

FROM PAIN TO PLEASURE: THE TROPING OF ELEGY IN THE RENAISSANCE ITALIAN MADRIGAL*

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ABSTRACT:

In the Renaissance period, melancholia emerged as a dramatic cultural phenomenon among the intellectual and artistic elites, with a locus in elegy it gave form to the Renaissance poetics of loss, pain and shedding of tears, expressing essentially the fantasy about death as a prerequisite for revival. The possibilities of confronting the threats of death were being found in its very nature whose inherent ambiguity was determined by the principles of Thanatos and Eros. The creative act of the troping of elegy proved to be an effective literary and musical strategy for the transcendence of death including the procedures of homeopathization, pastoralization, heroization and erotization of elegy. The elegiac tropic transcendence of death found its most complex expression in the madrigal which in turn added to its basic polyphonic procedure the opposing stylistic elements of the pastoral genres (canzonettas and villanellas) or heroic solo or choral recitations and it consequently acquired a hybrid form in the last decades of the 16th century, and thereby proved to be a cultural trope itself. The aim of this article is to examine the musical implications of the tropic strategies of facing death within Francesco Petrarca's, Torquato Tasso's, and Battista Gurini's poetic models of the art of loving death, using the remarkable examples of the Italian madrigal practice of the late Renaissance.

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In his book *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, the Italian philosopher and aesthetician, Giorgio Agamben, argued that after the reappearance of court love lyric poetry among poets in the 13th century, “the first great return of melancholia in Western culture started with the Humanism” (Agamben, 1993: 14, n. 3). It started, as is known, with the revision of Galen’s physiological-psychological discourse according to which the melancholic temperament, caused by the fluctuation and predomination of black bile (*melas khole*) and exhibited in the typical symptomatology – from dry, cold, hard, heavy, slow, lonely, sad, evil to earthly, autumnal, old, dark, rot, deadly – had a negative predisposition since it lead to the pathological state of *mania*. Such a revision took the course of the Platoization of Aristotle’s notion of natural or ingenious melancholia stated in his *Problemata XXX.1* with the famous question: “Why is it that all men who have become outstanding in philosophy, statesmanship, poetry or the arts are melancholic, and some to such an extent that they are infected by the diseases arising from black bile?” (Radden 2000: 57). Attributed by Aristotle to all ingenious people (*literarum studiosi*), melancholia was then, within Renaissance Neoplatonism, related to divinely inspired cogitations and contemplative, introspective cognition of the divine (*divine furore*). An elite “disease” thus became the designation of intellectual exclusivity and spiritual greatness, which, however, unlike Aristotle’s recognition of diversity as the only characteristic that distinguishes ingenious people, also meant the fulfillment of their moral (Christian) virtues. In addition to human and natural causes, melancholia also received a heavenly cause.

The epochal leap of melancholia from clinic to culture, from a medical condition to a discursive practice, was initiated by the Florentine philosopher, doctor and composer Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). He outlined the confluence of the ancient ideas of the Saturnian temperament and melancholic genius in his medical-astrological treatise on life (*De vita triplici*, 1480–89) and widely elaborated the concept of love as the key of theology, epistemology and ethics in his influential treatise on love (*Commentarium in convivium Platonis de Amore*, 1474–75). Above all, Ficino emphasized something that will prove to be indicative of a cultural identity of Renaissance humanism. This is the idea of separation, loss and absence. This thanatological idea acquired an ambivalent status in the Renaissance philosophy and art – of the subjective source of love melancholia (in a negative medicinal sense) and the objective recourse of divine furor (in a positive Platonic sense). According to Ficino’s neoplatonic vision, the interrelation between love and melancholia is woven into polarity between the magical-demonic and the angelic-contemplative nature of fantasy – a polarity which is personified in the double manifestation of Venus: as *terrestris/volupta* and as *celestis/contemplativa*. In the first case, love leads the melancholic to necromantic fascination (*Venus oppositus Saturn*), and in the second, to the ecstatic radiance (*cum Venus Saturn*) (Ficino 1944: 142–143, 191–193). In contrast to

the Platonic ethos of *furor divinus* as “contemplative love” of melancholic genius for the divine knowledge, the close relationship between the pathos of “vulgare love” and the melancholia is expressed particularly in their common characteristics, *disiunctio* and *excessus*. Ficino explains that this characteristically “happened usually to those who, neglecting contemplative love, have turned to a passion for physical embrace,” recalling the fact that even “the ancient physicians observed these phenomena, they said that love was a kind of melancholy humor and passion of melancholy,” so that “anyone who is naturally of that temperament is more susceptible to love” (*ibid.*, 195). *Amor hereos* was the name for a kind of pathological madness resulting from an embrace of the defect of heart and affliction of body. It affects “the desperate in love.” The ethos of contemplative, celestial melancholia and pathos of love, terrestrial melancholia received in Renaissance humanism its paradigmatic cultural expressions, the former in Ficino’s neoplatonic philosophy and the latter in lyrical poetry of Francesco Petrarca (Francesco Petrarca, 1304-1374) and his followers, Petrarchists.

Humanistic privileging of loss and absence revealed, consequently and importantly, melancholy attitude to *eros*, because what is lost and absent becomes an unattainable object of nostalgic desire and yearning (*eros*). It is precisely desire and yearning which give the loss as absence a status of presence (*eros* as copula). As Thomas M. Greene points out, “The humanists of the quattrocento did not suffer so intimately or so intensely from the knowledge of loss, partly because they devoted so much of their careers to the repossession of the lost” (Greene 1982: 8). It was possible only in the fantasy of the regeneration by means of efforts to integrate the loss into a new etiological myth that could define the historical birth of the epoch. For Renaissance culture in general, objects of melancholic *eros* were antiquity, the idealized figure of a non-corporeal woman or a primordial oneness with God. The affirmation of the male-oriented subjectivity of melancholic *eros*, through legitimizing the expressiveness of his melancholy was attained in the forms of cultural production and artistic representation.

