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Order and Balance in Gesualdo's "Moro, lasso"

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2012

Dedication

To Max

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Abstract

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The Aaron Copland School of Music, 2012

Supervisor: Henry Burnett

The question of Mannerism as a viable stylistic period in music history is still contentious in musicological circles. According to Tim Carter "the category of Mannerism has been slow to gain acceptance...but with few exceptions" (2006, 40). At the forefront of these exceptions, Carlo Gesualdo and his late madrigals embody the Mannerist tradition and promote the idiomatic phenomenon representative of Mannerist vocal music: irrationality, disorder, and above all else, formal procedures dependent upon a text. Scholars and analysts have combed Gesualdo's notorious madrigal, "Moro lasso al mio duolo," for these very elements. The chromatic labyrinth has been explored, but only on the surface, motivating terminology like 'floating tonality' and 'triadic atonality' (Lowinsky, 1961) and implying the consistent dilemma of analyzing this music.

What musical feature holds such elements together to maintain a coherent whole? A lack of analytical insight into the compositional foundations of Gesualdo's music, which Glenn Watkins has relegated to 'instinct' alone, has assumed that only the 'immiscible' details of the music describes Gesualdo's Mannerist personality (1973). This conclusion partakes in a larger assumption concerning Mannerism seen essentially as 'anti-classic' and dependent upon the Renaissance for identity. I contend that there is an order and balance within Gesualdo's compositional architecture; a conclusion which not only challenges the way we think about chromaticism and modality in late sixteenth-century polyphonic vocal music, but also affects stylistic issues embodied by Mannerism as a synchronic type. The result produces a re-evaluation of the music, its representation as a style, and even its interpretive qualities.

Table of Contents

List of Diagrams ...	7
Examples	8
Tables	9
Introduction. Premise	10
Chapter One. Foundation	18
Chapter Two. Dilemma	33
Chapter Three. Edifice	51
Chapter Four. Method	62
Chapter Five. Solution	77
Chapter Six. Consequence	86
Bibliography	92

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1: Western Ecclesiastical System of Mode ...	23
Diagram 2: Guidonian Hexachord System	63
Diagram 3: Central Hexachord Harmonized	66
Diagram 4: Dahlhaus' Hexachordal System	68
Diagram 5: Chafe's Hexachordal System	68
Diagram 6: Burnett's Hexachordal System	71
Diagram 7: Burnett's Transposable Gamut	72
Diagram 8: System's Notation	77
Diagram 9: PCA/PDA Notation	79
Diagram 10: PCA/PDA Reduction	80

List of Examples

Example 1: “Moro, lasso,” mm.1-3	36
Example 2: Dahlhaus’ Phrygian Sequence in “Moro, lasso”	37
Example 3: Watkins’ Tonal Identification of “Moro, lasso”	39
Example 4: Pike’s Solmization Analysis of “Moro, lasso”	41
Example 5: Chromatic 5-6 Exchanges in “Moro, lasso”	57
Example 6: Chromatic Notation in “Moro, lasso”	58
Example 7: Reynolds Intervallic Analysis of “Languisce al fin”	59
Example 8: Reynolds Harmonic Analysis of “Io parto”	60
Example 9: System’s Analysis of “Moro, lasso”	74

List of Tables

Table 1: Turci-Escobar's Cadentially Attenuated Types 45

Table 2: Burdick's Key Structure of "Moro, lasso" 54

Introduction. Premise

Carlo Gesualdo was a Neapolitan prince who “murdered his first wife, abused his second, and in his final days became a troubled victim of the nefarious ploys of a group of witches who took up residence in his castle.”¹ The reception of Gesualdo’s life (1566-1613) has all but labeled him a murderer, misogynist, and mystic. Shlomo Giora Shoham maintained as of 2003 that Gesualdo lived a life of sado-masochistic misery, “was a sexual pervert who derived pleasure from being flogged by a group of twelve young men,” and can retrospectively be diagnosed with an oral fixation.² Yet, the last few years has witnessed a reevaluation of Gesualdo’s social and political life.

In 2010, Glenn Watkins introduced an essential new perspective, estimating Gesualdo’s complexities as a major musical figure at the end of the sixteenth-century. The incidents that color Gesualdo’s life, according to Watkins, seem to fit reasonably within his own social environment. Spanish convention, including the city-state of Naples, would have been inclined to favor the killing of both Gesualdo’s adulteress wife and her lover. “Thus custom held that a cuckolded male had not only the right but duty to protect the honor of [his] family name.”³ Gesualdo’s sado-masochistic floggings were, in actuality, a prescribed treatment by his physician in order to cure bowel troubles. Even his association with witches cannot be considered uncommon given that the period of history of Gesualdo’s life included the Inquisition.

¹ Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth and Memory* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010).

² Shlomo Giora Shoham, *Art, Crime, & Madness: Gesualdo, Caravaggio, Genet, Van Gogh, Artaud* (U.S., Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 73.

³ Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth and Memory*, 19.

I believe that the most idiosyncratic feature of Gesualdo is the duality of him being both a prince and composer who published his own works. This duality was atypical for his time, as the station of nobility only included artistic support without the need for recognition and artistic activity.

Contrary to what some later writers would have us believe, it was Gesualdo's confrontation with avant-garde developments in Ferrara that provided the catalyst for his change to a new and miraculous expression – not the murder of his first wife that drove him to madness and to the composition of an unstable music.⁴

The reevaluation of Gesualdo's fantastic life has not only affected the relationship between him and his music, but also motivates the need to reconsider his music independently of the notorious events that have inaccurately branded him.

While primary sources describe Carlo Gesualdo as an excellent instrumentalist on the *arcicembalo*, his published musical output is confined to sacred and secular vocal works. Evidence of a clear musical maturity is more readily observed in his six books of five-voice madrigals, in which the last two books were published at the end of his life's career in 1611.⁵ Scholars have formally acknowledged the last two books as an example of Gesualdo's extravagant and irrational style. These two books have caused quite a long and drawn-out controversy in musical scholarship. Scholars have had extreme opinions of his late-style of music similar to the controversial claims made about his fantastic life.⁶ It is my contention

⁴ Watkins, 24.

⁵ A seventh book of madrigals did exist, yet has come down to us in too scarce a form to reproduce accurately. Only the *quinto* part remains. Additionally, the publication date and year of creation for these madrigals were far removed from each other. The date of compositional completion for these two books has been considered to be perhaps as early as 1596.

⁶ Chapter two elaborates on what the extreme opinions addressing the reception of Gesualdo's music were.

that an evaluation of scholarly opinion discussing Gesualdo's music, as well as a reevaluation of his late-style, are necessary in order to resolve stylistic factors too extreme and inhibiting as aesthetic labels with a more balanced and comprehensive outlook. Therefore, this thesis is part theoretical historiography and critique, and part analytical in regard to both compositional construction and style.

This thesis formally consists of an analytical and stylistic assessment of "Moro, lasso" (Book VI, n.17), one of the most notorious madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo.⁷ The assessment questions the notion that chromaticism in this madrigal is strictly a surface gesture, one that is functionally irrelevant in deeper levels of counterpoint.⁸ My analysis illustrates that chromaticism and diatonicism act as discrete, yet interrelated functions of counterpoint. The utilization of a chromatic and diatonic modal octave stretched across the entire madrigal organizes the music architecturally. This means that chromaticism and diatonicism are both used to maintain large-scale order by means of a background projection of their respective scales linearly. The analytical system used to verify this organization is entitled systems analysis and is one of a number of pitch-space oriented theories created in recent years.⁹ The conceptual consequence of such a realization is multifaceted: "Moro, lasso" can be contrapuntally reduced to two primary voices with a linear ordering and logical unfolding of a modal octave. Chromaticism is not portrayed solely as a foreground

⁷ The notoriety stems from the extreme range of opinions critiquing the madrigal and Gesualdo's late-musical style.

⁸ Counterpoint, in the context of much of this study, refers to 'species' counterpoint. Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 26-48 provides an entire section solely concerned with the origin and evolution of species counterpoint. He writes, "Teaching counterpoint by isolating different types or 'species' of voice interactions goes back at least to the early sixteenth century." (26) In this study, species counterpoint is utilized as an analytical device (and implicitly, a compositional one as well) in order to map structures larger than note-to-note successions. Chapter four of this thesis explains more precisely how the methodology and illustration of a first species counterpoint governs the continuity and consistency of Gesualdo's music.

⁹ Systems analysis is a theoretical construct coined and created by Henry Burnett and Roy Nitzberg, *Composition Chromaticism and the Developmental Process*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007).

decoration dependent upon and reduced to a diatonic skeleton, but is now seen to also stand on its own merits through hierarchical significance.

The stylistic conclusions made about “Moro, lasso” in this thesis depict a rational and symmetrical organization to Gesualdo’s music rather than only pure irrationality, disorder, and disunity. This reconciliation also affects the transitional period of time in which Gesualdo lived. The stylistic period to house this chromatic development and experimentation is known to some as Mannerism. While “Mannerism can be interpreted as a fruitful trend toward [an] anti-natural or anti-classical style...it can also be considered epigonal.”¹⁰ I conclude that just as chromaticism should be identified by what it ‘is’ and not by what it ‘is not,’¹¹ so too stylistic identification must first begin with definable characteristics of a synchronic type before a diachronic development and comparison can be discussed. The importance of chromaticism as a unifying device in Mannerist music, as a novel method for formal order and balance, falsifies the dichotomy made between the Renaissance and Mannerism: a “rational craft cedes its former prominence to a new aesthetic of irrational genius.”¹² To clarify, I do agree that Mannerism is partly defined by the utilization of exaggeration and distortion, specifically an exaggeration and distortion of

¹⁰ Maria Rika Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 6. The concepts ‘natural’ and ‘classic’ refer to the ideal of the Renaissance: perfection within the bounds of nature. While the aesthetic premise of the Renaissance connotes an imitation of nature, Mannerist aesthetics promote surpassing nature through refinement, i.e. distortion. It should be noted that what was considered ‘classic’ in Renaissance music was simply scholarly reflection of particular composers (Josquin des Prez for instance) who seemed to embody a perfected art. Chapter six of this thesis will attempt to realize the dependency of Mannerism upon the Renaissance and the inherent problems as such.

¹¹ The theoretical and methodological considerations that are derived from the statement, “chromaticism is the absence of diatonicism,” treats chromaticism as diatonically reducible, in effect, two sides of a single coin. Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 42 treats these negative descriptions as only ‘heuristically’ helpful in establishing a stylistic class, a diachronic connection between styles. Yet, “statements that characterize styles by remarking on the absence of some trait or parameter...are not analytically useful.” Chapter six of this thesis embraces Meyer’s methodology as a means to reconcile the relationship between musical style and music history.

¹² Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, 131.

Renaissance concepts like ‘classic’ and ‘natural’.¹³ Yet, in any music that means to distort a particular subject, there must be a constant or stable environment for such distortion and exaggeration to manifest. Chromaticism and diatonicism act contrapuntally as independent yet interrelated symmetrical threads, which create an organizational constant to judge distortion or exaggeration of surface contrapuntal and harmonic features, rhythmic phrasing, and texture.

This thesis falls within the category of style analysis, as its goal is to propose a new compositional outlook of “Moro, lasso” and Gesualdo’s late-musical style. One of the primary tenets that this thesis maintains is that analytical observations of music directly affect the categorization of stylistic factors, i.e. style theory a la Leonard B. Meyer.

One of the fundamental stylistic issues discussed in this study lies in the identification of terminology like chromaticism or Mannerism solely by means of comparison: chromaticism in terms of diatonicism; Mannerism in terms of Renaissance classicism. In addition, maintaining that music history consists of various synchronic types, i.e. periods of music, without understanding the diachronic connection and evolution between types, allows for sharp distinctions between stylistic periods that are liable to create factitious holes in the continuum of music history. This issue is particularly devastating to the viability of Mannerism especially when Glenn Watkins, the contemporary biographer of Carlo Gesualdo, claims that in comparison with the Renaissance “subjectivity replaces objectivity, [as] the personal vision of the artist counterbalances the scientific view of an ordered universe.”¹⁴ I

¹³ However, I do not necessarily agree with Maniates that ‘Mannerism’ is a befitting title for the sixteenth century. Chapter six of this study examines how my analysis, coupled with a contemporary view of style criticism, re-defines and re-assesses the polemic of periodic labeling.

¹⁴ Glenn Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), 102.

would argue that there is a contextual order and balance found within the most extreme mannerist music, a notion that inhibits severe separation of the style periods on a diachronic level, yet also maintains a synchronic steadiness between periods.

The essential reason for this study is a question I pose concerning musical architecture: are there musical factor(s) of Carlo Gesualdo's late madrigals that support(s) all the surface features deemed incongruous?¹⁵ Analysts who have indirectly treated this query have long debated tonality as an organizational source, yet the definition of tonality and its application or indication in sixteenth-century music is littered with controversy. Watkins aptly notes that "it would be misleading to imply that there are no difficulties in trying to reconcile Gesualdo's concept of harmonic progression with the principles of harmonic function."¹⁶

Other analytical researchers have attempted to remain 'true' to the theoretical and aesthetic practices of the sixteenth-century. Such analytical perceptions define the category

¹⁵ The assumption I take for granted here is that the definition of music includes the concept of coherent organization, or at least within the context of the sixteenth century. I define coherent organization as the utilization of particular elements of music in order to create a musical narrative that is aurally convincing. Such elements observed are large-scale repetition of phrases, surface motivic imitation, as well as harmonic transposition. In addition, I postulate that a deeper structural element underscores the contrapuntal fabric of the music sustaining coherence throughout. Nicola Dibben, "Musical Materials, Perception, and Listening," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton et al. (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 193-203 writes quite a provocative chapter critiquing "one of the most influential accounts of music cognition in the last twenty years [which] has been the idea that listeners hear relationships between abstract underlying structures in music as well as surface relationships, and that a hierarchy of tonal structures is fundamental to the listening experience." (193) She argues that musical materials are a socially dependent construct "whether that be their compositional use with regard to fulfilling particular structural functions or their association with particular social contexts." (196) I agree with her primary concern considering music theory as a musical discourse that suggests alternatives to music experience, and regard compositional and performative processes as co-dependent designs. My analytical question is a compositional one, yet its solution will imply performative potential. The analysis I present in chapter five illustrates an alternative compositional outlook and interpretation of "Moro, lasso," yet one that is reinforced by our cultural parameters. Allen Forte, "Concepts of Linearity in Schoenberg's Atonal Music: A Study of the Opus 15 song Cycle," *Journal of Music Theory* 36 (1992), 286 borrows a metaphor from telecommunications to explain that "linear structures may sometimes be multiplex...more than one convincing analytical reading may be possible," i.e., alternatives enrich our understanding of music.

¹⁶ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 204. A comprehensive overview of this analytical dilemma is considered in chapter two of this thesis.

of early music analysis. Whatever the methodology or analytical approach, it is the musical experience or its potential that ultimately rewards methodological or analytical justification. While my analysis does not pretend to reflect Gesualdo's own analytical and compositional views, it maintains an analytical awareness of the sixteenth century and the theoretical constructs of other scholars who have already tried to understand his music.¹⁷ I believe that the question posed above has yet to be answered. The solution to this analytical problem, as I suggested earlier, sheds light on the compositional structure of "Moro, lasso" and motivates new observations and interpretations within musicology.

The most significant limitation of this study is the analytical treatment of only one madrigal. The parameters of this study, as a master's thesis and not a doctoral dissertation or book, limit the quantitative element needed to bolster the consequences of the study.¹⁸ Yet, the analytical conclusions of "Moro, lasso" can be used as a benchmark to measure the analytical implications of Gesualdo's other madrigals.¹⁹ The scope of this thesis still maintains a geographical limit. To clarify, the label used throughout this thesis entitled 'late sixteenth-century polyphonic vocal music' is limited to the geographical region of the

¹⁷ Speculation of Gesualdo's theoretical foundation can only be derived from his interaction with other musicians and theorists. While it can be suggested that Gesualdo must have had a solid understanding of chromaticism, defined and promulgated by theorists like Vicentino, in which an intervallic approach to various 'genera' was in vogue, it can also be suggested that theoretical insight positioned at a distance from Gesualdo's own era is more suited to provide an integrated and contiguous focus.

¹⁸ The implication is that finding similar structural characteristics in other like-minded works would reinforce the delimitation of the thesis' argument.

¹⁹ Scholars consistently view "Moro, lasso" as an extreme exemplification of chromatic experimentation such that its analytical elucidation is paramount towards understanding other late sixteenth-century compositions that also utilize chromaticism, even in moderation. For reasons of expediency, I use Charles Burkhart and William Rothstein eds., *Anthology for Musical Analysis 6th Edition* (New York: G. Schirmer Inc., 2008), 367-70. All subsequent examples or references in this study will be in context to this score. Their score is a copy from the authoritative modern edition of Carlo Gesualdo, *Sämtliche Madrigali*, Vol.6, Ed. Weismann (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1987), 74-7 in which the original irregular barring is maintained, while a modernized system of pitch notation has been implemented for convenience. The use of natural signs within the modern score (the natural sign was not commonly used) does not alter the actual meaning of the notes, but rather aids in readily identifying accidental alteration according to our modern standards of notation. Gesualdo, himself, published his madrigals in score form, a rare occurrence within the musical printing norms of the time.

Northern Italian courts. This is because experimentation with chromaticism (an element of the Mannerist style) was largely bound to “northern Italy, excluding [the] Veneto and later, in some art in Rome” as well as restricted to the “socio-political environments in which [a mannerist style] flourished.”²⁰

Each chapter of this thesis serves a teleological design focused to guide the reader to the thesis’s conclusion. The first chapter introduces broad musical concepts associated with sixteenth-century music to lay the conceptual foundation for the chapters that follow. Chapter two describes the dilemma in analyzing Gesualdo’s music, the controversial environment set by a number of different scholarly opinions that surrounds the music, and the need to integrate scholarship of his music in order to gain a more comprehensive and balanced outlook of his style. The third chapter follows the proposition in the second by combining various analytical assessments of Gesualdo’s music by scholars and providing a sense of correspondence. Chapter four begins the main body of the thesis with a theoretical explanation of systems analysis and its practical significance over other pitch-space systems that attempt to analyze late sixteenth-century chromatic music. This chapter is coupled with chapter five, my analysis of “Moro, lasso” and the theoretical implications of my analysis. The last chapter demonstrates the effect of my analytical conclusions within style theory and period labeling as I explore the intricate and quibbled field of connecting style and history convincingly.

²⁰ Tim Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11.

Chapter One. Foundation

The Foundations of Sixteenth-Century Musical Organization²¹

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, via George Dyson and William Drabkin, defines chromatic as “based on an octave of 12 semitones.” Due to the evolution of music, chromaticism has been spatially represented as an abstract set of pitch-classes and also intervallically represented as a temporal relationship. Thus, I define chromaticism as the range of pitch material designated as available in addition to the various intervallic relationships among the designated range. While I agree with the *New Grove*’s definition of chromaticism in terms of a species of octave, I disagree with the *New Grove*’s consideration of what constitutes a chromatic interval: “an interval is said to be chromatic if it is not part of a diatonic scale.”²² This is akin to claiming that anything is considered chromatic by virtue of it not being diatonic. The ‘diatonic-chromatic’ opposition carries a similar implication: chromaticism is perceived as an extension of the diatonic scale (at least until the twentieth

²¹ David Schulenberg, “Modes, Prolongations, and Analysis,” *The Journal of Musicology* 4 (1985-6), 305. His request for scholars to trace their analytical principles is a primary motivation for this chapter dealing with essential terminology and a theoretical foundation.

