

Sessions 8 and 9:

John Dowland, “Come Again” (1597)

1. Englishness and melancholy

period between 1588 and 1632 as the ‘golden age’ of English music
‘rediscovered’ in the 1920s

Edmund H. Fellowes, editor of *The English Madrigal School* (1913-1924, in 37 volumes),
and *The English School of Lutenist Songwriters* (1925-1932, in 39 volumes):

“The English School of lutenist song-writers stands by itself as something that had
no parallel in contemporary Europe.”

John Dowland was perhaps the most accomplished songwriter of this period, and is seen as
the most ‘English’:

“It is the ‘Englishness’ of Dowland’s music that strikes one most forcefully” (Rooley
1983, 6),



Dowland and the English cult of melancholy since about the 1580s



Albrecht Dürer, „Melencolia I“ (1514)

How should we interpret Dowland's 'very English' melancholy?

Option 1: melancholy as a **personal disposition** (Diana Poulton)

"In no period in England before the Elizabethan had the individual been as conscious of the subjective emotions or as articulate in expressing them, and side by side with the genuine cases of psychological disturbance and justified pessimism, a vogue or fashion for melancholy grew up."

"That Dowland suffered from periods of intense melancholy is shown throughout his life" (Poulton 1982, 77-78).

Problem: "[w]e should not forget that Dowland was the product of an age that did not expect to find in a poet's or composer's work an intimate record of his private life" (Wells 1994, 204).

Option 2: melancholy as a serious **esoteric intellectual pursuit** (Anthony Rooley)

"[by] taking melancholy as his artistic persona, Dowland embraced the highest ambitions in the Renaissance tradition of inspired melancholy – through his art and his choice of potent images he hoped to achieve the deepest possible contemplation" (Rooley 1983, 12).

Dowland as part of a neo-Platonic secret society in pursuit of the three stages of 'inspired melancholy' (the union of music and poetry, philosophical contemplation, divine revelation)

Problem: there is no historical evidence that Dowland was part of a secret society or 'school of night'.

Option 3: the expression of melancholy as a **rhetorical exercise** (Robin Hedlam Wells)

Following the view that in the Early Modern period music shifts from the classical Quadrivium or *artes mathematicae* to the Trivium or *artes dicendi*

Dowland's songs as a strictly non-intellectual, empty game of rhetoric

Problem: Dowland's music was intended mainly for private use, and not in public (rhetorical) situations.

Option 4: melancholy as a **political strategy** (Susanne Rupp)

→ my favoured reading in the following

2. "Come Again" (1597)

Come againe: sweet loue doth now invite

1
Come again; sweet loue doth now inuite,
Thy graces that refraine,
To do me due delight,
To see, to heare, to touch, to kisse, to die,
With thee againe in sweetest sympathie.

2
Come againe that I may cease to mourne,
Through thy vnkind disdaine:
For now left and forlorne,
I sit, I sigh, I weepe, I faint, I die,
In deadly paine and endlesse miserie.

1
All the day the sun that lends me shine,
By frownes doth cause me pine,
And feeds me with delay:
Her smiles, my springs, that makes my ioyes to grow,
Her frownes the winters of my woe:

2
All the night my sleeps are full of dreames,
My eyes are full of streames.
My heart takes no delight,
To see the fruits and ioyes that some do find,
And marke the stormes are mee assigned,

3
Out alas, my faith is ever true,
Yet will she neuer rue,
Nor yield mee any grace:
Her eyes of fire, her heart of flint is made,
Whom teares, nor truth may once inuade.

4
Gentle loue draw forth thy wounding dart,
Thou canst not pierce her heart,
For I that doe approue,
By sighs and teares more hot then are thy shafts,
Did tempt while she for triumph laughs. (Dowland 1970, n.p.)

Petrarchan conventions of love poetry and their subversion in stanzas 1 and 2:

- Lyrics pretend to be an "innocent lover's complaint" (Wells) in Petrarchan fashion in ll 1-3
- ll. 4-5, however, imitate a progression of intimacy culminating in sexual climax

"and surely here the words 'to die' are used in the figurative sense, meaning to reach the final transports of physical love" Poulton 1982, 238)
- parody of the rhetorical figures of 'auxesis' based on "the medieval devotional five-point *gradus amoris*" (Wells 1994, 106-08)
- presented in a way that "achieves a merger of text and music which in its flawless coherence need to be called ideal" (Kelnberger 2004a, 148, my tr.)

