyme on line 13 is made even more barren for its lack of a consonant partner: "Unwept, and welter to the parching wind". Similarly, the lone instance in which Lycidas' name is used to end a line, much later, at line 51, it, too, is left unrhymed, held, as it were, in perpetual suspension.[27] In effect, the intended "sense" is wedded perfectly to the

[27] Line 22, "And bid fair peace be to my sable shrowd", line 82, "And perfet witness of all judging *Jove*", line 91, "He ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the Fellon winds", and line 161, "Where the great vision of the guarded Mount", are the other instances of lines being left unrhymed.

"music" of the poem. As Oras wrote in 1954, in defence of Milton's very deliberate use of rhyme, we see in *Lycidas*

> an increasing mastery in making rhyme express mood and matter with force and precision. It shows a technique growing in range and intricacy but never "irregular" in the negative sense of the poet's letting himself go without knowing exactly what course he is taking. Its so-called 'irregularity' is essentially calculated complexity.[28]

The matter of the poem's unresolved first line, the "ore" rhyme, was addressed in 1969.[29] Wittreich points out its recurrence at each significant section break, such as during "the introduction of the Orpheus image (line 58), a key image in the poem and the one which begins the deification of Lycidas". Its next occurrence coincides with the conclusion of Milton's prophecy about the downfall of the clergy and the famous image of "that two-handed engine at the door", which "Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more" (lines 130-1). Frye describes an overall ABACA structure, "as in the musical rondo", to the poem in which "The main theme [i.e. the A sections] is the drowning of Lycidas in the prime of his life; the two episodes [i.e. the B and C sections], presided over by the figures of Orpheus and Peter, deal with the theme of premature death as it relates to poetry and to the priesthood respectively".[30] These section divides, however, do not coincide with instances of the "ore" rhyme, as the central "A" section is imagined to fit between lines 84 ("Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed") and 108/9 ("Last came, and last did go,/ The Pilot of the *Galilean* lake") – that is, after the exit of Phoebus and before the entry of Peter. Frye notes the difficulty in "the managing of the transitions from these episodes back to the main theme", but this is only due to these transitions having been mistakenly identified. Assuming the method to Frye's choices was dictated by changes in speaker or character would be to overlook the equal weight given to Apollo in the B section supposedly concerned with Orpheus, for it is Apollo who speaks and resolves the poet's inner turmoil, not Orpheus himself.

Assuming that Milton's intent is to use suspended rhymes in order to add greater unity to the poem reveals a simpler and more cohesive structure, in the form of ABA. Here, again, the

---

[28] Oras 1954, p. 21.
[29] Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., "Milton's 'Destin'd Urn': The Art of *Lycidas*", *PMLA* 84 (1969), pp. 60-70.
[30] Easterhammer 2005, p. 26.

transition from A to B makes use of an internal sonnet, which marks the first reiteration of the "ore" rhyme as well as the other unrhymed (or "x") line in the poem, on the name of Lycidas:

> Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep
> Clos'd o're the head of your lov'd *Lycidas*?
> For neither were ye playing on the steep,
> Where your old *Bards*, the famous *Druids* ly,
> Nor on the shaggy top of *Mona* high,
> Nor yet where *Deva* spreads her wisard stream:
> Ay me, I fondly dream!
> Had ye bin there – for what could that have don?
> What could the Muse her self that *Orpheus* bore,
> The Muse her self, for her inchanting son
> Whom Universal nature did lament,
> When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
> His goary visage down the stream was sent,
> Down the swift *Hebrus* to the *Lesbian* shore.[31]

This sonnet is unique in a number of ways aside from its mere cohesiveness with the poem's opening stanza. It marks the poet's first insertion of his own personality into the poem, serving as a jumping point for the meditation on the subject of poetry itself, and simultaneously changing the overall tone considerably, with a marked use of questions. These questions, however, are distinct from the purely rhetorical "Who would not sing for *Lycidas*?" Rather, they are addressed to the muses directly, and lack the intentional pause that accompanied the poet's address to his listeners. Nor have any questions, inwardly or outwardly directed, been employed in the intervening lines leading up to this sonnet. Milton has guided us to this transition point, and mirrored his opening form, right down to the closure of the "ore" rhyme, this time at the bottom of the stanza. The rhyme itself is carefully prepared as well, its first utterance occupying the first line of this sonnet's sestet.

It has been previously pointed out that these so-called unifying rhymes are "too far apart to have any meaning".[32] Certainly, as we are much more concerned with the aural dimensions of Milton's work than with the purely architectural, it is necessary to address this. A merely visual device would be of no value for the present purpose. Wittreich did respond to this observation

[31] *Milton*, p. 102, lines 50-63.
[32] Anthony Low and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr., "Circular Rhymes in *Lycidas*?", *PMLA* 86 (1971), p, 1032.

with the claim that even his students had been able to detect the "ore" rhyme without any assistance from him, but it may be possible to provide more substantial evidence. To begin, there can be no question that Milton has deliberately limited his use of the "ore" rhyme to very specific moments in the poem. Other rhymes which repeat at later points in the poem, such as "eyes" and "lies", or "dead", "bed", and "head", on close examination, show some level of thematic coincidence, but not in every instance. What is occurring incidentally and what may be true artifice is not as obvious in these cases. Milton is very careful, seemingly, to avoid merely visual rhyme as well, pairing even "*Hebrides*" with neither "surmise" nor "tide", but "ease/Seas" (over the course lines 151-6). The unrhymed lines ought also to be noted. Numbering six in total (see above), only "parching wind" and "*Lycidas*" seem significant as examples of intentional isolation by means of aural dissonance for the sake of thematic emphasis, but the effect never fails to heighten the satisfaction of the well-executed rhymes that invariably follow. Milton makes frequent use of the six-syllable line in order to maintain a strong internal unity to his rhyming; all instances of these lines, save one, are used in a rhyming couplet. Conversely, employing occasionally, and, for the most part, incidentally, unrhymed lines attenuates the moment of a rhyme's closure, achieving an effect similar to that by Spenser in his employment of the Alexandrine. Both cases involve a delay, of a kind, that teases expectation without refusing it.

If *Lycidas* were to be divided into an ABA structure, then each transition from one section to another would be marked by an instance of the "ore" rhyme. This syllable possesses, as a unifying element, the singular quality of forming a part (or, two parts) of the poem's opening line. While it forms a part of a repeated phrase in a line heavy with caesurae, "more" has the additional distinction of being, here, part of one of the poem's very few enjambments. "Laurels" rhymes with nothing, but "never-sear" rhymes with the opening sonnet's fourteenth line. In this way "Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more" forms a unit unto itself, which momentarily disregards the progress of the poem in such a way that promises it will be heard and recalled to mind at a later point. As previously noted, its reappearance marks the invocation of the Orpheus figure, with which, ostensibly, Lycidas is identified, even while the listener is acutely aware that it is with the poet himself that Orpheus is meant to be compared, these two figures having entered the scene in the same moment.

