'The Disempowerment
of
Mode in the Music
of
Claudio Monteverdi'
(2004)

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Monteverdi has long been touted as a revolutionary, a maverick whose peculiar innovations cajoled Western music onto the path towards common-practice tonality. However, the particularities of this road, or why the journey upon it was even begun, are rarely made clear. The former inquiry is beyond the scope of this project, being the study of over a century's worth of music. The latter, on the other hand, can be reduced to manageable proportions, in this case, in the context of mode. It is the purpose of the writer to show how mode was toppled from its position of systemic eminence in late-sixteenth century music, to become just another, indeed somewhat non-functional element by the end of Monteverdi's oeuvre. The first part of this paper seeks to define mode within its immediate syntactical context. This is followed by the analysis of one madrigal from Monteverdi's Book One (1587) and two from Book Eight (1638), a study that endeavours to show how mode was disempowered, in a broader systemic sense, through the maturation of Monteverdi's compositional style.

While the theoretical treatises of the late-sixteenth century present a scholastic front of (more or less) glorious stasis, the seventeenth century, with its kaleidoscope of confusing and confused models, speaks in hindsight of a music that was very much ready for, if not already in a state of flux. It is difficult, therefore, to know what contemporaneous theory best describes Monteverdi's music (if any), given both the composer's considerable innovations and his longevity. At best, perhaps one can choose a model that adequately describes one or a collection of works. For example, in Adriano Banchieri's *L'organo suonarino* of 1605, a set of "pitch key modes" [1] is presented: C, G, d, a and e with no flat in the key signature, and F, g and d with one flat. These modes are ordered in pairs in a fourth/ fifth arrangement around the four finals of mediaeval theory: d(nat)/ g(b), a(nat)/ e(nat), C(nat)/ F(b), and d(b)/ G (nat). This

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[1] Eric Chafe, "Monteverdi's Tonal Language" (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), p.39

system incorporates the ancient authentic/plagal differentiation and also the more novel concept of transposition, a mixture of old and new that could be suitable for analysis of Monteverdi's early work, including the first book of madrigals. In contrast, Athanasius Kircher introduces in his *Musurgia universalis* a thirteen mode system with finals F, G, A, Bb, C, D and E. This model similarly has modal pairings that have either a tranpositional or authentic/plagal intrarelation, but more significantly, it incorporates scales which reflect the modern major and minor, and describes a psychological affect brought on by each mode. Perhaps this approach is appropriate for Monteverdi's later output. Indeed, Eric Chafe points out that "Kircher's presentation of the modes correspond exactly to the spectrum of modes in Orfeo [1607]" [2], this being the work which heralded the composer's mature style, to say nothing of his posthumous reputation.

It would be rather futile, however, to delve further into the inner workings of modal systems at this point. Any overarching, all-encompassing theoretical explanation of Monteverdi's music in its entirety is obviously not feasible, and more pertinently, not directly relevant to the proposed mode of analysis. The aim here is to witness the disempowerment of mode as a system, not to trace its internal changes or correlate its theory with music in practice. Of course, in the analyses of madrigals below, modal relationships and characteristics will come to light that may very well be consistent with this theory or that. It serves no purpose, however, to recognise these connections and name names, so to speak: the function of mode in the broader context, and the repercussions thereof, are more pressing matters. It would be best, therefore, to look at how mode works within its immediate systemic context, before moving on to its role in the integrated whole.

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[2] Chafe, p.49

Monteverdi employed a binary key signature system, which consisted of *cantus durus*, that is, without Bb, and *cantus mollis*, with Bb. This seems somewhat restrictive in the context of common-practice tonality, but the phenomenon of key was conceptually peripheral to this modal system. The centrepiece was instead a set of modes whose finals were, at its most developed, based on the *cantus mollis* F and *cantus durus* C hexachord (ie Kircher's finals): the clefs developed in tandem with the requirements of these modes. That is not say that transposition by fifth, which in Monteverdi's usage began strongly to reflect the relationships (though not necessarily the processes) of tonicisation and modulation in tonality, did not occur. Indeed, given sections are identical to what the tonal theorist would know as say, e minor, G major or D major [for example, in *Hor che l'ciel…*, the G major of pp.24-27, and e minor cadence on p.28 [3]]. Rather, it is to say that regardless of mode or key, the music was notated in either *cantus mollis* or *cantus durus*. This stance makes a clear distinction between a system of key signature and a system of mode, as opposed to conflating the two as in tonality, where key signature and tonic are intrinsically linked (the only comparable interaction is the common key signature between relative majors and minors). Acknowledgment of this by seventeenth century theorists was common enough: Kircher, for one, had the categories *mutatio modi* ("system" change) and *mutatio toni* (mode change). Monteverdi exploits the interaction of these two systems, sometimes establishing a convincing sense of key or mode, sometimes using a region of the tonal space, that either *durus* or *mollis* provides, with little reference to a tonal hierarchy. This is surely a powerful tool when dealing with text setting. After all, there are considerably more musical interconnections possible here than in one integrated system, enabling a much more complex, subtle shading of word-meaning and

[3] See attached score

implication. In any case, this gamut-mode complex is vital in tracing the fate of mode: it will be explored more completely in the later analyses.

