John Donne Journal
Vol. 26 (2007)

"O false, yet sweet contenting": John Coprario's Songs for Penelope Rich on the Death of Lord Mountjoy

David M. Schiller

While literary studies have tended to emphasize the epideictic character of the late Renaissance funeral elegy, musicology, following Vincent Duckles's lead, has stressed the elegy's affective aspect.[1] More recently, the outlines of a synthesis have become clearer. Robert Toft's *Tune thy Musicke to thy Hart: The Art of Eloquent Singing in England, 1597–1622*, though explicitly addressed to singers and defining itself in terms of performance practice, is informed throughout by a rhetorical understanding. And a closely argued essay by Daniel Fischlin, "Metalepsis and the Rhetoric of Lyric Affect," merges the rhetorical and affective aspects of the English ayre in its very title.[2] From both perspectives, John Coprario's *Funeral Teares for the Death of the Right Honorable the Earle of Devonshire*, is an exceptionally interesting

[1]Duckles, "The English Musical Elegy of the Late Renaissance," in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. Jan LaRue (New York: Norton, 1966; repr. Pendragon Press, 1978), pp. 134–153. Richard McGrady's essay, "Coprario's Funeral Teares," *The Music Review* 38 (1977): 163–176, addressed some of the issues that concern me here, especially the "existence of an overall scheme" in *Funeral Teares* (p. 169). Influenced by Helen Gardner's and Louis Martz's work on the poetry of meditation, McGrady concludes that "the songs are a meditative sequence, designed to be sung by the widow, leading to the assurance that her husband still lives in heaven" (p. 167).

[2]Toft, *Tune thy Musicke to thy Hart: The Art of Eloquent Singing in England, 1597–1622* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993); Fischlin, "Metalepsis and the Rhetoric of Lyric Affect," *English Studies in Canada* 22 (1996): 315–335.

work.[3] Devonshire, better known to history as Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, was the lover of Penelope Devereux Rich, Sidney's Stella. Mountjoy was the father of five of her children and, after her divorce in November 1605, her husband, until his own death on 3 April 1606.

As a publication, *Funeral Teares* demonstrates Coprario's skill in securing the reader's favorable judgment of Mountjoy's virtue, notwithstanding his controversial relationship with Penelope Rich. In performance the songs figure the speaker's tears and affirm music's distinctive role in the representation of grief. Furthermore, because Coprario casts Penelope not only as chief mourner but also as performer of the songs, the cycle takes on a distinctly dramatic character as it represents her grief and Mountjoy's virtue. Although proving Mountjoy's virtue and lamenting his death are not incompatible, neither are they identical. In praising Mountjoy, Coprario deploys epideictic rhetoric in its traditional role to recreate the public persona of the dead courtier. In representing Penelope's grief, Coprario is more innovative. Using music and words to create a grieving *character* in Penelope's name, at a time when the dramatic representation of character through music was just emerging as a priority in opera, Coprario's *Funeral Teares* is a significant achievement.

* * * *

Funeral Teares immediately engages both eye and intellect. It opens with an architectural frontispiece in the form of an arch (fig. 1). Before the left and right columns of the arch, respectively, stand two allegorical

[3] *Funeral Teares* (1606), original size facsimile, ed. David Greer (London: The Scolar Press Limited, 1978); the standard performing edition is John Coprario, *Funeral Teares (1606), Songs of Mourning (1613), [and] The Masque of Squires (1614)*; transcribed and ed. Gerald Hendrie and Thurston Dart in the English Lute-Songs, First Series, 17, ed. Edmund H. Fellowes (London: Stainer and Bell, 1959), hereafter, Hendrie and Dart. The texts of the songs and introductory poems are published in Edward Doughtie, ed., *Lyrics from English Airs, 1596–1622* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 251–258, hereafter, Doughtie; and the texts of the songs are also in Edmund H. Fellowes, ed., *English Madrigal Verse, 1588–1632*, 3rd ed., rev. and enlarged by Frederick W. Sternfeld and David Greer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

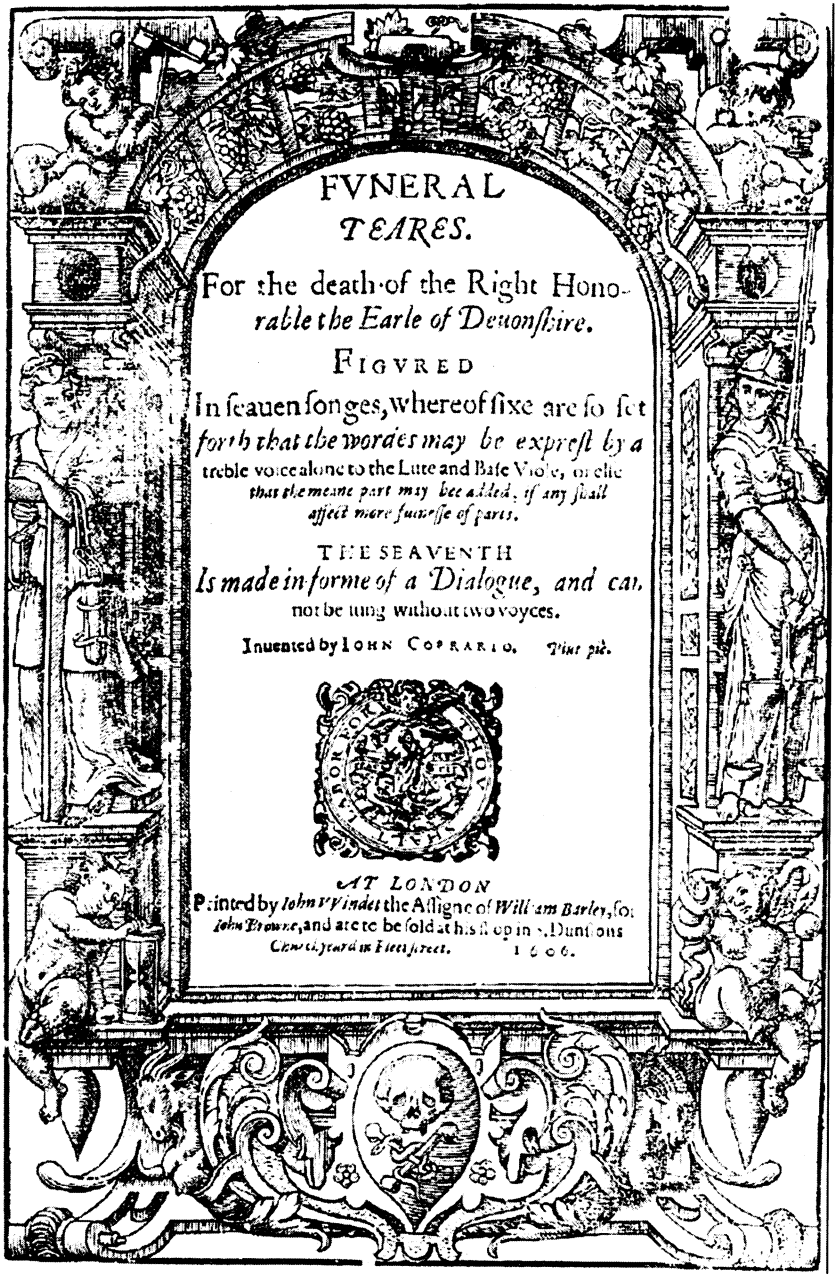


Fig. 1. Title page of John Coprario's *Funeral Teares* (1606).