Orpheus, whose very name shares a degree of assonance with the rhyme which we are pursuing, marks the beginning of the B section of the poem, in which the poet's own personality takes the stage. The first two lines of this sonnet's sestet (lines 58-9) mimic the repetition and caesurae present in line 1: "What could the Muse her self that *Orpheus* bore,/ The Muse her self..." Here, however, the rhyme must be repeated such that it can be re-affixed in the ear. Between "Ay me, I fondly dream!", and "Alas! What boots it with uncessant care", then, the "ore" rhyme is used thrice, fully half the length of the sestet (here as before marked by a question). What follows, the B section, embraces themes of mortality both in the context of the poetic career and the less-worthy pursuit of earthly glory in the clergy. Frye separates these two portions, and takes the indicator "But now my Oate proceeds..." (line 88) to mark the return to the poem's principal theme, the death of Lycidas. But while a change in tone between the beginning of the section and the end is clear, Milton's blending of the subject of Lycidas with his thoughts on both poetry and on the clergy is even and gradual in a way that belies a true "break". Placing a break at line 88 would, moreover, ignore, or at the very least invalidate, the significance of the "ore" rhyme as an indicator of a transition. The very word "more" is employed in the conclusion of section B: "But that two-handed engine at the door,/ Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more". Note again, in the second of these lines, the repetition and use of a caesura that lends additional weight to the close of the section. Milton has reproduced exactly his use of poetic devices to accompany each instance of this rhyme.

While his suggested sectional divisions of *Lycidas* may not accord perfectly with the notably musical effects we have been identifying, Frye does, as mentioned above, make the comparison with the musical rondo. The literal "rondo" was, in Milton's time, only barely coming into existence, and, much like monody, only came to be recognised by its current name considerably later in the seventeenth century, not reaching England until the time of Purcell (1659? – 1695).[33] Early Italian opera is, along with the work of French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 – 1687), identified as the first example of the form's usage, which, if Frye's comparison be a valid one, could provide further insight into background of *Lycidas*. It is not an

[33] Malcolm S. Cole, "Rondo", *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23787. Consulted on 16 December, 2012. Cole begins, "The very simplicity of the rondo concept, and its consequent wide usage, makes it difficult to give a precise account of its origins".

observation that seems to have received any comment or examination beyond Frye's mention of it.

Very simply, a rondo is one of the "fundamental designs" of music, in which a principal section is used to alternate between other sections within a single piece, such that the overall structure can be described as ABA, ABACA, etc. Regardless of the number of alternating sections, the A section must be restated between each, with transitions between them being marked by changes in key, from tonic to dominant, or another related key, and back. The ABA structure became such a mainstay of early Italian songs and arias (as well as later ones) that the repetitions of the A sections were abbreviated to the "D. C." mark, or "da capo" ("from the head"), placed at the close of the B section, which indicated to the performer(s) that the first section of the piece was to be repeated (usually with ornamentation). Since its inception, the rondo, and by extension the so-called "da capo aria" form, has been one of the essential characteristics of Western music, either in large or smaller scale, as indispensible as the concept of a key or mode.

Lycidas bears the signs of having been modelled on this structure. Poems written specifically for a musical setting in ABA form could, of course, dispense with any internal unity of their own, as the text for the A section is simply repeated along with the music itself. By contrast, simulating the effect of an ABA form in a longer poem such as *Lycidas* requires much more subtlety. There would be little to be gained from reprinting the opening stanza verbatim. Rather, the "ore" rhyme is employed in order to establish a semblance of "mode", in such a way as to create in the memory of the ear a sense of departure and subsequent return. As with any rhyme, the significance of a first line can only be understood in the context of its consequent partners. Given how clearly it is represented, there is little reason to doubt that the "ore" rhyme is employed with this in mind. Without a point of departure, there can be no return, but without an arrival, there can be no departure.

Milton resumes his original mode at line 132, "Return *Alpheus*, the dread voice is past". From here, there is a lengthy recapitulation which encompasses the invocation of the "*Sicilian* Muse", and the personification of the features of the pastoral, which makes for a gentle, indeed

serene, approach to the poem's resolution. Whether we, as close readers of the poem, are influenced in our perceptions by an expanded awareness of its rhymes, or not, there can be no debate about the sense of return conveyed by line 165, "Weep no more, woful Shepherds weep no more". The line copies exactly the form of repetition and use of caesurae identified in line 1, and, further, develops on the "ore" rhyme in imitation of its first reappearance, in the B section. While the line is a firm imperative, it is so with a note of consolation, in stark contrast to the stirring invocation of the poem's opening. Line 166, "For *Lycidas* your sorrow is not dead", echoes line 8, "For *Lycidas* is dead, dead ere his prime", closing the theme of mourning with active contemplation of a later resurrection. The final instance of the "ore" rhyme reproduces, yet again, its original form, this time dovetailed with another couplet (lines 182-3): "Now *Lycidas* the Shepherds weep no more,/ Hence forth thou art the Genius of the shore".

Lycidas is also conspicuous for the presence of its narrator. Milton's earlier poems, even those in which he himself is the subject, such as Sonnet 7, written on his "three and twentieth yeer", venture little comment on the career of the poet. *Ad Patrem,* one of the Latin elegies published with *Poems* in 1645 (and 1673), addresses John Milton Sr., with a lengthy exhortation on the virtues of poetry, in a tone that seems to seek justification. Attempts to date the poem have proved unhelpful (Flannagan notes, "It has been dated from 1630 to 1640... with no convincing evidence to support any of the various dates"[34]), but the subject matter situates it along lines closely similar to those of *Lycidas*. Milton's poetry had, especially by the late 1630s, begun attracting considerable attention. Lawes published the text to *A Maske* in 1637, because "Although not openly acknowledg'd by the Author, yet it is a legitimate off-spring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tir'd my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessitie of producing it to the publick view".[35] Even so, the 1638 publication of *Lycidas* bore only "J. M.", while the other contributors gave their family names. Milton's name appears nowhere in Lawes' publication of *A Maske*.