Stanza two replaces the "ladder of lechery" (Wells) with a "ladder of melancholy"

- but set to the same melody as stanza 1, the 'ladder of melancholy' is clearly comical!
- 1 and 2 clearly make fun of Petrarchan conventions and concepts of melancholy!

How do stanzas 1+2 and the second set of lyrics (1-4) relate to each other?

Second set as a *contrafact* of the first song:

- Counting starts again after first two stanzas
- last lines are only 10 instead of 12 syllables long
- the figure of 'auxesis' is no longer convincingly represented in the lyrics
- the rhyme scheme shifts from abacc to aabcc
- conventional Petrarchism on the level of content

Are we dealing with two independent songs set to the same music (Greer in Dowland 2000, 199), or is there a meaningful relation? I think there is ...

3. Petrarchism and Elizabeth I

With the ascent of a woman into the epicentre of political and religious power, the tradition of Petrarchan love poetry – devoid of sexual overtones and expressive of an unfailing loyalty to an unattainable mistress – became a core resource for panegyric politics.

Louis Montrose:

panegyric literature "was a medium through which court society manifested its ethos and the channel through which those within the orbit of the court pursued and negotiated their individual and common interests" (Montrose 1999, 133).

Helen Hackett

"[p]anegyric needs to be understood as the rhetoric generated by various kinds of political and personal ambition and dependence, rather than as a sincere effusion or infatuation with Elizabeth's personality" (Hackett 1995, 238).

Three phases of praise literature (panegyric):

- 1558 - ca. 1578: little Petrarchism – assumption that Elizabeth would still marry
- ca. 1578 - ca. 1590: Elizabeth as the 'virgin queen',

"when her unmarried state began to be accepted and even idealized in courtly literature [...] it was as the unattainable *object* of masculine desire that Elizabeth was presented, in an assimilation of Petrarchan and Neoplatonic attitudes" (Berry 1989, 62, italics in the original)

the image of the virgin queen was "fabricated by a group of male courtiers who attempted to use it to further their own political and personal ambitions" (ibid.).

- ca. 1590 - 1603: combinations of unlimited praise with political criticism
 - o The Queen's dealings with The Earl of Essex

"1590s panegyric becomes progressively divided between increasingly extravagant professions of devotion to the Queen, and oblique expressions of dissent and disillusionment" (Hackett 1995, 166).

4. Dowland's lute songs and Queen Elizabeth I

- "the madrigal and lutenist composers from 1598 to 1600 were overwhelmingly of Essex sympathies" (Ruff and Wilson 1969, 23)
- London's aristocracy "would recognize political pressure in certain madrigals; and singers could express an incantatory sympathy and loyalty in them at a time when open expression of political sympathies was treason" (ibid., 19)

The schizophrenic range of late Elizabethan panegyric in Dowland's *Third Booke of Songes* (1603):

Time stands still

Time stands still with gazing on her face,
Stand still and gaze for minutes, hours and years, to give her place:
All other things shall change, but she remains the same,
Till heavens changes have their course and time hath lost his name.
[...] (qtd. in Fellowes 1929, 432)

"one of the most uninhibited adorations of Elizabeth's beauty" and "one of the most spellbinding examples of Dowland's artistry" (Kelnberger 2004b, 127).

It was a time when silly bees

It was a Time when silly bees could speak,
And in that Time I was a silly bee,
Who fed on Time until my heart 'gan break,
Yet never found the Time would favour me.
Of all the swarm I alone did not thrive,
Yet brought I wax and honey to the hive.