Perceiving melancholia as a privileged, exclusively male form of creation and expression naturally resulted in the fixation of the woman only in the utterly domestic context of funereal mornings and lamentations. According to Sharon T. Strocchia, “Petrarch was the first to decry the ritual license of grieving women and to emphasize their need for greater public decorum” (Strocchia 1991: 167) and he supported privatizing “the visible expression of grief such as ritual laments, tears, and gestures of despair, for which women were primarily responsible” (*ibid.*, 166). As Strocchia puts forward, the only public mourning practice, albeit without the visible showing of emotions, referred to the Latin funereal orations and consolatory letters (*ibid.*, 164). The latter represented, so to speak, paradigmatic cultural expressions of the principle of *logos* and encomium elevating the deceased upon which rests funereal, personal melancholia. However, the possibility of male appropriating the expressive signs of ritual lamenting from fragile and sensitive female subjectivity necessitated the conversion of this mourning pattern into a cultural performance through the occupation of the literary space of fiction as a privileged form of male expression of personal grieving and suffering. Indeed, in both cases of either the exclusion of femininity (funeral and contemplative melancholia; the Ficinian model) or the acquisi-

tion of female characteristics (love melancholia; the Petrarchan model), the woman is obviously always absent. Or, to put it differently, she is present only as a lost or unattainable object of male desire and yearning.

In funereal, contemplative and love-like evocation of the Saturnian temperament it is *eros* which also makes a demand for overcoming the loss, for a relation with the transcendent whose threshold is *thanatos*. Ambiguity, inherent to melancholia, is driven by the principles of Eros and Thanatos, as well as by desire for transcendence of one or another. Since ancient times – from school of Dorian elegists (VI century BC), through bucolic elegists and neoterics (III–I century BC) to elegists of the August Roman imperial period (I century AD) – it found its cultural expression and form in the literary procedures of the lyric genre, elegy. The endeavor of Renaissance humanists to have “re-possessed the lost of the antiquity” illuminates the reason for Renaissance culture being flooded with a reflective, mournful poetic form connected with ideas of death, loss and pain. The Elegy immortalizes that ambiguity in the dynamism between the reality of physical death (in a personal funereal elegy), or an amorous loss as a symbolic death (in a subjective love elegy), and a hope and faith in (spiritual) life after death (in a divine elegy). This is at the same time the dynamism between the *logos* (the praise of the deceased), *pathos* (the lament) and *ethos* (the consolation) of melancholy. Since in Ficino’s neoplatonism melancholy was understood as a temperament of death, and death was celebrated as life because it was regarded as a step towards the original divine unity, hence only the melancholic *genius* could find comfort (*consolatio*) in contemplating the eschatologically implied death, while the melancholic *vulgus* succumb to affectational lamenting (*lamentatio*) when confronted with the mundane implications of death, loss and passing. Therefore, in contrast to the metaphysical demand of contemplative melancholy to transcend *eros*, the loving melancholy was based on the fixation of *eros* (love) in *thanatos* (the mortal beauty of the beloved), while the funereal personal melancholy idealized the loss and sorrow somewhere between *eros* and *thanatos*, in the equilibrium between praising the virtues of the deceased (*laudable*) and lamenting his death (*deplorable*).

The elegiacally expressed dynamics of melancholy between the extremes (divine-human, angelic-demonic, celestial-terrestrial, soul-body), or within the dichotomy inherent in the Saturnian temperament, had a strong cultural parallel in the fruitful crossing of renaissance music composition with the theory of four temperaments and the theory of passion (*pathos*) and character (*ethos*). In Ficino’s philosophical considerations of the correspondences between *spiritus humanus*, the mediator of the human body and soul, and *spiritus mundanus*, the intermediary between matter and soul of the world, the concept of melancholy (as a state of mind, soul and body) is associated with music, thanks to the pneumatological perspective of music first and foremost, that is, to the understanding that the nature of the sound resembles the aerial (spherical) nature of spirit (Ficino / Farndell 2010: 52). In light of this, Ficino specifies that “musical spirit touches and acts within the spirit as an intermediary between the soul and the body, impacting on any of these by its estuary of affect” (Ficino 1980: 162). Furthermore, music not only runs the human spirit because it is itself a movement, not only music enlivens it because it is itself like a living organism – by which the ancient view of music *pathos* and *ethos* reveals itself as a driver of one of the most

powerful fantasies of the musical Renaissance. Above all, the song (*cantus*) is regarded by Ficino as

esse imitatore omnium potentissimum. Hic enim intentiones affectionesque animi imitatur et verba, refert quoque gestus motusque et actus hominum atque mores; tamque vehementer omnia imitatur et agit, ut aedem imitanda vel agenda tum cantatem, tum audientes subito provocet [the most powerful imitator among all things. It displays the intentions and desires of the soul and the words, while it also represents human physical gestures, movements and actions, as well as their characters, and it imitates and performs all of these so forcefully that it immediately provokes both the singer and the audience to imitate and perform the same things] (Ficino 1998: 359).

The music that Ficino had in mind was based on his psycho-anatomical concept of *concentus*. This concept assumes a harmonious articulation of many different *melos* (the anatomical notion of any piece, article or body of the body, which Ficino takes over from Homer and Plutarch) – ranging from high and low tones, via the intervals (*ratio*), tetrachord (*diatessaron*), pentachord (*diapenta*) and octachord (diapason) to modes (tonoi) and melody. In such a composite sound organ, which is alive and rational like body and soul, “numerous voices properly commingled produce together a resonance which is the basis of a new and wonderful power,” while “a single form arises from many, full delight arises from a single form that is likewise produced harmoniously from many” (Ficino, Farndell 2010: 60). It is quite obvious that Ficino’s concept of *concentus* did not imply the melodic aspect of the antique monody, but the contrapuntal aspect of contemporary polyphony. Thanks to being filled with *spiritus aerius* and imitative ability, a polyphonic song allows production of a musical physio-psychognomy of temperament. As such, it can evoke *pathos* and *ethos* of “Saturn voices” through the attributes of *melan-khole* (black bile) among which Ficino include *stardas*, *graves*, *raucas*, *querulas* (“slow, deep, harsh, and plaintive”) in the listener’s body (as *motus*), soul (as *affectus*) and mind (as *significatio*) (Ficino 1998: 361). Since these attributes presume the disturbance of the psycho-physical balance, exhibited in the heart contractions and catatonic and *grave* passions, Renaissance musical melancholy is characterized by a predominance or excess of non-consonant intervals, i.e. imperfect consonances (3, 6) and dissonances (2, 4, 7). It is equally characterized by the qualities of the renaissance *stile grave* including the intervallic, melodic and repercussive movement *catabasis* and the deep (*gravis*) voices and the lower (terrestrial) register of the voices, then, the techniques of *note longe* and *note nere*, *genere chromatico*, *cantus mollis*, *modus plagialis*, *diatessaron*, *comixtio modi*, as well as formal-syntactic principles of *concentratio*, *circulatio*, *oscillatio*, *oppositio* (cf.: Boccadoro 2004).