²² George Dyson and William Drabkin, “Chromatic,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), 815. While Karol Berger, “Theories of Enharmonic Music in Italy in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century (PhD diss., Yale University, 1975), writes that Late Renaissance theorists discussed chromaticism in terms of a set of steps and intervals within the context of a tonal (organized and hierarchical) system, I believe that the definition of chromaticism can include both a spatial and intervallic orientation. While the intervallic constitution of chromaticism began in the sixteenth century by theorists such as Vicentino, a spatial manifestation of chromaticism came much later within the history of music theory. Mark Lindley, “A Systematic Approach to Chromaticism,” *Systematische Musikwissenschaft* 2 (1994) considers this association between a tonal system and chromaticism by listing various premises that would inherently change the quantity of pitch material we include as chromatic. Note how Lindley defines a ‘system’ as a set of pitch-classes with an internal set of relationships. While I agree that depending on the designated system, such as a chain of perfect fifths in varying orientations, relationships are present a priori, I also believe that a musical work includes many other factors that contribute to a pitch-class association of consonance and dissonance such that geometrical diagrams of pitch-class material can only tell us so much about musical relationships. Furthermore, see n59 for a more detailed discussion of how chromaticism is intervallically understood according to various camps of thought. I wish to note that any criticism of another scholar’s view of analysis and “Moro, lasso” does not mean to take issue with the definitions of any musical term, but simply the application of theory via analysis.

century), rather than two interrelated functions. This notion carries over into the analytical treatment of music that exhibits chromaticism.

The traditional hierarchical understanding of chromaticism as an outgrowth of diatonicism is supported, in part, by the evolution of chromaticism in music. The musical domain in which chromaticism began to saturate was one governed by diatonicism and the structural framework some scholars have designated as modal. However, although chromaticism sprouted from a diatonic system, it has become a compositional device that transcends its origins. Within late sixteenth-century vocal music in which chromaticism becomes an almost essential ingredient, it would be wise to consider chromaticism on its own terms. Our analytical past has created an artificial bias in which we believe that “a succession of half steps weakens the permanence of any local tonic.”²³ Within pre-tonal music that exhibits similar chromatic elements, in which such music is not dependent upon a key or ‘tonic’ for structural coherence, similar notions of diatonic supremacy have hindered the analytical treatment of such music. Quoting McCreless, William Hussey writes

the historical development of chromatic space in the nineteenth century involved a gradual and almost imperceptible progression from a state of affairs where such leaps into chromatic space catered to the inculturated security of global diatonic space by adopting conventional linear-motive means to rationalize them and by limiting their absolute duration to a state of affairs where the demand to hear in chromatic space is

²³ William Hussey, “Triadic Post-tonality and Linear Chromaticism in the Music of Dmitri Shostakovich,” *Music Theory Online* 9 (2003).

so pervasive that we must hear on its terms rather than on the terms of diatonic space.²⁴

It should be noted that whatever the musical system, whether it be a tonal, atonal, or modal context, “a recurring stepwise pattern of ascending or descending half-steps creates a sense of coherence and direction.”²⁵ This study adheres to the additional fact that linear chromaticism is not only a surface gesture,²⁶ but one that holds the contrapuntal framework of heavily induced chromatic music together symmetrically.

Tonality is a term that carries multiple meanings dependent on both the content and viewpoint of the analyst. The New Grove provides a comprehensive overview of the term and its contextual relationship to style periods. “In the broadest possible sense, however, it [tonality] refers to systematic arrangements of pitch phenomena and relations between them.”²⁷ For efficiency, whenever the term tonal is mentioned in this study, it will be clarified with a prefix or explained more thoroughly. This is because the term tonal can be used in direct contrast with modal and atonal, portraying historical discontinuity “as a form of cultural expression,” while at the same time, can be used “to describe the systematic organization of pitch phenomena in both Western and non-Western music.”²⁸

²⁴ Patrick P. McCreless “An Evolutionary Perspective on Nineteenth-Century Semitonal Relations,” in *The Second Practice of Nineteenth Century Tonality* ed. William Kinderman and Harald Krebs (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 103 quoted in Hussey.

²⁵ Hussey. In addition, Mark Lindley, “Chromatic Systems (or non-systems) from Vicentino to Monteverdi,” review of “Theories of Chromatic and Enharmonic Music in Late 16th-Century Italy,” by Karol Berger, *Early Music History* 2 (1982), remarks how “nearly all sixteenth-century chromaticism is...orderly in plan if sometimes daring in the motion of individual voices.” (393) This thesis attempts to quantify this statement.

²⁶ Joseph Kerman, *The Elizabethan Madrigal: A Comparative Study* (New York: American Musicological Society Inc., 1962), 213 is an example of how chromaticism is traditionally explained through surface voice-leading (linear) principles.

²⁷ Brian Hyer, “Tonality,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 585.

²⁸ Hyer, “Tonality,” 583.

The lack of terminological coherence in describing words like tonal, modal, atonal, words that are abstract classifications at best, has created an analytical discourse riddled with confusion and ambiguity. Instead of getting into a lengthy discussion about the issues surrounding such concepts analytically, I will contextualize the terms within late sixteenth-century vocal music. However, it should be noted that “tonal theories tend to concentrate on harmonic matter to the virtual exclusion of all other musical phenomena.”²⁹ This is why tonal music is associated with the concept of harmonic functionality relating to a particular triad. The application of tonal theory, whether that means Roman Numeral Analysis, Schenkerian Analysis, or any other tonal analytical system distorts the meaning of the music when both the music and its time period do not adhere to such requirements.³⁰ This is an oversimplification of the issue of analyzing ‘early music’, and I do not disregard utilizing tonal analysis (i.e. common practice tonality) if it brings insight to a piece of music. This is especially true with music classified as transitional in which certain phenomena, a dominant-tonic polarization for instance, are significant.³¹ However, In late sixteenth-century music, Carlo Gesualdo’s music may incorporate a surface harmony identifiable by tonal standards (functional harmony) yet his music becomes identifiably obscure when viewing more than the most surface harmonic instances. This is because Gesualdo and his contemporaries were

²⁹ Hyer, “Tonality,” 587.

³⁰ Schulenberg, 303-29 presents a thorough criticism of utilizing tonal methodologies to explain the structure of non-tonal music. According to Schulenberg, “the problem...is that it imposes a burden on non-tonal music to meet the same aesthetic standards against which tonal works are judged, and evaluates works chiefly on the degree to which they approach the use of tonal procedures.” (303) His article posits that “the absence of Schenkerian background structures in music should not be taken as an excuse for ignoring voice-leading and registral connections at ‘less background’ levels.” (321) In any case, without Heinrich Schenker and his profound impact within the realm of tonality, the idea of ‘analytical reduction’ wouldn’t even exist.

³¹ The adjective ‘transitional’ refers to music whose definable characteristics do not fit into a single paradigm of our established style periods.

not organizing their music through the prism of common practice tonality, but rather building upon a tradition based in modality.³²

This begs the question, how does modality function as an organizational system in sixteenth-century vocal music? Bernhard Meier's seminal work *The Modes of Classical Vocal Polyphony* attempts to address this issue. Meier describes two systems "which, by the Middle Ages, have influenced modal theory in different ways: the so-called Western ecclesiastical system and the pseudo classical system."³³

The former system designates particular rules to establish modal identity and the musical application of mode as a unifying factor. The organization of a melody stems from both its internal organization and its final pitch. The ambitus, or "musical space available" to a particular melody, designates a range of pitches for melodic construction. The final pitch of a melody provides a particular pitch with "greater syntactical weight".³⁴ Both factors contribute to eight categorized modes known as the authentic and plagal modes. An authentic mode is similar to its plagal counterpart with regards to the final pitch, but is distinct in its ambitus. Meier notes, "the ambitus...never establishes the limits of a merely abstract, empty musical space" but is defined by melodic archetypes: distinctive formulas or models abstracted from melody between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century.³⁵ For example, mode 1 (the system designates modes through ordinal numbers between one and eight) is portrayed by a final pitch or referential pitch Re (D) and has an ambitus of around an octave above the final. The melodic archetype provides one additional important pitch, "a second

³² See chapter two of this study for a more comprehensive exploration of tonal analysis and Gesualdo's late madrigals.

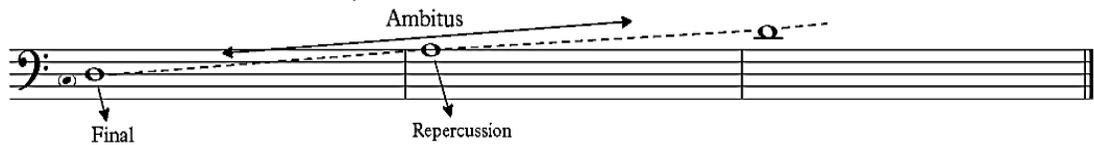
³³ Meier, 36.

³⁴ Meier, 36.

³⁵ Meier, 38.

tone of special importance within the mode” known as the repercussion.³⁶ The repercussion of mode 1 is a fifth above the final or La (A) (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1



Within this identity and classification of modality, Meier concludes, “contrary to what the nineteenth century and its spiritual descendants believed...every single pitch ‘foreign to the scale’ does not signify departing from the mode.”³⁷ This conclusion is due to the ‘typical physiognomy of the modes’ in which the pitch material of a melody is designated by an abstract musical space. The system then pre-compositionally allows for chromaticism, yet does not establish melodic or contrapuntal guidelines³⁸ for how to deal with chromaticism within a diatonic musical space. These guidelines form the basic material dealt within the musical subsets of modality: modal counterpoint and modal harmony.

The other system of modality, the pseudo-classical system, exhibits a contraction between a theory of interval species and the Western ecclesiastical system. This system, according to Meier, distorts many of the fundamental elements that are representative of modality within the other system discussed. The idea of an octave species linearized as a scale and distinguished by the position of ‘half tones,’ “no longer retain[s] any of the essential features and characteristics of the modes: no reference to the union of every two modes by the same final and to the different ranges that distinguish authentic and plagal

³⁶ Meier, 40.

³⁷ Meier, 43.

³⁸ The term guidelines substitutes for the more common ‘rules,’ which I believe would otherwise connote an objective parameter to a subjective system of musical organization.

melodies with the same final.”³⁹ The pseudo classical system, due to its practical limitations in analysis of music which utilizes any pitches outside the scale, is deemed unfit. Yet, there are obvious problems with claiming the modal integrity of late sixteenth-century music on the basis of ambitus and final alone even according to the Western ecclesiastical system.⁴⁰

The primary debate considers whether modality, comprising the modes of monophonic chant, maintains its integrity and practicality within sixteenth-century polyphonic vocal music. Margaret Bent argues that “polyphony was not modal in [the] fourteenth century” and onward.⁴¹ This may be because multiple voices assume multiple ranges, i.e., each voice pertains to its own modal ambitus. Bernhard Meier argues that polyphony maintains modal awareness in which “all the voices are related to one and the same modal quality of the same final...and therefore are accommodated to each other in accordance with definite rules.”⁴² Perhaps both scholars are correct in their assessment but wrong in understanding the bigger picture. Bent is correct in questioning modal viability of

³⁹ Meier, 44.

⁴⁰ Susan McClary, *Modal Subjectivities: Self Fashioning in the Italian Madrigal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) argues for an attitude of flexibility, through a species-oriented conception of mode, represented by the Western ecclesiastical system and argues against “defining *mode* in scalar terms” represented by the pseudo classical system. She most pointedly explains how “too often scholars act as though a cadential leading tone or a lowered sixth degree in Dorian demolishes modal purity” rather than recognizing the functional flexibility of a modal pitch-space as a method of consolidating modal identity (199).

⁴¹ Margaret Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 19. Bent argues in favor of the pseudo-classical system in which “modes are fundamentally fixed arrangements of tones and semitones.” (71)

⁴² Meier, 49-53. In fact, many contemporary books on modal counterpoint introduce modality through the pseudo-classical system: Robert Stewart, *An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint and Palestrina's Musical Style* (Fullerton: Ardsley House Publishers, 1994), 2; Stella Roberts and Irwin Fischer, *A Handbook of Modal Counterpoint* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 6-9; Harold Owen, *Modal and Tonal Counterpoint: From Josquin to Stravinsky* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 355-7; Thomas Benjamin, *The Craft of Modal Counterpoint: A Practical Approach* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 12-13; Margarita Merriman, *A New Look at 16th-Century Counterpoint* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America Inc., 1982), 2. The only contemporary theoretical manual I have found that tries to maintain at least a semblance of the Western ecclesiastical system is Leslie Bassett, *Manual of Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1967), 3. As Meier explains, the pedagogical difference between the two systems can truly distort the way we understand modality and its musical paradigm. I speculate that the immersion of the pseudo classical system in our contemporaneous pedagogy, at the expense of the Western ecclesiastical system, has distorted our reception of modality and its connection and evolution towards tonality. See footnote n189 of this thesis for a cited work that argues in favor of a diachronic approach to modality and tonality.

polyphonic music by comparing it to its monophonic origins. Meier is correct in determining the relationship of modal characteristics to each voice of a polyphonic work as well as alluding to definite organizational principles of the music.

This issue is a duality that may be better understood in philosophical terms by means of ‘emergence’ or ‘emergent properties’.⁴³ The concept of emergence explains how simple systems of thought, for instance, the Western ecclesiastical system concerning monophonic music, are placed or observed in more complex systems in which new properties emerge. Meier illustrates how classic polyphony sustains multiple vocal parts in which each part can individually be isolated to a particular authentic or plagal mode. This explains how each vocal part, a monophonic strand of music when isolated, can be modally identified, but together form new properties not found in and unrelated to Bent’s definition of modality. Polyphonic modality is not the same as monophonic modality, yet the former is built on the principles of the latter.⁴⁴

This philosophical concept becomes ever more important once late sixteenth-century vocal music is introduced. This is because new experiments with chromaticism, that go beyond adjusting imperfect intervals to create a major sixth before a cadence, or to avoid harmonic or melodic tritones within a musical work, traditionally dictate modal disintegration.⁴⁵ As opposed to relegating late sixteenth-century experimental music to modal incoherence, in which Gesualdo is perceived as an extreme example, I believe that

⁴³ Jean-Marie Grassin, “Emergence,” <http://www.flsh.unilim.fr/ditl/EMERGENCE.htm> provides a complete and accurate overview of the concept of emergence.

⁴⁴ Harold Powers, “Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34 (1981), 439 argues in favor of a new modal orientation as his idea of a ‘tonal type’ includes “all members of a class of polyphonic pieces minimally characterized by some particular combination of system, cleffing, and final sonority.”

⁴⁵ Schulenberg, 310 alludes to the idea of complex systems when he writes, “the possibilities of transposed modes, chromaticism *commixtio*, and the free selection of cadence tones enormously complicate the description of musical space in later polyphony, especially toward the end of the sixteenth century.”

chromaticism is an emerging property that changes the complexity of analytical systems, one that demands a re-evaluation of organizational principles in which classic polyphony becomes embedded within a new system.⁴⁶

There are other factors that also contributed to emerging qualities in sixteenth-century music. The formal organization of sixteenth-century music directly relates to both the designated text of a vocal work and how the text is set and sectionalized. The Madrigal of the sixteenth century represented a poetic form “inspired by the freedom inherent in the unstructured canzone stanza,”⁴⁷ while also developed from “the transformation of the frottola, from an accompanied song with a supporting bass and two inner voices serving as ‘fillers’ into a motet-like polyphonic construction with four parts of equal importance.”⁴⁸ The poetic forms associated with the madrigal, the sonnet, the ottava stanza, the canzona, and the ballata, all maintain a particular structure of stanzas and divisions, essentially identified by the verse/phrase building block, and highlighted within the musical setting by early madrigalists.⁴⁹ Yet, from the middle of the sixteenth century and on, “the madrigal... offered a wide[r] range of constructional possibilities” due to its flexibility and “capacity to expand or contract not only the total number of lines employed, but also their syllabic quantities.”⁵⁰ The extreme representation of this flexibility is found within Gesualdo’s last two madrigal books where the verse/phrase is broken up idiosyncratically utilizing the “half-verse, double-

⁴⁶ Chapter six of this thesis touches upon the concept of emergence and how it is tied to stylistic change as well as its overall relationship to periodic classifications.

⁴⁷ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 114. See especially chapter five, 111-32, which supplies a thorough overview of text and form concerning Italian secular vocal music after the beginning of the sixteenth-century and especially Carlo Gesualdo’s treatment of formal procedures.

⁴⁸ Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal V.1*, trans. Alexander H. Krappe et al. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), 121.

⁴⁹ Don Harran, “Verse Types in the Early Madrigal,” *JAMS* 22 (1969), 27-53. The article provides an overview of the text and its versification in the early madrigal.

⁵⁰ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 111-15. For an overview of the Italian madrigal undergoing transformation at the end of the sixteenth-century see Anthony Newcomb, *The Madrigal at Ferrara 1579-1597* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980).

verse elision, and [even] the single word.”⁵¹ The evolution of the madrigal within the sixteenth century was primarily a trajectory from a determination of musical material directly from a text towards freer variety to a determination of the musical material from the sentimental content of a text at large.⁵² This evolution culminates in Gesualdo’s most mature works, which show an increasing inclination for a through-composed structure.⁵³

The premise of Meier’s book, grounded in the speculative writings of theoreticians of the sixteenth-century, maintains that sixteenth-century “vocal music is basically determined by the affection of the text to be set to music – above all by selecting a mode that conforms to the affection of the text.”⁵⁴ As an organizational tool, text setting is involved solely with vocal music and cannot be considered as an organizational principle within the genre of instrumental music. Some scholars, as Meier explains, tend to “consider works of classical vocal polyphony a priori as ‘autonomous’ musical creations and may overlook definite relationships between the text and its setting.”⁵⁵ While analysis should not overlook the important relationship between the text and its musical setting, as many compositional details in vocal music are a means of underscoring the represented text, it is by no means an excuse

⁵¹ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 118-19. This passage illustrates the division of “Belta, poi” (VI,2) and the amount of flexible relationships that occur within the madrigal at the end of the sixteenth-century.

⁵² Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi’s Seconda Pratica* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 56 comments on L’Ottuso’s *Nuova Pratica* and astutely claims, “the composer no longer strives for the immediate identity between words and settings...Rather, music and text are heard as separated components...understood in terms of rhetorical operations.” The equality of the functional relationship between a text and its musical setting is an important observation to keep in mind when analyzing.

⁵³ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 122. Don Harran, “Mannerism in the Cinquento Madrigal?” *The Musical Quarterly* 55 (1969), 532 comments, “and a multifarious structure it was, built on contrasts and dichotomies. Somewhere the balance of a classic art has dissolved [into]...structural and emotional imbalance. It is a form, in truth, without focus or orientation.” This thesis means to take issue with this perception.

⁵⁴ Meier, 13.

⁵⁵ Meier, 13.

or substitution for musical coherence.⁵⁶ Watkins questions this very idea of musical coherence dependent upon a text and its far reaching implications as the justification of *Seconda Prattica*. Again, the assumption is that composers like Gesualdo, Cipriano de Rore, Monteverdi, “and ending with Giulio Caccini, held counterpoint and rhythm as subordinate to the text, and harmonic dissonance unacceptable in *prima prattica* were now rationalized by the fact that they were inspired by and joined to a text.”⁵⁷ The emphasis of this assumption regards surface details including the idea of counterpoint as moment to moment rather than an underlying organizational principle. This is just one of the issues which are inherently solved by this thesis’ argument.

