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Reforming Sound and Silence:

Oratorian Spirituality and the Laude in Rome 1550-1600

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Musicology

by

Monica Christine Chieffo

2021

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2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reforming Sound and Silence:

Oratorian Spirituality and the Laude in Rome 1550-1600

by

Monica Christine Chieffo

Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Nina Eidsheim, Chair

In this dissertation I present a social and material microhistory of sound and music in early modern Catholicism. Based on musical analysis of the genre of the laude, and supported by original research into the institutional records of the Oratory of Filippo Neri, including descriptions and accounts of meetings, various devotions, poetry and music, I investigate processes of spiritual production after Trent which occurred at the boundaries of the divine, the corporeal body, and intimate practices of sound. In each investigation sound figures prominently on a material spectrum to include vocality, conversation, composed music, mental and vocal forms of prayer, and silence. I begin by drawing on the Oratorians' private institutional records

ca. 1550 when the group was a small, burgeoning reform order in Rome, moving to the 1580s when the order was at the height of their growth and musical pastoral work in Rome. The final analyses then culminate around 1600 when Neri's Oratory became a formalized institution whose core membership relied as much on the precious quality of silence as they did sound amid the most urbanized regions of Rome.

In contradistinction to the neighboring Society of Jesuits, who used catechism singing for indoctrination purposes, my research shows the ways in which the Oratorians used music and prayer to invite freer forms of listening among Romans precisely at a point in the Counter Reformation years when the Church exercised increased formal power over civic and parish life. Understanding this pivotal episode of Oratorian activity also unsettles extant scholarship that emphasizes hearing primarily as a means of social control in the post-Tridentine period through *recte sentire*, or correct hearing. Furthermore, the musical and poetic content of the Oratorians' laude, or three-four voice polyphonic songs featuring spiritual and semi-secular themes, has been characterized as simple music in the scholarly literature. However, the present study invites historians to reconsider the laude genre as an overlooked but rich archive of public spiritual listening in the late *cinquecento.* I contend the musical style of the laude gave rise to sophisticated modalities of the spiritual, in part by attracting non-expert listeners and encouraging them to embrace the human body as a powerful expression of piety. Drawing on music and poetic analysis, close readings of period source texts, theories of social value, and insights from the material study of religion, "Reforming Sound and Silence" explores how the Oratorians at the end of the 16th century used sound and listening specifically to foster religious creativity and, possibly, to promote freedom from ecclesiastical ideology.

The dissertation of Monica Christine Chieffo is approved.

Olivia Bloechl

Elisabeth C. Le Guin

Bronwen Wilson

Nina Eidsheim, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

This dissertation is dedicated

to my mom, Patty, and my sister, Andrea,

and submitted in loving memory of my dad, Christopher John Chieffo.

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Introduction

At the end of the 16th century, the Oratorians had established themselves as one of the most influential reform communities in Rome. Like many newly created orders at the time, including the Theatines, Capuchins, Barnabites, and the Society of Jesuits, the Oratorians endeavored to improve the spiritual health of the city of Rome and to renew public faith after the Protestant Reformation. In response to the Church's call for a uniformed spiritual front to renew the losses incurred by the spread of Protestantism, the Jesuits, who had been established in Rome since 1540, took a militant approach to spiritual renewal. They swore special allegiance to the pope and designed systematic ways to educate the illiterate masses in the doctrine and sacraments. The Oratorians also found ways to educate and engage what they perceived as the spiritual wilderness of Rome. However, in many ways, the Oratorians became the counterparts to the Jesuits due to their less systematic approach to pastoral care in the city and because they never swore allegiance to the pope, remaining an independent Catholic brotherhood to this day.

Based on archival research of the institutional records, including descriptions and accounts of meetings, devotions, poetry, and music at the Biblioteca Vallicelliana, the Archivio della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri, and the British Library, this dissertation offers a microhistory based in sound of the early institutional formation of the Oratorians. In particular, I draw on primary evidence ca. 1550 when they were a burgeoning reform order in Rome, through to the 1580s when they were at the peak of their pastoral work in Rome, culminating roughly around 1600 with the cessation of what had been a steady production of music books, or books of laude, produced for public use by Oratorians. At the same time, the project also serves as a social and material history of sound in early modern Catholicism, and

offers various points of entry into the investigation of the social construction of sound through the body in processes of spiritual production and even transformation into transcendent social value. To this end, I offer an investigation of how sound—understood on a broad material spectrum of forms of vocality, conversation, composed music, interior thought, and importantly, silence—was socially and materially constructed by the Oratorians reformers and the public they engaged in the last quarter of the 16th century.