Then thus I buzzed when Time no sap would give:
Why should this blessed Time to me be dry,
Sith by this Time the lazy drone doth live,
The wasp, the worm, the gnat, the butterfly.
Mated with grief I kneeled on my knees,
And thus complained unto the king of bees:

My liege, gods grant thy Time may never end,
And yet vouchsafe to hear my plaint of Time,
Which fruitless flies have found to have a friend,
And I cast down when atomies do climb.
The king replied but thus: Peace, peevish bee,
Thou'rt bound to serve the Time; the Time not thee.
(qtd. in Fellowes 1929, 440-41)

- lyrics written by the Earl of Essex (decapitated for high treason two years earlier)
- "[i]t is impossible to imagine what impulse betrayed Dowland into such an error of misjudgement" (Poulton 1982, 59)

5. Lyrical authorship in Dowland's songs

- Of 83 different songs, only 5 lyrics can be clearly attributed to other poets
- 21 other poems have been at least associated with other poets such as

Sidney, Greville, Daniel, Jonson, Donne, and of course Thomas Campion. Other poets represented are Nicholas Breton, William Browne, Henry Chettle, Walter and Francis Davison, Thomas Lodge, Anthony Munday, George Peele, and Robert Southwell; courtiers like Sir John Davis, Sir Henry Lee, Sir Edward Dyer, and the earls of Cumberland and Essex; and even anachronisms like Wyatt and Gascoigne. (Doughtie 1986, 123)

- The authorship of most lyrics is unclear
- Dowland certainly drew on the manuscripts by the 'courtly makers' circulating at the court. Why did Dowland not mention their names in the printed collections of his music?
 - By the courtly poets, printed poetry "had an "aura of vulgarity [and] inferior commerce, [...] lacking the cultural authority of manuscripts" because it "threatened the continuity of social hierarchies which regulated textual production" (Frenk 2003, 55, my tr.).

- It is rather likely that Dowland also wrote some of his own verse.
- Especially in "Come Again", "the perfect symbiosis of text and music [...] indeed suggests that poet and composer may have been the same person (i.e. Dowland)" (Kelnberger 2004a, 151, my tr.).

6. The strategic organisation of the *First Booke of Songes* (1597)

- Thematic unity: 19 out of 21 songs are about female rejection and betrayal
- Strategic framing of the volume with the first and last song:

Unquiet Thoughts (I)

Unquiet thoughts, your civil slaughter stint
And wrap your wrongs within a pensive heart;
And you, my tongue, that makes my mouth a mint
And stamps my thoughts to coin them words by art,
Be still, for if you ever do the like,
I'll cut the string that makes the hammer strike.

[...]

How shall I then gaze on my mistress' eyes?
My thoughts must have some vent, else heart will break.
My tongues would rust as in my mouth it lies,
If eyes and thoughts were free, and that not speak.
Speak then, and tell the passions of desire,
Which turns mine eyes to floods, my thoughts to fire. (Fellowes 1929, 408)

- similar jump from intellectual complexity in stanza 1 to conventional Petrarchism in stanza 3
- stanza 1 can be read as an apology that this is a commercial, printed songbook, and not, as convention has it, a private manuscript

- stanza 3 explains why Dowland 'goes public': There is too much pain in the rejected love (of whom?)

"Away with these self-loving lads" (XXI)

My songs they be of Cynthia's praise
I wear her ring on holidays,
On every tree I write her name,
And every day I read the same.
Where honour Cupid's rival is
There miracles are seen of his.

If Cynthia crave her ring from me,
I blot her name from every tree.
If doubt do darken things held dear,
Then well fare nothing once a year!
For many run, but one must win;
Fools, only, hedge the cuckoo in.

The worth that worthiness should move
Is love, which is the bow of Love.
And love as well the foster can
As can the mighty nobleman.
Sweet saint, 'tis true you worthy be,
Yet without love naught worth to me. (Fellowes 1929, 420)

- the lyrics are from a very daring poem by Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the queen's last remaining favourites
- 'Cynthia' (moon goddess) was "[o]ne of the most common images of Elizabeth in the last fifteen years or so of her reign" (Hackett 1995, 174).!
 - o The moon could "invoke qualities of radiance, ethereality, mysticism and other-worldliness,"
 - o it was also "identified with virginity and female power"
 - o The moon as ruler of the seas "could be used to assert English claims to imperial power,"
 - o but here is also the 'dark side' allowing "negative undertones of criticism" (ibid., 175-76).

- Waxing and waning of the moon symbolises inconsistency!
- the Petrarchan addressee of the whole book of songs is thus finally 'outed' in the last song!