Ad Patrem, for the considerable detail Milton gives to his descriptions of poetry's virtues, is a relevant work regardless, but it bears mention with regards to *Lycidas* because it also

[34] *Milton*, p. 223.
[35] Henry Lawes (ed.), *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634* (London, 1637), pp. A2-3.

constitutes a self-proclamation as a poet, and one destined to join the ranks of Orpheus and those others of "my native Olympus". John Milton Sr. evidently did everything in his power to encourage and help his son develop his talents, but here as in *Lycidas* there is the unmistakable impression that some justification was felt to be needed. After an opening stanza expressing thanks to his father, Milton addresses him in the imperative: "Do not despise divine poetry, creation of the prophetic bard: nothing better shows our heavenly origins".[36] He goes on to blend together, as did E. K., the myriad dimensions of poetry that give it its power, and make it essential to a good and happy life. Here we see *vates*: "In poetry the secrets of the far-distant future are revealed... The priest composes songs at the holy altars". Here, *movere*: "song has the power to stir the depths of quaking Tartarus, to seize the gods of the underworld; song binds unfeeling ghosts with triple bands of steel". Here, *delectare*: "I will go through the heavens wearing a golden crown, marrying my sweet words to the soft music of the lute: those songs will ring through the stars, from pole to pole". And, finally, *docere*: "Songs used to adorn noble feasts of kings... In those days, the bard... sang of the achievements of heroes worthy of emulation, and sang of chaos and the broad foundations of the world". Presumably to make the point a more personal one, Milton concludes his praise of poetry with a discussion of how essential words are to music, in order to give it its sense:

> What pleasure after all will there be in music well attuned if it is empty of the human voice, or empty of words and their meanings, or of rhythms of speech? Such strains befit woodland choirboys, not Orpheus, who by his singing and not his lute captivated streams, and caused oak trees to grow ears to listen to his songs, and by his singing made lifeless ghosts weep: it is from his song that he has these praises.

As is to be expected, the Orpheus figure is given pride of place in a discussion of poetry, but it is nevertheless surprising to be able to mark so many arguments in defence of poetry with which we are already familiar through the work of Spenser (and E. K.), and Philip Sidney – or, perhaps not. Situated alongside *Lycidas* (and *A Maske* as well) in *Poems*, *Ad Patrem* serves as an excellent gloss to Milton's English poems, equipping the whole publication with a critical apparatus reminiscent of E. K.'s contribution to *The Shepheardes Calender*. Here as then, great pains have been taken to exalt poetry, when appropriately wedded to music, above all earthly

[36] *Milton*, p. 224. The translation from the Latin is Flannagan's own adaptation, "updated, simplified, and sometimes changed utterly from the quaint Victorian English of the Columbia translators". See *Milton*, p. 173.

concerns, even, in the case of Lycidas himself, death. Poetry has the power to describe the path to Heaven, to redemption. As Orpheus' song is credited with raising man above the level of brute beasts, so Milton situates himself as the poet whose songs may elevate man above the merely terrestrial and set him on the right path to God.

Following its introductory sonnet, the B section of *Lycidas* begins the poet's meditation on the "Shepherds trade", so-called because here poetry is situated in the pastoral realm. In keeping with the poetic tradition established by Vergil, and adapted to English verse by Spenser, Milton maintains a sharp conceptual divide between the bucolic and the epic. Line 64,"Alas! What boots it with uncessant care", where the meditation begins, ties in closely with the preceding sonnet by echoing lines 57 and 58: "Had ye bin there – for what could that have don?/ What could the Muse her self that *Orpheus* bore". The assonance between "there" and "care" places the helplessness of Calliope ("the Muse") alongside the apparent futility of a poetic career, while the questioning tone of the poem itself grows more insistent. Even she herself was unable to save her son, as the nymphs were unable to save Lycidas.

It is this realisation that spurs Milton to beg of his listeners the question, what is the worth of a lifetime given to poetry. One of the poem's more enigmatic lines, perhaps even more so than that of the "two-handed engine", is line 71, in which the spur of *Fame* is called "That last infirmity of noble mind". Emerging from the rueful tone of Milton's question, "What boots it", calling the desire for fame an infirmity seems to be yet another, somewhat harsher, apology. "To scorn delights, and live laborious days" would indeed be a symptom of an infirm mind, as though one would have to be mad to wish for a life of such hardship. Moreover, it has been noted[37] that Milton choses to name the *Fury*, rather than the three Fates, as the fickle agent of death who snatches away the poet's prize in his moment of triumph. According to oneself the role of *vates*, of daring to be an artist, is to run against the grain of all society, and to invite the kind of justice that is far from even-handed. Mere destiny may itself be fickle, but the Furies, the Erinyes, were goddesses of vengeance, and played a role similar to that of Nemesis, "correcting or punishing

[37] *Milton*, p. 103, n. 37.

beings that step outside their conventional roles, especially overreachers who try to climb above their divinely ordained station".[38]

To say that one's life would be ended by the Furies is a wry admission, and introduces a note of dark irony into the poem, especially when considering the fact that it is Lycidas, or Edward King, about whom the poet is ostensibly speaking. The life of the poet is "thin-spun", a tenuous thing, subject to worse whims than mere ill fate. Later, on line 100, the blame is laid squarely on "that fatall and perfidious Bark"; the sea and winds were calm the day King's ship was lost, but the ship itself was accursed, doomed by some malicious entity.

Such desperation must be the lot of the poet, if he is to be worthy of his just reward. The intercession of Phoebus Apollo saves the poet from despair, giving a lyrical description of heavenly fame over seven lines, six of which form rhyming couplets (lines 78-84):

> *Fame* is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glistering foil
> Set off to th'world, nor in broad rumour lies,
> But lives and spreds aloft by those pure eyes,
> And perfet witness of all judging *Jove*;
> As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

That the name of Jove should fall on an unrhymed line in the midst of a series of couplets (which are rare enough) is indicative of his authority in matters of fate and judgment. The couplets, in this poem, are sufficiently unexpected that they affect the ear charmingly, and the insertion of an unrhymed line has an exalting effect rather than, as in the case of the "parching wind", a dissonant or jarring sound. It may very well be, too, that Milton intends a more lyrical mode for the duration of Apollo's speech (even if the Milton we come to know later is not one that would associate rhyming couplets with strains "of a higher mood"). Line 79, "Nor in the glistering foil", I read as having six syllables, not seven (i.e. "glist'ring"). Milton is far from miserly with his use of apostrophes to maintain the integrity of his lines. Line 116, for example, contracts "reckoning" to "reck'ning", and similar examples abound. The discrepancy, then, is

[38] Brian Seilstad, "Furies", in C. Scott Littleton (ed.), *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology*, 11 vols. (New York, 2005), v. 4, p. 538.

somewhat surprising, but there is no precedent across the entirety of the poem for a deviation in syllable count. The 1638 version of the poem, in *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago*, reads "glistring", without "e" or apostrophe,[39] but the "e" is present in both the 1645 and 1673 versions, and the Trinity MS.