However, when it comes to the modal aspect of Renaissance musical grammar of melancholy, it is necessary to emphasize the restrictiveness of the dichotomous

nature of melancholy between the ethos of the Mixolydian mode and the ethos of the Phrygian mode. In the Renaissance modal cosmology, as shown by the musico-theoretical discourse of that time, the Mixolydian mode, being the highest among the modes, was associated with the influence of the most distant planet, Saturn, and the muse Polyhymnia (The one of many hymns), obviously for the reason of wishing to stress the celestial and intellectual nature of melancholy, which is the basis of the ingenious ascents of contemplation and imagination (*melancholia generosa*). Heinrich Glareanus (1488–1563) in particular (*Dodecachordon*, 1547) emphasized the ecclesiastical tradition and the religious sphere of the use of the seventh mode, and the related affects of *pietas, honesta, dignitas, severitas* propelled by it. On the other hand, although the Phrygian mode had been attached, first by Franchinus Gaffurius (1451–1522; *De harmonia*, 1518), to the planetary influence of the fiery, choleric, feisty and passionate Mars and the muse Erato (The desired one) and described by a Martial affective configuration of *ira* (wrath, anger, rage, vengeance) from Glareanus via Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–1590; *Le institutioni harmoniche*, 1558) to Jan Pieter Sweelinck (1562–1621; *Über die acht, respektive zwölf Tonarten*, 17th century), it was nevertheless regarded as a mode that provoked sadness, crying, lament (*trenos, commovere al pianto, piene di lamenti, sono lagrimevoli*) (cf.: Smith 2011: 166–232).

Together with the Hypodorian, Hypophrygian, Aeolian and Hypoaeolian modes, the Phrygian mode was well suited to represent the earthly and human nature of melancholy (*melancholia miserabila*), above all in a love elegy, mostly because of their common constructive element — the Phrygian *diatessaron*. The specificity of this constituent lies in a distinctive position of the dissonant terminal interval *fa-mi*, whose melodic gesture of *catabasis* produce an unmistakable effect of the finality. In that sense, if we take into consideration that the relation *fa-mi* is the primary *locus* of the Phrygian inflection, then other types of catabasic intervallic/melodic aims, and the *gravis* of vocal and register moves in the depths of the sound space – for *grave* is the place of death – can adopt the Phrygian quality and to express the thanatological ideas in music as gestures of Phrygian inflection (cf.: Kimmel, 1980).

The fulfillment of loving melancholy's demand to face death, loss and pain, that I will focus on in this article, was, however, possible – as revealed by the Renaissance practice of loving elegy from Francesco Petrarch via Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) to Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538–1612) – thanks to the creative acts of troping the elegy, because only tropes, as deviations of meaning, can undermine the death threat and evoke the transcendence of *thanatos*. Towards the end of the 16th century, three models of the lyrical *ars moriendi* crystallized in a unique poetic-musical transformation of the Renaissance elegiac discourse on the lost love: the Petrarchian model (*tristitia amoris*) with its roots in the lyrical cycle *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*Canzoniere*, 1327–1374), followed by Tasso's model (*militia amoris*) with its source in the epics *Gerusalemme liberata* (1575, 1581) and *Gerusalemme conquistata* (1593), and the Guarinian model (*voluptas amoris*) with its origins in a pastoral tragicomedy *Il pastor fido* (1580–84) and his *Rime* (1598). These models were shaped with special literary strategies of tropic transcendence of death which can be described by metaphor (in the sense of homeopathization), epic fight and narrative distance (in the sense of heroization), as well as metonymy, irony and synecdoche (in the sense of pastoraliza-

tion and erotization). The line of emergence of melancholic models is in accordance with the transformation of the melancholic *eros* from *pathos* via *agon* to *pothos*, that is, from pain via struggle to pleasure.

The elegiac tropic confrontation and overcoming of death possibly reached its most complex expression in the musical madrigal of the late sixteenth century. Since the second half of the sixteenth century, it gradually adopted into its basic motetic, polyphonically constituted procedure and *stile grave*, the opposing characteristics of the homophonic procedures and *stile piacevole* of the light musical genres such as canzonetta, villanella, villanesca and such, or the *stile eroico* of the heroic soloist and choral recitations. Thus embracing a hybrid form, the musical madrigal also affirmed itself as a particular cultural trope. My aim here is to examine the musical implications of the tropic strategies of facing death within the aforementioned poetic models of the art of loving death, using the remarkable examples of the Italian madrigal practice of the late Renaissance.

PETRARCH'S MODEL OF LOVE MELANCHOLIA

Petrarch's poetics of lost love and the rhetoric of lament and weeping, with a mortal woman, Laura, as a pretext, as well as with a biblical and Dantean lamentations as an intertext for the poet's melancholic voice, became the foundation of the institutionalization of the male melancholic *eros* in Italian Renaissance poetry and music. The elegization of *eros* is generated in Petrarch's imagination by an internalizing identification of the poet's lyrical I with a designated female source of loving sorrow. Namely, by acquiring the expressive ritualistic signs of sorrow (crying, tears, screams, anger, fear, sighs, silence etc.) which have a female denominator, Petrarch and his *cinquecento* followers shaped their melancholic lyrical discourse by means of the trope of (female) sensitivity. An absent woman (an idol carved into a live laurel) or a cruel woman (a melancholic merciless lady) open up the space of a metaphor of male pain and sorrow. A confrontation of the very poetic creation (singing or writing verses) of death happens in a particular linguistic and rhetoric moment, as a tropic epiphany of the linguistic eloquence, of the simultaneity of singing and crying, or, otherwise, silence. The markedness of a specific musical moment of facing the thanatologic issue of saturnation with a Phrygian inflection and *stile grave* precisely implies the Paracelsusian homeopathic principle of *similia similibus curantur* as a way of overcoming death.