In contradistinction to the Jesuits, who used catechism singing and listening for indoctrination purposes, my research shows the Oratorians figured sound as an open-ended medium. The Oratorians, lead by St. Filippo Neri, invited listening to support the creation of individual spiritual value during years of increased power by the Church over civic and parish life. Understanding this pivotal episode of Catholic reform during years of increased ecclesiastical reach by the Church in Rome unsettles extant scholarship that emphasizes hearing as a primary means of social control through correct hearing, or *recte sentire*.[1] Indeed, the musical style of the laude (3-4 voice polyphonic songs on spiritual and semi-secular themes) has been described in music historical scholarship as simple music. The following chapters show the ways in which they gave rise to sophisticated modalities of the spiritual, to support religious creativity, and possible freedom against ecclesiastical ideology.

Methodologically, I employ musical and poetic analysis, supported by theories of social value and sound, while harnessing important details from urban geography and insights from the material study of Catholic piety. My approach to early modern music history—both theoretical and historicist—does not so much bridge a "gap" in scholarship as expand the purview of musicology that typically encompasses the history of works and clerical decrees to also include

[1] See Frederick J. McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

the experiential history of the "low." In other words, I present informed but semi-speculative analysis to construct an experiential historical field to consider what ordinary listeners might have gained from virtually unlimited versions of knowledge production made largely by sound. I am inspired by the analytical thinking of sound studies to reveal entangled agencies and materialities of sound in Neri's Oratorians of Rome. As my approach is a close reading of objects and records pertaining to one institution's approach to reform, along with localized contexts, I am also not claiming to trace a culture of sound, auditory culture, or monolithic sound history of any kind. Therefore, themes of sociality, individuality, and power run through each chapter. Each case presents particular confluences, entanglements, and encounters with sound objects and the nature of human susceptibility to religion via mediation with acoustic presences.

The Oratorians functioned essentially as a semi-secular lay confraternity with some ordained members. Their musical pastoral work traversed both the high and low social strata of Roman society, across parish and civic life, through private iterations of acoustic intimacy and public displays of song in urban space, as a material presence available to all demographics across Rome. Importantly, sound was socially and materially constructed for personal yield at the same time that it circulated spiritual value to support the process of institutionalization of Filippo Neri's reformed piety.

I employ the terms Catholic reform and early modern Catholicism to encapsulate a period of plurality in which many groups and individuals sought to renew the Church from within rather than as an offensive response to Protestantism, per se. The Jesuit priest and scholar, John O'Malley suggests the capacious term "early modern Catholicism."[2] Thus, I use early modern Catholicism to capture the multiplicity of reform after Trent. This conception, rather than the "Counter-Reformation," encompasses the agencies of independent groups like the Oratorians

[2] John O'Malley, *Trent and All That* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1-15.

that operated outside the Church as a centralized power, and indeed, never swearing allegiance to the pope as the Church. Early modern Catholicism also encompasses the material presence of sound supported a spectrum of religious activity that defined religiosity, doctrine and devotion, clergy, laity, parish and confraternity.[3]

Overview of Chapters

Each of the four chapters offers a close analyses or deep read of primary materials spanning the most traditional scores and records to the nontraditional with acoustic space and interior, or de-visualized hearing, in order to trace formations of social and spiritual value across entangled agencies of bodies and sonic practices of conversation, prayer, and listening in institutional and public space. In each case, I illuminate the fundamental and sometimes contradictory ways in which sound gave rise to both the legitimized practices and particular values of the Oratorian institution and to microexperiences of individual spirituality and agency across the public space of Rome.

Chapters 1 places the earliest social gatherings of Neri and his followers among the reform groups of Rome while harnessing insights from various primary sources to construct a microhistory of the intimate physicality of the early *oratorio della sera* as a burgeoning institution of reformed spirituality. Sound figures prominently in the first gatherings of the *oratorio*, as a pervasive material wielded by the small collective for their devotional exercises. Sound, in the form of improvisatory vocalities and acoustic intimacy helped to organize divine space and spiritual experience around the corporeal body as the primary site for experience. My research in this chapter extends the musical, or sonorous, history of the Oratorians in Rome

[3] O'Malley, 9; Daniele Filippi and Michael J. Noone, eds. *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: Perspectives from Musicology* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

further back to 1550 prior to their musical publications and to the official date of 1575 of the consecration of their church, the Santa Maria in Valicella. All together, I provide a microhistorical account of sound and acoustics in the *de facto* founding of Neri's company of reformers.