It should here be noted that Phoebus Apollo is generally acknowledged as the father of Orpheus. The original libretto of Alessandro Striggio for Monteverdi's *l'Orfeo* concluded with an ending based on Ovid's account of Orpheus' death, namely, that the Bacchantes, offended at Orpheus for scorning women after the loss of Euridice, tear him to pieces and send his head floating down the Hebrus. Obviously, it is to this "traditional" ending that Milton refers, earlier in *Lycidas* (the Bacchantes are "the rout that made the hideous roar"). Striggio's libretto has the Bacchantes arrive on the stage, orgiastic as ever, to interrupt Orpheus' concluding aria. He exits, his ultimate fate more or less certain, and the opera ends. But Monteverdi himself, for the performances and publications of *l'Orfeo* (in 1609 and 1615), changed the libretto in order to have a happy ending for his opera.[40] In this altered version of the story, Apollo appears before Orpheus. He rebukes his son for his excessive preoccupation with both his original good fortune, in having Euridice, and with his ill fortune in having lost her: "Troppo, troppo gioisti di tua lieta ventura, or troppo piagni tua sorte acerba e dura".[41] He then invites his son to ascend with him to heaven, where he will see Euridice's likeness in the stars, join the immortals, and receive praise and life.

Apollo is the patron god of poetry and music, as well as of the sun. Lycidas' resurrection is likened to the rising sun in lines 168-72 as well (though the resurrection is attributed to "the dear might of him that walk'd the waves", not Apollo). Being the father of Orpheus, and, hence, one-time paramour of Calliope, head of the nine Muses and patron of epic poetry, Apollo has a strong, logical connection to the matter of the poem that does not necessarily depend on whether Milton could have known Monteverdi's *l'Orfeo* at the time of *Lycidas*' composition. This description of poetic fame owes much more to *October* in Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*,

[39] Buck 1638, p. 22. This edition is, however, rife with typographical errors. See *Milton*, p. 98.
[40] John Whenham, "*Orfeo*, Act V: Alessandro Striggio's original ending", in John Whenham (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo* (New York, 1986), pp. 35-40.
[41] "Too much, too much you rejoiced in your happy fortune, now too much you weep for your fate bitter and hard" (my translation). Claudio Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo* (Venice, 1615), p. 95, mm. 116-120.

in any case. And it is perhaps merely natural of Milton, as it was not of Spenser, to morph the Orpheus/Lycidas story into a Christ-like event, complete with a resurrection and redemption in Heaven. Orpheus, as ever, serves as a broadly adaptable figure that can be employed in making any point about the nobility of poetry – this is, indeed, why it was his story that served as the material for the earliest operas (both Peri and Caccini composed operas titled *Euridice*, before Monteverdi). The apparition of Apollo in *Lycidas*, and the recreation of *l'Orfeo*'s finale (as Milton could have known it) may as likely as not be a coincidence.

As covered in the previous chapter, some works of *nuove musiche* (and, specifically, some songs from Caccini's publication bearing that title) had reached England as early as 1610. Anthony à Wood (1632-1691) wrote of Milton in *Fasti Oxonienses* (1691) that in the five years leading up to the trip to Italy he "now and then made excursions into the great City to buy books, to the end that he might be instructed in Mathematicks and musick, in which last he became excellent, and by the help of his Mathematicks could compose a Song or Lesson". Wood cites Milton himself for this information, offered in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda* (1654): "I devoted myself entirely to the study of Greek and Latin writers, completely at leisure, not, however, without sometimes exchanging the country for the city, either to purchase books or to become acquainted with some new discovery in mathematics or music, in which I then took the keenest pleasure./ When I had occupied five years in this fashion, I became desirous, my mother having died, of seeing foreign parts, especially Italy".[42]

Lawes' music for *A Maske* is not "modest" as appears at first glance. Even if the superficial characteristics of the *stile rappresentativo* are not visible, the music most certainly complements the text in a way that shows similar lines of thought to those in the vanguard of the *nuove musiche*. Even so, his songs feature no instrumental interludes, nor does the surviving music from the performance contain any dance numbers, so there is no evidence of the rondo form, no sign of an ABA structure. Instances of repeated structures in Italian song, effectively precursors to the early rondo, can be found among the very first works produced by the Florentine Camerata, as demonstrated by Caccini's publication in 1601. As mentioned in the

[42] John Milton, "A Second Defence of the English People", in *John Milton prose: major writings on liberty, politics, religion, and education*, David Loewenstein (ed., trans.) (West Sussex, 2013), pp. 346-7.

previous chapter, some of these songs had made their way to England as early as 1610. But Lawes' songs themselves, while they feature a high level of melodic development based on the text, do not feature any alternating thematic material which could resemble a rondo.

Lycidas, however, is clearly built with alternating themes in mind. The specific breaks and transitions to each section are clearly marked, and there is an undeniable sense of closure accompanying the conclusion of the poem. Multiple voices are present, but they are present in turns. Strictly speaking, "monophony", not "monody", is the opposite of "polyphony". "Monophony", too, contains only one "voice", but this classification of voice does not depend on the number of singers or instruments employed, but only on the sequence of notes being sounded – in this case, one. A monophony may consist of any number of musicians, all playing the same tune. "Monody", as developed by the Florentine Camerata, by contrast, hinges on solo song, music sung by an individual, with an instrumental accompaniment. That instruments should be used merely to complement a vocal line, rather than partake equally of its complexity, was the Camerata's greatest achievement, allowing much greater levels of thematic development, and relations to text, setting aside the rigidity of polyphonic counterpoint, which was as smothering to musical creativity as was the need to compose in a fixed rhyme scheme to a poet of Milton's temperament.

This poem, then, called a "monodie" by Milton during the period of its composition does indeed contain multiple voices, but each sings in a different mode, alternating between one another while the "accompaniment", the poem's underlying structure, continues, providing background music and unifying their diversions to one mode or another, as a single, consistent vocal line. In a manner not attempted in English poetry or music before it, *Lycidas* is based on the form of the rondo, returning, at its close, to both the aural substance and the thematic material of its introduction.