While form is a definitive element of musical organization, the musical content of formal procedures necessitates an inclusive identification and justification beyond textual considerations and sectional divisions. The issue of conflating the organization of musical sections with its textual counterpart, without explaining musically dependent features such as sectional transposition, cadential treatment, and musical continuity, is incomplete in understanding late-sixteenth century vocal music. The issue of musical analyses that confuse

⁵⁶ Jeffrey Kurtzman, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) argues in favor of such an opinion when considering Monteverdi’s *seconda prattica* compositions “it is often this musical coherence that gives primary force to the expression of the text, for in the absence of a powerful musical logic, the addition of tone to word is likely to prove fleeting, superficial, and unconvincing.” (308-309) Ossi, 21 amply writes how the crucial relationship between text and music “had provided l’Accademico Ottuso with his chief justification for Monteverdi’s violations of the rules of counterpoint—‘The text made him do it!’” while in fact, “Giulio Cesare may have done his brother more a disservice than a favor with his famous encapsulation of the aims of the *seconda prattica*, because the notion of music being the servant of the text could not be further from the aesthetic ideal that Monteverdi was trying to achieve.” In addition, James Haar, “False Relations and Chromaticism in Sixteenth-Century Music,” *JAMS* 30 (1977), 405 states that “composers did not thus always use chromaticism for expressive purposes.” These opinions and observations are contemporary in origin as Claude V. Palisca, *Music and Ideas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 5 states that Johannes Ott, Gioseffo Zarlino, Giovanni Bardi, Giulio Caccini, and Giulio Cesare Monteverdi all “emphasized the primacy of the word over the music.” I agree with the contemporary attitude towards the late-sixteenth century madrigal and opt for a more ‘retrospective’ viewpoint.

⁵⁷ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth and Memory*, 55-6. He discusses the concept of performing vocal works purely on instruments and their aesthetic implication with regards to expression associated with a text.

textual organization with musical coherence is an issue that permeates musical scholarship to such an extent that even books concerned with writing about music are influenced by it.⁵⁸

Another definitive element of musical organization is counterpoint. Counterpoint, simply put, is “a term, first used in the fourteenth century, to describe the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines according to a system of rules.”⁵⁹ The origin of counterpoint lies in the interaction of two voices in which a “two-part progression of an imperfect to a perfect interval” becomes the ‘goal’ or cadence of a musical phrase.⁶⁰ A third voice, known as the *contra-tenor* or *bassus*, became popular within fifteenth-century polyphony, determining the primary voices of modal counterpoint to be the tenor and soprano voices. In fact, the modal primacy of the tenor line, in which the tenor voice is ‘composed first’, becomes the basis for “inventing motives establishing the cadence plan... a voice that confers unity on the whole composition.”⁶¹ This idea aids in understanding the underlying compositional thread of a sixteenth-century vocal piece. Yet, beyond the tenor line’s modal unification of a piece, analytical discussions of counterpoint have mainly been

⁵⁸ See for example Richard J. Wingell, *Writing About Music: An Introductory Guide* 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2002), 10-14 where the reader is asked to consider basic questions about musical organization. While the author correctly notes how “we can always assume that musical works are based on some principle of organization” and “identifying the musical means by which the composer has built in unity and coherence is the most important step in analysis” (11), his generic analysis of Gesualdo’s ‘famous madrigal’ “Moro, lasso” assumes that musical rhetoric, or “finding appropriate musical ways to depict the striking words and ideas of the text,” is the most feasible analytical approach. Without getting too critical of a discussion clearly oriented towards research strategies and not wholly concerned with reasoned content, the author actually acknowledges the feasibility of arguing that Gesualdo’s style “lacks overall unity and coherence.” (14)

⁵⁹ Kurt Sachs and Carl Dahlhaus, “Counterpoint,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 551. Gioseffo Zarlino, *The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche*, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1968), 1 defines counterpoint as “that concordance or agreement which is born of a body with diverse parts, its various melodic lines accommodated to the total composition, arranged so that voices are separated by commensurable, harmonious intervals.”

⁶⁰ Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, 14.

⁶¹ Meier, 68-70. Carl Dahlhaus, *Studies on the Origin of Harmonic Tonality*, trans. Robert O.Gjerdingen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 63-4 states how the *contra-tenor/bassus* “represents not the root movement of a chord progression, but a supplementary voice added to a discant-tenor framework.” This is the view I uphold in my own analysis of “Moro, lasso” in chapter five where a piano reduction is further reduced to a two-part discant texture revealing the essential fabric of the piece.

reserved for surface simultaneities such as harmonic juxtapositions or dissonant suspension chains. This is perhaps why the term counterpoint has come to mean motivic imitation at a point, motivic inversion (double counterpoint), and includes only the most surface details.⁶²

At most, scholars have mainly dealt with cadential treatment of voices, a structurally important event in any musical surface. However, due to a lack of analytical treatment of contrapuntal settings, an analysis that tries to account for a linear framework of a piece by looking beyond a single surface event, scholars do not regard analytical terminology that attempts to address sixteenth-century vocal music on a fundamental organizational level. An analogy can be made from the way Schenkerian analysis attempts to illustrate the contrapuntal fabric of tonal music with harmonic functionality as fundamental (common practice tonality), to sixteenth-century modal music and its own contrapuntal framework, yet without the notion that harmonic functionality represents the basis and support for melodic linearity.⁶³ I believe that counterpoint can support and fulfill a background structure in modal music, a compositional process that can be observed through contrapuntal reduction utilizing species counterpoint and governed by both chromaticism and diatonicism.⁶⁴

Our exploration of the foundations of sixteenth-century vocal music now comes full circle as we attempt to consider the role of chromaticism and diatonicism within late

⁶² James Wood, "Gesualdo: Sacrae Cantiones II, An analysis towards reconstruction," (October, 2010) <http://www.choroi.demon.co.uk/Gesualdo-Introduction-v4.pdf> defines counterpoint as melodic/text fragments imitated at a point; Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 134-40 refers to 'contrapuntal foundations' as imitation and inversion including double and triple counterpoint.

⁶³ Kenneth Schmidt, "Harmonic Progression in the Music of Gesualdo: An Analysis of 'O Vos Omnes,'" *In Theory Only* 1 (1975-6), 6-16 asks the question: "in what way do chordal successions form progressions? As patterned harmonic events or as incidental results of simultaneous linear motion? Or both?" (6) Though much of how he approaches musical reduction coincides with my own analytical approach, his analysis assumes the answer as one of harmonic symmetry and prolongation and fails to account for any significant linear continuity implied. Chapter three of this thesis discusses this distinction between harmonic progressions (divorced from tonal functionality) and contrapuntal progressions, both needed for a comprehensive analytical reduction.

⁶⁴ This observation is derived from Henry Burnett and Roy Nitzberg, *Composition, Chromaticism and the Developmental Process* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007)

sixteenth-century contrapuntal practice. Karol Berger, via Mark Lindley, builds upon Meier's modal principles and begins to assess chromaticism in late sixteenth-century Italian music as an essential ingredient for musical organization. Lindley explains that "the tonal system [here meaning a generic system of musical organization] has two parts: first the 'gamut' or 'intervallic material available to a composer', and second the 'pre-compositional organization' of this material (pp.3-4). The second part has a 'generic level', where distinctions between diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic are made, and an 'octave species level', where the different modes are determined."⁶⁵ In this definition of late sixteenth-century musical standards, chromaticism is utilized as an aspect of tonal (musically coherent) organization. Polyphonic cadences at this time are identified by an interval of a major sixth moving in contrary motion out to an octave with one voice moving a whole step and the other a half step.⁶⁶

Both diatonicism and chromaticism are inherently part of this cadential formula as a whole step involves diatonicism while a half step involves chromaticism. It should be noted that the assumption of these two concepts within this discussion is not, as many scholars believe, to be foundationally diatonic. As opposed to "describing chromatic sonorities as they relate to diatonic sonorities,"⁶⁷ this description assumes that a particular diatonic scale in

⁶⁵ Lindley, "Chromatic Systems (or non-systems) from Vicentino to Monteverdi."

⁶⁶ Kyle Adams, "A New Theory of Chromaticism from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Music Theory* 53 (2009), 255-304 discusses the analytical debate surrounding the chromatic genus as one between the Historicist conception of chromatic, i.e. melodically conceived chromatic semitones, and the Presentist conception who define chromaticism by the utilization of pitch-classes outside of a designated diatonic collection. This thesis adheres to the Historicist's conception of chromaticism with regards to its liberation from diatonicism, yet is distinct in also regarding 'diatonic half-steps' (C#-D for example) as a chromatic interval. This definition, due to its independent identity from diatonic, can exist even within the gamut of *musica recta* as the diatonic half-step between E and F. The idea, that a particular set of intervals or pitch-classes can exist in both a diatonic or chromatic context, is perfectly valid if diatonicism and chromaticism are independent entities each with particular constructs depending on the context of a compositional work.

⁶⁷ Adams, 257.

which “the octave is divided into a fifth and fourth”⁶⁸ is subsumed under a chromatic scale that is dependent upon various tuning systems. That is not to say that diatonicism is any more dependent upon chromaticism than the reverse, but rather the pre-compositional material available is fundamentally chromatic. It is important to be aware that tuning and temperament governed the conceptual framework of consonance and dissonance within the context of a particular time period.⁶⁹ Once chromaticism becomes fully saturated (all twelve pitch-classes) and introduced within a single musical work, scholars speculate that the only temperament which works for chromatic vocal music must be equal temperament.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, whether composers during that time were wholly concerned with tuning and temperament or not seems irrelevant for a cappella groups that can instantaneously temper pitches and intervals, due to the nature of the voice as an instrument.

In conclusion, this study re-evaluates the statement that “tonally disruptive chromaticism could...be used as demonstration of Splenigerian decay in the contrapuntal fabric” in late sixteenth-century vocal music.⁷¹ Rather, chromaticism can be used as a novel organizational principle that allows for surface expression and dissonance.

⁶⁸ Lindley, “Chromatic Systems (or non-systems) from Vicentino to Monteverdi.”

⁶⁹ See especially Lindley, *Lutes, Viols, and temperaments* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and J. Murray Barbour, *Tuning and Temperament; a historical survey* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972).

⁷⁰ George R. Marshall, “The Harmonic Laws in the Madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo,” (PhD diss., New York University, 1956), 21 and Kian-Seng Teo, *Chromaticism in the English Madrigal* (New York and London: Carland Publishing Inc., 1989), 10. Both claim that equal temperament was necessary for the performance of chromatic passages composed by late sixteenth-century madrigal composers.

⁷¹ Haar, “False Relations and Chromaticism in Sixteenth-Century Music,” 391.

Chapter Two. Dilemma

Carlo Gesualdo and the Analytical Dilemma

In 1789 Charles Burney described Carlo Gesualdo's madrigal "Moro, lasso" as one that contains "harsh, crude and licentious modulation"⁷² and claimed that his music "seldom succeeded to the satisfaction of posterity."⁷³ August Wilhelm Ambros (1891) labeled Gesualdo a dilettante; Robert Eitner (1909) found him truly monstrous.⁷⁴ His music was "destined never to be performed," according to Paul Henry Lang (1941); seen "as a 'stillborn' art," by Joseph Kerman (1962); "as having ended up a blind alley," through the eyes of Hans Redlich (1966). According to Lorenzo Bianconi (1987), Gesualdo's historical influence was slight; his music was 'virtually without consequence' according to Carl Dahlhaus (1967), and even judged as 'sadly amateurish' from the standpoint of compositional technique by James Haar (1986).⁷⁵

On the other hand, in contrast to such "astonishingly repetitive and accumulating opinions [made] by some of our most prominent historians,"⁷⁶ Giovanni Battista Doni (1636) stated that "none of the moderns can compare with Gesualdo in the handling of rhythm and melody." According to Sir John Hawkins, (1776) Gesualdo's music presents the "sweetest modulation conceivable;" he was acknowledged as "a true pathfinder in the modern way" by

⁷² Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, Modern edition with critical notes by Frank Mercer, Vol. II, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1789), 179ff.

⁷³ Burney, quoted in Lorenzo Bianconi, "Gesualdo," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 20, ed. Stanley Sadie (London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), 783.

⁷⁴ Marshall, 8.

⁷⁵ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music Myth and Memory*, 3-4. While there are no citations present for the three scholars quoted in Watkins' book, I believe that Bianconi's quote may originate from his book on seventeenth-century music (1987). Carl Dahlhaus must have mentioned such a statement in his "Zur chromatischen Technik Carlo Gesualdos," *Analecta Musicologica* (1967). As for James Haar, I managed to locate a more or less similar sentiment from his *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance 1350-1600* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1986), 144.

⁷⁶ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 4.

Guido Adler (1929);⁷⁷ Gesualdo was “One of the boldest pioneers” according Curt Sachs (1955);⁷⁸ his music contained “spectacular harmonic posturing” as illustrated by Watkins (1974).⁷⁹ “To his champions, Gesualdo's expressive impulse yielded brilliant works of unparalleled boldness.”⁸⁰

What allows for such a range of opinions to emanate from the same musical source? The enduring issue is whether it is the life or the work of Gesualdo that creates such a lasting polemic.⁸¹ While Gesualdo’s notoriety begins with his reported killing of his first wife, Donna Maria d’Avalos and her lover, the Duke of Andria, it ends embroiled in witchcraft and masochism.⁸² At the same time, Gesualdo seemed to have played a musically influential role in that he “continued to garner admirers such as Schütz, Frescobaldi, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Francesco Geminiani...[all of whom] spoke of their respect and wonder” for the composer.⁸³ The combination of Gesualdo’s outrageous life and music extended beyond the musical sphere to virtually every corner of the creative arts stimulating new movies, literature, operas, and even sculptures.⁸⁴ The answer to this lingering question presents a duality of association between Gesualdo’s life and music. “If Gesualdo had not committed such shocking acts, we might not pay such close attention to his music. But if he had not

⁷⁷ Marshall, 4-8.

⁷⁸ Curt Sachs, *Our Musical Heritage* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1955), 178.

⁷⁹ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 186.

⁸⁰ John Turci-Escobar, “Softening the Edges: Cadential Attenuation in Gesualdo’s Six Books of Madrigals,” *Theory and Practice* 32 (2007), 123.

⁸¹ Alex Ross, “Prince of Darkness: The Murders and Madrigals of Don Carlo Gesualdo,” (Abstract) *New Yorker*, December 19, 2011. Accessed December 18, 2011.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/12/19/111219fa_fact_ross.

⁸² “Don Carlo Gesualdo,” Last modified December 14, 2011, <http://www.gesualdo.co.uk/sample-page/>. In addition, see Glenn Watkins’ books concerned with a biographical account of Gesualdo: *The Man and His Music* as well as *The Gesualdo Hex*. Together they present arguably the most thorough and up-to-date account of Gesualdo’s life.

⁸³ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 271-2.

⁸⁴ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 232. In addition, an entire breviary of itemized art can be found in Appendix 1, 305-8.

written such shocking music we would not care so much about his deeds.”⁸⁵ It is the combination of Gesualdo’s life and musical work that motivated an extreme conflict of musical opinions.

It is my contention that a collaborative, multi-faceted approach will provide a richer theoretical understanding of “Moro, lasso” and facilitate progress in mending the controversy that Gesualdo’s music has stirred during the past three centuries. Our ever-growing network of intersecting theories should allow us to delve into the essentials of music and its association with human experience and cultural history.⁸⁶

Before getting into the nitty-gritty, I wish to at least acknowledge the amount of progress that has been accomplished by theorists in unraveling the complex and perplexing nature of Gesualdo’s music. Analytical models for early music are commonly debated for their effectiveness due to the amount of controversy and debate that occurred in theoretical treatises during the composers’ own time. As a consequence, many twentieth-century scholars have preferred to approach early music in its relation to later music in order to create a model for comparison. “While some continue to rely on common practice tonality as a prism through which to view early music, others have begun to explore methods that respect the integrity and self-sufficiency of the languages of early music.”⁸⁷

“Moro, lasso”, more than any other madrigal of Gesualdo, has been discussed for its musical idiosyncrasies. No other contemporary piece began with a C-sharp major triad with an E-sharp in the soprano acting as a leading tone that fails to rise to an F# and instead descends

⁸⁵ Ross.

⁸⁶ McClary, “In Praise of Contingency.”

⁸⁷ Jessie Anne Owens, “Series Foreword” to *Counterpoint Composition and Musica Ficta* (New York: Routledge, 2002), vii.

chromatically (Ex.1).⁸⁸ It has been dubbed “Gesualdo’s most famous text of all,”⁸⁹ or simply “the most famous of them [madrigals].”⁹⁰ The opening of “Moro, lasso” has been analyzed from every conceivable angle.

Example 1

The image shows a musical score for the madrigal "Moro, lasso" by Gesualdo. It consists of five staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "E chi mi". The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Mo - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - lo E". The third staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Mo - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - - - lo". The fourth staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Mo - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - - - lo". The fifth staff is a bass line with lyrics: "Mo - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - lo". The score is in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The music is characterized by its chromaticism and complex intervals.

Some analytical perspectives provide a unique identification of these opening chords, but with an emphasis on analytical constructs that ultimately may not be of value. For instance, Dahlhaus proposed that the opening progression is contrapuntally derived from the juxtaposition of a pair of Phrygian cadences,⁹¹ however, “Moro, lasso” is missing one of the chords. Dahlhaus is assuming a construction of the opening measures that isn’t actually completely there, but only fragmented in appearance (Ex.2).

⁸⁸ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 321n33.

⁸⁹ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 48.

⁹⁰ Allan W. Atlas, *Music in Western Europe, 1400-1600, The Norton Introduction to Music History* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), 564.

⁹¹ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 204.

Example 2

Phrygian sequence: C# a6 B G6 E7 a, (b6) - C# a6 - B g6 a

92

Schenkerian analysts designate the bass as the fundamental compositional thread of the piece, implying particular compositional strategies involving the bass rather than the tenor line in modally conceived music.⁹³ Susan McClary, discussing Schenkerian analysts that have tried to unravel the complexities of “Moro, lasso,” states that the piece “yields to the bass/canto orientation of Schenker’s method only with considerable difficulty...the argument frequently resides in the tenor...as the usual mode bearing voice.”⁹⁴

What many scholars fail to perceive is an account of musical practicality or utility for their theoretical discussions of “Moro, lasso.”⁹⁵ I advocate the notion that theorists should use analysis as a means to identify and emulate the compositional strategies of the composer in question. The most practical example that comes to mind is the application of stylistic

⁹² Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 205

⁹³ Theoretical models that advocate the fundamental orientation of the bass within Gesualdo’s music, as does John Clough, “The Leading Tone in Direct Chromaticism: From Renaissance to Baroque,” *Journal of Music Theory* 1 (1957), 2-21 are analytically negated by sixteenth-century theorists who coined the principle entitled the ‘primacy of the tenor’ line.

⁹⁴ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 163-4.

⁹⁵ Schulenberg, 303 criticizes these constructs as a hazardous means “to rely solely on such an empiricism without considering the compositional theory and procedures that inform the work, as well as the other aspects of its native cultural milieu, such as performance practice.

factors realized through analytical methods in order to reconstruct an unfinished or incomplete piece of music. The usefulness in constructing style periods, from the compositional constraints of a particular ‘class’ of composers whose music are compositionally interrelated, is a necessity for compositional reconstruction as well as a performative aid for historically informed performances.⁹⁶

Tim Carter reviews a particular recording of Gesualdo’s fourth book of madrigals performed by La Venexiana in 2001 in which aspects of the ‘mannered’ style are downplayed for a more structural and balanced approach. He writes, “instead of fragmented responses to exaggerated texts, we discover taut harmonic structure and a clear sense of musical rhetoric, not least by way of sequential block repetitions.”⁹⁷ The idea that performance can have an impact on conventional academic assessments of this music is directly related to the essential sentiment of this thesis. A stylistic consideration of both the norms and deformations in Gesualdo’s music, ranging from cadential attenuation and surface dissonance to my own analytical observations regarding a contrapuntal framework and continuity, will allow us to delve into the compositional foundations of Gesualdo’s music in order to produce a body of observations that may aid in defining Gesualdo’s stylistic constraints.⁹⁸

An assortment of analytical methodologies mentioned in the *New Grove* article on Gesualdo (Bianconi) and in Glenn Watkins’ *Gesualdo: The Man and his Music*, represents a

⁹⁶ Wood, provides a perfect example of musical reconstruction through analysis. It should be noted that a reconstruction of a piece can never truly accomplish what the original intended by the composer, but at most can emulate. It is the job of theoreticians and style analysts to determine the identifiable characteristics to emulate.