figures. On the right is Justice, holding scales in her right hand and an upraised sword in her left hand. The figure on the left is harder to identify. Probably Religion, or perhaps Law or Nemesis, she leans on a Tau cross, holds a closed book in her right hand, and carries reins and a bridle draped over the crook of her left elbow.[4] In the corners, above and below these two standing figures, are seated putti, each with a symbol of mortality. Seated on the capital above Religion's head, a putto holds a toy windmill or whirligig, similar to those used as weapons by two jousters in Breughel's *Children's Games*. Below, another putto contemplates an hourglass, with a visible heap of sand already filling the bottom. Above Justice, on the right, a third putto blows soap bubbles. Beneath the feet of Justice, the fourth putto sits like an infant Hercules, with a coiled serpent draped over his shoulders, but this reference is Biblical, not classical: the serpent holds an apple in its mouth. At the top of the right column, the sun peeks through a small opening in the capital, but a similar opening in the left column is shaded black, suggesting the passage of time from day to night. An oval opening in the bottom center contains a skull and crossbones, the latter tied together by another serpent. The imagery is somber, even a bit grim, and offers little in the way of comfort or hope. Only a grape vine, twining through the top of the arch and bearing clusters of grapes, suggests a fruitful life.

The imagery seems to epitomize the publication's dual purposes—praise and lamentation—so aptly that it comes as a disappointment to learn that the frontispiece was not designed for *Funeral Teares*. In fact, its

---

[4]On the iconology of Religion pictured as a beautiful woman with a cross and bridle, but also with bare breasts and a torn dress (not robed), an open (not closed) book, and several additional attributes, see Yassu Okayama, *The Ripa Index: Personifications and their Attributes in Five Editions of the Iconologia* (Doornspijk: Davaco Publishers, 1992), p. 238. On the iconology of Nemesis with a bridle, see Samuel C. Chew, *The Pilgrimage of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 57–58. The tentative identification of the figure as Law was made by R. B. McKerrow and F. S. Ferguson, *Title-page Borders used in England and Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1932), p. 182. However, a printer's device catalogued as no. 307 by McKerrow in his *Printers' and Publishers' Devices in England and Scotland, 1485–1640*, in which a figure labeled *Religio* and conforming to the description of Religion in the *Ripa Index* is paired with Justitia would seem to resolve the ambiguities in favor of Religion.

earliest documented appearance, according to McKerrow and Ferguson, was as the frontispiece to printer Adam Islip's 1602 impression of *The Workes of our Ancient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer.* In that earlier context, presumably, it would have evoked thoughts of the long-dead poet's living works—the bunches of grapes that flourish despite the passing ages—and the favorable judgments of Religion and Justice in granting him immortality and restoring his posthumous reputation after he had fallen into obscurity. Here the border invites the reader to consider Mountjoy in the same light, and asks us to weigh the competing claims of Time, Justice, Religion, Death, and Sin, as we judge Mountjoy and lament his death.

The title sentences, which are framed by the arch, apply the metaphor of the tear explicitly to the songs that follow and provide specific performance directions:

> Funeral Teares. For the death of the Right Honorable the Earle of Devonshire, Figured In seaven songes, whereof six are so set forth that the words may be exprest by a treble voice alone to the Lute and Base Viole, or else that the meane part may bee added, if any shall affect more fulness of parts. The Seaventh Is made in forme of a Dialogue, and can not be sung without two voyces.
>
> (Hendrie and Dart, p. ii)

The verso of the title page is devoted to a Latin epigram. Thematizing vision and sight, it begins by glossing the vanished sun of the frontispiece border as Mountjoy himself, and it addresses Penelope as a little eye, *ocello*, which, paradoxically, contains the sun:

> Uno Sol Mountioie tuus contentus ocello est,
> Cuncta tamen cernit, nihil est oculatius illo.
>
> (Doughtie, 1–2)

> [Your Sun Mountjoy is contained in your eye alone,
> Nevertheless he perceives everything, there is nothing that sees more than he.]

The recto of the second page presents a twenty-line poem entitled "To the Ayre," an English sonnet with two sestets. The name of John

Coprario, "The devoted servant of true noblenesse," is subscribed beneath the poem as a signature. In contrast to the visual emphasis of the Latin epigram, the sonnet organizes itself around the phenomenon of sound and the sense of hearing. It is addressed to Air as the medium through which sound travels, but at the beginning of the second sestet, the poem shifts its stance, so that Coprario concludes by apostrophizing Penelope:

> Sing Lady, sing thy Deu'nshires funerals,
> And charme the Ayre with thy delightfull voyce,
> Let lighter spirits grace their Madrigals,
> Sorrow doth in the saddest notes reioyce.
> Fairest of Ladies since these Songs are thine,
> Now make them as thou art thy selfe, deuine.
> (Doughtie, 16–21)

Casting Penelope as the performer of the songs in this dedicatory sonnet empowers Coprario to appropriate her voice in the songs that follow. By deploying the rhetorical figure of *prosopographia*, in which an absent person is represented as present and speaking, it solves two conceptual problems central to the whole endeavor: how to mourn a man he did not know, and how to praise a man whose virtue was open to question.[5]

Coprario's *prosopographia* of Penelope's voice draws both on her persona as Stella and also on her public role as a participant in court masques. In sonnet 36 of *Astrophil and Stella*, Stella, having already "ransackt" Astrophil's heart through his eyes, launches a new assault with

---

[5]I am employing Arthur Kinney's definitions: ". . . The most popular figures used by Tudor humanists as rhetorical techne are *prosopgraphia* and *prosopopoeia*. The former is an impersonation of a historical individual"; the latter, ". . . the feigning of a person who is fictional" (*Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986], pp. 22–23). On Coprario's address to Penelope in this prefatory poem, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, "Sidney, Stella, and Lady Rich," in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. Jan Van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986). Duncan-Jones observes, "[Coprario] makes it abundantly clear that he expects [the songs] to be sung by the lady whose grief they express" (p. 187). As I argue below, I think his expectation is more rhetorical in nature: he expects that she will be pleased by his *representing* her as the singer of the songs.

her "so sweete voice, and by sweete Nature so / In sweetest strength, so sweetly skild withal / In all sweete stratagems, sweete Art can show" (9–11).[6] In sonnet 57, she hears Astrophil's plaints, "and did not only heare, / But them (so sweete is she) most sweetly sing" (9–10). And in the Third Song "If *Orpheus* voyce had force to breathe such musicke's love," Astrophil reasons: "More cause a like effect at leastwise bringeth: / O stones, O trees, learne hearing—*Stella* singeth" (5–6). Penelope's masque appearances included the role of Venus (to Queen Anne's Juno) in Samuel Daniel's *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* presented at Hampton Court in January 1604, and the role of Ocyte (to Queen Anne's Euphoris) in Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness*, presented at Whitehall in January of 1605. It is not hard to imagine Penelope in the role Coprario creates. Yet paradoxically, as we move deeper into the song cycle, that role increasingly usurps the place of the historical Lady Devonshire to whom the dedicatory sonnet is addressed. As the fictive aspects of Penelope's character are developed, *prosopographia* shades into *prosopopoeia*.