For English literature, Milton's use of the word "monody" is to describe a poem wholly unique. In light of the above analysis of *Lycidas*, and the assessment of the context in which Milton came to employ the term, there is reasonable ground to take his accomplishment as having gifted to poetry a new definition for it. Milton did not compose a "monody". Rather, his

experiences as a composer of poetry, of poetry for masques, his experiences as a musician and a lover of Italian forms, equipped Milton to invent, in *Lycidas*, the English monody. A formal definition which accounts for the poem's salient features runs thus: "A lyrical form in which occur alternating solo voices, unified by a common theme and architecture, employing a semi-irregular, canzone-style rhyme scheme, and based on the rondo, or ABA, structure".

Lycidas would not appear with the full name of its author until 1645, but Milton declared himself poet a few years earlier, in a lengthy biographical preface to the second book of *Reason of Church-Government* (1642), being the first publication to which he attached his name.[43] In it he again describes the role of the poet in society, professing also to defend and improve poetry in English, i.e.: "to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue". His ambitions are "of highest hope, and hardest attempting, whether that Epick form... Or whether those dramatic constitutions... Or if occasion shall lead to imitat those magnifick Odes and Hymns wherein *Pindarus* and *Callimachus* are in most things worthy".[44]Ultimately it seems it is the vatic impulse, drawn to God and Heaven, which will be the deciding factor (note also the presence of the triad of rhetoric):

> These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired guift of God rarely bestow'd, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every Nation: and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of vertu, and publick civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty Hymns the throne and equipage of God Almightinesse.

There is much to redeem. Showing he could knock elbows with the best among poetry's detractors, Milton again echoes E. K.:

> And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry, may be soon guest by what we know of the corruption and bane which they suck in dayly from the writing and interludes of libidinous and ignorant Poetasters, who having scars ever heard of that which is the main consistence of a true poem, the choys of such persons as they ought to introduce, and what is morall and decent to each one, doe for the most part lap us vitious principles in sweet pils to be swallow'd down, and make the tast of vertuous documents harsh and sowr.

[43] Ralph Haug (ed.), "The Reason of Church-Government", in Don M. Wolfe (ed.), *Complete Prose Works of John Mitlon*, 7 vols. (New Haven, 1953), v. 1, p. 736.
[44] *Milton*, p. 923.

Taking on the role of *vates*, the true poet scorns those works which aspire to nothing more than "to please". This contempt would show itself again in the most memorable passage ever composed in defence of blank verse. Milton's publisher for *Paradise Lost*, Samuel Simmons, in response to his readers, included some further prose from the poet. Simmons' address, the arguments for each book in *Paradise Lost* (of which, at this time, there were still ten), and "The Verse", Milton's own response, were all included in 1668, inserted into the remaining copies of the first edition. From "The Printer to the Reader", Simmons writes: "There was no Argument at first intended to the Book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procur'd it, and withall a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the Poem Rimes not".[45]

For its relevance with regards to the present argument, Milton's defence deserves to be quoted in full (though it has been included in all subsequent editions of the poem):

> The Measure is *English* Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of *Homer* in *Greek*, and of *Virgil* in *Latin*; Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarious Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter; grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets, carried away by Custom, but much to thir own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse then else they would have exprest them. Not without cause therefore some both *Italian* and *Spanish* Poets of prime note have rejected Rime both in longer and shorter Works, as have also long since our best *English* Tragedies, as a thing of it self, to all judicious ears, triveal and of no true musical delight; which consists onely in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoyded by the learned Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory. This neglect then of Rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar Readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in *English*, of ancient liberty recover'd to Heroic Poem from the troublesom and modern bondage of Rimeing.[46]

T. S. Eliot said of Milton's style, "It is, from the foundation, and in every particular, a personal style, not based upon common speech, or common prose, or direct communication of meaning",[47] arguing that the sound of the language was in no way connected with the matter of

[45] S. Simmons (ed.), "The Printer to the Reader", in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London, 1668), p. A2.
[46] *Milton*, p. 352.
[47] P. 36

the poem. Rather, it should be observed that Milton's descriptions of his own work, in the above passages, could be adapted to describe in intent and product all of the devices, techniques, and concepts, which, over the course of this work, we have been identifying. At a stroke, he articulates the struggles of the Elizabethan poets and critics, and points the way forward, to a new poetry – one that could honour the teachings of Plato and encompass the painstaking work of those philosophers of *musica mundana*, who understood that it was only through art and artifice that the right path to God could be marked. "Artifice", the means by which the affective triad may be woven into a work, necessarily requires some obfuscation: it is against the superficially pleasing that Milton and E. K. rail when they decry the obsession with "rime". This is, to a greater or lesser extent, Eliot's point in criticizing Milton himself. But to raise this point against Milton is to have missed the point entirely. There would come a time again when simplicity of expression was a virtue, but for those would-be poets who emerged during the Renaissance, steeped in garbled and half-Christianized wisdom inherited from an age long gone, there could be no virtue greater than the composition of a poem that could, by the wedding of its matter and its form, imitate divine harmony and point the way to Heaven.

POSTSCRIPT

Whether the stated purpose of a poem is "to fashion a gentleman", as Spenser wrote to Walter Raleigh, or to "justifie the wayes of God to men" as Milton declared, it is to educate, to ennoble the soul, that the poet commits himself. That art should fill some role in society was one of the sternest and best-remembered edicts inherited from Plato and Aristotle. Little enough can be said for how Homer thought of his own work, but what came down to the Renaissance was a vision of a time wherein art provided direct lines of access, whether to the soul or to the passions, and could raise a man to the level of the gods, or drag him down to the brute state of beasts. Understanding that sound, and the body, were physical things, poetry was likened to music first and foremost because it was something one experienced aurally, not intellectually only. From this understanding was derived a whole host of theories and interpretations on how to bring poetry back to its former glory, to the days of Orpheus. Admiration for ancient poetry led, at the same time, to the birth of early opera; scholars and musicians following a path identical to that followed by Spenser created, only a few years after his announcement of a "new poetry" in England, the "new music", in Italy. Milton, arriving on the scene only shortly thereafter, became the nexus point of these two movements. A tradition by then spanning two thousand years, that poetry and music were one and the same, a tradition that began as it ended, largely in the erroneous conflation of similar but unrelated details, came to fruition in his work as it has in that of no other, before or since. Wanting to give to English its own "Heroic Verse", he became the intellectual and artistic successor to an entire generation of poets, musicians, and scholars, such that the English poetic tradition, bound by the virtues of *docere*, *movere*, and *delectare*, would take its place among the finest, and most revered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Eshan. “Du Bellay, Sebillet, and the problematic identity of the French humanist”. *Neophilologus* 75 (1991), 185-193.