David Fischlin:

"The closural parody of previous poetic poses is notable for what it conveys about the larger organization of the songbook, especially the subversive framework that the songbook establishes in relation to courtly and poetic convention. The recapitulation followed by the parodying of the songbook's thematic concerns would seem to indicate a coherent, if not carefully manipulated, literary organisation." (Fischlin 1999, 103)

7. Back to "Come Again"

- the first two stanza work as a 'camouflage' of the political message of the second 4!

What is expressed in the second lyrics, then?

- Image of the 'sun':

The sun predated the moon as a "a favourite image for Elizabeth," partly because "the sun could connote the inspiring radiance of the Petrarchan mistress," and partly because the "Sun/Son was a favourite punning emblem for Christ, and therefore had messianic overtones which made it highly applicable to Elizabeth as the supposed saviour of the nation, restorer of the faith, and dutiful heir of her father" (Hackett 1995, 81).

- the problem of 'faith' (my faith is ever true):
 - probably a pun: the lover is faithful to the mistress
 - the speaker asserts his Catholic faith! against the Anglican dogma
- what could the rejection by the inconstant Queen who "for triumph laughs" while other earn the "fruits and joyes" that should by right be his have to do with the speakers faith?

8. Some biographical background

- born in 1563 somewhere in England
- 1580 to 1584 in the services of Henry Cobham, the English ambassador in France, in Paris
 - o converts to Catholicism in Paris! (either because he was drawn to it, or for reasons of personal safety, about 10 years after the Bartholomew Night)

- Dowland did not have a 'Papist' reputation – e.g. he was allowed to study at Oxford and Cambridge

- Still, Dowland writes in 1995:

"I have been thrust off of all good fortune because I am a Catholic at home. For I heard that her Majesty being spoke of me, said I was a man to serve any prince in the world, but I was an obstinate papist" (qtd. in Poulton 1982, 38).

- in 1594, a court lutenist dies and the position remains vacant for one year. Dowland does not get the job despite an excellent reputation

"Then in time passing one Mr. Johnson died & I became an humble suitor for his place (thinking myself most worthiest) wherein I found many good and honourable friends that spake for me, but I saw that I was like to go without it, and that any may have preferment but I, whereby I began to sound the cause, and guessed that my religion was my hindrance." (qtd. in Poulton 1982, 37)

Compare in "Come Again": "My heart takes no delight / To see the fruits and ioyes that some do find / And marke the storms are mee assigned, [...] My faith is euer true / Yet will she neuer rue, / Nor yeeld mee any grace."

- Dowland feels exiled from the centre of English national culture, leaves England for Germany and Italy in 1595
- One the way to Rome, Dowland stopped over in Venice, where he got into trouble:
 - o Catholic English exiles want to draw him into a conspiracy against the Queen

- He is offered a position as musician in the Vatican
- Dowland finally realises that this would be high treason back home, and he could never return to England.
- Travels back to Germany, and writes a panicking letter back to England to Lord Cecil:

“I called to mind our conference & got me by myself & wept heartily, to see the fortune so hard that I should become the servant to the greatest enemy of my prince : country : wife : children : and friends : for want, & to make me like themselves. God he knoweth I never loved treason nor treachery nor ever knew any, nor never heard any mass in England, which I find is great abuse of the people for on my soule I understand it not. Wherefore I have reformed myself to live according to her Majesty’s laws as I was born under her Highness, & most humbly I do crave pardon, protesting if there was any ability in me, I would be most ready to make amend.” (qtd. in Poulton 1982, 39)
- Returns to England realising that his chances of employment at the court are near zero
- Publishes the first book of songs in 1597 (strategically!!)
- Leaves England in 1598 for a position at the Danish court. Why?
 - Christian IV of Denmark’s sister was the wife of the Scottish King James IV – who would probably become (and indeed became) the next English king!
 - Dowland’s first printed collection of instrumental music, *Lachrimae* (1604), is strategically dedicated to the new English Queen, Anne of Denmark. Peter Holman writes:

“It is often thought that Dowland made the 1603-4 journey to England specifically to publish *Lachrimae*, but his main motive seems to have been to lobby James I for the court post he had repeatedly failed to obtain from Queen Elizabeth. Indeed, he probably began to make preparations for the trip soon after the news of Elizabeth’s death on 24 March 1603 reached Denmark. He clearly planned to approach James through the queen, Anne of Denmark, sister of his employer Christian IV, using *Lachrimae* to attract her attention.” (Holman 1999, 3-4)
- Returns to London in 1606.
- Finally gets a job as a court musician in 1612.
- Last publication *A Pilgrim’s Solace* in the same year, after that no more music publishing! Why?