Not only does the concluding sestet assign a distinctive voice to the songs that follow, it also provides important information about their ethos. Coprario's dismissal of madrigals as fit for "lighter spirits" recalls Thomas Morley's classification of vocal genres in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597):

> . . . I say that all music for voices (for only of that kind have we hitherto spoken) is made either for a ditty or without a ditty. If it be with a ditty it is either grave or light; the grave ditties they have still kept in one kind, so that whosoever music be made upon it is comprehended under the name of a Motet. . . .
>
> The light music hath been of late more deeply dived into so that there is no vanity which in it hath not been followed to the full; but the best kind of it is termed Madrigal, a word for the etymology of which I can give no reason; yet use showeth

[6]Richard S. Sylvester, ed., *The Anchor Anthology of Sixteenth-Century Verse* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 437, 449, 465. Future references will be in the text.

> that it is a kind of music made upon songs and sonnets such as Petrarch and many poets of our time have excelled in.[7]

Although it runs counter to our contemporary sense of genre to refer to a set of lute songs as "motets," no matter how weighty their ditties, Morley makes it clear that his taxonomy of musical genres is based not on the tripartite division of music into Church, chamber, and theatrical genres that would become standard in the later baroque, but strictly on a song's ethos and subject matter:

> [I]t followeth to show you how to dispose your music according to the nature of the words which you are therein to express, as whatsoever matter it be which you have in hand such a kind of music must you frame to it. You must therefore, if you have a grave matter, apply a grave kind of music to it; if a merry subject you must make your music also merry, for it will be a great absurdity to use a sad harmony to a merry matter or a merry harmony to a sad, lamentable or tragical ditty.
>
> (p. 292)

The reference to sad and merry harmonies anticipates the classic formulation of Claudio Monteverdi's brother Giulio Cesare Monteverdi: "By Second Practice, . . . [my brother] understands the one that turns on the perfection of the melody, that is, the one that considers harmony not commanding, but commanded, and makes the words the mistress of the harmony."[8] Coprario's reference to sorrow's "saddest notes" alludes similarly to this widely shared aesthetic and to specific compositional techniques of the early seventeenth century. It is an aesthetic manifesto

---

[7] *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, ed. R. Alec Harmon, with a forward by Thurston Dart (London: J. M. Dent, 1952), pp. 292 and 294, respectively; subsequent references to this volume are made parenthetically in the text. There is also a facsimile edition, Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (Westmead, Farnsborough, Hants, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1971).

[8] Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), pp. 408–409. The "Declaration" of Giulo Cesare Monteverdi expands on principles outlined by Claudio Monteverdi in his *Fifth Book of Madrigals* (1605); it was published in Claudio Monteverdi's *Scherzi Musicali* (Venice, 1607).

in miniature, a pledge that his harmonies will be ruled by Penelope's affect.

Before turning to the songs themselves, however, there is one more commendatory poem to be considered, a substantial work of 80 lines in rhymed quatrains (*abab*), which occupies the next two pages of the print. It is entitled "In honorable memory of the Right noble the Earle of Devonshire, late deceased." In his edition of the nondramatic works of John Ford, L. E. Stock argues persuasively for the attribution of this poem to John Ford.[9] Ford also published his own tribute to Mountjoy, *Fames Memoriall, or The Earle of Devonshire Deceased, With his honourable life, peacefull end, and solemn Funerall*, and dedicated it to Penelope. "In honorable memory" and the much longer *Fame's memoriall* share an emphasis on Devonshire's Fame. "In honorable memory" concludes with Fame herself inscribing Mountjoy's name in her book:[10]

> . . . Fame charg'd Zepherus to sound
> His goulden trumpet, after whose smooth blast
> These words she made from earth to heau'n rebound,
> Brave Mountioyes glory shall for euer last.
> Then forth was brought a boss't booke destined
> For Kings, and Heroes, where with liquid gould
> Deceased Deu'nshires name she registred
> In charmed letters that can nere grow old.
> (Doughtie, 76–83)

But the most memorable part of the poem is its satirical representation of Mountjoy's detractors as monstrous animals:

> Some wept, some sobd, some howld, some laught, some smild,
> And as their passions strange, and different were,
> So were their shapes, such heapes were never pil'd
> Of Monstrous heades as now consorted here.
> For some like Apes peere out, like foxes some,

---

[9] *The Nondramatic Works of John Ford*, ed. L. E. Stock et al. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, in conjunction with Renaissance English Text Society, 1991).

[10] Quotations from "In honorable memory" are from Doughtie, pp. 253–255; I have retained his line numbering, which includes title lines. See also Stock et al., eds., p. 336.

> Many like Asses, Wolfes, and Oxen seem'd,
> Like hissing Serpents, and fell Hydras some,
> Rhinoceroes some by their arm'ed snowtes I deem'd
> Others like Crocodiles hang their slie heads downe. . . .
> (Doughtie, 24–32)

Edward Doughtie situates this passage in the tradition "deriving from moral commentary on the Circe legend and culminating in Milton's *Comus*" (p. 548). The appearance of these monsters in Ford's poem, after Coprario's commendatory sonnet designating "Penelope" as the singer of his songs, prepares her entrance and enhances the masque-like aspect of her performance.

The beasts are united in their malicious condemnation of Mountjoy's love for Penelope:

> First as accusers spake the busie Ape,
> The enuious bould Wolfe, and the spitefull snake,
> And diuers in the braying Asses shape,
> But all their malice did one period make.
> Deu'nshire did loue. . . .
> (Doughtie, 40–44)

Against these accusers, the "humane speakers" who come to Mountjoy's defense cite Penelope's beauty and Mountjoy's naming her his own "for ever" as vindications of his honor and immortality.