Monteverdi's vocal output can be divided quite clearly along gamut-modal lines. There are essentially two camps: one, the early works- the first two madrigal books (1587; 1590), as well as Sacrae cantiunculae (1582) and Canzonette a tre voci (1584)- and the other, the third to eighth books. The former has prominent examples of *cantus durus* F mode and the *cantus mollis* C and A modes, which rarely if ever appear in the latter. The *cantus mollis* mode, broadly speaking, appears significantly more often in the early pieces: for example, eighteen out of the twenty-one madrigals in Book One employ *mollis* modes. The trend towards sharper realms nevertheless begins almost immediately, even within this first category. By the Second Book, C has become exclusively *durus*, and *durus* D outweighs *mollis* d, when previously it had been the other way around. *Mollis* d appears for the last time in any notable fashion in Book 6, and even then is overshadowed by its *durus* counterpart. It is, at any rate, certainly absent from Book 8. By this point, there is an almost exclusive reliance on *cantus durus*, as well as *durus*-related, major mode types such as Ionian and Mixolydian on C and G. There is also the attrition of finals to note: the frequency of *durus* D, A, C and G does fluctuate as one progresses through the madrigal books, but *durus* F and E have long been left by the wayside when Book 8 comes around. Similarly, the only *cantus mollis* final to survive this journey is g, which appears either in the context of the *mollis* g/ *durus* G shift or in its own right.

The outline of this mercurial, upward slide from a flat world to a sharp(er) one is not made here necessarily to highlight the aesthetic and semiotic shifts in Monteverdi's approach, nor is it even to herald the eventual emergence of the sharp major keys of common-practice tonality. However charged with new and explosive potential Monteverdi's developments may have

been, the basic purpose of this process was to maintain, and perhaps even increase control over the communicative power of music, irregardless of localised flux of meaning through syntactical reassignment and/or reconfiguration. Monteverdi initially favoured *cantus mollis* in a calculated attempt to avoid the negative connotations of *durus* in the late sixteenth century: this was done in the context of a modal system which, through its pedigree and age, was as rich with possibilities for an expressive, humanist agenda as it was for a methodological, scholastic one. With the changing attitude towards the setting of text, however, came all sorts of new rhythmic, harmonic, textural, tonal and formal innovations, which did not allow the modal system, or to be more accurate, the portion of the modal system that Monteverdi chose to emphasise, to remain in stasis. In order to retain some level of compositional integrity- indeed, to develop as a composer- Monteverdi needed his modal vocabulary to react and interact with the other more novel aspects of his language.

One may then ask why he chose so markedly to rethink his approach to mode, it being the focus of contemporaneous music theory, and therefore the most highly developed and richly nuanced aspect of his music, rather than mould around it the newer elements, which after all were in their infancy and thus rather malleable. The answer is found in the famous assertion made by Monteverdi's brother, Giulio Cesare, that words should be "the mistress of the harmony and not the servant" [4]. In other words, the text was to be at least equal in some way to the music in any hierarchy of systemic function: the modal system could thus be affected not just by other musical parameters, but also by an external impetus. It is perhaps easy to overstate the importance of words to the Second Practice- after all, if Giulio Cesare had really

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[4] Gary Tomlinson, "Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p.23

wanted to make the hegemony of text unassailable, he would have used a master/servant analogy. Instead he uses a trope of feminised authority, a power altogether more complex and fluid than the masculine norm. Hence music may not be the servant to this mistress, as the immediate context implies, but rather her master, at least ostensibly. This interpretation is an apt summary of the power ambiguity which this analysis seeks to address. The master/music is empowered by society/ theory to lord over the mistress/ text, but is this truly the reality of the matter? Words have moved up the social ladder, but by how much? They cannot be overtly dominant in Giulio Cesare's construct- they are not "masculinised"- but that is not say they do not wield real, perhaps ultimate power and influence. The function of text in the overall medium of Monteverdi's art is essential to understanding the disempowerment of mode, and will be further explored in the specific analyses of madrigals. In the meantime, however, it is appropriate to look at other musical parameters, as part of a process of linking the gamut-mode complex to other closely related entities.

The gamut of the Renaissance and Middle Ages was inherited by seventeenth century theory, and despite the striking musical developments of that century, it remained a firm fixture throughout. It was divided into the "soft" (*molle*) hexachord F, natural C and "hard" (*durum*) G. This nomenclature appears to have derived from the perceived psychological comfort of flats in contrast to the harshness of sharps, an assumption that became increasingly more anachronistic through Monteverdi's lifetime. Nevertheless, the theorists kept these markers, as they did the "diatonicism" of the three hexachords, that is, the identical sequence of intervals, solmised as ut, re, mi, fa, sol and la. Traditionally, transpositions were made via hexachords, or more specifically, via the semitone (mi-fa) central to them all. For example, C hexachord could morph to F by introducing a melodic Bb (moving from/to A) or to G through

B natural (moving from/to C): essentially a transposition of the semitone. The move between soft and hard hexachords, without the natural acting as intermediary, was forbidden in orthodox theory, since the stark chromaticism of Bb/B natural was brought into relief in any such shift. And yet, by the early seventeenth century, the Bb/B natural interplay was readily employed for its inherent expressive power in other contexts [see excerpt from Book I: III p.1].Similarly, a region that was distinct by its inclusion of Bb could exist alongside one that was defined by the exclusion thereof within the confines of the one key signature [see excerpt from Book VIII: I pp.2-5] .* This was a product of certain *durus* modes (C, d, F) being equipped with the possiblity of a Bb ficta (an analogous phenomenon can be observed with E/Eb in *mollis* Bb, d, F and g). This considered usage of chromaticism on a micro- and/or macro-structural level illustrates a marked change in attitude from earlier practice. It also suggests indirectly that the foundations of the hexachordal system were being challenged. The letter of the law- that one could not transpose between distantly related hexachords because of unpleasant chromatic relations- may have been kept in the majority of cases, but its raison d'étre was losing much of its relevance.