The poetics of Luigi Tansillo's (1510–1568) love elegy in his *ottava rima*, *Dolorosi martir*, rises from the appropriation and interiorization of the female position of lamenting and the pathos of loss. The poet's excessive agony expresses his longing for transcendence, because it converts itself into a creative melancholic state from which the woman, as the verses demonstrate, is explicitly excluded. Through the emphasized use of the rhetoric figures *epitrochasmus* (a quick illumination of numerous things) and *enumeration* (enumeration), the ritualistic signs of lament (anguish, fierce suffering, sorrowful voices, lamentation, screams, weeping, bitter tears) reveal themselves as the signs of poetic eloquence ritual. The male amorous loss regenerates itself *in* the song as a privileged form of inspired male expression.

*Dolorosi martir, fieri tormenti,
 Duri ceppi, empi lacci, aspre catene,
 Ov' io la notte, i giorni, hore e momenti
 Misero piango il mio perduto bene:
 Triste voci, querele, urlì e lamenti,
 Lagrime spesse e sempiterno pene
 Son' il mio cibo e la quiete cara
 Della mia vita oltr' ogni assentio amara.*

(Grievous torture, fiery torments,
 unyielding fetters, cruel snares, bitter chains,
 with which I lament my lost love
 through the nights, the days, hours and moments;
 mournful cries, complaints, shrieks and groans,
 heavy tears and everlasting agony
 these are my nourishment and the hard-won
 peace of my life more bitter than wormwood) (Steele 1996/I: 42).

Luca Marenzio (1553/54–1599) chooses the Phrygian mode in *cantus durus* together with the melodic and the register realization of the Phrygian inflection, i. e. the Phrygian tetrachord, the *fa-mi* semitone as the initial or terminus of the phrases, the melodic descent, the descending interval spiral, the descending voice repercussion, low register. He abundantly uses the tone perfections (*accidentali duri*) and semitone chromaticism, as well as the rhythmic articulation of the phrases/verses structures in the manner of dichotomy originating in the tension between the *note longe* and *note nere* and resulting in the aesthetic *gravità* (long, slow, grave, dark, like the Saturnian quality and concurrently the quality of melancholic furor). In such a way the composer illuminates in his music nothing else but the thanatological semantic matrix of Tansillo's elegy (the trope of funereal female sensitivity) (Example 1).-

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Example 1. Luca Marenzio, *Dolorosi martir*

At the same time, he emphasizes the internal logic of flowing in its principal poetic form, *ottava rima*, in the elegiac distich precisely by use of cadence and the change of texture. The conversion of the expressive signs of weeping into the poetic figures of eloquence is underlined by their paratactically set melodic-rhythmic individualizations which are ritualized, as it were, by the procedure of eloquent contrapuntally imitative repetitiveness (Example 2).

Example 2. Luca Marenzio, *Dolorosi martir*

With his introspective lyricism, Francesco Petrarch transforms, in *Canzoniere*, the practice and rhetoric of lament into encomium (hymn, song of praise), for the triumph of female death immortalizes the male experience of love loss and anguish in the poetical language, i.e. through the celebrated rhymes. In the *sestina stanza*, *Amor, I' ho molti*, the poet turns his confession of Love (*Amor*), that he has for many years lamented over his grave love loss in an anguished poetical style (*in doloroso stile*), to the prayer to Death (*pregar Morte*), to make him happy by rising him skyward, to the bode of Laura, the epitome of female absence and the metaphor of masculinized pain, so that he may sing there, and weep as well in love verses (*canto e piango in rime*).

*Amor, i' ho molti et molti anni pianto
Mio grave danno in doloroso stile,
Né da te spero mai men fere notti;
Et però mi son mosso a pregar Morte
Che mo tolga di qui, per farmi lieto,
Ov' è colei ch' i' canto et piango in rime.*

(Love, many, many years I have shed tears
for my grave loss and in a grieving style
and there's no hope you'll make less cruel my nights;
and so now I have turned to begging Death
to take me from this place, and make me happy,
to her for whom I am sing and weep in rhymes) (Steele 1996/V: 111).

However, in the case of Marenzio's music in Phrygian mode, the redirection of the poet's invocation from love to death does not imply varying (*varietas*) in terms of difference in kind, but transformation (*variatus*) in terms of difference in degree, since the basis (E-D) of the same melodic figure of the Phrygian inflection (G₁-F sharp₁ in *canto*) – underlying these key words by the use of a sharp accidental – shifts from the bass part (with the exclusion of tenor), upward, as it were, to the tenor part (with the exclusion of bass) remaining at the same time in the same terrestrial register and the grave rhythm of four-voice homophony – as another of the same. This shifting is underlined in the music by a parallel reduction of the sequence of contrapuntal imitations *in note longe* and *in note nere* respectively to a single (isolated, solitary, melancholic) voice (alto) performing the mentioned melodic figure of the Phrygian inflection (G₁-F sharp₁). The continuity between the lamenting of love loss on the earth (*pianto mio grave danno in doloroso stile*) and the singing or verse-making in heaven after death (*canto e piango in rime*) reveals death itself as a metaphysical trope, for it highlights its eschatological implication (Cf.: Medić 2013) (Example 3).

In the poem *Io tacerò* by an anonymous poet, written in the poetic form of cinquecento madrigal, the extreme male suffering, expressed in silence by tears and sighs, suggests the failure of language to express that suffering, so that silence and death, given eventually voice by the poet, become a sonorous trope in language, and consequently the poetic creation itself becomes the locus of inexpressiveness.

Example 3. Luca Marenzio, *Amor, l'ho molti*

*Io tacerò, ma nel silenzio mio
 La lagrime i sospiri
 dirann i miei martiri.
 Ma s'a verrà ch'io mora,
 Griderà poi per me la morte ancora.
 In van dunque, o crudele,
 vuoi che'l mio duol e'l tuo rigor si cele,
 poi che mia cruda sorte
 dà la voce al silenzio ed a la morte.*

(I will keep quiet, yet in my silence
 my tears and sighs
 shall tell of my pain.
 And if I should die
 Death shall cry out for me once again.
 Thus in vain, oh cruel one,
 yearn you for my pain and your harshness to be hidden
 since my cruel fate
 gives voice to silence and to death) (Céster 2005: 22, 24).