> Did Deu'nshire loue? and lou'd not Deu'nshire so
> As if all beautie had for him beene fram'd?
> For beautie more adorn'd no age shall know
> Than hers whom he his owne for euer nam'd.
> Let then base enuie breake, fond rumour sleepe,
> Blacke malice turne to doue-white charitie,
> Let Deu'nshire triumph, and his honour keepe
> Immune, and cleare from darke mortalitie.
> (Doughtie, 68–75)

In fact, Mountjoy's naming Penelope as his own for ever, in a marriage ceremony of doubtful legality, and not his long affair with her, was the cause of the scandal that surrounded the couple.[11]

The prefatory poems support the interpretation of the title page of *Funeral Teares* as a *pegma*, "a stage whereon pageantes be set, or whereon plate and jewels do stand to be looked on." Consistent with Corbett and Lightbown's thesis in *The Comely Frontispiece*, the triumphal arch on its title page has "both the connotations of a stage and a monument."[12]

* * * *

That stage is now set for Penelope's entrance, and turning the next page of the imprint will take us to the songs. The design of *Funeral Teares* displays the music and lyrics of the seven songs it contains to equal advantage. Each song begins on the verso of one page and continues on to the recto of the next. In a variation of the madrigal-book design that allows one book to be shared by four singers sitting around a table, this one provides for the singer (*canto*) and the lutenist to read together off the *verso*; a viol player sitting opposite reads the basso part from the *recto*; and a second vocalist (alto), ad libitum except in the final song, reads from the *recto* at a right angle to the other two. The design also allows room for each poem to be printed in full under the voice/lute parts, so that they can be read as complete texts without the interference of musical notation. This would have been a very practical performing score, as well as a comfortable reading edition in its time.

As the first song begins, "Penelope" is heard singing and, for the first four lines or so, we may assume that she is singing to us, the audience:

---

[11]The ceremony was performed by Archbishop William Laud (1573–1645), then a chaplain in Mountjoy's household, on 26 December 1605. It seriously damaged Laud's career and continued to trouble him throughout his life. See the biographies: Cyril Falls, *Mountjoy: Elizabethan General* (Long Acre, London: Odhams Press, 1955), pp. 225–232; Maud Stepney Rawson, *Penelope Rich and Her Circle* (London: Hutchinson, 1911), 279–287; and Sylvia Freedman, *Poor Penelope: Lady Penelope Rich, An Elizabethan Woman* (Abbotsbrook, Bourne End, Bucks.: Kensal Press, 1983), pp. 163–173.

[12]*The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-page in England, 1550–1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 7.

> Oft thou hast with greedy eare,
> Drunke my notes and wordes of pleasures;
> In affections equall measure,
> Now my songs of sorrow heare.
> (Doughtie, 1–4)

But the last three lines change our perception:

> Since from thee my griefes doe grow
> Whome aliue I pris'ed so deare:
> The more my joy, the more my woe.
> (Doughtie, 5–8)

The imagined audience, he from whom "[Penelope's] griefs do grow," is Mountjoy (the Mountjoy/my joy pun is a fixture of all seven songs). Yet we, the living audience, are present too, as if in a theatrical setting or at a masque. As Mary Chan has argued, "The masque's meaning depended to a large extent on the right response of the audience; or rather on the audience's recognition that it was not really audience in the sense simply of onlooker, but that it too had a part to play."[13] *Funeral Teares* resembles a masque in insisting that the audience become actively involved in the creation of its meaning, but it differs from a masque in that the spectacle of a live performance is not essential to that meaning. In the case of *Funeral Teares*, whether we imagine the kind of live performance that we can actually experience, or the kind of seventeenth-century performance that might have been given by aristocratic or professional musicians who had access to the publication, the work's meaning depends mostly on a performance that can exist only in the mind of the audience, a performance in which the historical Lady Devonshire plays herself. It is in this sense that "Penelope" becomes not merely the performer of the songs, but the "speaker" of their lyric texts, that is to say, their author.

The process by which Coprario transfers authority over his songs to Penelope makes an interesting contrast to the process that Clark Hulse discerned in *Astrophil and Stella*. There too, as Hulse observes:

---

[13] *Music in the Theatre of Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 144.

> . . . Stella becomes the virtual coauthor of the sonnets . . . Stella then appears in public as the performer of Astrophil's sonnets, replacing his voice with her own."[14]

At the same time, in Hulse's reading, the historically distant reader of *Astrophil and Stella* is merely a "dummy audience," reduced to reading the poems as a voyeur (p. 282). However, the agonistic struggle for sexual and rhetorical control that shapes *Astrophil and Stella* is absent from *Funeral Teares*. For this reason, the effectiveness of *Funeral Teares* depends on a convergence of interests and identifications, not their opposition. Coprario could only hope that Blount's widow would identify with the lamenting widow of *Funeral Teares*, and that the multiple audiences of the songs—historical and historically distant alike—would accept the verisimilitude of his representation of her grief. Finally, to complete this circle of identifications, the audience must imagine *itself*, not as voyeurs, but as the sympathetic and respectful listeners whose presence Penelope periodically acknowledges.

The *public* audience and readership of *Funeral Teares* counts for more than that of *Astrophil and Stella*, because, despite the earlier controversy over the marriage itself, it was only after Mountjoy's death that Penelope's public reputation was seriously threatened. Documenting the legal attacks on the legitimacy of her marriage and right to inherit that followed Mountjoy's death, Sylvia Freedman writes:

> Being branded as a harlot was only a small part of the stigma now attached to her name. She was painted as a mercenary schemer, interested only in getting her hands on the Devonshire fortune and using every underhand means to achieve this, bribery and corruption, fraud, forgery and deceit. (p. 192)

The audience, which is addressed directly in the performance of the songs, is implicitly being asked to take Penelope's part and defend her

---

[14]"Stella's Wit: Penelope Rich as Reader of Sidney's Sonnets," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 279.

reputation, just as Mountjoy's advocates defended him against the malicious beasts in Ford's "In honorable memory."

As Penelope's attention shifts from one song to the next, and sometimes even within a single song, new levels of meaning are created. Her organizing trope is *apostrophe*, which George Puttenham explains as follows:

> Many times when we have runne a long race in our tale spoken to the hearers, we do sodainly flye out & either speake or ex-claime at some other person or thing, and therefore the Greekes call such figure [*Apostrophe*] (as we do) the turnway or turnetale, & breedeth by such exchaunge a certain recreation to the hearers minds. . . .[15]

The poetics of *Funeral Teares* are consistent with Fischlin's view of *metalepsis* as the master trope of the English ayre, but the major focus of "interpretive accretion and distention" in these lyrics, is their dual audience, Mountjoy and ourselves (p. 316). The second strophe of the first song establishes Penelope's ethos as the songs' author and performer.

> Musicke though it sweetens paine
> Yet no whit empaires lamenting:
> But in passions like consenting
> Makes them constant that complaine:
> (Doughtie, 8–11)

These lines activate two mechanisms of identification that pervade the cycle. By offering Penelope a sympathetic image of herself as a constant widow, Coprario invites her to identify with the poem's speaker. And, by offering the audience a dramatic representation of her constancy, he enlists our support in his defense of both her character and Mounjoy's.