These sorts of observations may touch on the role of chromaticism in Monteverdi's music as an integrated whole, and in consequence allude to its effect on the listener, but they do little to identify its theoretical function within a given component system. Perhaps partly in response to this quandry, Eric Chafe has developed a theoretical extension of the hexachordal system [5], which directly addresses the new desirability of chromaticism, as well as elucidating Monteverdi's harmonic and tonal schemata. It can be represented thus:
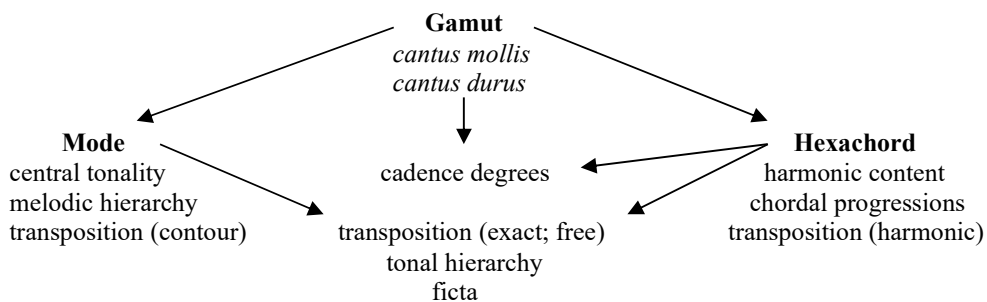
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[5] Chafe, pp.24-31

Fig. 1

mollis	two-b hex.	Eb[Bb]	Bb[F]	F[C] – c/C[G] – g/G[D] – d/D[Eb]
	one-b hex.		Bb[F]	F[C] – c/C[G] – g/G[D] – d/D[A] – a/A[Bb]
	nat. hex.			F[C] – c/C[G] – g/G[D] – d/D[A] – a/A[E] – e/E[F]
durus	# hex.			c/C[G] – g/G[D] – d/D[A] – a/A[E] – e/E[B] – b/B[C]

In response to the pressure of an extended tonal range, a two-flat hexachord has been added. The *cantus mollis* is now capable of accessing the two-flat, one-flat and natural hexachord; *the cantus durus*, the sharp, the natural and the one-flat. Each hexachord has six triads whose root-notes are the composite pitches thereof (shown as stand-alone pitch designations). Five are usually preceded by their dominant; the sixth, which is identified by way of a circle of fifths, usually not, being reached via a phrygian cadence (all in square brackets). When the sixth note has a major triad and appears in a dominant cadence, it heralds a shift into a sharper hexachord, while in minor form, it indicates a move into a flatter hexachord (or alternatively an expressive gesture of some kind). The fifth in the chord on the sixth introduces a new semitone (for example, in the soft hexachord, E/F), a harbinger of the leading note in tonal music. An activated hexachord is indicated by the outlining of all or most of the six possible harmonies (through circle-of-fifths progressions or transposition); the phrygian cadence outlines its extremities.

The system described above is a gamut-hexachord complex. It is related to the gamut-mode complex directly through the *mollis*/*durus* phenomenon, but this is not the only, or indeed the most binding connection. The technique of transposition acts as kind of glue between these two systems, aiding and abetting one or the other or both simultaneously. Monteverdi's transpositions occur mainly at the fourth and fifth, but also at the second and the third (the former being the product of two fifth transpositions and therefore highlighting the difference between relative flat and sharp). Transposition's active ingredients are its
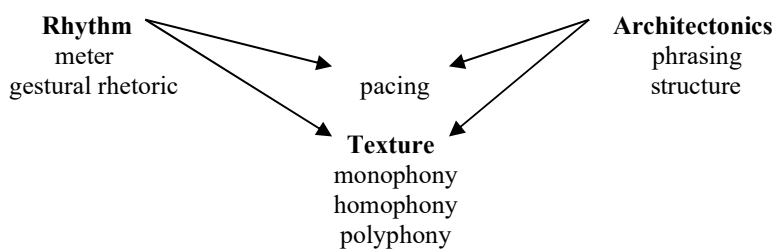
remarkable flexibility and reproducibility, which allow for any given phrase or chord progression to be produced exactly or to some degree of similitude at a new pitch-level. This tool conceptually enables a mode-gamut-hexachord complex, represented by the diagram below. The filled line with the single arrowhead denotes the dependence of the item at the end of the vector on its source.

Fig. 2

Gamut
cantus mollis
cantus durus

Mode
central tonality
melodic hierarchy
transposition (contour)

cadence degrees

transposition (exact; free)
tonal hierarchy
ficta

Hexachord
harmonic content
chordal progressions
transposition (harmonic)

Before embarking on any specific analysis, the musical parameters other than pitch should be given some attention, albeit very briefly. Below is a systemic representation thereof. Dynamics and articulation are not part of the written form of this music, and have thus been excluded from any analytical process.