⁹⁷ Carter, “Vocal Mannerisms,” *Early Music* 29 (2001), 472-4. My analysis in chapter five of this present study will attempt to acknowledge this alternative practice and try to illuminate the reason behind why Carter describes the performance of these madrigals as ‘revelatory.’

⁹⁸ See chapter six of this thesis which explores the historiographical concerns of style periods and the polemic surrounding the viability of Mannerism as a recognized period of music.

tonal framework to measure “Moro, lasso”. It is important to be aware that tonality was the primary system in which theorists operated and discussed Gesualdo’s music. It is only recently that any other systematic treatment of his music has manifested in the theoretical community. In fact, the *New Grove* article explains the opening three measures of this madrigal as “a chordal succession of C# major to A minor in first inversion,”⁹⁹ while Watkins’ stylistic overview utilizes tonal terminology including ‘key’ and “an unmistakable V7-I progression”¹⁰⁰ (Ex.3).

Example 3

The image shows a musical score for the madrigal "Moro, lasso, mio duolo". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into three measures. The first measure contains two chords: a C# major triad (C#, E, G#) and an A minor triad in first inversion (A, C, E). The second measure contains a single chord, an A minor triad in first inversion (A, C, E). The third measure contains a single chord, an A minor triad in first inversion (A, C, E). Below the staves, the lyrics "Mo - ro, las - so, al mio duo - lo" are written. Underneath the lyrics, the Roman numerals "V7" and "I" are placed under the first and second measures respectively, indicating the chord progression.

The list of analytical methods mentioned by the *New Grove* is clearly oriented towards an ‘anachronistic’ approach.¹⁰¹ It reads as a progression of theories.¹⁰² It is a vindication of Gesualdo’s work that Watkins’ compilation of analyses shifted the academic attitude from an aesthetic opinion to a critical judgment.

⁹⁹ Bianconi, “Gesualdo,” in *The New Grove*, 781.

¹⁰⁰ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 186.

¹⁰¹ Bianconi, “Gesualdo,” in *The New Grove*, 783 mentions a functional harmonic system (Keiner), Hindemith’s theory of root progression (Marshall), triadic atonality (Lowinsky), the tradition of counterpoint (Dahlhaus, 1974), and the stylistic category mannerism (Finscher and Watkins). The bibliography section of the article (786) cites a number of other analyses including “Phrase painting and Goal orientation in two late Gesualdo Madrigals” (M.F. Burdick), as well as analyses concerning Gesualdo’s Cadences (R. Jackson and J. Anderson).

¹⁰² It is quite amusing to compare *New Grove*’s most recent article with its previous edition. The article in the 1980’s edition of the *New Grove* seems to forget that Gesualdo is of any import as “the music of Gesualdo...had little immediate impact upon the history of music” and “[was] too extreme in style to form the basis for future developments.” Jo E. Carney, “Gesualdo, Carlo (New Grove entry, 1980)” *Renaissance and Reformation, 1500-1620: A Biographical Dictionary, The Great Cultural Eras of the Western World* (Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 160-1.

Many analyses do attempt to be faithful to a historically informed methodology by accepting the framework of sixteenth-century theory and practice. This marks a notable distinction between theorists who believe that musical validity relies solely on their own analytical tools, or those that believe it is also the music which grants value to an analytical tool. This is the difference between a pure anachronism and a retrospective point of focus.

For example, *Hexachords in Late-Renaissance Music* by Lionel Pike provides a reassessment of music by taking solmization syllables into account.¹⁰³ His analyses try to incorporate some of the theoretical practices of the sixteenth century including the hexachord system and the use of *inganni* in music allowing the reader to observe the ‘flattening’ and ‘sharpening’ of textures (Ex.4).¹⁰⁴ These two theoretical devices were originally compositional tools used by sixteenth-century composers. The hexachord system was a means to utilize more pitch classes for melodic and harmonic purposes, while *inganno* was an outgrowth of the hexachord system and was used to create points of imitation. What appears in the example below is Pike attempting to subscribe “Moro, lasso” to the *inganno* technique. The problem with this subscription is that “Moro, lasso” is too chromatic to warrant the use of solmization, a technique that would serve no useful purpose in this context. Yet, Pike is aware of how the texture in the last few measures has both descended and ascended by the interval of a fifth, a fundamental feature of the hexachord system.

¹⁰³ Lionel Pike, *Hexachords in Late-Renaissance Music* (London: Ashgate Publications, 1998), 2. Also see Roland Jackson, “On Frescobaldi’s Chromaticism and its Background,” *Musical Quarterly* 57, no.2 (1971), 255-69.

¹⁰⁴ An *inganno*, in this context, refers to the transposition of a melodic idea which retains the same solmization syllables attached to the original idea, but can be intervallically different due to the choice of three overlapping hexachords. For a more comprehensive understanding of the modal gamut, hexachord system, and *inganno* device in theory and application see Pike. The gamut consisting of three overlapping hexachords will also be discussed in chapter four as one of the primary analytical tools for my own assessment of “Moro, lasso.”

techniques demonstrate how Gesualdo's music does follow organizational principles, yet principles that we are only beginning to realize. Yet, neither of these analytical studies is mentioned in the mainstream analytic literature regarding Gesualdo's music.

In fact, most analytical studies of the music lack any collaborative input. At most, scholars may acknowledge or use one particular source as a foundation for further development, but without tying their own work into any larger focus. It is only with Watkins' synthesis of analytical research that any association of ideas takes place. His summary shifts from harmonic to contrapuntal to textually based analysis in order to provide a stylistic overview of fundamental elements in Gesualdo's music. The explosion of scholarship that has accumulated in recent years demands an entire reassessment of stylistic procedures in Gesualdo's music beginning with "Moro, lasso."¹⁰⁶

In a more recent book, *The Gesualdo Hex*, Watkins questions how scholarship affects Gesualdo's reception in the musical field. He asks: "How does Susan McClary's recent persuasive test of the music against fading Renaissance modal tenets place him in this regard?" Or how does "Richard Cohn's investigation of 'uncanny' harmonic features from Gesualdo through a series of [modern successors]"¹⁰⁷ place him. The question can be reinterpreted to imply far-reaching consequences: How does analysis affect our understanding of a composer's music, whether it be through the act of performance, composition, or even listening?

For one thing, Susan McClary answers this question by claiming that a textually-based analysis coupled with her own understanding of modality provides a historically

¹⁰⁶ Chapter three of this present study will assess some of the contemporary scholarship that, coupled with my own analysis, will provide a more pointed outlook considering Gesualdo's musical style.

¹⁰⁷ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 5.

informed grasp of theoretical principles underlying this music.¹⁰⁸ She also negates much of the previous scholarship integral to Watkins' earlier assessment, claiming that "the too-common habit of labeling chords in this music frequently obscures some of the most significant moments in a piece."¹⁰⁹ Yet she, like so many other theorists, falls prey to tonal terminology while attempting to negate the tonal archetype.¹¹⁰ It is only by acknowledging previous scholarship and building on theoretical premises with a wealth of analytical judgments that any analytical comparisons can exist.

Analysis not only affects performance practice, but even other historical literature. Maria Rika Maniates' *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, for instance, utilizes the colloquial terminology that theorists were using at the time her book was published: tonal identification. She discusses Gesualdo's use of 'dominant seventh chords' and identifies many harmonic figurations through 'their inversions'.¹¹¹ Yet, at the same time, she claims that Gesualdo's viewpoint was always contrapuntal.¹¹² It is only recently that "any claim that counterpoint (the linear) in Gesualdo's music was antonymous to 'harmonic' (the vertical)...held as misleading."¹¹³ This realization can only be practically applied to Gesualdo's music if both harmonic and contrapuntal frameworks reinforce our understanding of his works.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 23.

¹⁰⁹ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 23.

¹¹⁰ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 167 refers to cadential goals utilizing tonal terminology such as the dominant (V) rather than consistently referring to cadences in a generic manner.

¹¹¹ Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, 388.

¹¹² Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, 391.

¹¹³ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 278.

¹¹⁴ My analysis presented in chapter five, incidentally, illustrates how the contrapuntal threads of "Moro, lasso" support even the most anomalous harmonic juxtapositions.

There has even been interdisciplinary scholarship utilizing Gesualdo's madrigals either as a means to simulate composition through linear systems and statistics,¹¹⁵ or by relating Gesualdo's "Moro, lasso" to other compositions and composers by means of the golden ratio.¹¹⁶ However, just as other analytical authors attempt to negate one theoretical system for another, while ultimately failing to account for anachronistic terminology, so too do these authors fall prey to it. Zuzana Martináková-Rendeková, in search of universal musical laws, maintains that "Musicological attempts to analyze Gesualdo's music from the tonal functional system (tonality) [are] not suitable because the functional dependence of all chords is not present [in Gesualdo's music]."¹¹⁷ Yet, on the same page, the author identifies a 'dominant-tonic' relationship present in the music. While I agree that the tonal functional system is an unsuitable medium to analyze Gesualdo's music, the absolute negation and dismissal of any, even unintentional, tonally perceived harmonic relationship in the music is a precarious extreme.

This issue of misappropriating anachronistic terms is non-essential in some analytical studies that adhere to one paradigm. John Turci-Escobar's article regarding cadential attenuation in select works of Gesualdo is an exception in that it observes a contemporary perspective of modal counterpoint without relying on any tonal identification (See Table 1).

¹¹⁵ Biancamaria Criscuolo and Francesco Russo, "Some Considerations on Algorithmic Music and Madrigals of Gesualdo da Venosa," *Ninth International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition*, (paper presented at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, August 22-6, 2006), 330-5.

¹¹⁶ Zuzana Martináková-Rendeková, "Searching for Universal Laws and Rules in Music," *Mathematics and Computers in Biology, Business and Acoustics* (2011), 280-5,

¹¹⁷ Martináková-Rendeková, 281.

Table 1. Cadentially Attenuated Types

1) Evaporated cadences	Where several voices begin their cadential preparation, but instead of sounding their last note, rest.
2) Interrupted cadences	The cadential formula articulates the first and second cadential harmonies but not the terminal one, while the second harmony falls on a metrically strong position.
3) Distorted cadences	Where one or more of the non-structural voices introduce closure-denying elements in the terminal harmony.
4) Synecdochic cadences	A non-cadential closing featuring one or more characteristic cadential gestures.

Nonetheless, identifying a clear weakening of cadences in Gesualdo’s music, as Turci-Escobar does, can only be of real value if utilized in tandem with studies pertaining to other elements. It is the contrapuntal fabric underlying entire pieces, including ‘interphase borders’ that promotes the continuity throughout. As Turci-Escobar fittingly notes, “Gesualdo frequently broke contrapuntal rules to express harsh poetic context has been well documented. That he could do so in ways that simultaneously solved a compositional problem, mending rather than rending the musical fabric, has not.”¹¹⁸

A clear relationship between the Gesualdo controversy and analysis can especially be found within Turci-Escobar’s analytical study. Several scholars, according to Turci-Escobar, have called attention to the striking discontinuities in Gesualdo’s madrigals but have generally overlooked any indication of how such a defining feature can encourage the perception of musical continuity.¹¹⁹ Critics like Bianconi hastily conclude that not even a singular strand of musical continuity runs the “heterogeneous succession of isolated musical

¹¹⁸ Turci-Escobar, 125. This idea converges in my own analysis in which ‘mending’ is highlighted rather than the conventional ‘rending.’

¹¹⁹ Turci-Escobar, 101.

units” of his late madrigals.¹²⁰ According to Turci-Escobar, “The combination of Bianconi and Haar’s views...suggests [that musical discontinuities] 2) have a deleterious effect on these madrigals as music... and 3) result from a lack of compositional control.”¹²¹ However, by reconsidering Gesualdo’s late madrigals through novel analytical methods, his music yields distinct threads of continuity.¹²² The identification for such continuity lies in the analytical field of species counterpoint. It seems then that any future resolution in determining a coherent validation and disposition of Gesualdo’s music will be based on analytical judgments considering the contrapuntal background and its projection of continuity.¹²³

The validity of any musical criticism depends upon the identification of a musical work whether it be through listening to a particular performance or by studying an actual score. This very notion is one that has engaged the musicological field, re-evaluating the analytical trends of musicological scholarship by acknowledging a separation between a perceptual and conceptual methodology. I believe the same separation must be applied to the field of music theory, but with opposite implications in mind. A perceptual approach may exclaim “The music of Gesualdo is brilliant and beyond words,” but without a qualification as to how or why such a statement is determined. It is, at most, perceptual awareness, an aural assessment, or in other words, an aesthetic opinion validated only as a tautology. For example, Robert Eitner’s deleterious comment, indicating the monstrosity of Gesualdo’s music, may be simply based on a chance encounter of an amateur performance and is not

¹²⁰ Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. David Bryant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 4-7.

¹²¹ Turci-Escobar, 124.

¹²² Turci-Escobar, 123.

¹²³ The difference between Turci-Escobar’s study and my own is analogous to the difference between the function of a derivative and an integral in mathematics. A derivative’s function, in calculus, is to pinpoint a precise instance of a larger concept, while an integral is used to see a continuous whole.

corroborated with any evidence beyond a subjective opinion. In other words, he may provide an emotionally charged diatribe against Gesualdo, but one that is underscored simply with emotion. A conceptual approach assumes conceptual awareness, one that attempts to qualify aesthetic opinions made about music with analytical evidence. Burney, for instance, does analyze the music and uses his understanding of the music as a basis for his criticism.

Analytical judgment of Gesualdo's music, as with other composers and compositions, is contingent upon the musical efficacy or contextual norms of a particular time and place in which his music emerged. This accounts for a critic's rigorous subjection of a musical work to an existing body of music in order to determine its musical worth. In addition, there is also a cultural contingency in which a critic's opinion of a particular work is colored by the composer's own actions and the existing body of criticism (reception theory). Both contingencies are easily identified within Burney's criticism of Gesualdo. Burney finds the idiosyncratic treatment of text setting, where Gesualdo seems unconcerned with following the syllabic element of the text, to be quite careless and abnormal when compared to the stylistic tendencies of his own musical and cultural sphere. Moreover, Gesualdo's utilization of unrelated harmonies perceived from a framework of tonality (functional harmony) resulted in Burney's harsh attack of the music and his ultimate negation of it. However, his analysis falls short due to his anachronistic comparison of the music to the stylistic tendencies of his own time period. Rather, Burney should have provided a more appropriate assessment of the music from the 'inside out'. On the other hand, many scholars including Burney, discount the critical praise of Gesualdo from advocates of his music on the basis that these advocates were visibly influenced by Gesualdo's princely rank. While such an argument is ludicrous when

applied to any critic after Gesualdo's death, it provides an adequate example of how even the most particular social and cultural details can affect a critic's appraisal of a musical work.

Thus, critical rather than aesthetic judgments are validated or invalidated by some conceptual understanding of the music contingent upon both a cultural and stylistic context, whether it is through music's abstraction as a score, a particular performance, or even exclusively cultural history and meaning. Susan McClary, discussing the power and limit of theory, stressed that "the study of music must also include the study of music." This is a response to "musicologists [who] have entered a phase in which analysis has become the butt of jokes."¹²⁴ Yet, analytical paradigms can only be effective if they reveal something about the music rather than distorting the truth as a means to prop up one's theoretical methodology.¹²⁵ Roy Howat claims that in order to validate any criticism, it must be based upon an analytical process. Howat maintains that "Whatever the dangers of analysis, ignorance is worse: we need to analyze, consciously or otherwise, if we want to follow a composer's train of aural thought and feeling"¹²⁶

Recent trends in Gesualdo scholarship promote an increasingly specialized pursuit in identifying and understanding his music. The most recent analytical scholarship seems focused on constituent elements of Gesualdo's music like metrical placement¹²⁷ or cadential attenuation,¹²⁸ for instance, but not on any larger framework of analytical integration. Even within the scope of only one madrigal, "Moro, lasso", no single analytical approach

¹²⁴ McClary, "In Praise of Contingency: The Powers and Limits of Theory," *Music Theory Online* 16 (2010), Accessed December, 2012.

¹²⁵ Roy Howat, "What do we perform?" *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*, ed. by John Rink, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

¹²⁶ Howat, 4.

¹²⁷ Williams Bruce Victor, "Dissonance in the Madrigals of Carlo Gesualdo: An Analysis of Metrical Placement, Duration, and Resolution," (PhD diss., in progress).

¹²⁸ Turci-Escobar, 101-135.

adequately describes its musical processes comprehensively. This tendency towards specialization rather than collaboration has reached a nadir in which analysis has become a fragmented field. Rather than creating a backdrop for the host of analytical methodologies used in approaching this single madrigal, theorists have their own specialized agendas in mind.

In retrospect, Burney's harsh criticism ultimately relied on the terminology and theoretical background of his day, yet failed to adequately assess Gesualdo's music due to his anachronistic approach. Only with the analytical and stylistic re-evaluation of Gesualdo's music were scholars sufficiently able to connect his musical idioms into more modern trends. However, due to a lack of analytical collaboration in which specialized pursuits are linked together forming a greater picture, some scholars still espouse that "Gesualdo's chromatic practice...remained without lasting historical consequences" and that "music [history] would have been no different even without them."¹²⁹ Supporters of Gesualdo's music, according to Richard Taruskin, must also be cautious not to validate their own statements "by drawing factitious connections between Gesualdo and other daring harmonists" and adhere to a reception theory that "has obscured rather than illuminated the actual historical and cultural conditions that nourished their various activities."¹³⁰

Yet, reception and influence is what ultimately labels a composer relevant. A treatise published in 1640 by Pietro della Valle, explicitly linked Gesualdo with the advent of the Baroque along with two of its recognized masters. Della Valle maintained that it "was the

¹²⁹ Karol Berger, "Concepts and Developments in Music Theory," in *European Music 1520-1640*, James Haar ed. (Great Britain: The Boydell Press, 2006), 324.

¹³⁰ Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music Vol 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 739.

Prince of Venosa who perhaps showed the light to all others in affective song and Claudio Monteverdi and Jacopo Peri in the works named above [*Daphne*, *Euridice*, and *Arianna*].”¹³¹

Fundamentally, it has always been musical analysis that has validated critical statements concerning Gesualdo’s music. An analytical survey and assessment of this particular field of research will not only provide widespread clarity in understanding Gesualdo’s music, but also promote unity and moderation in this current polemic.

¹³¹ Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 271-2.

Chapter Three. Edifice

Corresponding Research

Beyond rehashing some of the major contributions to discussions of “Moro, lasso”, this section plays the role of building an analytical picture of “Moro, lasso” through related research. The result is to provide the reader with a refined lens in which to view the madrigal from the inside out. The chosen observations and controlled groupings of this section are twofold: the intent to guide the reader from textual hermeneutics and verse/phrase settings to the musical surface which is filled with idiosyncrasies in need of a conceptual translation, and finally to the underlying features of the piece which stimulate my own analytical observations. My decisive analytical skimming and arrangement of relevant data are necessary to create such a pointed guide.¹³²

The poetic text of “Moro, lasso” is a single stanza that embodies an oxymoron between life and death. While Gesualdo’s consideration towards a single word of the poetic text functions as an essential ingredient of his style, this particular madrigal has a verse/phrase division where each line marks a new musical phrase. It is speculated that Gesualdo’s later texts were actually forged by him in order to create only the most suitable poetry to fit his musical needs.¹³³

¹³² Please refer to chapter one for my consideration of the role of text setting in analysis. Text-setting is used as a jumping off point to introduce the reader to the narrative and how the music relates to the poetry on a superficial level. Chapter five of this thesis will attempt to explore how particular musical functions can serve to emotionally charge the text.