In the first two songs, Mountjoy seems recently dead and still very much present: Penelope addresses him as the source of her grief in the first, and contemplates his portrait in the second, "O Sweet Flower." The third song, "O Th'Unsure Hopes," is unique in that it remains in the

---

[15] *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge University Press, 1936; repr. 1970), p. 237.

third person throughout, and it suggests the passage of some time. The fourth song, "In Darkness Let Me Dwell," ends with Penelope addressing Mountjoy anew, now intending to join him in death: "O thus, my hapless joy, I haste to thee." In the fifth song, "My Joy is Dead," she admits Mountjoy's absence, and distances herself from the audience, seeking refuge in a barren and rocky landscape. There, in the sixth song, "Deceitful Fancie," she apostrophizes Mountjoy's shade. The seventh and final song, "A Dialogue: Foe of Mankind," begins with an *apostrophe* to Death and ends in an *apostrophe* to Mountjoy. As the cycle unfolds, Penelope brings Mountjoy before our eyes by singing to *him*, and summons witnesses to his apotheosis by singing to *us*.

The complete cycle of seven songs is shaped by an over-arching tonal plan: the first three songs are in C major, the fourth song is in A minor, and last three in G minor. This large-scale tonal pattern is reinforced by a similar, though not quite identical, metric plan: the first two songs employ a tetrameter stanza, the third song uses pentameters, the fourth song, uniquely, a hexameter stanza, and the last three, pentameters again.

Theories of harmony, modality, and tonality were very much in transition in the early seventeenth century, and Coprario's musical settings, without sounding the least bit uncertain, manage to combine progressive and retrospective features. The progressive features are the polarity of the outer voices, the *basso* and *canto*, the chordal accompaniment provided by the lute, and the clear tonal orientation of each song. Retrospective features include the contrapuntal complexity that can be seen and heard when the alto part is taken into account, and the modal characteristics that can be inferred from the melodic shape and range of the *canto* part. The easiest and most direct way of describing Coprario's harmonic practice is with a flexible combination of contemporary and historical terminology, and that is the course I will follow here. The next two paragraphs below summarize several historical and contemporary sources that bear directly on my discussion of the songs.

Coprario's own manuscript treatise on counterpoint, *Rules how to compose* (*c.* 1610–1614), conveys a clear sense of his compositional practice.[16] However, since *Rules how to compose* is organized as a practical

[16] *Rules how to compose*, facsimile with an introduction by Manfred F. Bukofzer (Los Angeles: Ernest E. Gottlieb, 1952).

handbook, with many musical examples and little theoretical explanation, we must turn to other sources for descriptive accounts of the theoretical concepts that inform Coprario's approach. Relevant early modern sources include Thomas Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction*, which I have already cited in connection with the ethos of *Funeral Teares*, and Thomas Campion's *A New Way of Making Fowre Parts in Counter-point* (*c.* 1613–1614).[17] Morley summarizes the state of vocal counterpoint in the late sixteenth century and looks back to the modal theories of Heinrich Glarean and Gioseffo Zarlino, while Campion's work shares a progressive tonal orientation and a number of specific details with Coprario's treatise.

Among more recent theoretical monographs, Lionel Pike's *Hexachords in Late-Renaissance Music* and Robert Toft's *Aural Images of Lost Traditions: Sharps and Flats in the Sixteenth Century* provide useful approaches to bridging the gaps between early-modern and baroque-classical conceptions of harmony.[18] Hexachords, as demystified by Pike, "are merely a means of identifying notes" by means of the syllables *ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la*. Since a hexachord by definition contains only one semitone, always between *mi* and *fa*, it was, and is, a useful aid in sight-singing and learning vocal intervals and melodies. Because the hexachordal system which the Renaissance inherited from Medieval music theory allowed for the designation of only one chromatic note—a B-flat—in the key signature, only three hexachords are possible. C–D–E–F–G–A, which includes neither B nor B-flat, is known as the *natural* hexachord. G–A–B–C–D–E is the *hard* hexachord because it includes a B-natural, originally drawn with hard, angular edges like the modern natural sign (♮), while F–G–A–B-flat–C–D is the *soft* hexachord since it includes a B-flat, drawn with soft, rounded edges, like the contemporary flat sign (♭). Other alterations could be added as accidentals, or improvised as *musica ficta*, "false" notes not provided for in the theory of hexachords. The hexachord system operates in tandem with the modal system to influence the ethos of a musical setting. In general, sharped notes and

---

[17] *A New Way of Making Fowre Parts in Counter-point*, in *The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Walter R. Davis (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), pp. 319–356.

[18] Pike, *Hexachords in Late-Renaissance Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998); Toft, *Aural Images of Lost Traditions: Sharps and flats in the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

keys also connote hardness in some metaphorical sense, and flatted notes and keys connote softness.

In "Oft thou hast," the first song of *Funeral Teares*, Coprario's musical setting is squarely in C major. The *canto* stays strictly within the limits of the Hypoionian mode as Glarean had defined it in the *Dodecachordon* of 1547, with the melody rising to G a fifth above, and falling to G a fourth below the tonic, or final, C. Gioseffo Zarlino, who adapted Glarean's system in Part Four of *Le istitutioni Harmoniche* of 1558, defined the ethos of this mode as "suitable for expressing thoughts of love which contain lamentful things, for in plainsong it is a lamentful mode and according to the opinion of some it has something sad about it."[19]

Morley listed both Glarean and Zarlino in his works cited, but Morley himself steered clear of modal theory. Instead, he explained musical ethos in the more up-do-date terms of the intervallic relationships, specifically between the *canto* and the bass. The following paragraph is the crux of Morley's theory of sad and merry harmonies, and it is also entirely consistent with Coprario's harmonic practice as he presents it in *Rules how to compose*:

> [I]f you would have your music signify hardness, cruelty, or other such affects you must cause the parts proceed in their motions without the half note, that is, you must cause them proceed by whole notes, sharp thirds, sharp sixths, and such like (when I speak of sharp or flat thirds and sixths you must understand that they ought to be so to the bass). . . . But when you would express a lamentable passion then must you use motions proceeding by half notes, flat thirds, and flat sixths, which of their nature are sweet, specially being taken in the true tune and natural air with discretion and judgment.
>
> (p. 290)

"Whole notes" and "half notes" refer to melodic motion by whole *steps* and half *steps*, respectively, while sharp and flat thirds and sixths refer to the harmonic intervals of major and minor thirds and sixths. To restate Morley's principles, then, melodies that use chromatic motion sparingly

---

[19] *On the Modes: Part Four of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558*, trans. Vered Cohen, ed. with an introduction by Claude V. Palisca (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983).

and harmonies that emphasize the vertical sonorities of major thirds and sixths (especially those whose notation requires the addition of a sharp sign) are hard and cruel. Alternatively, melodies that make frequent use of the half steps and harmonies that emphasize the vertical sonorities of minor thirds and sixths (especially those requiring a B-flat in the key signature or the addition of accidental flat signs), express lamentable passions.