To the lyrical pathos of the poet's anguish, Carlo Gesualdo (1566–1613) assigns the musical character *molle* by transposing the Dorian mode into *cantus mollis* and emphasizing the essential tone B flat and the accidental tone E flat, as well as by using the conventional signifiers for tears and sighs in madrigals, like the interval of the minor sixth (as an ascending leap and as an intervallic frame for the descending melodic motion) and the descending dissonant suspension (4–3, 7–6 and 9–8) and furthermore by the categories of *gravità* like the deep register, lower voices, descending melodies and voice repercussions. The 'voice' of silence is articulated by pauses as the locus

of the poet's silence, and the 'voice' of death by the Phrygian half-tone *fa-mi* relation as the primary terminus of the melodic lines which thereby creates an aura of macabre sonority. By doing this, the composer dives deeply into the sonorous interiority of the poet's language and its inexpressiveness (Example 4).

Example 4. Carlo Gesualdo, *Io tacèro*

TASSO'S MODEL OF LOVE MELANCHOLIA

In his epic *Gerusalemme conquistata* Torquato Tasso does not display the melancholic fragility of male identity in the first person, that is through a Petrarchian adoption of the ritualistic signs of female lamenting into the Self of male protagonists (Tancredi, Rinaldo). On the contrary, he literally embodies his own melancholic fragility through the voices of lacrimose women (Armida, Erminia and Clorinda). The poet does so in the third person, by matching the narrative tendencies of the epic storyteller with lamenting female narrators who tell or write their own stories about pain and loss. By identifying himself with their tearful narrations, the poet himself established a metonymic relationship with them. Especially when it comes to creating the character of the Antiochian princess Erminia, whose Italian root of the name (*erma*) means alone or lonely, Tasso also creates a self-portrait of a melancholic writer. In a double act – that of Erminia carving (*incidere*) a painful autobiography into a hard core of a shady tree and that of her repeated reading of her own notes while crying tears (*spargere di pianto*) – a symbiosis of an elegiac writing/reading and a melancholic lamentation (that is, words, sighs and tears) makes the first appearance explicitly in the sixth ottava rima, *Piange e sospira*, from the eighth *canto* of Tasso's epic. However, the melancholic transformation of the tearful Erminia into an elegiac writer unfolds in a Petrarchian literary key stemming from his sestina *Giovane donna sotto un verde*

lauro (*Il Canzoniere*, no. 30). Erminia performs it with the name of her hopeless love Tancredi (*segnò l'amato nome in mille guise...in dura scorza incise*) – somewhat similar to what Petrarch, with a river of tears (*lagrimosa riva*) does with the entire being of his hopelessly loved Laura, when he says *l'idolo mio scolpito in vivo lauro*.

Piagn' e sospira; e quand' i caldi raggi
 fuggon le gregi a la dolc' ombr' assise,
 ne la scorza de' pini o pur de' faggi
 segnò l'amato nome in mille guise;
 e de la sua fortuna i gravi oltraggi
 e i vari casi in dura scorza incise;
 e in rilegendo poi le proprie note
 spargea di pianto le vermiglie gote.

(She wept and sighed, and when her flocks
 fled the sun's rays to rest in softest shade,
 a thousand ways she carved her lover's name
 in the bark of pine and beech trees,
 and further carved the tales
 of all the blows dealt her by fate.
 And when she read over her own words,
 tears bestrewed her rosy cheeks) (Longhini 2005: 20).

In the case of Erminia, Tasso remodels in an emulative way Petrarch's metonymic playing with names *Laura/lauro* (Laura/laurel) into *il pianto/la pianta* (crying/plant), because he creates an extension of Petrarch's arboreal imagery in a direction wholly opposite to the encomiastic incarnation of the idol in the famed rhymes. This is the direction of conversion of a tree as a *locus semiosis* or a place of the signs of sorrow written into a tree as a *locus sepulchralis* or a funereal place of death, in short, from *scripta* (*scritta*) into *cripta*, because Erminia will soon call her arboreal texts her tomb. According to Lynn Enterline, "just as Erminia declares these arboreal texts to be her own 'tomb' and to announce her 'martyrdom,' Tasso collapses the self, the lament, and trees when he writes his own name and his paternal family name into the epic by turning it into the common noun for tree of death it signifies" (Enterline 1995: 144), and that is *il tasso* or the yew tree. She further elaborates on this idea when she claims that "classical and medieval poetry, natural history, and cosmological speculation consistently associate the yew tree, the *taxus*, with death and the underworld." Enterline states Ovid's association of the yew tree with *sepulchres* (tombs) and the attribute *tristis* or sad by Pliny the Elder used for poisonous juice and the yew tree berry (*ibid.*, 144–145).

At the same time, through Erminia's scriptural elegiac commemoration of loss and pain, Tasso also shows that to be lamented or to exist as a male object (Tancredi) of female lamenting (Erminia), means to be pulled away from oblivion that equals death; furthermore, to be immortalized by carving a name in the bark of a tree means in effect to receive immortality, and thus to transcend death. By doing so, in an epic, distant manner, totally outside of the time and place of the event, Tasso – himself

a confirmed practitioner and theoretician of melancholy – metonymically and in mimicry opposes to Thanatos not the lyrical *pathos* but the epic *agon*.

The madrigal can surpass loss and pain by means of the *stile eroico* shaped in the tradition of epic *recitar cantando* as the counter-style to the *stile grave*, just as the epic poem itself is basically a counter-genre to elegy. Along the line of the tropic genre and stylistic positioning as an evident expressive intent, Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) firstly decides on the juxtaposition of the *stile grave* for the first verse and the *stile arioso* for the second verse. While the *stile grave* is realized with the melody whose initial chromatic ascent (for *piange*) in long note values subjects itself to the imitative contrapuntal procedure, while the terminus is determined by the Phrygian *fa-mi* relation (for *sospira*), the *stile arioso* is embodied in the declamatory syncopated melody over the descending-ascending fourth pattern, quite similar to the so called *aria per cantar ottava rima*, which was a basis for improvised solo singing of the narrative or lyrical verse (Haar 1998: 223) (Example 5). After that, the composer superimposes the *stile grave* (of the first verse), the *stile arioso* (for the verses 2-4) and the *stile eroico* for verses 5–6 (embodied in a monotonic melody in semi-breves and semi-minims, characteristic of epic declamation). In such way, the composer produces a kind of tropic collision of stylistic types in this functional location (Example 6).