9. Ideas of professionalism in Dowland's time

Concepts of 'authorship' in the Renaissance period

- Shakespeare vs. Ben Jonson
- 'Musicus' vs. 'Composer'

"While the word *musicus* denoted social status and public respect, the merely technical term *compositor* was devoid of any such overtones. Anyone could be a *compositor* by simple virtue of committing new music to paper, irrespective of social category or rank" (Wegman 1996, 438).

"[t]he thought of a composer exercising authorial control over the performance and interpretation of his work was virtually unknown" (Wegman 1996, 460).

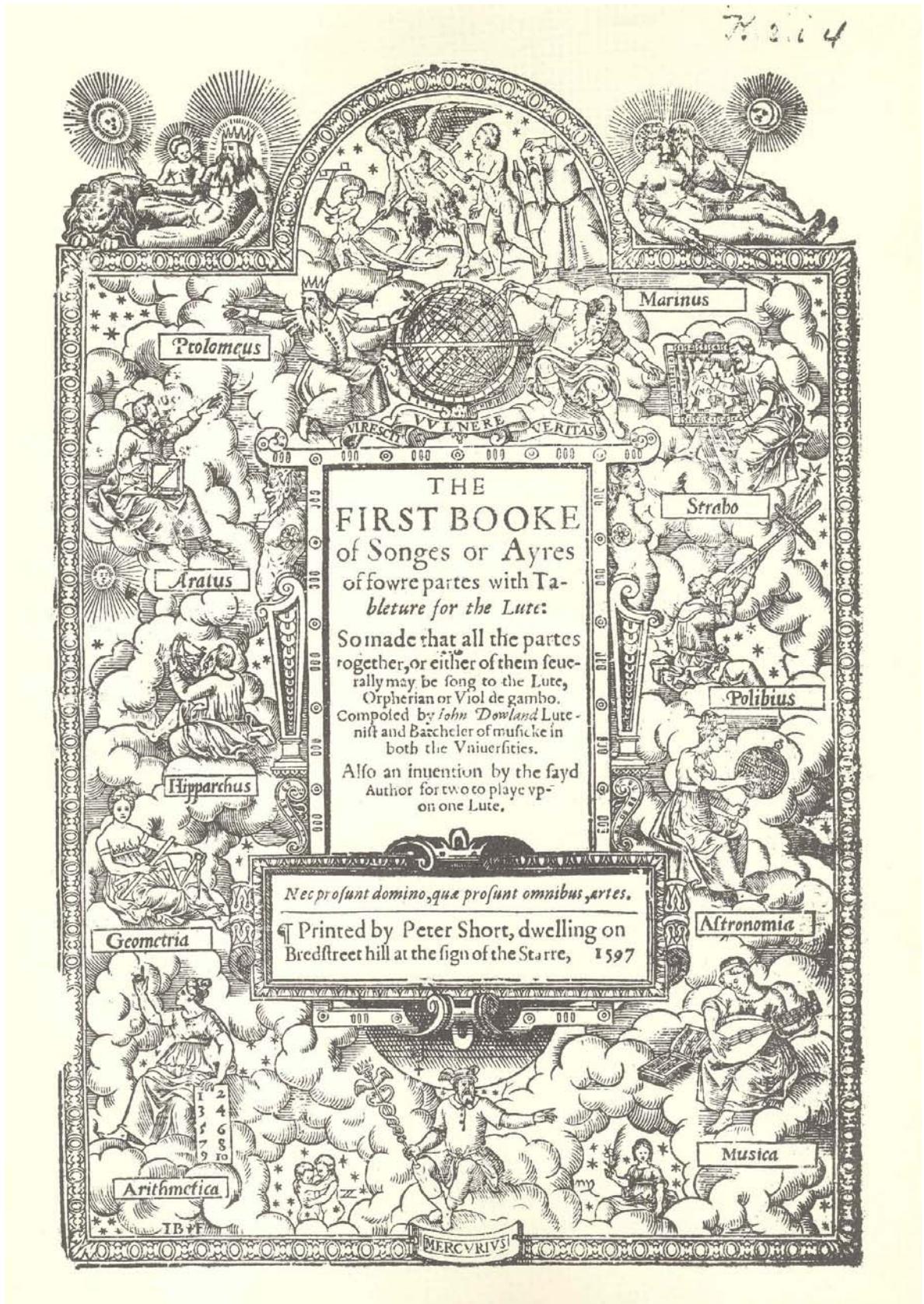
e.g. Thomas Campion (1617): "To be briefe, all these Songs are mine, if you expresse them well; otherwise they are your owne. Farwell" (Campion 1967, 168).