¹³³ For an account of the various historical issues pertaining to Gesualdo’s last two madrigal books, i.e. the speculated date of composition and the poetic sources, see Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex*, 37-42.

Moro, lasso, al mio duolo	I die, alas, from my pain
E chi me può dar vita?	and who can give me life?
Ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol dar mi aita! me help!	Ah, that kills and does not want to give
O dolorosa sorte,	O painful fate!
Chi dar vita me può, ahi, mi dà morte!	The one who could give me life, alas, gives me death. ¹³⁴

On first hearing the piece one notices the sudden, arresting contrast of the musical texture, which exemplifies the poetic duality of the text.¹³⁵ The first line mentions death and suffering and is musically presented with an expansive homophonic gesture riddled with chromaticism and harmonically adventurous juxtapositions. The following line, however, shifts to a more diatonic and imitative texture in order to illustrate the idea of ‘life’ or *vita*. The musical contrast of textures representing provides the crux to many of Gesualdo’s madrigals. This is because many of his chosen texts are built on oxymorons like the juxtaposition of life and death. Gesualdo’s mature style consistently vacillates between the chromatic-harmonic adagio and the diatonic-melodic allegro in order to portray an exaggerated and sometimes twisted portrayal of the text.¹³⁶

Yet within the majority of this madrigal, “chromaticism [does] occur in both the homophonic and polyphonic sections, so that distinctions cannot be made on the basis of texture.”¹³⁷ Due to this consideration, Michael Burdick concludes that phrase painting and the harmonic beginning and ending points of each phrase form a goal orientation. In this

¹³⁴ The text presented above is a conglomeration of a translation by Taruskin, 738 and the verse/phrase division of McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 164. I have changed some of the syntax from both translators with the aid of Emily Wilbourne for a more literal and exact translation.

¹³⁵ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 177.

¹³⁶ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 178. In addition, the previous page of the cited book discusses the use of various time signatures within a single piece as indicators of rhythmic contrast: a stylistic tendency of the late madrigalists.

¹³⁷ Michael F. Burdick, “Phrase Painting and Goal Orientation in Two Late Gesualdo Madrigals,” *Indiana Theory Review* 5, no. 2 (1982), 19.

instance, Burdick considers a larger phrase or passage, underlayed with a textual line, to supersede the position of the simple chord progression itself.¹³⁸ This is the first occurrence in analytical scholarship relating to Gesualdo's madrigals in which any background structural parameter of Gesualdo's music is conceptually identified. Burdick's search for any functional explanation of Gesualdo's musical phrasing is dependent upon the textual identity of the verse. He criticizes other scholars who came before him that have utilized Baroque theoretical concepts in order to explain Gesualdo's chromaticism and idiosyncratic harmonic juxtapositions. These scholars, according to Burdick, "fall short of explaining all of the progressions...using the chromatic third relationship." This is due to their lack of any structural conception of the music. His own analytical observations with regards to the music and not only the text, perceive an underlying musical structure but without any thorough explanation beyond the fact that the "composer deliberately planned them."¹³⁹

Burdick's observations include how the tonality of "Moro, lasso" is A: the piece begins and ends with cadential goals of a harmony built on A. Edward Lowinsky was quite correct in questioning the significance of identifying a corresponding harmonic entity at the beginning and end of Gesualdo's madrigals due to a lack of tonal organization and internal coherence.¹⁴⁰ Identifying any internal coherence between the two harmonic 'lamp posts' within these madrigals, cannot be determined by the text, but must be explained exclusively in terms of the musical phrase. Susan McClary agrees "for although text informs both the surface imagery and formal structure of madrigals, it does not determine them."¹⁴¹ Watkins' consideration for testing the tonal character of these madrigals depends not only upon pitch

¹³⁸ Burdick, 19.

¹³⁹ Burdick, 27.

¹⁴⁰ Edward E. Lowinsky, *Tonality and Atonality in sixteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 43.

¹⁴¹ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 123.

correspondence between the beginning and end of a piece but also regarding the internal cadences as a network of inter-related keys.¹⁴² Burdick picks up on this consideration and labels each cadential goal by its harmonic root (See Table 2).

Table 2

Burdick: "Moro, lasso," Key Structure

<i>initial</i>		<i>final</i>	<i>relationship</i>
C#	Moro...duolo	a	↓3rd
a	E chi...vita	C	↑3rd
e	Ahi...m'ancide	C#	↓3rd
B	e...aita	D	↑3rd
F#	Moro...duolo	D	↓3rd
d	E chi...vita	F	↑3rd
d	Ahi...m'ancide	B	↓3rd
A	e...aita	C	↑3rd
F	O...sorte	B	↑4th
e	Chi...può	e	—
e	Ahi...morte	A	↑4th ¹⁴³

McClary reifies the observation regarding pitch correspondence of “Moro, lasso” at its endpoints within the context of modality. She, like Bernhard Meier and Karol Berger, understands modality as an abstract pitch space rather than a traditional scale.¹⁴⁴ Modes involve the melodic and ‘structural’ projection of a particular species of octave, but without precise definition within the specified octave.¹⁴⁵ This means that accidentals in “Moro, lasso” operate not only to distinguish one significant mode but also provide other hierarchic levels of functionality as well.¹⁴⁶ While the first harmony presented in “Moro, lasso” is a C#-major

¹⁴² Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 186.

¹⁴³ Burdick, 29. The diagram suggests not only the prevalence of the third relationship, but also its continuous alternation between ascending and descending versions.

¹⁴⁴ See chapter one for Bernhard Meier’s explanation of modality.

¹⁴⁵ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 20 clarifies how a species of octave is further divided into an intervallic space of a fifth (*diapente*) and a fourth (*diatessaron*) whose arrangement and ordering defines a particular mode.

¹⁴⁶ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 18. As opposed to Kyle Adams (New Theory of Chromaticism) and his various levels of chromatic functionality within a system ruled by diatonicism, I adhere to a methodology that views chromatic function within a system of chromaticism. See chapter four of this study for a more thorough explanation as to what chromatic functionality actually means in this thesis.

triad, which would seem, according to McClary, to have no possible connection to any recognizable mode, the tenor line or mode-bearing voice, begins on the “Aeolian leading tone...[yet] suffers extraordinary stress as though tied to some instrument of torture.”¹⁴⁷

In addition, she establishes criteria for identifying modal irregularities through particular pitch-classes. The Aeolian mode for instance, built upon A, inherently differs from other modes with regards to available secondary cadences due to the fact that the sixth degree of Aeolian, or an F, is ‘hardwired’ in at the structural level for modal integrity. However, “in those cases in which an Aeolian degree is inflected upwards to F# to provide the second degree for an authentic cadence on E, the alteration counts as a significant violation and should be regarded as such.”¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, she also notes how these violations and disruptions of a ‘modally pure’ texture often operate as the ‘expressive crux’ of compositions identified in the Aeolian mode.

While McClary recognizes the importance of an underlying thread in “Moro, lasso,” as well as “a nearly geometrical conception of large-scale architecture,” she does not explain the reason for a particular transpositional level of a musical section, or how continuity occurs on any background level beyond the tenor voice.¹⁴⁹ Yet, she does allude to an underlying structural framework found within the tenor voice and not, as Schenkerian theorists believe, in the bass.

¹⁴⁷ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 165-6 explores the “Moro, lasso’s” surface trajectory with utmost care and scrutiny. Her analysis coupled with her outlook on cultural hermeneutics within the Italian madrigal of the sixteenth century is enlightening to say the least as she combines technical and psychoanalytic observations linking Gesualdo’s music to his own melancholy.

¹⁴⁸ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 20. The significance of F# within the modal orientation of “Moro, lasso” is incorporated into my own analysis in chapter five. The idea of ‘modal propriety’ and distinct modal types harks back to Eric Chafe, *Monteverdi’s Tonal Language* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992).

¹⁴⁹ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 155. Chapter five of this thesis illustrates diagrammatically the various transpositions of the madrigal as well as a continuous linear framework as a species contrapuntal reduction of the music.

However, most scholars in describing “Moro, lasso,” mention surface distortion and exaggeration and not the organizational principles behind surface features. Burdick understands this problem when he discusses how in “Moro, lasso” a special problem arises whenever a verse begins with a series of chromatic-third progressions where the feeling of a grounded tonic is unclear.¹⁵⁰ Yet, he doesn’t recommend a musical solution to this organizational problem. The idea of exaggeration and distortion, as fundamental elements of Gesualdo’s style, has encompassed the majority of analytical writings creating a one-sided understanding of his music. It has only been recently that any scholars questioned this analytical approach and aesthetic paradigm concerning Gesualdo’s music.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, the surface features identified by theorists and scholars deserve consideration. Chromatic-third relations within Gesualdo’s harmonic progressions are not only important in their theoretical identity, but in their consistent application seen within compositions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁵² Richard Cohn has even coined the analytical concept hexatonic systems and mapped out its usage within compositions throughout music history.¹⁵³ For simplicity’s sake, I rename Cohn’s hexatonic poles as chromatic 5-6 exchanges. This is because I am more interested in the contrapuntal progression of such an exchange rather than the quantity of varying pitch-classes used or its

¹⁵⁰ Burdick, 28.

¹⁵¹ See chapter two of this study and the section on Turci-Escobar’s study relating analysis to aesthetic judgment.

¹⁵² Watkins latest book, *The Gesualdo Hex*, correlates Gesualdo with Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Gesualdo’s harmonic progressions and daring chromaticism have been compared to Wagner’s music, a notion that Taruskin condemns both for its misconstrued historical implications as well as the different contexts of Gesualdo and Wagner’s music. According to Taruskin, “Gesualdo’s harmony however radical, was in no sense ahead of its time” (739).

¹⁵³ Richard Cohn, “Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no.2 (2004), 285-324.

exemplification as a species of third relationships (Ex.5).¹⁵⁴

Example 5 "Moro, lasso" mm.1-2

Mo - - ro, las - - so
5 - - 6 5 - - 6

Beyond the daring juxtapositions that Gesualdo is famous for, his mature musical features are summed up succinctly by Watkins: “unprepared dissonance, invertible counterpoint, cross relations, unusual melodic intervals, suspension chains, degree inflections, chromatic non-functional harmony, and a rich modulatory vocabulary.”¹⁵⁵ In addition, he makes a most astute comment on how precedents for virtually all of these musical features are found in Gesualdo’s earlier books, yet the difference between the madrigal books lies in the proportion and concentration of Gesualdo’s idiosyncratic ideas.¹⁵⁶ On a more superficial level, it is interesting to note how Gesualdo utilizes almost all the available chromatic permutations of a pitch-class available.¹⁵⁷ In the case of “Moro, lasso,” a

¹⁵⁴ A chromatic 5-6 exchange is defined as a harmonic entity spanning the interval of a fifth that is contrapuntally connected to another harmonic entity with the span of a sixth. The adjective ‘chromatic’ refers to the exchange that occurs between the various voices of each harmony. The quantity of pitch-classes refers to a technical feature in which a hexatonic pole, as well as its transposition at a precise intervallic number, will provide all twelve pitch-classes within four separate harmonies. The third relationship between the harmonic entities is one that precludes a tonal identity or representational part of the Neo-Reimannian movement. See chapter two regarding Dahlhaus’s alternative explanation of this statement by means of a phrygian construct, as well as the scrutiny that this opening has been through.

¹⁵⁵ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 169.

¹⁵⁶ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 169. His comment has been recently justified by Gregory Camp, “Myths on Disc,” *Early Music* 39, no.1 (2011), 114-17, where the evolution of Gesualdo’s style is aurally perceived through a similar ensemble and performance practice.

¹⁵⁷ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 194-6 provides a statistical overview of accidentals used in Gesualdo’s most mature madrigals. Bear in mind that although Gesualdo’s original score did not utilize the exact notation of accidentals present in the modern edition, the pitch content remains the same.

most particularly striking passage employs E-flat, E-natural, and E-sharp and again as D-flat, D-natural, D-sharp within a subsequent section transposed down a major second (Ex.6).

Example 6 "Moro, lasso" mm.10-12, mm.24-6

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'mm. 10-12' and the bottom staff is labeled 'mm. 24-6'. Both staves are in common time (C) and show a melodic line in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. Red lines connect the notes between the two sections, illustrating the transposition down a major second. The notes in the top staff are E-flat, E-natural, and E-sharp, while the notes in the bottom staff are D-flat, D-natural, and D-sharp.

This is in contradistinction with classic Renaissance principles via Margaret Bent as she states that each letter-name (the contemporary system of labeling pitches) had not three pitches (natural, sharp, flat) but only two (natural, sharp; flat, natural).¹⁵⁸ In addition, Gesualdo's use of enharmonicism within the modern score of "Moro, lasso" (especially D-sharp and E-flat) is indicative of an issue of hexachordal identification which Bent attributes to theorists who attempt to cover both hexachordal meanings within a single musical sequence.¹⁵⁹ Within "Moro, lasso," the distinction between classic principles is met as the identity of a particular hexachord becomes a surface feature that constantly shifts due to the chromatic implications of a particular section.

Christopher Reynolds focuses on two other madrigals of Gesualdo to illustrate two separate, but equally important observations concerning Gesualdo's compositional organization. The first observation concerns the melodic line in "Languisce al fin" (Book V,

¹⁵⁸ Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, 75.

¹⁵⁹ Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, 75. This issue, and the confusion of hexachordal constructs and enharmonicism, is clarified within chapter four of this present study.

n.10), a madrigal whose text represents an anguished lover who embraces death. Reynolds illustrates how Gesualdo's uppermost voices create an aural 'composite' line through imitative dove-tailing, repetition, and large-scale intervallic recurrences.¹⁶⁰ Descending motives that unfold shorter and shorter interval spans also elucidates the poetic text as a musical transition from life to death. The most important aspect of this observation is the compositional expression of a single plan, one that spans two large segments of the madrigal (Ex.7).

Example 7. Gesualdo, *Languisce al fin*, composite line of mm. 1-22 and mm. 68-89.

a. = First 22 breves
 b. = Last 22 breves
 — = 3rd line from top
 == = 2nd line from top

161

The second analytical observation reveals how non-cadential chords form a symmetrical harmonic plan in the three-part poetic structure of "Io parto" (Book VI, n.6). Reynolds attempts to show how the chordal plan of the madrigal creates a compositional continuity and symmetrical plan between the E-major triads that begin and end the piece. The harmonic plan ascends from E-major in a stepwise fashion to C# and then descends back to the original E-

¹⁶⁰ Reynolds, "Gesualdo's Languishing Steps," 376. In addition, Reynolds, "Gesualdo's Dolcissima Mia Vita: A View of Musical Order," *American Choral Review* 26 (1984), 5-16 foreshadows his demonstration of how sixteenth-century composers organized their music around a text with an attention to isolated details as well as a coherent view of a whole work. Yet his earlier publication actively promotes the idea that chromaticism is simply an ornamental display that covers the motivic and harmonic elements that lie beneath a piece's surface.

¹⁶¹ Reynolds, "Gesualdo's Languishing Steps," 376.

major triad.¹⁶² This observation, addressing a harmonic symmetry based on a linear, step-wise ascent and descent, is one that balances the distortional features of the madrigal: “the paucity of straight-forward cadences...the frequent interjection of rests in all voices,” and a harmonic scheme intervallically related ‘in pairs of tritones’ (Ex.8).¹⁶³

Example 8. Chordal plan of "*To parto" e non più dissì.*

B = Beginning
M = Middle
E = End

Verse no: 1B 1E 2E 3E 4E 5E
Harmony: E F# G A b C# c#

Verse no: 6M 6E 7E 8M 8E 8E
Harmony: B Bb a G F# E

164

Yet, Reynolds does not associate any chromatic organization with chordal step-wise symmetry nor does he explain the systematic circularity of the madrigal in contrapuntal/voice-leading terms but only as harmonic verticalities. This may be, in part, due to Reynolds’ view that the “harmonic sensibilities [of sixteenth-century composers]...have thus far been ignored in studies that dwell on mode and counterpoint.”¹⁶⁵ However, I believe that many of the ‘harmonic sensibilities’ of sixteenth-century composers were compositionally developed through counterpoint. Even the terminology that Reynolds

¹⁶² Reynolds, “Gesualdo’s Languishing Steps,” 379. Beyond the musical plan, Reynolds also discusses the particular harmonic symmetry in association with the poetic text in three stages: a departure from life, stasis and reflection, and a return to life.

¹⁶³ Reynolds, “Gesualdo’s Languishing Steps,” 380.

¹⁶⁴ Reynolds, “Gesualdo’s Languishing Steps,” 379.

¹⁶⁵ Reynolds, “Gesualdo’s Languishing Steps,” 380. The only other formal analysis of harmonic symmetry and the constitution of cadential ‘goals’ as structural pillars is Schmidt, 6-16. Both analyses point to a harmonically oriented approach.

utilizes to depict the harmonic plan of “Io parto” underscores an importance of species counterpoint and voice-leading; for how can anyone discuss connections between harmonic simultaneities (using words like ‘link’ or ‘ascent’) without acknowledging counterpoint?

Perhaps the only analysis that can be considered truly ‘related,’ in the sense that it attempts to categorize the background organizational principles within Gesualdo’s madrigals, is the chapter by Reynolds, a chapter not mentioned or considered by other contemporary Gesualdo scholars. Reynolds understands this dilemma when he proclaims, “the use of non-cadential chords as agents of musical organization in the sixteenth century is virtually unexplored...[as] we have yet [to] retrace the compositional steps that made his strange loveliness possible.”¹⁶⁶ This is the goal of my thesis: to retrace these steps and comprehend the most elemental compositional structure of “Moro, lasso.”

¹⁶⁶ Reynolds, “Gesualdo’s Languishing Steps,” 380.

Chapter Four. Method

Methodological Considerations

This chapter begins the true body of the thesis: a theoretical elucidation of chromatic function. Up until now, I have argued for the rectification of chromaticism traditionally defined as a surface simultaneity and governed by a diatonically conceived modal orientation.¹⁶⁷ Each of the previous chapters questions this conception of chromaticism, weakening preconceived notions and steadily preparing the reader for a novel solution.¹⁶⁸

Defining chromatic functionality necessitates an understanding of the chromatic aggregate and its pre-compositional orientation.¹⁶⁹ The derivation of a chromatic pitch-space begins with an exploration of how sixteenth-century composers structured their pre-

¹⁶⁷ Adams, 255-304 is the most recent scholarly example maintaining diatonicism as the essential determinant for chromatic functionality. His analytical method classifies a continuum of various compositional techniques whose backdrop is a diatonically conceived pitch-space. For this reason, chromaticism is implicitly understood as a surface instance, or rather, a non-structural entity. Adams even makes the case against other theorists such as William Mitchell, Karol Berger, and W. E. Lake who all attempt to explain chromaticism “by describing chromatic sonorities as they relate to diatonic sonorities.” (257) Yet, the only difference between his theoretical methodology and theirs is the comparison of a collection of pitches as opposed to a comparison of sonorities. This is not to say that a diatonic background is insignificant, diatonicism is a significant structural element of music, but rather that chromaticism can be structurally significant as well. This methodology, whose theoretical postulates and methodical tools are elucidated later in this chapter and utilized in my own analysis of “Moro, lasso” in chapter five, is grounded in Burnett and Nitzberg.

¹⁶⁸ The trajectory of this thesis is a means to grasp how one generality in theory can affect how we consider and reason with a particular piece of music. Chapter one questions the theoretical foundation of late sixteenth-century vocal music encompassing chromaticism. Chapter two questions these theoretical principles in application to a piece of music: “Moro, lasso.” Chapter three begins to build a more concrete analytical picture of “Moro, lasso” through related research, providing the dual function of familiarizing the piece to the reader as well as prepping the reader for my own analysis. The problems presented in chapters one to three find resolution in chapters four and five.