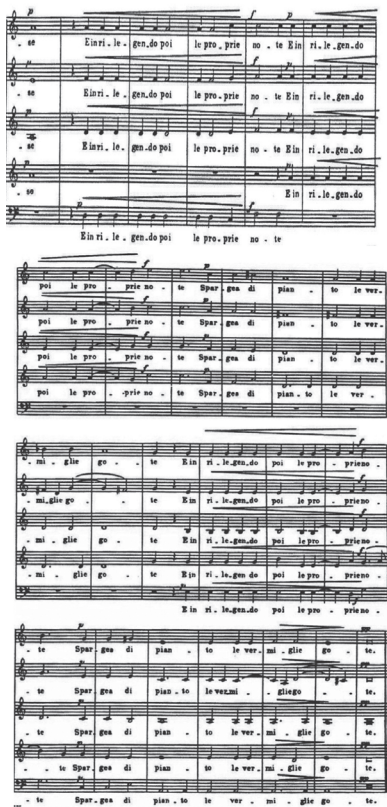
Example 5. Claudio Monteverdi, *Piang' e sospira*

Avoiding cadences until the exposition of the two last verses/phrases, conceived in a strict heroic recitation homophony with simultaneous cadences in all voices when the mode of the composition (Dorian in *cantus durus*) is definitely confirmed, Monteverdi maintains narrative continuity in his music. Concurrently, using the so called multi-thematic counterpoint, Tasso exposes the scene from the heroic past all at once, and with his increasingly dominant epic narrative distance, transforms it into a live happening. Taking on a heroic position of impersonality and objectivity is agonal mode of transcendence of death (Example 7).

MILENAMEDIĆ
 FROM PAIN TO PLEASURE: THE TROPING OF ELEGY IN THE RENAISSANCE ITALIAN MADRIGAL



Example 6. Claudio Monteverdi, *Piang' e sospira*



Example 7. Claudio Monteverdi, *Piang' e sospira*

GUARINI'S MODEL OF LOVE MELANCHOLIA

The mediation of tropes in elegy enables the Renaissance Italian poets to confront death both by means of the idyll/bucolic (in pastoral elegy) and the erotic (in erotic elegy). According to Giuseppe Gerbino, the literary pastoral, which experienced a cultural explosion in the final two decades of the 16th century, while the musical madrigal experienced a pastoral turn with a consequent change of thematic and stylistic ranges, “imposes itself as one of the main symbolic systems that shaped Renaissance aristocratic identity, finding space between the chivalric tradition of the noble warrior and the Petrarchist construction/deconstruction of the self” (Gerbino 2009: 193). In the light of the cultural appearance of the pastoral as “the third fundamental field of self-representation” (ibid., 247), the pastoral-erotic pathos posed new challenges before lyric and dramatic genres (as well as secular music). These were the demands for a stylistic variation of the court erotology and for a serio-ludic reshaping of Petrarch's dominant poetic code. Petrarch's loving oxymoron (*atra voluptas*) of the Augustinian order, with its imagery of shadow and death, is parodically inverted into a Guarinian loving oxymoron (*voluptas dolendi*) of the Ovidian order, with a discovery of a new, arcadised eros sunk into the joy of the pain of a carnal desire and the loss of the darker, deviant and subversive side of the erotic desire. The epochal transfer of stress from Petrarch's introverted and solipsistic tension of a platonic love to Guarini's extrovert and communal exaltation of a sensual love has shed light on a melancholic loving experience of death, loss and mourning in Renaissance poetry and music, moving from being wounded to being joyful, from pain (*pathos*) to pleasure (*pothos*).

The origin of such a possibility for confronting death through constructed pleasure lies in the paradoxical nature of death itself, for it needs not be only bitter and painful but may also generate the states of inexplicable delight and joy. That is when Thanatos performs, in a metonymic manner, the ecstasy of Eros/pothos. If the encounter with death is possible through the metonymic renaming of dying into a sexual desire and the very moment of death into the moment of sexual climax, so that the time of dying is revealed as the pastoral-erotic *tempus amoenus* (the time of pleasure), then it follows that the semantic and expressive ambiguity of death gives the poet a possibility to create a fiction of transcendence – the transcendence of death by means of death (of sexual ecstasy).

The madrigal may sweeten the pain by the *stile piacevole*, characteristic for the so called folklore genres – canzonettas, villanella, villanesca/villotta, as well as dance song. They make real, in a purely musical sense, the ideal of pastoral simplicity through a short melody, lively rhythm, consonant harmony and homophonic texture, but in a specific way, through a reduction of a complex four-part or five-part singing, as a stylistic norm of an aristocratic polyphonic madrigal, to a singing style for two (or three) voices. When discussing the stylistic *topoi* of villanesca/villotte, Gerbino explains the preference for two voices (soprano and tenor): “despite its visibly erotic overtones” (ibid., 156), primarily as “a way of singing closer to nature than culture” (ibid.) and hence as “a metaphor of this yearning for the natural” (ibid., 157).

In the poem *Deh, vezzose del Tebro amate Ninfe* by an anonymous poet, articulated in the *trecento* madrigal form, the shepherd invokes to the gracious river nymph, surrounded by tiny Cupidos (Eroses), to decorate with floral wreath the golden hair of the shepherdess Phyllis, so that he may die in the sweet traps of her curls.

Deh, vezzose del Tebro amate Ninfe,
 Ch' ad hor' ad hor scherzate
 Co' pargoletti Amori
 Intorno a chiare Linfe,
 La mia Filli honorate
 E di leggiadri fiori
 Tessete un cerchio a le sue trecce d' oro:
 Dolci lacci ond' io moro.

(Ah, graceful and beloved Nymphs of the Tiber,
 who sport from hour to hour
 with the tiny Cupids
 around the clear waters,
 honor my Phillis
 and weave a circlet of graceful flowers
 around her golden tresses:
 The golden snares in which I die) (Steele 1996/II: 91).