Dowland: composers are "Monsters of Musicke" (Dowland qtd. in Rupp 2005a, 108).

!! Dowland remained *musicus* in professional ideology, but saw himself forced to explore new ways of marketing and self-fashioning – and thus to become *composer* – after being barred from the epicentre of English religious and secular professional authority. !!

10. Motivations to publish printed music collections

- an increasing 'privatisation' of the music market in the second half of the 16th century (a rising 'middle class' wants to imitate aristocratic culture)
- **printed collections suddenly become attractive as**
 - o **tools of self-fashioning**
 - o **marketing instruments (e.g. Thomas Whythorne, 1771)**



XVII. CANTVS.

Come againe: sweet loue doth now enuite, thy gra- ces
 that refraine, to do me due de- light, to see, to heare, to touch, to kisse,
 to die, with thee againe in sweetest simpha- thy.

²
 Come againe that I may cease to mourne,
 Through thy vnkind disdaine,
 For now left and forlorne:
 I sit, I sigh, I weepe, I faind, I die,
 In deadly paine, and endles miserie.

¹
 All the day the sun: that lends me shine,
 By frownes do cause me pine,
 And feeds me with delay: (grow,
 Her smiles, my springs, that makes my ioies to
 Her frowes the winters of my woe:

²
 All the night, my sleepes are full of dreames,
 My cies are full of streames,

My hart takes no delight:
 To see the fruits and ioies that some do find,
 And marke the stormes are me asignd,

³
 Out alas, my faith is euer true,
 Yet will she neuer rue,
 Nor yeeld me any grace:
 Her eies offire, her hart of flint is made,
 Whom teares nor truth may once inuade.

⁴
 Gentle loue draw forth thy wounding dart,
 Thou canst not pearce her hart,
 For I that do approue: (shafts:
 Py sighs and teares more hote then are thy
 Did tempt while she for triumphs laughs,

Sweetest sympathy.

doe me due delight, to see, to heare, to touch, to kisse, to die, ij. with thee againe in

Ome againe: sweet loue doth now enuite, thy gra- ces that refraine, to

ALTV.

BASSVS.

Ome againe: sweet loue doth now

enuite, thy graces that refraine, to do me

due delight, to see, to heare, to touch, to kisse

to die, ij: with thee againe in sweetest

simpatie.

TENOR.

Ome againe, sweet loue doth now enuite, thy graces that refraine, to do me due

delight to see, to heare, to touch, to kisse, to die, ij. with thee againe, ij. in sweetest

simpatie.

12

- Assertion to be a 'true musicus': "Bachelor of musicke in both universities"
- Dedication to Sir George Carey, ""*Lord Chamberlaine of her Maiesties Royall house, and of her Highnes most honorouable piuiie Counsell*" (Dowland 1970, n.p.)"
 - o Cary was a stout Anglican, a favourite of the Queen, and an enemy of the Earl of Essex!!
 - o Gives the book an aristocratic aura
- at the same time designed for the most flexible use in as many households as possible:
 - o very flexible instrumentation and combination of voices:

"The First Booke of Songes or Ayres of four partes with Tableture for the Lute: So made that all the partes together, or either of them seuerally may be song to the Lute, Orpherian or Viol de gambo. [...] Also an invention by the sayd Author for two to playe vpon one Lute." (Dowland 1970, n.p.)