¹⁶⁹ By laying the parameters of content, *what* chromatic pitch-space comprises will assist in illustrating *how* it functions. In addition, please refer to chapter one of this thesis discussing modality as an abstract pitch-space, a conception of modality that operates in tandem with hexachordal theory. This conception is held only with utmost consideration as Carter, “The Search for Musical Meaning,” in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, 174 attends to the fact that “hexachord, system, and mode are three different things serving three different purposes: mixing them without due caution can all too easily produce analytical accounts of music that may claim some kind of historical authenticity...but are in fact both spurious and flawed.” The very fact that harmonic potential is included in a system of pitch-space already creates a separation between a modern analytical methodology for ‘early’ music and the historical record. I, therefore, clarify that my understanding of the relationships between the three terms bears no connection to historical ‘authenticity,’ but only to an historically ‘informed’ conception, a retrospective point of view, utilizing modern theory as a means to observe musical phenomena.

compositional material through the utilization of the hexachord system. A hexachord denotes “a series of six notes ascending stepwise through two whole tones, a semitone, and two further whole tones.”¹⁷⁰ In other words, a hexachord simply refers to an abstract ordering of six pitch-classes, built upon a designated pitch, and identified through intervallic symmetry. The Guidonian gamut, or the standard medieval system of potential pitches, spans a musical space occupying three overlapping hexachords built upon the pitches G, C, and F.¹⁷¹ According to Margaret Bent, the pitches included within this system are called *musica recta*, as “the system caters for the three most common semitone steps, B-C, E-F, A-Bflat” (Diagram 2).¹⁷²

Diagram 2. C Naturalis Hexachord System (Linear).



The aggregate of pitch material realized through hexachords was extended by fourteenth-

¹⁷⁰ Jehoash Hirshberg/r, “Hexachord,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), 472-3. This entry explains the evolution of the hexachord from a mnemonic device used for teaching monophonic plainchant to a pre-compositional device for determining pitch content within a given piece.

¹⁷¹ Stefano Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) is perhaps the most advanced and latest study of hexachordal theory exploring the identity, evolution, and transformation of the hexachord from the eleventh to the sixteenth century. The primary reason for the original three hexachord system was to account for both a B and Bflat: the hexachord on G (labeled *durum* or hard) yields B, the hexachord on F (*molle* or soft) yields Bflat.

¹⁷² Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, 67. In addition, in Bent, “Musica Recta and Musica Ficta,” *Musica Disciplina* 26 (1972), 98, she signifies how “flat signatures bring about a transposition of the basic recta system of three hexachords one degree flatwards for each note flattened in the signature,” while “ficta involves the transposition of isolated hexachords for the purpose of creating chromatic notes.” A transposition of the gamut down or up in fifths is not only dependent upon the context of signature, but can also be realized by the utilization of a particular pitch-class within a composition. A complete realization of this distinction informs hierarchical differentiation of chromatic material as well as a gamut capable of modulation. In other words, chromatic functionality now includes structural significance as particular pitch-classes necessitate a modulation of the entire gamut, while others only necessitate a tangential change of solmization indicated by the rule of *fa supra la*. A more thorough explanation of chromatic pitch-space, embodied by the gamut of three hexachords capable of transposition, as well as its derivation, is explored later in this chapter. Carter, “The Search for Musical Meaning,” 174 explains similarly how the three hexachord system, operating within “the systems of *cantus durus* (with B-mi) and *cantus mollis* (B-fa),” can also be transposed sharp-wards or flat-wards.

century theorists to accommodate for an increasing amount of chromaticism, known as *musica ficta*, such that the primary motivation for hexachords revolved around the solmized semitone step, mi-fa.¹⁷³

Reasons for the use of chromaticism began with the advent of polyphony and were deeply entwined with the contrapuntal guidelines that theorists identified as compositional trends. Two of the ‘rules’ discussed exhaustively by theorists throughout the Renaissance were integral aspects of late sixteenth-century polyphonic counterpoint, and consequently, late sixteenth-century chromatic pitch-space. The first was entitled by scholars, *mi contra fa*, and referred to the tritone as an illicit harmonic or melodic interval within polyphonic compositions. This also references the positive guideline to counterpoint: that the intervals of a unison, fifth, or octave ought to be perfect. As Bent explains, “the speculative reasoning which determined the intervals permitted in counterpoint also lay behind the harmonic reasons for chromatic inflection.”¹⁷⁴ Needless to say, the rule became more and more relaxed as some composers, especially in the sixteenth century, began experimenting with chromaticism, utilizing tri-tones and false relations as a means of musical expression.¹⁷⁵

The other contrapuntal guideline pertained to the cadential treatment of voices, defined by an imperfect-to-perfect progression, in which a major sixth or minor third resolves to an octave or unison. John Turci-Escobar refers to the two-voices carrying the progression as ‘structural voices,’ especially due to the fact that “the writings of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century theorists suggest that cadences in polyphonic compositions are based on a two-voice

¹⁷³ Bent, *Counterpoint, Composition, and Musica Ficta*, 67.

¹⁷⁴ Bent, “Musica Recta and Musica Ficta,” 92.

¹⁷⁵ “Tritones in Early Music: Were they Always Prohibited?”

<http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/harmony/tritone.html> provides a succinct explanation of the rule of *mi contra fa* as well as its adherence within different time periods.

contrapuntal framework.”¹⁷⁶ The necessary adjustment of imperfect cadential intervals, such as minor sixths to major sixths, is what Henry Burnett describes as part of an ‘extended’ modal system. This extension was conceived by innovative composers of the sixteenth-century who did not limit their choice of supplementary cadential goals to a single ‘modally pure’ figure associated with an older diatonically conceived system.¹⁷⁷ Bear in mind that the limit of pitch-class choice is governed by the *naturalis* or C hexachord of the un-transposed three-hexachord gamut such that any particular gamut can support cadences on specific auxiliary degrees.¹⁷⁸ For the *naturalis* hexachord, the three ‘allowable’ inflections are C#, F#, and G#, resolving to D, G, and A respectively. It should be noted that the concept of a Phrygian cadence, defined by a major sixth in which the semi-tone resolution occurs as a descent while the whole-tone resolves as an ascent, originated from a sensitivity to the hexachord system maintaining a particular gamut (Diagram 3).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Turci-Escobar, “Softening the Edges: Cadential Attenuation in Gesualdo’s Six Books of Madrigals,” 102. Refer to this article for the various paradigmatic combinations of voices creating the contrapuntal and harmonic requirements for a formal cadence. Also see “Hexachords, Solmization, and Musica Ficta,” <http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/harmony/hex3.html> which thoroughly discusses the theoretical writings that Turci-Escobar refers to. For instance, Gioseffo Zarlino (1558) represents one of the sixteenth-century’s authorities on Renaissance music who writes in one of his treatises, *The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni harmoniche*, “in principle a sixth expanding to an octave should *always* be major, and that likewise a third contracting to a unison should always be minor.” One of the issues I find with Adams’ classification of chromatic functions is the label of non-essential chromaticism for cadential purposes. In fact, he labels the rule of *mi contra fa*, a dying rule within late-sixteenth century music, as essential.

¹⁷⁷ Burnett, 42 comments on a translation of Vincenzo Galilei’s *Il primo libro della prattica del contrapunto* (1591) that states, “[T]he best and most famous contrapuntists have used cadences on any step at all [of the mode] in their vocal compositions.”

¹⁷⁸ This is because choosing to cadence on a pitch-class associated with another hexachord (take the C# octave for example) implicitly assumes that the gamut has already been transposed. The larger implication of gamut transposition caused by chromaticism is contextually related to an analytical pitch-space.

¹⁷⁹ Eric Chafe, *Monteverdi’s Tonal Language*, 27 explains how the sixth degree of the C hexachord reordered in fifths “serves as the final for Phrygian cadences [or] as the dominant of the fifth cadence degree,” but when altered, shifts the hexachord in the sharp direction. This idea is similar to Bent’s view of gamut transposition and shows how a particular pitch-class, D#, shifts the entire gamut up a fifth to support its inclusion within the musical texture.

Diagram 3. C Naturalis 3-Hexachord Gamut (Harmonic)

Central Hexachord

re-ordered as 5ths

Harmonized (the quality of the last four chords may be major or minor)

A cadential B-triad lies outside the current Hexachord gamut (D# is added) Transposes the gamut up a 5th

Chromaticism, within sixteenth-century compositions, became a necessary ingredient for cadential goals as their “arrivals were carefully planned, and were natural conditions of both text syntax and an innate desire to create a sense of large-scale form.”¹⁸⁰

Various scholars have attempted to build an analytical system comprised of pitch-space in order to observe and understand harmonic progressions within a modally defined composition.¹⁸¹ Carl Dahlhaus was perhaps one of the first to analyze sixteenth-century compositions that did not fit into Renaissance modality or harmonic tonality by considering an analytical pitch-space through the ‘modal-hexachordal system.’¹⁸² Kyle Adams discusses

¹⁸⁰ Burnett, 42-3.

¹⁸¹ The concept of musical space as an analytical tool is not a new one. Mitchell Turner, “Interval-Class Exchanges in a Two-Dimensional Pitch-Class Space,” *Intégral* 16/17 (2002-3), 35-66 explores how many composers and theorists have utilized musical space as an analytical tool for atonal music. Its analytical value is in context to music that is not based in functional tonality, i.e. atonal and modal music. Additionally, the same article also discusses how various scholars attempt to define ‘prolongation’ as an aural phenomenon. Turner explains how applying prolongational analysis to atonal music “poses many problems, since the chords and hierarchies of tonality are not present.” (36) The solution according to F. Lerdahl and R. Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal music* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983) suggests an association between the relative salience of a pitch-class and aural prolongation. Yet, Turner counters that “total reliance on salience...predicates a piece’s pitch hierarchy solely on non-pitch factors.” (36) I suggest my own solution, an integral part of my analysis in chapter five, where prolongation assumes the sustention of pitch-classes without association to either harmonic functionality or salience. The determinant factor for prolongation in “Moro, lasso” is purely derived from the contrapuntal arrangement of the piece in which particular notes are temporally sustained through repetition. Therefore, the term prolongation, in the context of modality, is synonymous with sustention. Other terminology, such as the word ‘structural,’ carrying weighty connotations from both the tonal and atonal spectrum, will be further clarified in chapter five in regards to my utilization of notational reduction.

¹⁸² Mengozzi, 23 also describes the current polemic regarding ‘hexachord order’ as contributing to a Renaissance conception of a diatonic pitch-space.

Dahlhaus's conception of modal pitch-space as one that "consists of a single hexachord, either on Bflat, F, C, or G, and the triads that can be built upon its tones."¹⁸³ Furthermore, triads can be built with a major rather than minor third for the purpose of 'directed' motion.¹⁸⁴ This means that modal pitch-space built from the *naturalis* hexachord, under the guidelines of Dahlhaus, includes the six roots of the hexachord: C, D, E, F, G, and A, and the minor and major thirds above these roots: F#, G#/Aflat, B, and C#.¹⁸⁵ This, in effect, would provide a ten pitch-class set, yet without any clarification of the role of the other two pitch-classes, Eflat/D# and Bflat, in any musical texture that does utilize all twelve notes of the chromatic octave (See Diagram 4). This is not so much a problem as a descriptive realization of an abstract pitch-space, without any provision for dealing with the pitch-classes not included.¹⁸⁶

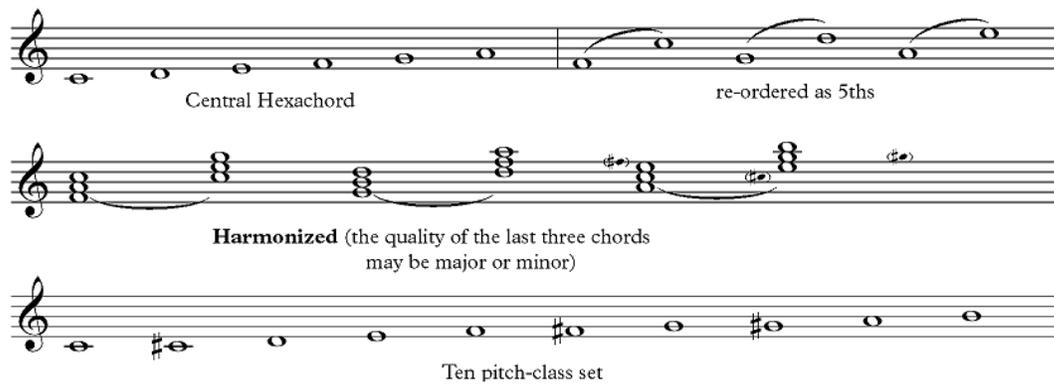
¹⁸³ Adams, 299 uses the term 'tonal system' to designate what I also refer to as an analytical pitch-space. As Adams' journal article does not actually cite the particular page(s) where he derives Dahlhaus's tonal system, I have focused on corroborating his interpretation with other reviewers of the work. See Dahlhaus, for his comprehensive derivation of an analytical system. Eva Linfield, review of Dahlhaus, *Journal of Music Theory* 36 (1992), 389-400 reminds us to translate *Entstehung* as 'emergence' or 'genesis' and not as 'origin' according to Gjerdingen. In addition, she explains how Dahlhaus's tonal system represents a pre-compositional backdrop for harmonic compositional procedures. However, it should be noted that Dahlhaus's conception of the modal-tonal evolution in history fundamentally ignores late sixteenth-century repertory (chromatic madrigals) on the basis that composers like Gesualdo played no part in the development of tonality. Linfield expresses the fact that "harmonic behavior in sixteenth-century polyphony presupposes a modal system in which neither clausela (cadence) degrees nor individual chord progressions define specific functions around a fixed tonal or pitch center." (391) It is important to understand this distinction, between an essentially free hierarchical system of modal scale degrees and a tonal system whose hierarchy is maintained through a projection of harmonically functional scale degrees against a tonic. It is this distinction that underscores my analytical observations within chapter five substituting harmonic functionality with melodic linearity. Other reviewers, such as Thomas Christensen, review of Dahlhaus, *Music Theory Spectrum* 15 (1993), 94-111 who pairs the book with Lester's *Between Modes and Keys* and emphasizes the emergence of tonality rather than focusing on Dahlhaus's system of modality. Cristie Collins Judd, review of Dahlhaus, *Music and Letters* 74 (1993), 61-3 expresses one of Dahlhaus's main convictions, "a critical distinction between..."harmonic' tonality and 'melodic' tonality in which a hierarchical relationship among pitches does not rely on a chordal context for comprehension." (61) 'Melodic' tonality is thus equated with 'modality.'

¹⁸⁴ Here I believe 'directed' motion refers to the idea of a cadential goal.

¹⁸⁵ I list the non-redundant pitch-classes above the designated roots.

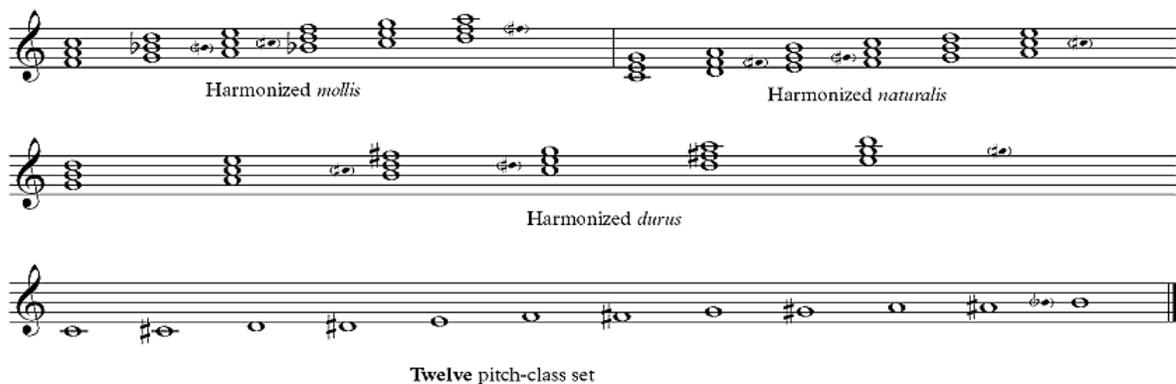
¹⁸⁶ Refer to the end of chapter one for a brief description of the role of tuning and temperament within unaccompanied madrigals of the late sixteenth century. Needless to say, it should be pointed out how the particular methodology used in analyzing "Moro, lasso" in chapter five maintains that a pitch-class (D# for example) and its enharmonic 'equivalent' (Eflat) are functionally different within the context of a work.

Diagram 4. Dahlhaus' pitch-space.



Eric Chafe's conception of modal pitch-space expands upon Dahlhaus's system by including three overlapping hexachords with harmonic potential, rather than just one. His natural system "consists of hexachords built on F, C, and G; his one-flat system consists of hexachords on Bflat, F, and C."¹⁸⁷ This model of pitch-space includes all twelve pitch-classes as D# is generated as a third above B within the *durus* hexachord (Diagram 5).

Diagram 5. Chafe's pitch-space.



However, we are hearing Gesualdo's music with ears saturated by centuries of divergent music, such that my analysis wishes to accommodate our aural evolution (or devolvement depending on one's perspective).

¹⁸⁷ Adams, 299 somehow deduces that each of Chafe's tonal systems "corresponds to the modern diatonic scale plus the raised fourth scale degree." The issue is how he derives such a pitch-space from a system whose basic qualifications include the fact that every pitch-class may serve as the root of a major or minor triad. The very fact that Adams determines the addition of the raised fourth degree assumes this qualification.

Transposition of this pitch-space, can only affect the enharmonic respelling of pitch-classes, so that in a Bflat hexachord system, the original D# is now spelled as Eflat. However, Chafe does not account for any hexachordal shift in the sharp direction.¹⁸⁸ The more substantial problem with his conception of a system is the fact that each hexachordal gamut system represents a pitch-space of all twelve pitch-classes. Transposition of such a pitch-space is theoretically redundant as long as the entire chromatic space is included, and its analytical practicality deemed unfit beyond a descriptive observation of the pre-compositional material of an entire piece.¹⁸⁹

Where Dahlhaus's system doesn't account for transposition as a means of shifting his analytical pitch-space and Chafe's system is incapable of any meaningful transposition addressing analytical issues within the scope of a single composition, Adams attempts to build his pitch-space with the capability and motivation for transposition. His conception of pitch-space begins by allowing a "hexachord to be built on any tone...yet does not necessarily allow minor triads to be altered without a change of system."¹⁹⁰ However, Adams does make a primary distinction between the generation of a single hexachord and his utilization of the hexachord as a tonal system. This is because he does not wish to have the root of any given hexachord assume a modal center to which the other pitch-classes are seen as auxiliary. His system is, in effect, a diatonic pitch-space without hierarchy. While such an analytical tool is useful in classifying many compositions that maintain a diatonically

¹⁸⁸ This realization of Chafe's system, one that involves only two overlapping sets of hexachords (C, F, G and Bflat, F, C) contradicts his statement quoted in footnote n173 earlier. McClary, "Monteverdi's Tonal Language," review of *Monteverdi's Tonal Language*, by Eric Chafe, *Music Theory Spectrum* 16 (1994), 263 realizes how there are difficulties with the model by which Chafe arrives at his interpretive conclusions.

¹⁸⁹ Burnett, 45-7 concludes that Chafe "limits the transpositional capabilities of the system, both within a single composition and among related pieces." (47) Chafe, 28 himself remarks that a "work itself may introduce up to three contiguous hexachords without any necessity of key signature shift."

¹⁹⁰ Adams, 299.

reducible framework, heavily induced chromatic music poses a problem of exclusiveness. In “Moro, lasso,” for instance, Adams’ system will constantly shift measure to measure to account for the changing pitch-space or become analytically deferred where a chromatic texture cannot be reduced to its diatonic foundation.¹⁹¹

I believe that the issue of both Chafe’s and Adams’ systems is one of practicality as an analytical lens to view a composition. Chafe’s system represents a large analytical lens, one that cannot zoom in or out, but only reconstitute the image already present.¹⁹² Adams’ system represents a small analytical lens, one that can only observe surface changes of texture through juxtapositions of varying diatonic pitch-spaces. On the contrary, the most practical analytical lens is one that has the ability to observe compositional phenomena beyond each measure by means of a more inclusive pitch-space capable of transposition. It is this analytical lens that is the one considered by Burnett entitled ‘systems analysis’: an eleven pitch-class system capable of transposition by means of the inclusion of the twelfth pitch-class in the musical texture.