Luca Marenzio places the shepherd's invocation in the rhythmic and textural frame of the canzonetta shaped by consonant and block-like homophonic groups with two or three voices in the form of imitation or dialogue and in the fast rhythm. He follows in the paratactic manner, together with repetitive phrasing and clear cadences, the logic of juxtaposition of the poetic images. The composer makes clear the point of the poem, sweet dying, by using *Aria alla Romanesca*, a popular descant melody of pastoral and dance provenance, with the characteristic *diapente* descent (D-C-B flat-A-G) above the recognizable fourth pattern in the bass (B flat-F-G-D). In the 16th century, the melody represented one of the so called *modi da cantar versi*, i.e. one of the distinctive ways of singing poetry, characterized by Vincenzo Galilei as “an exciting sound” (Palisca, 1994: 361) (Example 8).

Example 8. Luca Marenzio, *Deh, vezzose del Tebro amate Ninfe*

The two-part format of an epigrammatic erotic madrigal by Giovanni Battista Guarini, *Cor mio, mentre mi viro*, reveals semantic parallelism between *expositio* and *acumen* (resourceful point), quite apparent in the dynamism of the poet's observation of the beloved (the evocation of the dual nature of beauty), of the metamorphosis into the beloved (rebirth through beauty) and of his soul vanishing in one sigh (dying through beauty).

*Cor mio, mentre vi miro,
visibilmente mi trasformo in voi,
e trasformato poi,
in un solo sospir l'anima spiro.
O bellezza mortale,
O bellezza vitale,
poiché sí tosto un core
per te rinasce, e per te nato more.*

(My heart, as I gaze upon you,
visibly do I become you,
and then, thus transformed,
in a single sigh give up my soul.
O mortal beauty,
O vital beauty,
so quickly is a heart reborn
for you but; once born, it dies) (Longhini 2005: 15).

The basic paradoxical dualism between the Thanatos-like transformation and the Eros-like expiration, embodied in two lovers and in the idea of their separateness and unification, gave rise to Monteverdi to express it through a stylistic opposition as well as a melodic and hexachordal dualism in the context of the d mode. The poet's identity is represented in the first verse/phrase by a typical homophonic trio texture of the popular villanella with two parallel voices in the thirds (canto and alto). After the initial "Phrygian" motion A₁-B flat₁, their melody descends to the tone E₁. Together with the bass line this melody reveals the presence of a soft hexachord (F-G-A-B flat-C-D). Conversely, the identity of the beloved in the second verse/phrase is demonstrated by the imitative polyphonic five-voice texture of the (otherwise originally court) madrigal, within which the basically ascending melodic line reaches up to E₂ as the culmination tone, before it descends to the confinalis A. However, the total tone foundation reveals the presence of the natural hexachord (C-D-E-F-G-A). Due to the domination of hexachord and cantus over mode, the explicit appearance of B flat and B as the essential tones obscures, at the very beginning of the madrigal, the identity of the D mode, which is neither Aeolian nor Dorian, thereby illuminating the process of the transformation and unification of lovers. The movement towards a culmination of this eros-oriented process "in one sigh" is quite logically upheld. Firstly by the tenor melodic line with the verse on transformation is overtook as the bass foundation for the return of the initial "Phrygian" semitone A₁-B flat₁, again in

the trio texture, used now to connect directly the beloved one (*cor mio*) and the sigh (*in un solo sospir*). Secondly the music flow, all along the four times expressed verse on expiration, shifts from the soft to natural hexachord. The very moment of death, as the metonymy of the sexual climax, is underlined by the reduction of the texture to only two voices performing the so called evaporating cadence (*clausula evaporata*). It is called evaporating because the finalis tone (D), in the unison, is reached on the last, unaccented beat lasting the crotchet, in other words, lasting literally as long as one single Eros-like sigh/Thanatos-like expiration (Example 9).

Example 9. Claudio Monteverdi, *Cor mio, mentre vi miro*

The figurative ambiguity of the trope, which shapes the experience of death transcendence, may be tied in a synecdochical representation *pars pro toto* (a part instead of a whole). Guarini's madrigal *Ohimè se tanto amate* establishes, in its epigrammatically recognizable two-part form with a closing accutezza, a dichotomy between the sigh as a ritualistic indication of grieving (Thanatos) and the sigh as a cathartic indication of pleasure (Eros).

Ohimè, se tanto amate
 Di sentir dir „Ohimè“, deh perché fate
 Chi dice „Ohimè“ morire?
 S'io moro, un sol potrete
 Languido e doloroso „Ohimè“ sentire;
 Ma se vita ho da voi e void a me,
 Havrete mille e mille dolci „Ohimè“.

(Alas, if you love so much
 To hear the words alas, ah, why do you cause
 Those who say alas to die?)

If I die, you will hear
 Only one languid and sad alas;
 But if I gain life from you and you from me,
 You will enjoy thousands and thousands of times sweet alas) (Steele, 1996/II: 49).

This semantic and affective dichotomy becomes central to Monteverdi's and Marenzio's musical setting of the word *Ohimè* in terms of style and expression. In the case of Monteverdi, the "languid and sad alas" is represented in two-part writing, in the descending parallel thirds and iambic meter, all in the context of Dorian mode in *cantus mollis*. Delimited by pauses, the registrally contrasting two-part groups establish a sequential dialogue founded on the dissonant interval of the seventh. The lyrical *grave* expression is intensified by the bass line which, broadly developing the sequence of the ascending fifths (G-D, B flat-F, C-G) with the ending on the Phrygian semitone B flat-A, reveals the descending thirds as dissonant suspensions, showing them as exclamations as well. Along the lines of Monteverdi's choice of the *stile grave*, Marenzio insists on the threnodic descending fourth in long notes and in the context of Phrygian mode in *cantus durus*, separating from the five-voice choral ensemble the solitary high voices. (Example 10 a and 10b)

Example 10a. Claudio Monteverdi, *Ohimè, se tanto amate*

Example 10b. Luca Marenzio, *Ohimè, se tanto amate*

Dico per tanto che la Tragicomedia, si cole l'altre anch' essa ha due fini: lo strumentale, ch' è forma risultante dell' imitazione di cose Tragiche e Comiche miste insieme; et l' architetonico, ch'è il purgar il animi del male affetto della maninconia. Il qual fine è tutto Comico, e tutto semplice, ne può comunicare cosa alcuna col Tragico; perciocchè gli effetti del purgare son veramente oppositi infra loro: l'un rallegra, et l'altro contrista; l'un rilascia et l'altro restringe. Moti dell' anima ripugnanti: concio sia cosa che l'uno va dal centro alla circonferenza, l'altro camina tutto all' opposto, et questi sono quei fini che nel drammatico si possono chiamare contraddittori [Thus I say that Tragicomedy, like others /Comedy and Tragedy/ also has two ends: the instrumental, which is the form resulting from the imitation of tragic and comic things mixed together, and the architectonic, which consists in purging the soul from the evil affect of melancholy. That end is all comic and all simple, nor is it in anyway akin to the tragic end, for the reason that the effects of /tragic and comic/ purging are truly one the opposite of the other: one relaxes while the other tightens. These are opposite movements of the soul, as one were to move from the center to the circumference and the other in the opposite direction, and such ends, in drama, we may call contradictory] (Guarini, 1603: 22–23).