What Morley calls "the true tune and natural air" refers to the diatonic pitches of the mode or scale, as he explains in the next paragraph:

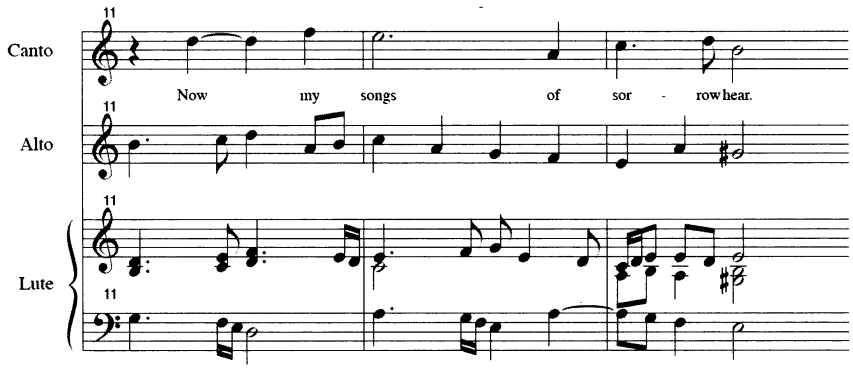
> But those chords [i.e., thirds and sixths] so taken as I have said before are not the sole and only cause of expressing those passions, but also the motions which the parts make in singing do greatly help; which motions are either natural or accidental. The natural motions are those which are naturally made betwixt the keys without the mixture of any accidental sign or chord, be it either flat or sharp, and these motions be more masculine, causing in the song more virility than those accidental chords which are marked with these signs, # b, which be indeed accidental and make the song as it were, more effeminate and languishing than the other motions which make the song rude and sounding. So that those natural motions may serve to express those effects of cruelty, tyranny, bitterness, and such others, and those accidental motions may fitly express the passions of grief, weeping, signs, sorrows, sobs and such like.
>
> (p. 290)

Coprario's *Rules how to compose* also recognizes the distinction between chromatic songs and diatonic songs, in so far as they sometimes require different conventions in the notation of accidentals (p. 3).

"Of thou hast" is diatonic in the extreme. In the entire song, only three accidentals are used: F-sharp (once), B-flat (once), and G-sharp (once). Neither the F-sharp nor the B-flat disrupts the diatonic ethos of the mode; the only significant alteration is the G-sharp which occurs in the alto part at the cadence on the word "heare," at the end of the phrase "now my songs of sorrow heare." This alteration is significant both on the local level and for the tonal plan as a whole. Making a sharp third

with the bass's E, it expresses feminine tears and sorrows, and at the same time, the "hardness" and "cruelty" of death.

The phrase "Now my songs of sorrow heare" thus comes to rest on an E-Major chord:



Example 1. "Oft hast thou," mm. 11–13.

In terms of modern tonal theory, this is a deceptive half-cadence ("half" because it comes to rest on the dominant, creating a sense of expectation, not finality; and "deceptive" because it pulls the harmony in an unexpected direction). As Thomas Campion put it, "a close being to be made in the greater or sharp third is unproper" (344). This cadence or "close" on E-Major, a major third above C major, is harmonically remote from the home key, but it is the dominant harmony in the Aeolian mode, or A minor; in other words, it has a strong tendency to pull the harmony away from C major, and into A minor. Coprario does not follow through on this expectation immediately; he simply returns to C major and remains there through the remainder of the first song and the next two. But the turn to A minor is not forgotten; it remains in suspension until we reach the fourth song of the set, where it will have a determining influence on the structure of the cycle as a whole.

The first three songs of *Funeral Teares* comprise a group with some shared musical characteristics: the Ionian modality "for expressing thoughts of love which contain lamentful things," tempered by a strongly diatonic, and therefore "masculine" melodic line, emphasizing the natural

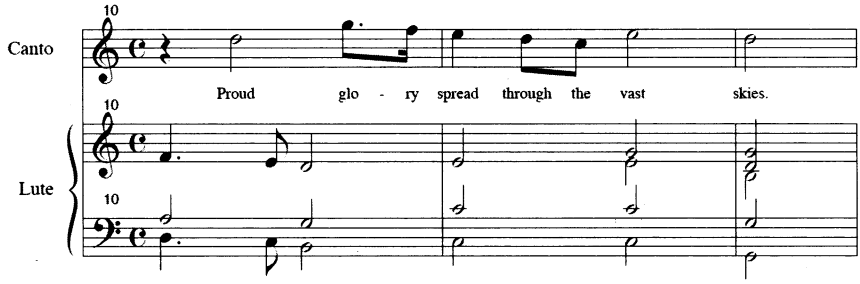
hexachord. The second song dramatizes the constancy and mourning that the first song describes. It begins with a series of conceits for the brevity of life, all of which gain a fresh infusion of energeia when the dramatic situation that informs them is revealed. In the first stanza, Penelope is looking at and speaking to Mountjoy's portrait.

> Oh sweet flower, too quickly fading,
> Like a winter's sunshine day.
> Poor pilgrim tired in the midway,
> Like the earth itself half shading.
> So thy picture shows to me
> But only the one half of thee.
> (Doughtie, 1–6)

In the second stanza, Penelope addresses Mountjoy as a "Proud glory spread through the vast skies" (9) and concludes:

> O how wondrous hadst thou been
> Had but the world thy whole life seen.
> (Doughtie, 11–12)

Fulfilling Fame's promise in Ford's prefatory poem, "Brave Mountioyes glory shall for ever last," these lines bring the image of Mountjoy before the eyes of the listeners in glorified form; as Penelope contemplates his picture, we see his image reflected in the heavens:



Example 2. "O sweet flower," mm. 10–12 (alto omitted).

The harmonic resolution that supports this *apostrophe* to Mountjoy in his heavenly "glory" is a conventional progression to a G-major chord, the dominant of C major. Although it is not harmonically distinctive, it too has long-term implications. It anticipates Mountjoy's final apotheosis as a spirit crowned with stars in the final song, and the G-major harmony that concludes the cycle.

In terms of its syntax, the third song is the most objective of the group, the only one to avoid both first- and second-person pronouns throughout. Nevertheless it strikes a surprisingly confessional tone as it reflects on the precariousness of men's hopes in the first stanza, and on women's fruitless love in the second:

> O women's fruitless love, unquiet state,
> Too dear affections that despitefully
> Ev'n in their height of bliss prove desolate,
> And often fall far from all hope of joy
> Ere they have time to dream on their annoy.
> (Doughtie, 6–10)

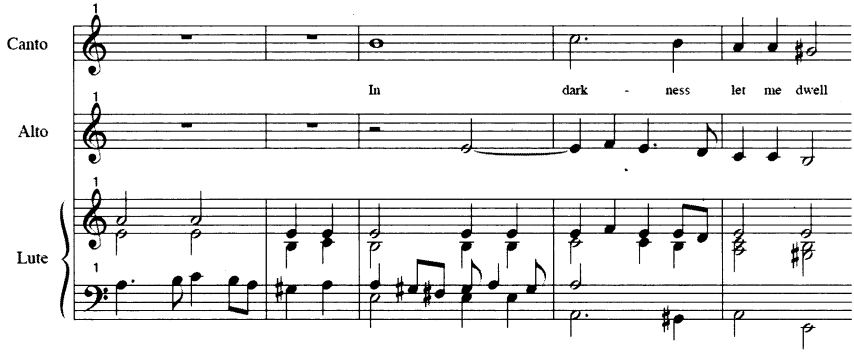
This song closes out the first group and prepares the audience for the shift in tone. From this point forward, the cycle becomes increasingly operatic. Each of the last four songs sets a precisely visualized scene, dramatizes a specific aspect of Penelope's character, and advances the plot toward its culmination in Mountjoy's apotheosis.