Burnett forms his pitch-space similar to Chafe’s expansion of Dahlhaus’s system, a series of three overlapping hexachords, but distinct in maintaining Dahlhaus’s conception of harmonic capabilities regulated by a single hexachord.¹⁹³ The reason for both components to the system, the three-hexachord system as well as the harmonic capabilities of the middle hexachord, is to derive the eleven pitch-class set. Triads built upon the six roots of the

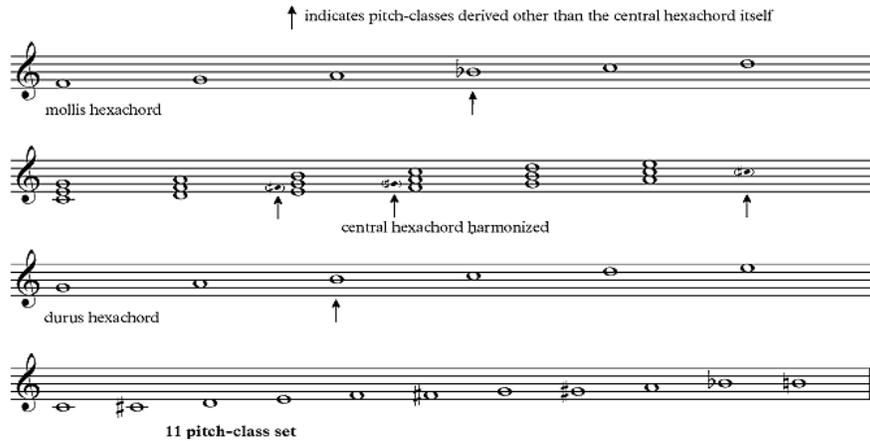
¹⁹¹ Adams, 261 introduces this very idea as ‘Suspended diatonicism.’ In addition, his analysis of Gesualdo’s *Madrigal, cagion* (V, 18) demonstrates six ‘system’ shifts for all of eight measures of the piece.

¹⁹² This refers to the fact that even by transposing Chafe’s proposed gamut, its pitch-space does not change quantitatively but only in terms of its orientation.

¹⁹³ Burnett, 43 labels the hexachord governing the harmonic possibilities of a system as the ‘central hexachord,’ a term he borrows from Chafe’s theory. The three-hexachord gamut of Burnett is quantified by the central hexachord for its harmonic potential.

designated hexachord support ten pitch-classes (Dahlhaus's system), while the other two hexachords as a linear model yield the eleventh pitch-class (the *musica recta* gamut) (Diagram 6).

Diagram 6. Burnett's pitch-space.



The twelfth pitch-class, whose presence indicates a transposition of the current system, forms the final element of the analytical model: a system capable of transposition.¹⁹⁴ This pitch-class is referred to by Burnett as a ‘system-shift motivator,’ denoting how a particular chromatic pitch-class provokes a transposition of pitch-space and implying a discrete chromatic function. The analytical lens of this model is one that can observe changes in modally conceived music that involves both diatonic and chromatic pitch-classes based in

¹⁹⁴ Burnett, 47 uses the term ‘modulation’ as synonymous to transposition since “both processes achieve the same results of moving...from one pitch level to another,” and both terms imply identical intervallic content. In addition, the twelfth pitch-class is labeled the ‘missing pitch’ of a particular system. He conveniently spells out how the “system-shift motivator is invariably the minor third or augmented second above the central hexachord of the modal gamut.” (11) This means that if a composer begins to work within the un-transposed system (F-C-G), the presence of Eflat would shift the system down a fifth (Bflat-F-C) while the presence of D# would shift the system up a fifth (C-G-D). The criteria for determining a particular eleven pitch-class system is “(1) the signature, or *cantus*, of the composition which identifies the initial gamut system... (2) the absence of the missing pitch class associated with a particular three hexachord system; (3) the presence of the missing pitch class” effectively transposing the system up or down a fifth. (63) On a side note, since the enharmonic respelling of pitch-classes affect the direction in which a system shifts, Burnett’s theoretical construct allows for various temperaments and tuning in which a D# is very different from an E-flat.

larger gamut systems (See Diagram 7).¹⁹⁵ Additionally, the root of a system’s central hexachord,¹⁹⁶ entitled by Burnett as a ‘system’s root,’ is said to govern an eleven pitch-class gamut system (See Diagram 8).¹⁹⁷

Diagram 7. Three-hexachord systems.

198

In application to “Moro, lasso,” systems analysis assists in qualifying an observation made by Glenn Watkins. He writes how the madrigal begins with a “gesture

¹⁹⁵ See Burnett, chapters 3-8, for the application of systems analysis in music spanning the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The implication that this method of analysis is invaluable to tonally (functionally harmonic) conceived music is quite cogent, yet beyond the scope of this thesis. The significance of systems analysis is based in a theoretical conception of chromatic pitch-space, all twelve pitch-classes and their enharmonic equivalents, in which various eleven pitch-class subsets assume a sense of mobility and hierarchy within the context of a piece of music. Mobility is a consequence of system transposition while hierarchy is a consequence of a particular pitch-class whose chromatic function creates transposition. Ultimately, the book argues that modality (in terms of pure intervallic counterpoint) never truly left the musical scene but actually became an integral compositional element for some of the most significant composers and their compositions in subsequent periods of music. Yet, this argument and its proper defense are also beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁹⁶ See n187 for the term ‘central hexachord.’

¹⁹⁷ For instance, the root of the *durus* system is G and refers to the root of the designated central hexachord reordered in fifths that bears the primary harmonic material for a modal piece. According to Burnett’s theory of modality, a modal system is one that subsumes and encompasses up to twelve modes within any given *cantus*. The relationship between a system and a mode illustrates a fundamental distinction between modality and tonality, yet beyond the scope of this analysis.

¹⁹⁸ Burnett, 51 provides a more thorough diagram of common transpositions between each self-contained system labeled and comprised of three-hexachords, the other ‘allowable’ pitch-classes pertaining to the central hexachord’s harmonic potential, and the missing pitch.

employing eleven of the twelve chromatic pitches.”¹⁹⁹ The only pitch-class noticeably missing is an A#/Bflat, which according to systems analysis, is the system-shift motivator. In fact, for the first fifteen measures of the piece, no A#/Bflat is utilized at all! It is only at the restatement of the opening material, transposed a fourth higher (m.16), in which an A# enters (Example 9).²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 178. These eleven pitch-classes are supported by a *durus* with G as the central hexachord (C-G-D). While the cantus of “Moro, lasso” has no sharps or flats, indicating a cantus *naturalis*, it is the presence of a D# within the musical texture (m.1) that indicates that the system is *durus* right at the onset of the piece. In addition, system-shifts that do occur as the music develops reverts ultimately back to a *durus* system at the end of the piece, implying that *durus* is the primary system governing this madrigal. Originally, the cantus for late sixteenth-century madrigals indicated either a *naturalis* (no sharps or flats), or *mollis* (one flat) hexachord. My conception of “Moro, lasso” clarifies how a cantus with no sharps or flats does not necessarily imply a *naturalis* signature, but may indicate a *durus* signature depending upon the context of a given musical texture.

²⁰⁰ This observation is only to briefly show how the analytical lens of systems analysis portrays larger than moment-to-moment organizational factors of music. For a more developed analysis of “Moro, lasso,” utilizing systems analysis to pinpoint large-scale changes in texture, and therefore, fundamental compositional choices of Gesualdo, see chapter five. Systems analysis for this particular madrigal is not an all-encompassing tool, especially in textures where a reconciliation of pitch-class presentation seems unrelated to observations made through systems analysis. Yet, its value lies in processing musical space and how composers utilized musical space. In addition, an indication of system transposition within a modal composition assumes the inclusion of a new pitch-class unsupported by the originally maintained system. Many times this process underlays the text such that system transposition acts as a theoretical aid in perceiving the moments of drama and expression (or its opposite affect) as representative of the related text. The relationship between systems analysis and the text of “Moro, lasso” is argued in chapter five.

Example 9. "Moro, lasso" mm.1-3, 16-17.

mm.1-3

C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F#, G, G#, A, B = 11 pitch-classes

E chi mi

Mo - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - lo E

Mo - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - - - - lo

Mo - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - - - - lo

Mo - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - lo

mm.16-17

Twelfth Pitch-Class

Mo - - - ro, las - - so,al mio

Mo - - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - -

Mo - - - ro, las - - so,al mio duo - - -

Mo - - - ro, las - - so,al mio

durus

Systems analysis is, therefore, understood as a transposable musical space supporting harmonic potential.²⁰¹ This analytical tool directly relates to the evolution of modality and its evermore-emerging complexity.

Yet, the complex system of late sixteenth-century modality rests on another compositional observation that harks back to modal tradition. Traditional modality is recognized as a linear system of diatonic-octave species. Yet, the emergence of chromaticism as a novel element for prolongation and expression further complicates the modal landscape. This observation reveals how modal composition, utilizing the chromatic aggregate, will seek to unfold “both a chromatic and a diatonic octave...over the course of [a] composition”

²⁰¹ Burnett, 47-8 explains the role of three-hexachord systems as a harmonic background.

defining a new linear representation of a modal self.²⁰² The interaction between a chromatic and diatonic genus, projecting a particular octave species, is an observation that allows us to understand the most elemental contrapuntal progressions of extremely complex music. Burnett entitles the gradual linear unfolding of a modally defined chromatic as the *Primary Chromatic Array* (PCA) and its diatonic counterpart as the *Primary Diatonic Array* (PDA).²⁰³ These two linear projections, according to Burnett, “[are] derived from the nature of [sixteenth-century] Renaissance counterpoint itself...based upon the intervallic interaction of two structural voices” and the inherent cadential sustention and resolution associated with sixteenth-century two-part counterpoint.²⁰⁴ The PCA represents a serialized²⁰⁵ ordering of a designated chromatic octave in which individual pitch-classes of that octave are introduced, remain active within the contrapuntal or harmonic (sonority) context, and finally displaced by subsequent pitch-classes within the ordering until octave completion. The manifestation of such an ordering invites the impression of balance and symmetry. As an analytical application, “both the PCA and the PDA may be viewed respectively as (1) the pairing of...a fundamental two-part texture, and (2) a species contrapuntal reduction of the essential structure of [a] given composition.²⁰⁶ In “Moro, lasso” the PCA/PDA revolves around the Aeolian octave species.

Such an analytical observation promotes the aesthetic conception of linear ‘order’ and symmetrical ‘balance’ on a structural level in late sixteenth-century music. The combination

²⁰² Burnett, 10.

²⁰³ Burnett, 68 introduces the terminology in application to Cipriano de Rore’s “Da le belle contrade.”

²⁰⁴ Burnett, 68 mentions the structural significance of formal cadences similar to my own explanation in chapter one under ‘what is counterpoint?’

²⁰⁵ A serial ordering, in this context, assumes only a background gesture as opposed to the organization of surface instances via serialism.

²⁰⁶ Burnett, 11. This method of analysis forms the basis of my analytical reduction of “Moro, lasso” in chapter five.

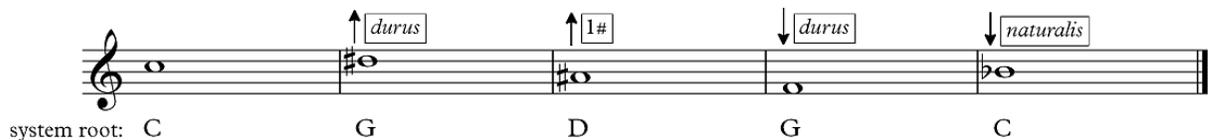
of structural octave arrays (PCA and PDA) as well as systems analysis, a combination that merges modal linearization and consolidation with harmonic space, mirrors the evolution of modality from its monophonic origins to chromatic polyphony and accounts for the precise emergent properties symbolized by late sixteenth-century practice.

Chapter Five. Solution

Analysis of “Moro, lasso”

The following analysis represents the crux of this thesis: order and balance manifests at a structural level in Gesualdo’s “Moro, lasso,” which intrinsically relates to its musical space and contrapuntal fabric. There are a number of significant annotations needed for the reader to fully grasp the analytical reduction present below. The two significant analytical tools used are systems analysis and PCA/PDA reduction.²⁰⁷ The former is readily identifiable in the score by means of an arrowhead and a label/numerical value beside it. The arrowhead describes the direction of transposition of musical-space provoked by the system shift motivator, while the label/numerical value identifies the eleven pitch-class area (See Diagram 8).

Diagram 8. systems notation



The latter tool is displayed as two levels of reduction underscoring the actual music. The first level presents a harmonic and contrapuntal skeleton shown as a simplified reduction outlining important cadential goals (M6-8) as well as contrapuntal five/six exchanges (5-6). In addition, this level acts as a ‘middle-man’ in allowing the reader to observe the relationship between the second level of contrapuntal reduction and the actual music. The second level presents a PCA and PDA as a two-part discant with structural pitch-classes represented as half-notes, the prolongation of structural pitches as quarter-notes, and other

²⁰⁷ See Burnett and Nitzberg, 13 for a more comprehensive overview of these analytical tools.

involved pitch-classes as eighth-notes.²⁰⁸ The term ‘structural,’ in the context of this analysis, simply denotes a pitch-class that is part of the PCA or PDA ordering. The term ‘prolongation,’ refers to the length of time that a structural pitch-class remains active (sustained) contrapuntally. A contrapuntal ‘background’ and the various reductions observed pertain only to a modal conception of musical ‘reduction’ divorced from any sense of a tonally defined background. This means that any terminology relating to traditional ‘voice-leading’ observations, such as passing or neighbor tones, anticipations, appoggiaturas etc., are only considered within the context of the contrapuntal ordering and the association with structural pitch-classes.²⁰⁹ Two other visual cues used within my analytical reduction directly relate to my own terminology. The structural ‘displacement’ of an active PCA or PDA pitch-class is visually represented as an oblique beam connecting the two represented notes. Any structurally sustained pitch-class of the PCA or PDA is represented by means of a broken beam (See Diagram 9). As the underlying contrapuntal framework of the piece, the PCA and PDA assume an overall sense of balanced symmetry, continuity, and above all else, order.

²⁰⁸ Other involved pitches that do not relate directly to the structure of a PCA or PDA do not indicate less musical significance. In fact, a prolonged pitch-class unrelated to the PDA, such as the recurring F# within “Moro, lasso” assumes significance by virtue of its ‘illicitness’ within an Aeolian modal texture. This is a view maintained by McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 168, that places due attention to the ‘illicit’ F#, “an extreme position for Aeolian in general.” While I do not necessarily agree that utilizing an F# to cadence on an E-triad is in any way particularly ‘extreme,’ the recurring use of F# against the more ‘structural’ F within the piece is still quite provocative. This encounter creates a significant dyad conflict between F and F# that is worked out over the course of the entire madrigal.

²⁰⁹ The reason for this clarification of analytical terminology is due to my utilization of Schenkerian-style graphic notation that implicitly connotes an entirely different classification of analytical reduction fundamentally determined by harmonic functionality.

Diagram 10. PCA/PDA reduction (Aeolian)



The first ‘structural’ action that occurs contrapuntally is the descent from A to G within the PDA (m.9). The segment leading up to this displacement involves the text *E chi mi può dar vita* and who can give me life) and is represented by a minor third (A-C), considered ‘sweet’ according to Renaissance intervallic associations. This interval consistently gives way to a ‘harsh’ major third (G-B) within (mm.3-9).²¹¹ Yet, such an intervallic association is superficially counterintuitive with regards to the represented text. However, if one considers the looming textual phrase, *Ahi, che m’ancide e non vuol dar mi aita* (ah, that kills and does not want to give me help), the intervallic adjustment is easy to rationalize. As the music progresses a significant F# is consistently active within the counterpoint (mm.12-16). This pitch is considered an illicit pitch-class according to Susan McClary within the Aeolian species, a pitch that must ultimately be displaced by an F-natural.²¹² The displacement occurs promptly (m.16) as the F# chromatically descends to an F (mm.16-17) and F becomes quickly displaced by the next ordered pitch-class E, a structural segment of the PDA, one that

²¹¹ The terms ‘major’ and ‘minor’ refer in this thesis to an intervallic relationship and not a chordal one. For reasons of convenience and conciseness, it is much easier to refer to a chord as A minor than to visually or verbally build it.

²¹² McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 168, discusses the non-fictive F#. While McClary views an F-natural as a more ‘structural’ pitch-class within Aeolian due to the cadential formulas of the time, a formula that portrays a diapente descent “which completes the linear resolution to A,” I argue that F-natural is considered structural as part of the PDA. Yet, both analytical views correctly points out the necessary contrast that Gesualdo employs by utilizing both an F-natural and an F# within the music.

is repeated again (mm.18-19).²¹³ Measure sixteen also marks the restatement of opening material (mm.1-15) now a perfect fourth higher.²¹⁴

Why does Gesualdo repeat the first three lines of text? The simplest answer is that in order to musically prolong such a short poem, the easiest solution would be large-scale textual-block repetition. However, a plausible reason for the transposition of a fourth and not any other interval may be due to the fact that Gesualdo wished to include an A# within the musical texture. This A# is the only pitch-class not employed within the entire opening statement, a structural pitch-class of the PCA and one that motivates a *one-sharp* system. Gesualdo, in unfolding a complete PCA within “Moro, lasso,” needs an A# to displace the previous A-natural. While the PCA/PDA can be seen to contrapuntally weave together large musical phrases (mm.1-15, and 16-29) in an ordered fashion, both contrapuntal lines do not seem to involve textual symbolism or representation on any meaningful level. In other words, the PCA and PDA are separate compositional devices that assume musical coherence only. This idea reinforces the fact that modal counterpoint may underscore aspects of the poetic text, yet ultimately, on a structural level, act as an absolute musical construction that satisfies its own conditions divorced from textual symbolism. James Haar has argued how late sixteenth-century madrigalists did not always use chromaticism for expressive purposes, i.e.,

²¹³ This is an important observation as it points out the dynamic nature of the PCA and PDA. While only one of the segments, usually the first to occur, is considered more ‘structural’ than its subsequent repetition, the fact that particular diatonic/chromatic segments repeat before moving on to the next diatonic or chromatic pitch-class of the PCA/PDA demonstrates a unique contrapuntal layering of the music. In addition, it should be noted that two different octave species are unfolded over the course of the madrigal, such that the pitch-class A can descend to G within the PDA (m.9) as well as ascend to A# within the PCA (mm.15-16). In effect, the PCA/PDA are compositionally derived concepts and not analytically imposed constructs. The reason that particular segments repeat in an ordered fashion and are accounted for within the analysis is part of this derivation.

²¹⁴ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 167, points out how the D-flat (m.24) “makes the voices veer off in new channels,” such that the end of the repeated material (m.29) is a major second lower than in its original form (m.15).

featuring the text.²¹⁵ Perhaps Gesualdo, as well as his contemporaries, were thinking bilaterally with regards to textual and musical: as autonomous elements, yet linked together through association.