From this one may deduce that it is precisely an oxymoronic combination of the instrumental goals of both tragic and comic imitations (*gravitas* and *piacevolezza*, *miserabile* and *riso*) that aims to fulfill its ethical purpose (*fine architetonico*) by purifying the audiences from the poisonous aspect of melancholy, whose only two certain final consequences are madness and death – the aspect called *mestizia* (sadness) by Guarini. However, a purification of the affliction of the epoch by means of a comic/pastoral pleasure (*diletto*) did not only materialise in the public sphere of performance – in the post-Renaissance tragicomedy as a *terza spezie*. During the same decades when Tasso's *Aminta* and Guarini's *Il pastor fido* were created, a parallel mixture of the tragic (madrigal) and the comic (canzonetta) flooded the field of secular music too. The new, hybrid music *terza spezie*, canzonetta-madrigal, simultaneously contributed in the private sphere of performances to a fulfillment of a unique moral therapeutic function of late-Renaissance art. Guarini's understanding of the purification, not in the sense of obliterating and extinguishing (*obliterazione*, *estinzione*) of the excessive affects, but their moderation and temperation (*moderazione*, *temperamento*), towards a natural symmetry of life (*simetria della vita*) (18), finally recontextualized Ficino's recommendation of the allopatric temperation (his favourite word) of a malefic Saturnian melancholy spirit, by means of beneficial gifts from "Three Graces of Heaven" (Ficino 1980: 99) – Hypolydian *Venus voluptas*, born for the delight and music, Lydian *Jovis laetus*, born for the comic laughter, and above all Dorian *Apollo Phoebus/Sol*, born for musical therapy.

Translated by Milijana Grkajac and Ivana Medić

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Милена Мегућ

ОД БОЛА ДО ЗАДОВОЉСТВА: ТРОПИРАЊЕ ЕЛЕГИЈЕ У РЕНЕСАНСНОМ ИТАЛИЈАНСКОМ МАДРИГАЛУ

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Велики повратак меланхолије у ренесансном хуманизму био је означен ре-визијом медицинског Галеновог и филозофског Аристотеловог дискурса о меланхолији, која је, последично, поред људског и природног, укључила такође небески или божански узрок афликије епохе. Скок меланхолије из медицинског стања у дискурзивну праксу покренуо је фирентински неоплатонички филозоф, лекар и композитор, Марсилио Фићино, продубљујући га перспективом о љубави.

Међуоднос љубави и меланхолије био је укореењен у танатолошкој идеји сепарације, одсуства и губитка, која, као важан, осветљава однос меланхолије према *еросу* у смислу копуле која оно што је одсутно држи у присутности и оно што је изгубљено претвара у недостижан објект носталгичне жеље и жудње. За ренесансну културу, објекти меланхоличног *ероса* били су антика, идеализована фигура декорпоралне жене или пак исконско јединство с Богом. У погребној, контемплативној или љубавној евокацији сатурнијанског темперамента *ерос* је тај који поставља такође захтев за превазилажењем губитка, за односом са трансцендентним, а чији је праг управо *ѿанайѿос*. Афирмација мушког субјекта меланхоличног *ероса* била је постигнута позакоњењем изражавања његове меланхолије у формама културалне продукције и уметничке репрезентације.

Елегија, као рефлексивна, меланхолична песма повезана с идејама смрти, губитка и туге, овековечује амбигвтет, својствен меланхолији, у динамици између стварности телесне смрти (*logos* похвале врлина умрлог у погребној персоналној елегији), љубавног бола као симболичке смрти (*pathos* афективног туговања у љубавној елегији) и наде и вере у (духовни) живот после смрти (*ethos* есхатолошке утехе у божанској елегији). Суочење са смрћу, као поетски захтев праксе љубавне елегије од Франческа Петрарке

преко Торквата Таса до Батисте Гваринија, било је могуће помоћу креативних чинова тропирања елегије. У јединственом поетском преображају ренесансног елегичког дискурса о љубавном губитку, од бола (*pathos*) до задовољства (*pothos*), искристалисала су се три модела лирске *ars moriendi* – петраркистички модел *tristitia amoris*, тасовски модел *militia amoris* и гваринијевски модел *volupta amoris*. Ови модели су обликовани нарочитим стратегијама тропичног превазилажења смрти које се могу описати у смислу хомеопатизације помоћу метафоре, хероизације помоћу епске борбе и наративне дистанце и пасторализације и еротизације помоћу метонимије, ироније и синегдохе. У подручју световне музике, тај преображај је укључио усвајање, у основни, полифоно конституисан проседе и *stile grave* мадригала, опонентних карактеристика хомофоног проседеа и *stile piacevole* (канцонета, виланела) или пак *stile eroico* (соло или хорска рецитација).

Гваринијево теоријско разматрање етичке сврхе новог, хибридног драматског жанра, трагикомедије, у прочишћењу (*purgare*) отровног аспекта меланхолије, *mestizia* (туга), баца ново светло на паралелну микстуру трагичког и комичког кода на подручју световне музике, наиме, у новом, хибридном музичком жанру, канцонета-мдригалу позног XVI века. Оно је на крају ренесансне епохе реконтекстуализовало Фићинову препоруку алопатичне температуре малефикног сатурнијанског темеперамента помоћу пасторално-еротског и модалног *ethosa* „три небеске Грације” – хиполидијске *Venus voluptas*, рођене за задовољство и музику, лидијског *Jovis laetus*, рођеног за комички смех, и надасве дорског *Apollo Phoebus*, рођеног за музикотерапију.

Кључне речи: ренесанса, меланхолија, елегича, мадригал, тропирање, трансцендирање смрти