Alsted, Johann Heinrich. *Encyclopaedia septem tomis distincta*. Herborn, 1630.

Alwes, Derek B. “‘Who Knowes Not Colin Clout?’ Spenser’s Self-Advertisement in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 6”. *Modern Philology* 88 (1990), 26-42.

Attridge, Derek. *Well-Weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres.* London, 1974.

Aubert, Jacques. *Introduction à L’Esthétique de James Joyce*. Paris, 1973.

----- (trans.). *The Aesthetics of James Joyce*. Baltimore, 1992.

Barham, Esq., Francis. (trans.). *The Political Works of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, 2 vols. London, 1841.

Barker, Andrew (ed.). *Greek Musical Writings, Volume II: Harmonic and Acoustic Theory.* Cambridge, 1989.

Barker, William. (ed.). *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children.* Toronto, 1994.

Baron, John H. “Monody: A Study in Terminology”. *The Musical Quarterly* 54 (1968), 462-74.

Basile, Mary Elizabeth. “The Music of *A Maske*”. *Milton Quarterly* 27 (1993), 85-98.

Berger, Harry. “The Mutabilitie Cantos: Archaism and Evolution in Retrospect”. *Revisionary Play: Studies in the Spenserian Dynamics*. Berkeley, 1988.

Birchensha, John (trans.). *Templum musicum, or, The musical synopsis of the learned and famous Johannes-Henricus-Alstedius*. London, 1664.

Blackburn, Bonnie J. “Music Theory and Musical Thinking after 1450”. Reinhard Strohm and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.). *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages. The New Oxford History of Music*, 10 vols., v. 3. New York, 2001.

Bottkol Joseph McG. “The Holograph of Milton’s Letter to Holstenius”. *PMLA* 68 (1953), 617-27.

Boyd, Morrison Comegys. *Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism.* Philadelphia, 1962.

Brennecke, Ernest. *John Milton the Elder and His Music.* New York, 1938.

Bridge, Frederick (arr.). *The Masque of Comus by John Milton; the original music by Henry Lawes*. London, 1908.

Brown, Ted. "Metapoetry in Spenser's *Amoretti*". *Philological Quarterly* 82 (2003), 401-17.

Bryskett, Lodowick. *A Discourse of Civill Life: Containing the Ethike part of Morall Philosophie.* London, 1606.

Buck, Thomam and Rogerum Daniel (eds.). *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago*. Cambridge, 1638.

Butler, H. E. (trans.). *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian.* London, 1920.

Campbell, Gordon and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought.* Oxford, 2008.

Campion, Thomas. *Observations in the art of English poesie.* London, 1602.

Caplan, Harry. (trans.). *Rhetorica ad Herennium.* London, 1964.

Carpenter, Frederic Ives. *A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser.* Chicago, 1923.

Cheney, Donald. "Spenser's Fortieth Birthday and Related Fictions". *Spenser Studies* 4 (1983), 3-32.

Cheney, Patrick. *Spenser's Famous Flight: A Renaissance Idea of a Literary Career.* Toronto, 1993.

----- and Lauren Silberman. (eds.). *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age.* Kentucky, 2000.

Christensen, Thomas. (ed.). *The Cambridge history of Western music theory.* Cambridge, 2002.

Clark, Donald Lemen. "Milton's Schoolmasters: Alexander Gil and His Son Alexander". *Huntington Library Quarterly* 9 (1946), 121-47.

Clements, Robert J. *Critical Theory and Practice of the Pléiade.* New York, 1970.

Cockeram, Henry. *The English dictionarie*. London, 1623.

Damschroder, David and David Russell Williams. *Music Theory from Zarlino to Schenker: a Bibliography and Guide.* New York, 1990.

Daniel, Samuel. *The Works of Samuel Daniel*. London, 1601.

Davies, M. "Monody, Choral Lyric, and the Tyranny of the Hand-Book". *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 38 (1988), 52-64.

De' Paoli, Domenico. *Claudio Monteverdi: lettere, dediche e prefazioni.* Rome, 1973.

Di Cesare, Mario A. (ed.). *Milton in Italy: Contexts, Images, Contradictions.* New York, 1991.

Doni, Giovanni Battista. *Compendio del trattato de' generi e de' modi della musica.* Rome, 1635.

Dowland, Robert. *A Musicall Banquet.* London, 1610.

Easterhammer, Angela (ed.). *Northrop Frye on Milton and Blake*. Toronto, 2005.

Eisuke, Tsugami (ed.). *Girolamo Mei, De modis.* Tokyo, 1991.

Fallows, David. "Tenor". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* Stanley Sadie (ed.). London, 2001.

Finney, Gretchen. "Ecstasy and Music in Seventeenth-Century England". *Journal of the History of Ideas* 8 (1947), 153-86.

-----. "A Musical Background for 'Lycidas' ". *Huntington Library Quarterly* 15 (1952), 325-50.

-----. "Music: A Book of Knowledge in Renaissance England". *Studies in the Renaissance* 6 (1959), 36-63.

Flannagan, Roy. (ed.). *The Riverside Milton.* New York, 1998.

Fletcher, Harris Francis. *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, 2 vols. Urbana, 1956.

----- (ed.). *Milton's Complete Poetical Works, Produced in Photographic Facsimile*, 4 vols. Illinois, 1943.

Folkerth, Wes. *Sound of Shakespeare.* London, 2002.

Fowler, Alastair. *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*. London, 1964.

Freeman, Louise Gilbert. "Vision, Metamorphosis, and the Poetics of Allegory in the Mutabilitie Cantos", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 45 (2005), 65-95.

Friedlein, Gottfried. (ed.). *Boethii De institutione musica libri quinque.* Leipzig, 1867.

Gibson, Margaret. (ed.). *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence.* Oxford, 1981.

Godwin, Joscelyn. *The Harmony of the Spheres.* Rochester, 1993.

Gosson, Stephen. *The schoole of abuse.* London, 1579.

Gouk, Penelope (ed.). *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance*. London, 1985.

-----. "The role of harmonics in the scientific revolution". Thomas Christensen (ed.). *The Cambridge history of Western music theory*. Cambridge, 2002.

Hadfield, Andrew. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser.* Cambridge, 2001.

----- and Willy Maley. (eds.). *Edmund Spenser. A View of the State of Ireland. From the first printed edition (1633)*. Oxford, 1997.

Hall, Anne D. "The Actaeon Myth and Allegorical Reading in Spenser's 'Two Cantos of Mutabilitie'". *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995), 561-75.

Hall, John. (ed.). *Milton's Familiar Letters.* Philadelphia, 1829.