The fourth song of the set is "In darkness let me dwell." Its first stanza is better known in the brilliant, through-composed setting found in John Dowland's *A Musicall Banquet* of 1610, and Richard McGrady devotes several paragraphs to a comparison of the two settings (pp. 173-176). The first three measures of the bass part in Coprario's setting also quote, apparently, the tune of Ophelia's song in *Hamlet*, "How should I your true love know?" Although Vincent Duckles believed Coprario intended to evoke Ophelia's grief, Peter J. Seng points out that the tune enjoyed great popularity and is preserved in numerous manuscripts from the time of Shakespeare.[20] Thus the tune's association with *Hamlet* and its appearance in *Funeral Teares* may both reflect, independently of each

[20]Duckles, "The English Musical Elegy," p. 149. Seng, *The Vocal Songs in the Plays of Shakespeare: A Critical History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 136.

other, nothing more than its wide circulation in the popular ballad tradition. But whether it is an allusion to Ophelia or not, Coprario's "In darkness let me dwell" defines "Penelope" in *Funeral Teares*, much as "How should I your true love know" has come to define Ophelia.

She makes her entrance, after a two-measure introduction played on the lute and viol, singing a B-natural. This was her pitch in the deceptive cadence on "Now my songs of sorrow heare" from song 1; only now does the E-major harmony resolve properly to A minor, on the first syllable of the word "darkness":



Example 3. "In darkness let me dwell," mm. 1–5.

The first phrase, "In darkness let me dwell," is set syllabically to six notes, whose motions consist of three half steps, one whole step, and one repeated pitch. The *canto* part as a whole contains seven written accidentals, all sharps, as compared with one in the *canto* of the first three songs combined. In comparison with the first three songs, this music is distinctly "effeminate and languishing," and "may fitly express the passions of grief, weeping, signs, sorrows, sobs and such like."[21] The mode itself, Hypoaeolian, is darker, too. Zarlino says its nature is not

[21]The association of chromaticism with portrayals of female sexuality has been a fixture of feminist musicology at least since Susan McClary demonstrated its importance in *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 16 and passim.

very different from that of the second mode, Hypodorian: ". . . a mode fit for words which represent weeping, sadness, loneliness, captivity, calamity, and every kind of misery" (58).

Zarlino's conflation of the Aeolian mode, which centers on A, and the Dorian mode, is based on the properties of the Hexachord system. Since half steps are always sung to the syllables *mi-fa*, the first four pitches of the Aeolian hexachord, A–B–C–D, are sung *re-mi-fa-sol,* the same as the Dorian hexachord, D–E–F–G. The difference is the hexachord itself: the Dorian mode is based on the natural hexachord, while the Aeolian, with its B-natural, is based on the hard hexachord. It is thus a "sharper" and "harder" version of the Dorian.

Penelope's grief is hyperbolical, but gains in verisimilitude when we recall the wonderful eighth song from *Astrophil and Stella*, "In a grove most rich of shade." There, gracefully repelling Astrophel's attempt to put his hands where honor forbade, Stella spoke prophetically:

> If that any thought in me
> Can tast comfort but of thee,
> Let me fed with hellish anguish,
> Joylesse, hopelesse, endlesse languish.
> (Doughtie, 76–80)

Now, as Penelope Blount, having suffered the final injury of Mountjoy's death ("Thus wedded to my woes and bedded in my tomb"), and the insults of being ostracized and denied the court ("Pale ghosts and frightful shades shall my acquaintance be"), she sings:

> In darkness let me dwell, the ground shall sorrow be,
> The roof despair to bar all cheerful light from me
> The walls of marble black that moistened still shall weep;
> My music hellish jarring sounds to banish friendly sleep,
> Thus wedded to my woes and bedded in my tomb,
> O let me dying live till death doth come.
>
> My dainties grief shall be, and tears my poisoned wine;
> My sighs the air through which my panting heart shall pine;
> My robes my mind shall suit exceeding blackest night;
> My study shall be tragic thoughts sad fancy to delight.

Pale ghosts and frightful shades shall my acquaintance be.
O thus, my hapless joy, I haste to thee.
(Doughtie, 1–12)

In her impatient desire for death and suicidal thoughts, Penelope resembles Hamlet more than Ophelia.

* * * *

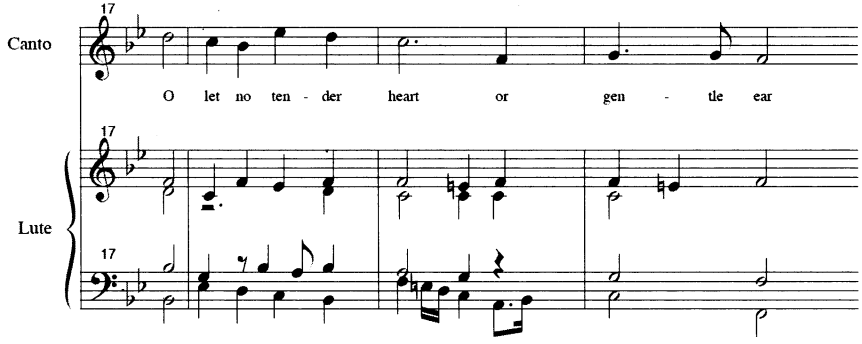
The last three songs of *Funeral Teares* are in a new key, G-Dorian, which requires a B-flat in the key signature, and therefore emphasizes the soft hexachord. (In the examples below, I follow Hendrie and Dart in transcribing these songs in G Minor.) As in the Aeolian and untransposed Dorian modes, the first four pitches of G-Dorian, G–A–B-flat–C, are once again sung to the syllables *re-mi-fa-sol*, but where the Aeolian mode is a harder and sharper version of the natural Dorian on D, this transposed Dorian with its B-flat is a softer and flatter version. In each of the last three songs, phrases implying a softening of affect are highlighted by a softening of the harmony.

In song 5, Penelope acknowledges Mountjoy's death. Dramatizing Sidney's vision of Stella in "If Orfeus' voice," Penelope becomes Orfeus, attempting to evoke a response from a petrified world:

My joy is dead and cannot be revived;
Fled is my joy and never may return;
Both of my joy and of myself deprived,
Far from all joy I sing, and singing mourn.
O let no tender heart or gentle ear
Partake my passions or my plainings hear.