As the textual phrase *Moro lasso al mio duolo* is repeated within the transposed musical texture, the PCA begins to ascend quite rapidly from the cantus' A# (m.16) to D (m.18) at the end of the phrase. This segment of the PCA, A#-B-C-C#-D, not only functions as a chromatic drive to the cadence on a D major sonority, but also underscores the rationale for Gesualdo's choice to repeat the opening material a fourth higher. The harmonic audaciousness of this phrase, considering the juxtaposition of D major and F# major (mm.15-16) as well as the obscure harmonic gesticulation back to D major (m.18), can be contrapuntally reduced to two coherent contrapuntal lines. Yet, just as the descending segment F#-F-E is repeated and portrayed within subsequent phrases as the unfolding structural segment (mm.18-29) so too the chromatic ascending segment C-C#-D will also unfold in the next phrase (mm.18-25) with an enharmonically spelled D-flat (mm.24-5). Subsequently, a D is finally displaced by the next ordered chromatic pitch-class D# (mm.25-6).²¹⁶ This D# is the only pitch-class 'missing' from the previous musical texture (mm.16-25)

²¹⁵ Haar, "False Relations and Chromaticism in Sixteenth-Century Music," 405.

²¹⁶ This musical phrase (mm.16-18) and its subsequent phrase (mm.18-24) additionally spawn a question regarding first species counterpoint. The anticipated question is as follows: If the PCA and PDA segments unfolded at this point are inherently part of a first species contrapuntal reduction, how can I argue that the structural pitch-classes of the PDA/PCA at this point (mm.18-25) involve an interval of a minor seventh (E-D), a sustained dissonant interval? This is where the idea of repeated segments becomes increasingly significant within the analysis as the solution to such a question involves an understanding of what the term 'structural' expresses in regard to the PCA/PDA. A structural pitch-class of the PCA/PDA simply expresses the fact that the pitch-class is part of a serialized ordering either through chromatic ascent or diatonic descent. Within the contrapuntal orientation of the problematic section (mm.18-25), the reduction clearly portrays the constant alternation between two intervallic sixths, F-D and E-C, and not the intervallic sustention of a minor seventh. This consideration of counterpoint, as the essential determinant for choosing the PCA/PDA, portrays the PCA/PDA as only an inherent aspect of the contrapuntal framework, but not a more structurally significant linearity that can be considered divorced from the more involved, surface events. The two levels of analytical reduction illustrated must still be viewed in tandem with the madrigal or else distortion will ensue. It is the

and one that restores the *durus* system that shifted down momentarily (m.25). Both D# (m.26) and its enharmonic equivalent E-flat (m.30) are displaced immediately by E and also illustrate segmented repetition of the PCA.

The fourth line of the text, *O dolorosa sorte* (O painful fate), features a PDA ascent from D to B (mm.30-3) as well as a PCA ascent from E to F# (mm.32-3), a passage in which McClary emphasizes the word ‘fate’ and the foreshadowed signal towards ultimate musical resolution. The emphasis for such a consideration, according to McClary, is derived from the cadential connection between this musical phrase (mm.30-33) and the final phrase (mm.34-42). The ‘illicit’ F#, designated by McClary, returns (m.33) as part of the PCA, truly resolving the pitch-class through octave completion ascending linearly to A (mm.34-42). In fact, the only pitch-class missing from the last statement (mm.34-42) is an F#. ²¹⁷ This final statement sets up the same conceptual duality as earlier in the text: *Chi dar vita me può, ah, mi dà morte* (“The one who could give me life, alas, gives me death”). While the surface of this passage is saturated with chromaticism, the underlying contrapuntal activity is simply a minor sixth (B-G) outlined by the PDA/PCA (mm.34-40) as the interval expands to a major sixth (B-G#) and finally a definitive octave resolution (A-A) (mm.41-2). ²¹⁸ This analytical assessment demonstrates how ‘exaggerated’ and ‘distorted’ surface features, including chromatic excess and a daring harmonic trajectory, are buttressed within a symmetrical contrapuntal design.

dynamic nature of the PCA/PDA that correctly describes the structure of the madrigal as not instances, but rather as a temporal unfolding of segments that underscores various phrases of the music.

²¹⁷ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 168 only remarks about the ‘fully rational resignation’ of the last statement by associating the verbal punctuation, *O dolorosa sorte* (O sorrowful fate), with the concluding passage. However, she does not realize that the last statement only employs eleven of the twelve pitch-classes. The illicit F# truly does ‘bow to fate’ within the subsequent musical texture.

²¹⁸ The fact that the final phrase repeats, due to the dotted bar-lines, is simply an indication of segmented repetition of the last subdivision of the PCA/PDA.

The duality presented within the text, between life and death, invites paratextual insight with regards to the musical embodiment of this ‘bipolar opposition.’ McClary writes how “the poet rocks back and forth between the two stark extremes, hardly even bothering to dress up the tension with double meanings.”²¹⁹ The association between music and text, beyond surface delineation, is reinforced by the system shifts within the madrigal. Systems analysis portrays a *durus* pitch-space (m.1) right at the onset of the madrigal. This musical space ‘flickers’ so-to-speak by consistently vacillating around the *durus* system, the ‘governing’ system of the madrigal. The first flicker occurs at the restatement of the opening material in transposition (mm.16-26) in which the *durus* system gives way momentarily to a *I#* system (m.16) and a *naturalis* system (mm.25-6). System shifts occur more readily towards the end of the madrigal where the flicker expands by moving down two systems and then back up two (mm.30-3, and 37-42). These system shifts occur due to Gesualdo’s precise notational spelling of pitch-classes such that A# (m.16) and its enharmonic equivalent B-flat (m.25), as well as E-flat (m.30) and its enharmonic equivalent D# (m.33) manifest as system shift motivators. The equilibrium of the *durus* system, as a referential space, partakes in the paratextual association of the textual duality and a duality of systems incorporated and explored within the music. In addition, by motivating both a system shift in the sharp and flat direction, Gesualdo easily exploits both E-flat and D# within the same measure (m.41), stressing the conceptual entity of a pitch-class and its dyad orientation at the end of this notorious chromatic labyrinth.

This analysis portrays particular pitch-classes as important structural elements within a contrapuntally derived framework. The significance of singular pitches as either sustained entities or system-shift motivators assumes new classifications of chromatic functionality via

²¹⁹ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 164.

chromatic octave completion and eleven pitch-class collections. In principle, this study of “Moro, lasso” qualifies McClary’s claim that Gesualdo “must rely on a supreme knowledge of weights and balances in order to succeed.”²²⁰ It is the contrapuntal fabric that provides the balance for the seemingly aberrant surface of the madrigal.

²²⁰ McClary, *Modal Subjectivities*, 169.

Chapter Six. The Lost Planet Pluto

Gesualdo's Place in Music History: The Question of Periodic Labeling

Definitions, labels, classifications, and delineations are all an integral part of an innate sophisticated tool called quantification: the ability for us as human beings to bring the boundless arena of our universe within a more concrete scope of focus. Leonard B. Meyer, in discussing a theory of style, mentions this method synonymously as a body of constraints that limits choice. He defines style as “a replication of patterning, whether in human behavior or in the artifacts produced by human behavior, that is produced from a series of choices made within some set of constraints.”²²¹ Style, as a method of quantification, allows historians to divide musical repertoire by periods and, consequently, allows us to classify music such as Gesualdo's “Moro, lasso” based on the various constraints of music and history.²²² Meyer portrays classification as a hierarchy of constraints intended to justify periodic labeling and style analysis.²²³ Whether we want to or not, taxonomies must exist in some manner if we try to analyze, identify, or compare musical works. While the title of this chapter alludes to the many issues of periodic labeling and the misappropriation of various terms, the focus of this chapter partakes in an exploration of musical classification as it relates to Carlo Gesualdo and his music within the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century.

The essential issue of labeling Gesualdo's music, as well as the music of his compositional peers within a particular style period, is wrought with difficulty, and yet

²²¹ Meyer, 3.

²²² This chapter relates to the consequences of the thesis: that chromaticism in “Moro, lasso,” an aspect of Gesualdo's musical style, serves as an organizational principle. The various constraints of the music, including its contrapuntal, chromatic, and modal foundations, provide the style analyst with some of the necessary criteria to fit Gesualdo within a musical period or know where Gesualdo does not belong. The relationship between the most trivial details of a piece of music and its musical surroundings is why Meyer's hierarchical theory of style is so significant.

²²³ Meyer, 13-30 lists the various levels of constraints and their properties.

seemingly overlooked within the musicological world.²²⁴ This issue has even been manifested within Glenn Watkins' biographies of Carlo Gesualdo in which two conflicting periodic labels are utilized to fit Gesualdo's musical style within a historical framework. The first biography that Watkins had written, *Gesualdo: The Man and his Music* (1974), labels the stylistic period that encompassed Gesualdo's music as 'Mannerism.' Yet, Watkins' most recent scholarly volume, *The Gesualdo Hex* (2010), labels the designated period 'Late-Renaissance' without ever mentioning the reason for the terminological shift.²²⁵ Instead of faulting Watkins for creating a dichotomy of classification between his two biographies, I wish to explore the reason why the shift occurred and rectify the disparate perceptions of the period in question.

The terms Renaissance, Mannerism, and Baroque are all considered justifiable periods of art within art history.²²⁶ However, their validity (especially Mannerism) are not taken for granted within musicology as any generalized label can truly distort and neglect much of music history that does not fit under a stylistic label. Tim Carter aptly writes,

“in our age of cultural uncertainty and equal opportunity for all, it becomes increasingly difficult to justify the wholesale exclusion of musical repertoires just on

²²⁴ That is not to say that there are musicologists who are actively considering the Renaissance vs. Mannerism debate, yet even the most recent publication concerned with this debate is seven-years old: Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” 1-26. Noel O'Regan, “Histories of Renaissance Music for a New Century,” *Music and Letters* 82 (2001), 271 finds it disturbing “that little or no attention has been paid to the historiographical issues involved at this interface.”

²²⁵ It is reasonable to assume that a lot can happen in thirty-six years, nevertheless it is troubling that a book, claiming to be part historiographical, does not explain a reason for such a shift of classification.

²²⁶ Haar, “Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music,” *International Review of Music Aesthetics and Sociology* 1 (1970), 56 writes how in art-historical circles Mannerism has become a term of lasting importance. In addition, Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” 8 specifies the reason why art historians have broadly adopted the idea of Mannerism as a style-period is due to the “political, social, and economic upheavals of Italy in the sixteenth century after the French invasions of the peninsula and the Sack of Rome.”

the grounds that they do not fit our prejudices concerning a given period, or about what ‘music might in fact be.’²²⁷

Carlo Gesualdo has never truly been neglected in music history, due to his notoriety, yet his music does not fit within the confines of either the Renaissance or Baroque. Musicologists have attempted to avoid these period-labels, by utilizing only a chronological marker such as the ‘sixteenth century.’²²⁸ Yet, chronological divisions, such as the one used in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, have split Gesualdo’s historical life in two.²²⁹ This is perhaps one of the reasons why Mannerism was the classification that Watkins used in his original biography.

Mannerism, as a period of music, “arises out of musical patterns evident in the practice and thought about music between the years 1530 and 1630.”²³⁰ This chronological demarcation is one that already includes the entirety of Gesualdo’s life (1566-1613) and one that attempts to clarify the fundamental changes that occurred between the Renaissance and

²²⁷ Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” 1.

²²⁸ Both Carter, preface to *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, xv-xvii and O’Regan, 268-81 discuss various approaches to music history. The former describes stylistic approaches such as the Dent-Norton and Prentice Hall series both of which divide music history into stylistic categories like the Renaissance and Baroque. Other history surveys, like the *Oxford History of Western Music* (2005) attempt both a chronological and stylistic divider creating even more historiographical issues of what is relevant. Some history surveys are even divided by genres such as opera, the madrigal, or any other instrumental or formal classification. Even the Cambridge history series, which discarded any generalized stylistic labels, utilizes some chronological delineation. Chronological demarcations can be especially misleading when composers, like Gesualdo, lives at the cusp of two centuries. The latter article reviews three different surveys of the Renaissance and the amount of confusion and disparity between each survey. Each survey qualifies the Renaissance with different chronological divisions, creating an even more fundamental problem of stylistic validity and uniformity. These issues are considered in my own exploration of Gesualdo and his place in music history.

²²⁹ While Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” (1), does clarify that “a [musical] period never has a clear beginning or end...thirty years either way will usually suffice,” *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music* doesn’t include Gesualdo at all other than a date of death in its Appendix I (535). Gesualdo had published his last two madrigal books in 1611, making his significance in the early part of the seventeenth-century relevant.

²³⁰ Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, xiii. This book is the authoritative defense of Mannerism as a viable musical period in music history. However, there are other opinions regarding this chronological demarcation as A.H. Johnson provides an entirely different chronological span for Mannerism: 1520-1600. Reasons for the divide in mannerist chronology is due to various musical and historical events that implies a new stylistic era, such as the introduction of basso continuo in madrigal writing, or the rise of opera.

Baroque. Mannerism is characterized by deliberate intellectualism, paradox, extremes, the ability to startle, and hyper refinement.²³¹ These characteristics are basic to a mannerist style typified by a measured act of exaggeration and distortion of a musical norm, a norm encompassed by the Renaissance.²³² This norm continued to be practiced, but subtly changed by the process of stylistic absorption.²³³ Watkins writes, “That the High Renaissance provided the foundation upon which the mannerist spirit could flourish is undeniable.”²³⁴ Maria Rika Maniates, the authoritative defender of Mannerism as a musical period, even admits that “the seeds of mannerist distortion lie buried in the so-called realism of renaissance art.”²³⁵ Therefore, both the aesthetic premise of distortion and the musical

²³¹ Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture*, 6. Haar, “Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music,” 61-2 lists a number of distorted characteristics of Renaissance principles including experimentation with madrigal writing via a thickening of imitative textures, verbal-musical expressiveness, and rhythmic ornamentation. Maniates, “Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?” *The Musical Quarterly* 57 (1971), 273-8 explains how only within the twentieth century, scholars have come to emphasize the positive value of mannerism’s maligned features, which bears a startling resemblance to modern Expressionism and Surrealism. The term ‘mannerist,’ defined simply as a stylistic deformation of some designated musical norm, is also perceived as a recurrent feature of style periods.

²³² Haar, “Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music,” 57 agrees with the diachronic association between the Renaissance and Mannerism when he writes how “musical mannerism [was] a phenomenon following in time, and dependent upon, a generally recognized classical norm, the polyphonic style of Josquin Des Prez and some of his contemporaries in the first two decades of the 16th century. This classical norm included the musical qualities of a rounded melodic line, smoothly joined counterpoint in which dissonance is carefully planned and regulated, equality of melodic interest in four voices, balanced phrase structure, imitation, etc. The aesthetic departure from this classical norm embraced the juxtaposition of intellectualism and emotionalism, or in musical terms, the artificial structure and organization of a piece of music coupled with its surface affectation and expression. Yet, in most discussions and analyses of mannerist music, it is the surface distortion and exaggeration that is emphasized, leading to an art form conceived as an anti-natural and anti-classical style. I believe that the stylistic association between the Renaissance and Mannerism has caused twentieth-century art and music historians to consider Mannerism solely through association. This has led Maniates, “Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?” 277 to characterize Mannerism in direct opposition to the Renaissance: objectivity, naturalness, normality, clarity, and order are replaced with the irrational, bizarre, and arbitrary. In addition, Mannerism emerges as an unstable period of disintegration between two relatively stable periods of integration. This type of periodic consideration, in which entire centuries of history are generalized, is why scholars have taken issue with style-periods due to historiographical misrepresentation.

²³³ Haar, “Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music,” 64 explains how the “cultivation of musical mannerisms took place inside, and on the basis of, a recognized classical style, without any overt desire to break down that style.” Yet, even the most conservative composers of the sixteenth century, including Palestrina, represent an altered form of classicism by means of all the extensions and modifications attributed with early Mannerism. Stylistic innovations are what dictate much of how we discuss and categorize music history such that style-periods become defined by their desire to push boundaries rather than prolong conventionalism.

²³⁴ Watkins, *Gesualdo: The Man and His Music*, 98.

²³⁵ Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630*, 13.

material exploited by mannerist composers are both derived from the Renaissance. This association results in a period of music defined solely through dependency and points only to the inartificial relation to the source and quality of nourishment. Mannerism is thus defined as the distortion and exaggeration of Renaissance principles, embodied by terminology like ‘anti-natural’ and ‘anti-classic,’ invariably describing the absence rather than presence of essential qualities.²³⁶ I believe that this association invalidates Mannerism as a cultural stylistic period, and is perhaps what motivated Watkins to describe Gesualdo’s music as yet encompassed by the Renaissance in his recent book.²³⁷ In order to then justify Mannerism as a style period and validate its identity, a synchronic identification of its essential qualities must be established without an association to the Renaissance.

James Haar, following this train of thought, proposed a mannerist influence in chordal writing, a textural element that begins to become relevant in the contrapuntal style of the late sixteenth century and not before. Beyond this developing chordal style is “voguish chromaticism – this time in the sense of sharps and flats – introduced into madrigals and motets in the 1540s and 50’s.”²³⁸ Chromaticism is then one of the essential emerging qualities of music at this time, providing a sense of synchronic readiness to the Mannerist tradition. . One late sixteenth-century scholar, Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, emphasized the sense of “hidden formal intricacy in the art object itself and of an intellectual scheme in the

²³⁶ See footnote n4 discussing the stylistic qualification of absence.

²³⁷ Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” 11 agrees as “Mannerism is perhaps best viewed within, rather than outside, the framework of the Renaissance as a whole.” This assessment is not only because of the factor of dependency but also because of the geographical limitations in which any mannerist spirit flourished.

²³⁸ Haar, “Classicism and Mannerism in 16th-Century Music,” 63. He then discusses how chromaticism need not just be used for extremes of passionate utterance, but can be used for the ‘sake of style.’ This thesis qualifies Haar’s statement by exploring chromatic functionality as part of a coherent musical framework. On a different note, Haar also mentions the cultural element of music printing as important for the intensification of mannerist musical activity in Italy, France, and the Netherlands.

mind of the artist.”²³⁹ This particular formulation of mannerism is validated through my thesis: chromaticism, an artificial ‘idea,’ provides the dual function of surface expression and affectation while providing a hidden organized design.²⁴⁰ Nevertheless, this element and aesthetic is too stylistically specific to be regarded as definitive to a Mannerist identity. Ultimately, precise labeling trumps generalized statements as we have yet to truly abstract any determinant conception of the sixteenth century. Yet, the alternative, “the decision to see the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a unified period, may well prove to have been the result of a historiographical accident.”²⁴¹

The only remedy to this controversy is to simply define the period in question by its unifying characteristics: the Age of Chordal Polyphony or the Age of Chromaticism. Jessie Ann Owens sums up the historiographical concerns of this form of taxonomy by claiming, “Within this broad framework, shifts in musical style could be explored without recourse to labels that may hinder more than they help.”²⁴² Gesualdo’s “Moro, lasso,” as well as the rest of his oeuvre, can now be classified under various musical phenomena without relying upon the vulnerabilities of style-periods. Chromaticism, as a result of this thesis, should be considered a significant organizational element of Gesualdo’s music and not solely a surface aberration, one that provides a fundamental criterion for the music’s stylistic classification within the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century.

²³⁹ Maniates, “Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?” 274. This formulation was in regards to art history, primarily the artistic works of Michelangelo. Carter, “Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque,” 8 mentions this formulation as an intricacy of design and articulation. As a consequence to my thesis statement, this formulation can now be understood within the scope of musical mannerism as well: chromaticism acts as both an artificial design while producing a rich, expressive effect.

²⁴⁰ Maniates, “Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?” 285 comments that “the pillars of modal stability were completely vitiated by chromatic sonorities that soared off into flights of unorthodox triadic progressions.” My understanding of modality, formulated in this thesis, argues in favor of emerging qualities that alter the focus of modality rather than destroy it.

²⁴¹ Owens, “Music Historiography and the Definition of ‘Renaissance,’” *Notes* 47 (1990), 330.

²⁴² Owens, “Music Historiography and the Definition of ‘Renaissance,’” 330 attempts this classification with regards to the Renaissance, its defining features being “the Age of Counterpoint or the Age of Mensural Notation.”

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