Hamilton, A. C., Hiroshi Yamashita and Toshiyuki Suzuki. (eds.). *Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene*. London, 2007.

-----, Donald Cheney, W. F. Blissett, David A. Richardson, William W. Barker. (eds.). *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*. Toronto, 1990.

Hanning, Barbara Russano. *Of Poetry and Music's Power: Humanism and the Creation of Opera.* Michigan, 1980.

Hardie, Philip. "The Historian in Ovid. The Roman History of *Metamorphoses* 14-15". *Clio & the Poets, Augustan Poetry & the Traditions of Ancient Historiography.* D. S. Levene and D. P. Nelis (eds.). Boston, 2002.

Harper, John. "'One equal music': the Music of Milton's Youth". *Milton Quarterly* 31 (1997), 1-10.

Harvey, A. E. "The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry". *The Classical Quarterly,* New Series, 5 (1955), 157-75.

Haug, Ralph (ed.). "The Reason of Church-Government". *Complete Prose Works of John Milton,* 7 vols. Don M. Wolfe (ed.). New Haven, 1953.

Hecht, Paul J. "Spenser Out of His Stanza". *Style* 39 (2005).

Heffner, Ray, Dorothy E. Mason, Frederick M. Padelford. "Spenser Allusions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries Part 1: 1580-1625". *Studies in Philology* 68 (1971), i+iii+v-xii+1+3-172.

Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England.* Chicago, 1992.

-----. (ed., trans.). *Joachim du Bellay.* Philadelphia, 2006.

Heninger, S. K. *The Subtext of Form in the English Renaissance.* Pennsylvania 1994.

Herford, C. H. and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (eds.). *Ben Jonson.* Oxford, 1952.

Herlinger, Jan. "Music Theory of the Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries". Reinhard Strohm and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.). *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages. The New Oxford History of Music,* 10 vols., v. 3. New York, 2001.

Herman, Peter C. *Squitter-wits and muse-haters: Spenser, Sidney, Milton, and Renaissance antipoetic sentiment.* Detroit, 1996.

Highley, Christopher. *Shakespeare, Spenser, and the Crisis in Ireland.* Cambridge, 1997.

Hieatt, A. Kent. "Scudamour's Practice of *Maistrye* Upon Amoret". *PMLA* 77 (1962), 509-10.

His, Isabelle. "Italianism and Claude Le Jeune". *Early Music History* 13 (1994), 149-70.

Holahan, Michael. "Iamque Opus Exegi: Ovid's Changes and Spenser's Brief Epic of Mutability". *English Literary Renaissance* 6 (1976), 244-70.

Hollander, John. *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry 1500-1700.* London, 1970.

-----. *Melodious Guile: Fictive Pattern in Poetic Language.* London, 1988.

Holsinger, Bruce W. *Music, body, and desire in medieval culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer*. Stanford, 2001.

Hubbard, Edith P. "John Milton and Giovanni Battista Doni". *Notes and Queries* 8 (1961), 171-2.

Hunt, Clay. "Lycidas" *and the Italian Critics.* New Haven, 1979.

Jeserich, Philipp. *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France*. Michael J. Curley and Steven Randall (trans.). Baltimore, 2013.

Jones, Horace Leonard (trans.). *The Geography of Strabo*. London, 1930.

Jowett, B. (trans.). *The Dialogues of Plato*, 5 vols. London, 1931.

Jowett, John (ed.). *William Shakespeare: The Tragedy of King Richard III*. Oxford, 2000.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Oxford, 1998.

Joyce, P. W. *The Wonders of Ireland and Other Papers on Irish Subjects.* London, 1911.

Kelley, Maurice and Samuel D. Atkins. "Milton's Annotations of Aratus". *PMLA* 70 (1955), 1090-106.

Lamb, Mary Ellen. "Gendered Fictions in *The Faerie Queene*". *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age.* Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (eds.). Kentucky, 2000.

Lawes, Henry (ed.). *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*. London, 1637.

Levene, D. S. and D. P. Nelis (eds.). *Clio & the Poets, Augustan Poetry & the Traditions of Ancient Historiography.* Boston, 2002.

Lewis, C.T. and C. Short. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford, 1879.

Lindley, David. "Music, masque, and meaning in *The Tempest*". David Lindley (ed.). *The court masque*. Manchester, 1984.

----- (ed.). *The court masque*. Manchester, 1984.

Littleton, C. Scott (ed.). *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology*, 11 vols. New York, 2005.

Loewenstein, David (ed., trans.). *John Milton prose: major writings on liberty, politics, religion, and education.* West Sussex, 2013.

Logan, George and Gordon Teskey (eds.). *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance.* Ithaca, 1989.

London, Justin. "Pulse". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* Stanley Sadie (ed.). London, 2001.

Low, Anthony and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. "Circular Rhymes in *Lycidas*?". *PMLA* 86 (1971), 1032-5.

McCabe, Richard A. (ed.). *Edmund Spenser: the Shorter Poems.* London, 1999.

McGrady, R. J. "Henry Lawes and the Concept of 'Just Note and Accent' ". *Music & Letters* 50 (1969), 86-102.

Maley, Willy. "Spenser's languages". *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser.* Andrew Hadfield (ed.). Cambridge, 2001.

Mallette, R. "Spenser's Portrait of the Artist in *The Shepheardes Calender* and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*". *Studies in English Literature* 19 (1979), 19-41.

Masi, Michael (trans.). *Boethian number theory: a translation of the De institutione arithmetica*. New York, 1983.

Mathiesen, Thomas J. *Ancient Greek Music Theory*. Munich, 1988.

-----. *Apollo's Lyre: Greek music and music theory in antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Nebraska, 1999.

Maynard, Winifred. *Elizabethan Lyric Poetry and Its Music*. Oxford, 1986.

Meyer, Russel J."'Fixt in heavens hight': Spenser, Astronomy, and the Date of the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*". *Spenser Studies* 4 (1983), 115-30.

Miller, David L. "Spenser's Career, Spenser's Vocation". *ELH* 50 (1983), 197-230.

Milton, John. *Poemata Miltoni Manu-scripta*. Unpublished Manuscript. Trinity College, Cambridge.

Monteverdi, Claudio. *L'Orfeo.* Venice, 1615.

Naylor, E. W. and J. M. & Sons. *The Poets and Music.* London, 1928.

Nohmberg, James. *The Analogy of* The Faerie Queene. Princeton: 1976.

Norbrook, David. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*. London, 1984.

Oram, William A. "Spenser's Raleghs", *Studies in Philology* 87 (1990), 341-62.