Rude flinty breasts, that never felt remorse,
Hard craggy rocks, that death and ruin love
These only these, my passions shall enforce
Beyond their kind, and to compassion move.
My grief shall wonders work, for he did so
That caused my sorrows, and these tears doth owe.
(Doughtie, 1–12)

Lionel Pike's observation that in Italian madrigals the soft hexachord is associated with pastoral imagery, and the hard hexachord with the anti-pastoral imagery of desert and rocky landscapes, is borne out in Coprario's setting (see pp. 33–38). The penultimate lines of both stanzas are set to a series of harmonies that transform the hard, anti-pastoral landscape of craggy rocks into a pastoral F major. Musical Example 4, taken from Penelope's *apostrophe* to the audience at the end of stanza 1, shows the progression leading to the F-major, soft-hexachord cadence on the words, "gentle ear":



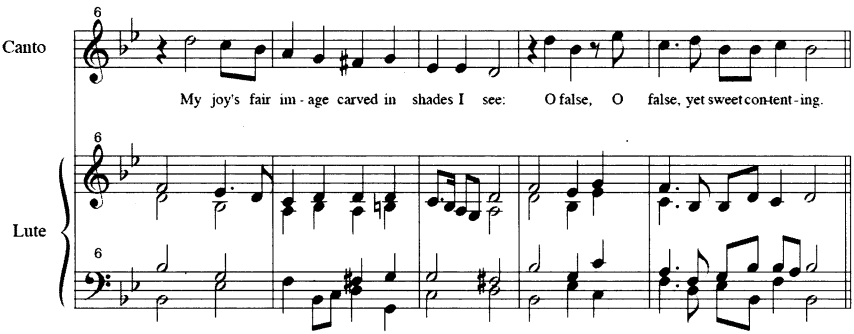
Example 4. "My joy is dead," mm. 17–24 (alto omitted).

Penelope banishes tender hearts and summons rude flinty breasts to hear her plainings, in order that she may effect the same transformation of the audience that she works on the landscape.

The sixth song apostrophizes Mountjoy's shade:

> Deceitful Fancy, why delud'st thou me,
> The dead alive presenting?
> My joy's fair image carved in shades I see.
> O false, yet sweet, contenting!
> Why art not thou a substance like to me,
> Or I a shade to vanish hence with thee?
> (Doughtie, 1–6)

Here, a half-cadence in G minor, a D-major chord on the word *see*, resolves deceptively to the soft and sweet B-flat major on the word *contenting*. The word *false* provides a double musical-verbal pun. First, it calls attention to the "false relation" that occurs when F-sharp, in the D major chord on the word *see*, in m. 8, is chromatically altered to F-natural in a different register on the B-flat major chord that follows on the downbeat of m. 9. Such relations are "false" because their notation depends on the use of *musica ficta*. Second, it puns on false and *fa*, for the B-flat that the canto sings on the word *false* is indeed *fa* in the soft hexachord. In the midst of all this verbal and musical wit, the setting actually sounds sweet and tonally secure. This is text-setting of a very high order.



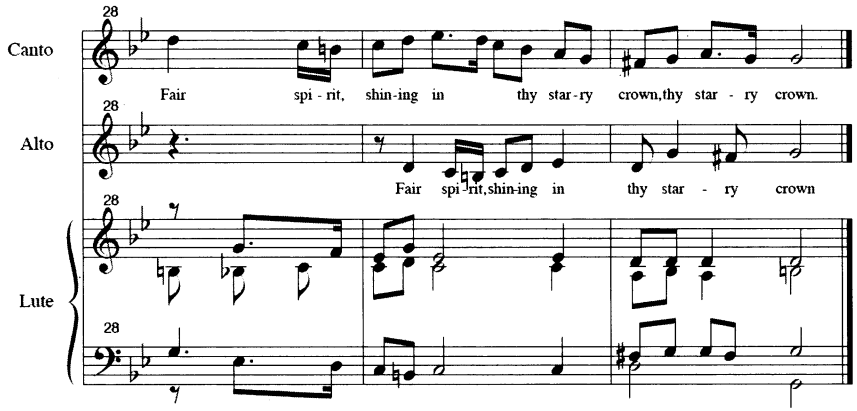
Example 5. "Deceitful fancy," mm. 6–10 (alto omitted).

The concluding dialogue, "Foe of Mankind," like the conclusion of a masque, reveals the universal or philosophical meaning of the particular entertainment it concludes. This one is a dialogue between "Penelope" and an allegorical interlocutor, the *alto*, whose philosophy is consistent with that of Fame in the long introductory poem.

Canto: Foe of mankind, why murd'rest thou my love?
Alto: Forbear, he lives!
Canto: O where?
Alto: In heav'n above.
Canto: Poor wretched life that only lives in name!

Alto: Man is not flesh but soul, all life is fame.
Canto: That is true fame which living men enjoy;
Alto: That is true life which death cannot destroy.
Chorus: Live ever through the merited renown,
Fair spirit shining in thy starry crown.

The concluding couplet, though sung by the *canto* and alto as a duet, are assigned to the Chorus in the text, indicating that the audience has finally been given a symbolic speaking role, that of ratifying Mountjoy's merited renowne and apotheosis:



Example 6. "Foe of mankind," mm. 28–30.

Mountjoy's starry crown, or halo, is the third and climactic manifestation of his "glory." First announced to the audience by Fame in Ford's "In honorable memory," then placed before our eyes by Penelope in the second song, it is finally seen—and sung—by all.

The songs being ended, *Funeral Teares* concludes with a final sonnet:

Tis true, that whom the Italian Spider[22] stinges
He sings, or laughs, or daunces till he dies,
Or spends his short time in such idle things

[22]Tarantula.

As the severer sort call vanities:
  Music alone this fury can release,
This venomous rancour that the flesh doth eate
  Like envie which in death doth seldome cease
To feede upon the honours of the great.
  Well have we toyld in prosperous harmonie
If we the envy-poysoned wounds doe cure
  Of spitefull adder-toongd hypocrisie
That speakes washt wordes, but works dark deeds impure
  If such prove past recure, suffice it then
  We song not to brute beasts, but humane men.

Through the devices of *prosopographia*, *prosopopoeia*, and *apostrophe*, the authorial "we" of this valediction has grown to accommodate Coprario, "Penelope," subsequent performers, and even ourselves, the audience. Through Penelope's transformation of her audience in song 5, the beasts of Ford's prefatory poem have been released from envy's spell, transformed into human beings, and granted a vision of Mountjoy's glory. Allowing that the entire cycle is, after all, a fiction—O false, yet sweete contenting—*Funeral Teares* stands as a small but essential postlude to Sidney's great portrait of Stella.

Hugh Hodgson School of Music–University of Georgia, Athens