Fig. 3

Rhythm
meter
gestural rhetoric

pacing

Architectonics
phrasing
structure

Texture
monophony
homophony
polyphony

The characteristics of text which enable a musical setting should also be addressed:

Fig. 4

Text
linguistic syntax
kinetic imagery
affect

It is hoped that these diagrammatical summaries are relatively self-evident. In any case, their relevance will presumably become clear through the following analyses of specific madrigals from Book One and Book Eight. They will be used to consolidate the disparate trends and observations of the analysis into a more easily digestible form.

The tenth madrigal of Book One, *Almo divino raggio* [pp.6-10], best demonstrates the range of text-setting techniques available to the youthful Monteverdi. The modal designation is relatively traditional and clear: authentic *cantus mollis* G in the tenor (G-A), soprano I (F-A) and soprano II (G-A), and plagal *mollis* G in the alto (D-D) and bass (Bb-Eb). The choice of a *mollis* mode in of itself has little to do with the colouring of this particular text, since the vast majority of madrigals in this book are mollis, as mentioned before. However, authentic *mollis* G (or transposed mode I, in the old speak) already has the Bb with the potential for an Eb ficta. In other words, it's very flat in terms of both melodic line and tonal hierarchy, which at this point Monteverdi perceived as an indicator of warmth and gentleness. It is hard to measure the success of this modal-textual interaction, particularly for a modern listener, but in any case, the rest of the word painting is left up to other musical parameters.

The first chord is an open fifth (G, D), a harmonic and modal ambiguity which heightens the anticipation for what is to come. The opening words *almo divino* (life-giving, divine) are presented in homophony, as if the singers are savouring the positive resultant of the initial uncertainty. *Raggio* (ray) induces a limited amount of polyphony, which includes a steady quaver movement that seems to emulate the energy of a ray of light. The harmony for this opening line appears to trace the natural hexachord, yet it could very well be the flat hexachord, since neither an E or Bb sonority are present to close the deal one way or the other. Perhaps the ambiguity of the opening sonority and the hexachord, as well as the fact that the

Bbs promised by the key signature are yet to transpire, conspire to create a *durus*-like brightness, which in the context of the subsequent mollis world is deprived of its negative affect.

The next two lines, *della cui santa luce; questa lieta stagion s'alluma e'ndora* ('by your holy light, this happy season is lit and gilded') are treated musically as one entity. 'Happiness' is reflected in the choice of rhythms: provided that scansion is the basis, there are groups of three, sometimes dotted, alternating with regular twos, giving a feeling of buoyancy and joy. Similarly 'gilded', manifests in the busy polyphony of this section, with its extensive use of imitation and figure-exchange between voices (for example, tenor/alto from b.7-9, becomes bass/soprano, b.10-12). The Bb of b.7 finally drags out the soft hexachord, but its stay is only fleeting, touched on by the Bb/A harmonic and linear movement in b.7-8 before moving to the two-flat hexachord. The Bb hexachord is more or less outlined by, for one, the bass part in the second system of 58: there is no F sonority, and a rather odd a^6 chord preceding the Eb (perhaps a substitute for C, or the product of voice-leading), but the emphasis on the Eb/D progression, particularly when it doesn't resolve directly to G in b.10 is evidence enough of its presence.

With 'and the beautiful month of May' comes a very clear statement of the Bb hexachord. In fact, it serves as the only real reinforcer of the words, by way of the transposition to Bb of the repeated cadence to G in the section before. The chordal sequence here is mirrored enough to suggest a softening from the bright season to the pastoral image of May. 'Today through you guides' adds to this Bb world ornamental filigree, reënergising the texture to take on the journey of Flora from the sky to the earth in the next line. This image is predictably brought out in falling lines, heard first by the tenor (G down to G, the whole ambitus of the mode),

closely imitated by the soprano (G to A), which is then reiterated as parallel thirds between soprano II (G to G) and bass (Eb to Eb). The general sinking of this figure on a broader structural level of course serves to emphasise its local character, and by turn, Flora's descent. The cadence in Bb has once again given way to G cadences, reserving its tranquillity for May alone.

Suddenly, there is a distinct change in mood, from the pleasant ponderings on light's delights, to the imploring and suggestive 'Pray, that that which oppresses us…..'. The texture becomes homophonic, but this is a paltry effort at word-painting when compared with the hexachordal shift from the old section to the new. The music moves without much to-do from the two-flat hexachord to the natural one (!), the clincher being the E major chord in b.28. Such a dramatic break from the premises of orthodox hexachordal theory serves to illustrate in no uncertain terms the sudden and profound panic of the protagonist.