-----. “Spenser’s Audiences 1589-91”. *Studies in Philology* 100 (2003), 514-33.

Oras, Ants. “Milton’s Early Rhyme Schemes and the Structure of *Lycidas*”. *Modern Philology* 52 (1954), 67-73.

Ossi, Massimo. “Claudio Monteverdi’s ‘Ordine novo, bello et gustevole’: The Canzonetta as Dramatic Module and Formal Archetype”. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45 (1992), 261-304.

Ossi, Michele. *Divining the oracle: Monteverdi’s seconda prattica.* Chicago, 2003.

Palisca, Claude V. “Review”. *Early Music History* 11 (1992), 303-13.

-----. *Studies in the History of Italian Music and Music Theory.* Oxford, 2001.

Patrides, C. A. (ed.). *Milton’s “Lycidas”: The Tradition and the Poem.* Columbia, 1983.

Plett, Heinrich F. *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture.* Berlin, 2004.

Prince, F. T. *The Italian Element in Milton’s Verse.* Oxford, 1954.

Puttenham, George. *The arte of English poesie, Contrived into three books.* London, 1589.

Radice, Betty, and Robert Baldick. (eds., trans.). *Classical Literary Criticism.* London, 1965.

Rajan, Balachandra. “Simple, Sensuous and Passionate”. *Review of English Studies* 21 (1945), 289-301.

Ravenscroft, Thomas. *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*. London, 1621.

Restani, Donatella. *L’itinerario di Girolamo Mei: dalla ‘Poetica’ alla musica con un’appendice di testi*. Florence, 1990.

Ringer, Mark. *Opera’s First Master: the Musical Dramas of Claudio Monteverdi.* Canada, 2006.

Ringler, R. N. “The Faunus Episode”. *Modern Philology* 63 (1965), 12-9.

Roche, Thomas. “Spenser’s Muse”. *Unfolded Tales: Essays on Renaissance Romance.* George Logan and Gordon Teskey (eds.). Ithaca, 1989.

Ryding, Erik S. *In Harmony Framed: musical humanism, Thomas Campion, and the two Daniels*. Missouri, 1993.

Sadie, Stanley. (ed.). *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* London, 2001.

Schafer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World.* Rochester, 1994.

Schleiner, Louise. “Milton, G. B. Doni, and the Dating of Doni’s Works”. *Milton Quarterly* 16 (1982), 36-42.

Segal, Charles. *Orpheus: the Myth of the Poet.* London, 1989.

Seilstad, Brian. "Furies". *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology*, 11 vols. C. Scott Littleton (ed.). New York, 2005.

Shawcross, John T. "Speculations on the Dating of the Trinity MS. of Milton's Poems". *Modern Language Notes* 75 (1960), 1-17.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *An apologie for Poetrie*. London, 1595.

Silberman, Lauren. *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene.* Berkeley 1995.

Silver, Isadore (ed., trans.). *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France, Part II: Ronsard and the Grecian Lyre*. Geneva, 1981.

Smith, Bruce R. *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England.* Chicago, 1999.

Smith, G. Gregory. (ed.). *Elizabethan Critical Essays.* London, 1904.

Spenser, Edmund. *Complaints Containing sundrie small poemes of the worlds vanitie. Whereof the next page maketh mention*. London, 1591.

Stanwood, P. G. "Milton's Lycidas and Earlier Seventeenth-Century Opera". *Milton in Italy: Contexts, Images, Contradictions.* Mario A. Di Cesare (ed.). New York, 1991.

Stephanus, Henricus. *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, 7 vols. Paris, 1846.

Stern, Virginia F. *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia and Library*. Oxford, 1979

Stevens, Denis (ed., trans.). *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi.* Cambridge, 1980.

Strohm, Reinhard and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds.). *Music as Concept and Practice in the Late Middle Ages. The New Oxford History of Music*, 10 vols., v. 3. New York, 2001.

Strunk, Oliver. (ed., trans.). *Source Readings in Music History: from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era.* New York, 1950.

Sutton, E. W. and H. Rackham. (trans.). *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*, 28 vols. London, 1967.

Svenbro, Jesper. *An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece.* New York, 1993.

Tomlinson, Gary. "Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi's 'via naturale alla immitatione'". *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981), 60-108.

Van Dorsten, J. A. (ed.). *Philip Sidney, A Defence of Poetry.* Oxford, 1966.

Vickers, Brian. (ed.). *English Renaissance Literary Criticism.* Oxford, 1999.

Walker, D. P. "The Aims of Baïf 's *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*". *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance.* Penelope Gouk (ed.). London, 1985.

Walls, Peter. "The Origins of English Recitative". *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 110 (1984), 25-40.

Whenham, John (ed.). *Claudio Monteverdi: Orfeo*. New York, 1986.

Whigham, Frank and Wayne A. Rebhorn (eds.). *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham; A Critical Edition*. New York, 2007.

Willett, Laura. (ed., trans.). *Poetry and Language in 16th-Century France: Du Bellay, Ronsard, Sébillet.* Toronto, 2004.

Wittreich, Joseph Anthony, Jr. "Milton's 'Destin'd Urn': The Art of *Lycidas*". *PMLA* 84 (1969), 60-70.

Wolfe, Don M. (ed.). *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 7 vols. New Haven, 1953.

Wyman, Barbara Hart. "Boethian Influence and Imagery in the Poetry of George Herbert". *Studies in Philology* 97 (2000), 65-8.

Yandall, Cathy M. (ed.), *Solitaire Second, Edition critique*. Geneva, 1980.

Yonge, C. D. (trans.). *Tusculan Disputations: On the Nature of the Gods, and On the Commonwealth*. New York, 2005.

Zarlino, Gioseffo. *Le institutioni harmoniche*. Venice, 1558.

WORKS CONSULTED ONLINE

Alexander, Gavin. "Why Milton Matters". *John Milton, 400th Anniversary Celebration* (2008), at http://www.christs.cam.ac.uk/milton400/matters.htm#language

Carter, Tim. "Word-painting". *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30568

Cole, Malcolm S. "Rondo". *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23787

Crocker, Richard L. "Melisma". *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18332.

James Haar, "Music of the Spheres". *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19447

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. “Giulio Romolo Cacchini”. *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40146pg1

Oldham, Guy and Mark Lindley. “Wolf”. *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30489

Palisca, Claude V. “Prima Pratica”. *Grove Music Online,* Oxford University Press, at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22350

-----. “Zarlino, Gioseffo”. *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30858

Renshaw, Martin. “Diapason”. *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* at http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07720