- o invention of the 'table book layout'

→ Dowland's aim was to make his name a standard reference before he left England for Denmark. It worked: His book was a bestseller, and he was soon the most famous musician in his time.

11. Why did Dowland get away with his subversive lyrics?

- **privacy of the performance arena of Dowland's lute songs**
 - o Table book layout!

Fischlin writes:

"Both from the evidence in composers' prefatory remarks to the songbooks and from the iconographical evidence of contemporary representations of the lute in performance, then, it becomes evident that the lute song's performance context is neither geared towards a notion of audience as contemporary performance practice

would have it nor possessed of the public dimensions of Renaissance entertainments. If anything, the radical newness of the lute song as an early modern manifestation of European secular song lies in its marking out of a private space apart from the public dimensions of theatre, courtly entertainment, or sacred music, all of which were intractably associated with public spectacle and functioning. (Fischlin 1997, 59)

- songfulness of his tunes?

It is in fact unlikely that the courtly circles did not get the subversive messages:

- There is evidence about the *Second Book of Songes* dedicated to Lady Bedford, a favourite of the Queen and a famous patron of the arts:
 - o David Price writes that she "showed herself openly hostile to a book which seemed to contain so many references to the recent demise of the Earl of Essex" (Price 1981, 185)
- State censorship was reserved for writing that was used in public performances (e.g. theatre)

12. The (schizophrenic) double strategy of Dowland's songbooks

Dowland probably would never have degraded himself with print culture, had he only been accepted as one of the Queen's musicians. But since he was not

- A) His songs offered him a way to secretly express his frustration and dissatisfaction with the Queen in a relatively secure way
- B) He could boost up his popularity and market value to increase his chances of a future employment

13. The sound of melancholy

!! The ‘invention’ of the ‘sound of melancholy’ and Dowland’s self-fashioning as the ultimate ‘melancholy man’ as the ultimate marketing twist !!

Advantages of the melancholy man:

- a) the melancholic Petrarchan lover as a mask to hide behind whilst criticising the political system
 - b) was the latest fashion of the day in poetry and other arts
- The motto of the *First Booke of Songs* (from Ovid):

“Nec prosunt domino, quæ prosunt omnibus, artes” (“The arts which help all mankind cannot help their master”).
 - Later signs letters with “semper dowland, semper doles” etc.

After the success of the first *Booke* the *Second Booke of Songs* (1600) becomes a ‘concept album’ of sorts establishing Dowland’s musical trademark, the **Lacrimae-Motiv**

The image shows a musical score for John Dowland's piece "Flow my teares" (1600, II). It consists of two staves: the upper staff is for the voice (CANTVS) and the lower staff is for the bass (BASSVS). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The melody in the voice part is marked with 'L' and 'LVT'. The lyrics are: "Flow my teares fall from your springs, Down vain lights shine you no more, Flow tears from your springs, Ex - Down lights shine no more, no".

The lachrimae-motif in John Dowland, “Flow my teares” (1600, II).
Transcription by Kelnberger (in Kelnberger 2004a, 422).

!! Dowland establishes the 'Soundtrack' of English melancholy !!

- 'Lacrimae' is continually quoted in other media (theatre, poetry, public letters etc), spreads to all sections of society
- there is nothing originally 'English' about the Lacrimae theme, which was a "a standard emblem of grief" (Holman 1999, 40) in European music of the time
- Dowland almost certainly took it over either from the Italian composer Lassus, or from Luca Marenzio; Holman concludes that "[o]f course, we have no means of knowing how conscious any of these borrowings were, though they at least suggest that Dowland was immersed in the music of his great continental contemporaries" (Holman 1999, 42).

14. Dowland's Englishness

'Englishness' as a product of the tension between the 'two times of the nation' (see session 7):

Desire to be part of the national *pedagogy* (i.e. to be an official royal 'musicus')

vs.

Individual self-fashioning and subversive *performance* from the margins of national culture

!! The 'essential' Englishness in Dowland is precisely a product of *not belonging* to the centre of English national culture, enabled by the formation of new performance arenas, facilitated by changes in the media system and conditioned by evolving social and institutional conditions. (see sessions 2-6). !!

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