The last section regains the earlier alacrity, but expresses it in quite a different way. The text *cangia in letizia in gioia* ('change into gladness, into joy') is repeated three times, set to a dance-like rhythm in three, which simultaneously creates the appropriate mood, and hammers home the process of change, by presenting a hitherto unused metric pulse. Bar 32 sees the pivot region between the natural and soft hexachord. The ambiguity of the opening is not evident here, since all six notes of the F hexachord are given harmonies: the completion of the system projects a feeling of contentment. The madrigal ends with D V:I cadence. While not altogether unusual for a g/G mode piece, it has been set up by the cadential sequence of this last section, that is D V:I, G V:I, D V:I. This is the first time that the piece has moved convincingly away from G as a tonal centre, a decision that may ensue multiple meanings. Firstly, this is the second part of a three-part "über"-madrigal: the sudden turn in the D

direction may be merely to avoid a sensation of finality, in preparation for the third part (which quickly returns to a g tonality; with which it also ends). Alternatively (or perhaps simultaneously), the joy this ending expresses has not actually been attained by the poet, but rather is the objective of the imploring. It is not "real" and therefore it is not given a "real" ending.

This madrigal epitomises, perhaps even overstates the interaction of word and music in Book One, and by extension, Monteverdi's early output. There is an obvious reliance on pitch to realise integration. Mode itself is relatively static in this system: by its very nature, its attachment to the text is fleeting, once the initial musico-dramatic connection is made. Nevertheless, as part of the mode-gamut-hexachord complex, it is privy to the most powerful effects of text on musical parameter. Rhythm, architectonics and by implication, texture are of course moulded to some degree by the linguistic, physical and emotional imagery of the text. However, they maintain a level of syntax in and of themselves which exists outside the influence of words: indeed, it can in turn inform the setting thereof, rather than the other way around. Below is a representation of these processes within the whole system known as "the madrigal". The dotted segments with an arrowhead at either end denote a relative syntactical symbiosis between the two parties, rather then perceived dominance of one over the other.

Fig. 5
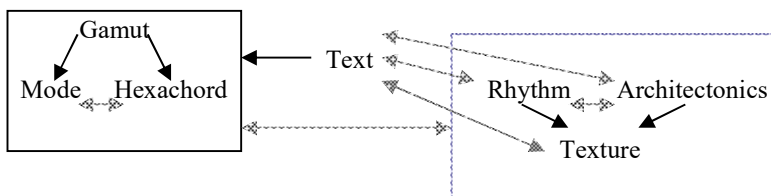
At this point, attention will be turned to Book 8. In contrast to the numerous duos, trios and even incidental solos therein (for instance, the bass in the middle section of the first

madrigal), 2a. *Hor che'l ciel e la terra e'l vento tace* [pp.11-28] is scored for six voices, two violins and continuo, Such considerable forces allowed a composer of the Second Practice to set texts in ways a smaller combination, with its inherent restrictions on textural and rhythmic opulence, could not possibly manage. A large ensemble was able to paint words somewhat independently of the mode-gamut-hexachord complex, due to its increased timbral palate and its potential for rich aural fabrics. The madrigal in question begins with an excellent demonstration of this capability. 'Now that sky, earth and wind are silent; and sleep immobilises beasts and birds' is all set to a reiterated, homophonic A minor chord, with closely spaced voice parts. The stasis of the harmony and the turgidity of its realisation conspire to create an image of soft, motionless slumber, without any recourse to the syntactical function of the chord. The sheer number of sounded pitches and colours needed to bring about this affect is obviously prohibitive to smaller groups.

The initial harmonic movement is to an E major chord, in response to Night circling in her starry chariot, that is, the first kinetic reference in the text. There is yet not enough information to assign a hexachordal context. That is left to 'and the sea lies waveless in its bed', whose d^6 to E^{4-3} to A confirms the natural hexachord, a somewhat non-committal position in the new Monteverdian order. The image of being bedridden is transferred from the overall harmonic nature to a single held A in the alto part, a cleverly simple semiotic devoid of syntactical function.

Out of the A sonority, 'I am awake, I am awake, I think, I burn, I weep' induces a perfect example of Chafe's establishment of hexachord: a circle of fifths (A, D, G, C, F, Bb) followed by a phrygian cadence (g^6, A), which defines the hexachordal extremes. This progression brings the music from the natural through the *mollis*, soft hexachord, dissolving the neutrality

of sleep and creating a state of acute sadness. Hence the phrygian cadence is used, which rings even more tears from *piange* via the suspensions/resolutions of the voice-leading: [Bb^7; g$^{6,4-3}$], A$^{6-5,4-3}$. Furthermore, such a violent harmonic progression is really quite surprising after the stasis of the slumbering A section: Monteverdi appears to be contrasting the peace of the world with the agonising insomnia of the poet by providing as much harmonic "tossing and turning" as is systemically possible.

The textural foreground of the next part is a tenor duo on the words 'and she that undoes me is always before me to my sweet sorrow'. In keeping with the ever-present image in the text, the tenors' line is unbroken for a considerable amount of time, the *veglio, veglio, penso, ardo* of before providing a punctuating, secondary textural unit (constructed by stretching the gaps from its original context) from the violins and other voices. This is a remarkable portrayal of obsession sporadically intruded upon by sleepless writhing. The cycle of fifths is once again attached to these pointed outbursts, but has now risen one step higher. In addition to this, the progression is ornamented, a logical way of providing momentum between points now much further apart.

Fig. 6

	Veglio,	*veglio,*	*penso,*	*ardo,*	*piange*
1st time:	D	G	C	F	[Bb^7; g^6], A
2nd time:	A/a, C#^{o}	D (g^{6,4}) D	G (c/C^{6,4}) G	C, G#^{o}, A, G	[F^7; d^6], E

Note that <u>*piange*</u> is again given a phrygian cadence, but this time up a fifth ([F^7; d$^{6,4-3}$], E$^{6-5,4-3}$). In other words, the harmony has now traced the natural, instead of soft hexachord, and as to be expected, this is not merely done for musical continuity. The former is more *durus* than the latter, that is, more indicative of sharp, hard emotion. Monteverdi had already imbued

piange with as much agony as the localised harmonic context would allow: he now draws upon a more macro-structural hierarchy to inject the phrygian cadence with even more pain. But he doesn't stop there. The *veglio, veglio, penso, ardo* line is used once again, but this time the original space is collapsed into one bar. A solo tenor utters the line stretched, over the range of a tenth, with a militaristic, dotted rhythm: the most violent and poignant rendition so far. Again *piange* is assigned a phrygian cadence, yet again up a fifth ($[C^7; A^6], B^{4\text{-}3}$). By having this third reiteration on the heels of the second; by having an unprecedented cry of anguish immediately preceding it; and by pushing the theoretical and psychological limits of the hexachordal system through the extremes of the sharpest hexachord, Monteverdi invokes the most heart-rendering 'weeping' of the piece.

Perhaps there is little room for more pain, since the suspension/resolution cluster is not nearly as intricate. This may indicate that the utmost point in the obsessive cycle has been reached. Indeed, release is imminent. The line *e chi mi……* is again presented, this time in the higher voices with much more staid rhythms. A rising, chromatised bass line, suggesting maybe agony or death, is worked into the harmonic outlaying of the hard hexachord. This section is then transposed down- pretty much note for note, with re-registration, and lower voices and violins added- thus now inhabiting the natural hexachord. The bitterness of the poet's pain has been reduced in tandem with the level of *durus* in the harmonies.

The next segment returns us to the technical realm of the opening (though certainly not to its mood). Once again, the mode-gamut-hexachord complex is made somewhat redundant. The next nine bars (in the given edition's notation) essentially rest a pseudo-G major drone, with some passing notes in the upper parts for the first five bars, and an oscillation with a decorative D^6 for the rest. Momentum and interest are provided instead through other musical

means. The text translates as 'war is my condition, full of anger and grief': it is no surprise then that Monteverdi employs the *stile concitato*, with its drum-like dotted rhythms and repeated pitch patterns. The bass, embodying the masculinity seen to epitomise war, opens with a plain recitation of *Guerra è il mio stato*, followed by the constant, arch-shaped, somewhat mindless repetition of the word 'war'. The latter gesture is taken up canonically by the violins and thence by tenor I, soprano II and soprano I, with supporting homophonic material from the other voices and continuo. The texture then becomes an imitative interplay of the arch shape introduced in the opening bass oratory and the repeated note aspect of *concertato* at different rates. The violins have, for one, notably more propulsion to their "rat-tat-tat-tat" figure. The full stop of this section is a short but firm D major chord in root position

Texturally, the next part- the homophonic setting of 'and only when thinking of her do I find some peace'- is relatively uninteresting. Harmonically, however, it is quite unique. A *two-sharp hexachord* (!) is outlined, excluding only a D sonority (no great loss, given that it is incorporated in every other hexachord). The most astonishing part of this process is kept for the cadence, F#$^{4\text{-}3}$ to B, on the word *pace*. It would be usual in this context to construct a phrygian cadence C to B, thus avoiding the problematic and alien F# chord, while simultaneously affirming the perfectly acceptable sharp hexachord. There are two possible pictorial reasons for this extraordinary course of action. Firstly, in the immediate context, the phrygian cadence is well and truly attached to *piange*, weeping. It would hardly seem appropriate to use it additionally for its psychological antithesis, peace: with this in mind, a V-I cadence is the only feasible option. Secondly, the hitherto height of *durus* was reached at the pinnacle of the poet's torment. Monteverdi may be suggesting at this point that the most

poignant reaction to her memory is not grief, but rather tranquillity.

In any case, this contemplative moment is immediately shattered by the return of the *stile concertato* dynamic. This section is a textural augmentation of the first appearance thereof: the order and nature of events are identical, but now they are realised over a larger space of time and with more intensity. Nine bars become twelve; the passing note: decorative chord-change ratio, as well as the textural division in time (dotted rhythms: repeated notes), was 4:3, but now is 6:6; imitation using the dotted arched figure is now exclusively in the voices, incorporates all six of them, and is active for longer than before; the repeated notes in the violins are more drum-like, more insistent, more numerous. This process is structurally reminiscent of the one outlined in Fig. 6. It's as if to assert that anger is as much an obsessive trap as anguish. But one way or the other, this doesn't last forever, it would seem. The setting of *e sol di……..* returns, but now transposed into the more mundane one-sharp hexachord. The transposition is pretty much exact, apart from the ornamented elongation of V in the closing cadence ($B^{7\text{-}6\text{-}5\text{-}. , 3\text{-}4\text{-}.\text{-}3}$, E). This device is as much sa musical full stop as anything else. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that through the use of a less *durus* hexachord, the intensity of the earlier *pace* is diminished. Perhaps Monteverdi is redressing the balance between the two extremes of emotion, by placing their respective last utterances in the same psychological space.

Throughout the above analysis, one may notice that there is very little mention of the concept of mode. This is not a wilful exclusion on the writer's part, but rather the result of an honest evaluation of musical function within an integrated syntax of music and text. It is judicious, nevertheless, to turn at this point to a madrigal that does actively use mode in the communicative process. In this way, the above example cannot be dismissed as an anomaly

within the strictures of the writer's argument.

Out of all the madrigals in Book Eight, the twelfth, *Mentre vaga angioletta* [pp.29-41]*,* displays the most rigorous and novel use of word-painting. This is no doubt because the text is concerned with the 'singing' of a love-torn heart: the two tenors, for which it is scored, are thus singing about singing! The madrigal begins with an accompanied tenor solo, reminiscent of plainsong, on the text 'while a charming, angelic girl attracts every wellborn soul with her singing, my heart dashes over and hangs completely upon the sound of her soft song, and meanwhile somehow'. This setting seems to reflect the religious connotations of the poet's imagery, that is, it accentuates the comparison of the objet d'amore to an *angioletta*, and alludes to the Marian quality in the drawing power of her voice. The mode here is a commixture of d *mollis* and d *durus*, ironically one of the more explicit functional uses of mode in the whole Book. The choice of d *mollis*/*durus* is a result of it being both a fundamental of orthodox modal theory, and psychologically neutral in the new practice. It can create the appropriate cultural interconnection through external means, while being dramatically non-committal in the immediate syntax.

A *mollis* Bb marks the end of this plainsong segment, foreshadowing future sadness. With '(my heart) assumes a musical spirit…..', the continuo enters: the poet's beatific vision is lost with the intrusion of a more secular musical context. This is further reinforced by the melisma on *garrula* (garrulous), a scuttling, worldly affair over a limited range, twisting and turning in on itself. It is repeated once up a third, with the second tenor joining in on the original pitch-level underneath. The latter's entrance here seems to preëmpt the introduction of *armonia* (harmony) in the text. Through this section, the mode seems to be relatively well established as d *mollis*, bringing to fruition the prophecies of the pivotal Bb in the first section.

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Hexachordal designation is somewhat ambiguous here, a blurring between soft and natural brought about by the use of first inversion chords. A retrograde progression of root position sonorities (F, C, D, A, D, C, F) does nothing to clarify the situation, since they all belong to both hexachords. This uncertainty, however, is resolved with *e maestrevol armonia….* ('and masterly harmony….'), through which the sharp hexachord is explicitly stated. The shift here is in reaction to the change of tone, from a melancholic to a strangely strident one. This newfound strength is further emphasised through an aggressive, *stile concitato* bass line and the switch to the brightness of d *durus*. Together with a newly articulated accompaniment and the imitative counterpoint of the voices, these characteristics effectively evoke a sense of 'mastery'.

'Masterly harmony' and 'it modulates/affects a voice' are run into each other across poetic meter. This perhaps reflects the turning and propelling of the next line, as well as the representation of change inherent to the immediate situation. Before this image can be made manifest, however, the '(voice) of ringing/piercing tone' has to be negotiated. This is drawn by way of falling chromatic lines in both the voice and accompaniment. Any attempt to interpret the bizarre result in modal or hexachordal terms is doomed to failure from the beginning, since this is way beyond the mode-gamut-hexachord model: there is even a percussed tritone between the voices (p31, 1st, b.1)! These chromatic lines are used purely for their semiotic content- that of death and pain- and not to form coherent musical syntax beyond a chromatic series of first inversion triads. Similarly, the resultant parallel fourths may well be a faux bourdon reference, remembering the religious iconography of the opening, as much as incidental harmonic configurations. Monteverdi appears to intimate that the voice of this lovesick heart has the ring of death, a terrible indictment of the poet's condition.

Following this very visceral realisation of the text comes an extended series of equally kinetic representations, depicted predominantly by way of texture, rhythm and architectonics. 'And turns it and propels it' engenders imitative, zig-zag melismas, generally in the downward direction, for the first action, and a quaver-two semiquavers figure on a rising scale for the second. 'With irregular attacks' has the words broken up by rests (imitatively) in an irregular way: the implications of *accenti* are dealt with through fluctuating gesture lengths and elision of the two active words, that is, rot…ti~ac… cen-ti. 'And complex runs' has twisting, turning melissma in imitation, made up of different patterns placed asymmetrically, with considerable chromatic inflections. 'Now slowly, now speedily' is approached by giving long durations and no local repetitions to *qui tarda*, and long, fast, diatonic, regular runs with local repetitions to *e la veloce*. 'And at times murmuring with a low, changeable sound' has *mormorando* depicted by crossing parts within a minor third, in regular quavers low in the tenor register, all on a static harmony. 'And alternating rapid and calm (passages)' gives imitation a particular importance in a *alternando* role, while frenetic *fughe* is shown in short downward scalar semiquaver melissmas, and the repose of *e riposi* is drawn by long repeated chords with harmonies sharper than assigned to the previous image, suggesting a stronger, more stable position. 'And quiet breaths' has its words imitatively broken up by rests, so as to "breathe" between each syllable. 'Now it [my heart] suspends and balances it[the voice]/ now pushes it'' has its first line represented by unison in the voices over a static chord, and the second moving from unison to a cadence on *preme*, "pushing" the music forward. The first half of 'now breaks it off, now slows it down' is imitation with a dotted crotchet and quaver, the answer being across the meter (the "breaking"part), while the second incoporates minium semiquaver runs, followed by minium rests, then crotchet semiquaver runs with crotchet rests, then a

semibreve semiquaver run, until longer durations appear, slowing down the flow irregularly. The first image in 'now darts it forth, and shakes it' is depicted through contrary motion part-crossing, creating the effect of a repeated pattern, somewhat like the earlier "murmuring"", which is propelled forward by a cycle of fifths, and the second is drawn by scalar semiquavers in contrary motion, giving the illusion of vibration. 'Now leads it around in a circle' engenders imitation in wandering crotchets, at least part of which ends up where it started (a "circular" motion). The *tremoli* of 'sometimes with tremulous and drifting accents' is represented by long melissma with a rhythmic pattern of repeated semiquavers, which would have to be produced through some sort of interference with the air column, while the *vaganti* is shown through long melissma made up of different patterns placed asymmetrically. Finally,'sometimes with firm and sonorous ones (accents)' is one static chord in longish durations.

These rhythmic, structural and textural realisations of the lively imagery of the text are not collated here to imply that the mode-gamut-hexachord complex is entirely redundant. Nevertheless, it clearly takes a secondary role throughout this extended passage. The designated hexachord swings from natural to soft to natural and so on, a background of relatively incidental teleological vectors that provides a sense of forward motion, but little in the way of dramatic illustration. The exception is the setting of *hor rompe* ('now it breaks off'), where there is a quick pivot from natural to soft [ ], then a trace of the latter's mi-fa, before a return to a harmonic realm common to both hexachords: a striking analogy to the kinetic imagery of the words. In terms of tonality, there are cadences in A, D, F, C, G and E, ordered here from most frequent to least. There seems to be no particular dramatic, or even musical logic to their interplay: they appear to be merely incidental points which provide some

sort of forward drive, however meandering. An interesting cadential colouring, nevertheless, can be found in the setting of *con rotti accenti* (c^6, $A^{6,5}$, D): irregular indeed! The d *mollis*/d *durus* alliance seems to be have dissolved into a broad exploitation of the available gamut: tonal hierarchy is dictated purely by the harmonic content, not the internal structures of any mode.

The last section is in $ABA_1B_1A_2B_2$ form, with A_2 being a severely truncated form of its predecessors. The bulk of 'thus singing….. to remain sad' is assigned to the As, a dance-like section which sets *spiega* (explains) to a long stream of upwardly rising, regular notes, alluding to the form of escape that is to be revealed. The last word *volo* (fly) is the content of the B sections, each occurrence of which is in four. The first time has semiquaver runs in an obvious painting of the word; the second sees these runs deteriorate into smaller semiquaver gestures attached to notes of longer durational value; the third has regular quaver movement. This trajectory is one of disillusionment: the poet's heart is torn, however much it flutters. The unusual outlining of an augmented third between voices in B_2, as well as the closing plagal cadence, with its allusion to the opening through its religious connotations, are complicit in this affect.

Below is the tonal and hexachordal schemata of the last section:

Fig. 7

Section	A	B	A_1	B_1	A_2	B_2
Tonality	A	E	A/D	A	D	D
Hexachord	nat	nat	nat/soft	soft	soft	soft

From this, one can see that hexachord and tonality are intrinsically linked. An interesting point to note is that within the D tonality, D is never approached by A, but rather $c\#^{o6}$, or more prominently g: this serves to delineate further the above relationships. Clearly, the mode-

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gamut-hexachord complex contributes significantly to the musical syntax: it also aids the overall dramatic effect by reconnecting with the tonal world of the opening. The *mollis/durus* d ambiguity is finally resolved, with *mollis* and all its melancholic implications winning out in the end. This is consistent with the trajectory of both the hexachordal and structural narrative described above.

These two quite different madrigals aptly display the myriad of different interactions between word and music in Book Eight, and by extension, summarise Monteverdi's late compositional style. It is obvious that the hegemony of pitch has taken a battering. Mode is even more systemically static than before, its attachment to text now so often tenuous as to make it functionally academic. Even given its position in the mode-gamut-hexachord complex- there is certainly no doubt that harmony and hexachord play important musico-dramatic roles- it is just another functional part of a functional part of the functioning whole. Rhythm, architectonics and by implication, texture have come into there own, taking on thoroughly active roles in the realisation of the linguistic, physical and emotional imagery of the text. Comparable developments in modal and hexachordal theory cannot compensate for this shift in the balance of power. After all, text now not only generally dictates the premises of pitch, as it did in Monteverdi's early style, but also all the other musical parameters, to some noteworthy degree or another. The mode-gamut-hexachord complex has lost its monopoly on expression: mode has thus truly been disempowered.

Fig. 8

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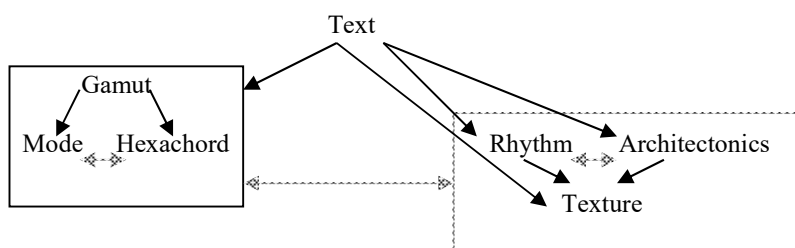
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