Chapter 2 turns outward from the private meetings of Neri's inner circle to the public display of the laude. I present the poetic laude texts against their most closely related genre for public use, the Jesuit *dottrina* prints. The *dottrina* books, like the laude, were intended for public use to encourage laypersons toward piety. However, singing the Jesuit books were designed specifically to encourage singing the catechism. In contrast, the poet of many of the laude texts, Agostino Manni's verses exemplified Oratorian precepts of Divine Grace and Christian Optimism that supported non-imitative forms of piety and open-ended experiences with the humanized divine persona and naturalistic imagery of Christian reform. I discuss how the Oratorian laude of the 1580s challenges the historicist notion that fixed forms of prayer, including catechism songs for memorization and internalization of doctrine, produced one type of knowledge, or were at least intended to reproduce one type of Catholic piety. They expand the form and affordances of prayer beyond cultivated musical knowledge and, as I contend, enforce no real acceptance of salvation or the confirmation of true belief. I use the term sound object to capture the ways in which the laude were also reflexive, enacting listening events that might expand and transform the listener's mundane reality into spiritual, or even sacred space.

Chapter 3 shifts to the sonic dimension of the laude to interrogate the musical style as represented by three selections in *Terzo libro* 1588. Through analysis I demonstrate how the Oratorian composers absorbed an array of sounds that resist one frame of hearing, like the catehicsm songs. Thus, I offer an alternative to the "harmonic style" defined by Arnaldo Morelli.

Conceived as sound objects, the amalgam of styles across the collection of laude in *Il Terzo libro* suggests a shifting and expanding frame for interpretation by the individual as a listener-participant. Like the poetic expansion of forms of prayer in Chapter 2, in this chapter I argue the amalgam of styles ultimately resist one meaning (i.e., the internalization of the Catholic catechism). The ambiguous style of the laude thus calls on the agency of even the most uninitiated or non-expert public listeners as participants in recreative acts of religious experience. Ultimately, I offer that the listener-participant, as constructed by Oratorian laude co-produced spiritual value outside the seemingly inescapable reality of ecclesiastical mediation.[4] I provide historiographical context that illustrates the ways in which clerical and noble individuals close to the Oratorian orbit attempted to police listening behaviors. Finally, I open up the analysis to a consideration of what would have been the opposite of close, or rapt listening for spiritual gain to take seriously the reality of consumption of generic sound and of boredom as an acceptable mode of receptivity related to *acedia,* and spiritual good in the Augustinian tradition.

Finally, Chapter 4 investigates the convergences among individual behaviors and built conditions that constructed silence as material acoustic presence in the institution. In this way, the final chapter serves as the complementary pair to the discussion of the earliest *oratorio della sera* and acoustic intimacy in Chapter 1. I show how the Oratorians employed a spectrum of sonic behaviors, including architectural maneuvers to fabricate and protect the special presence of silence as much as negate noise, and to cultivate the interior life of sounds that relied on deep-seated practices of silent prayer, or *oratione mentale*. This later practice built upon and modulated the Dominican monastic tradition of secret prayer toward a demonstrably more pure and private notion of silence, as part of the history of privatized experience. While their pastoral

[4] See Juame Aurell, *Medieval Self-Coronations: The History and Symbolism of a Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). I adopt this language "ecclesiastical mediation" in part from Aurell, and applying it here as the invisible reach of ecclesiastical power into spiritual spaces.

presence quite literally amplified their presence across the city, Neri and the more privileged members of the *oratorio* co-constructed silence as a medium of value for the institution. I also trace convergences of silence with the body to generate social value in its most extreme exhibitions of silence as acousmatic listening. Tracing value at the microlevel of the social presents contradictions and heightened moments of social value as transcendent value. For the Oratorian order, Neri's extraordinary acousmatic, or ecstatic experiences depended on the already established uses of silent prayer to conjure divine presences in the mind. Finally, in Neri's *vita* and canonization, disabled forms of sight, as blindness are intimately linked with sound as the inducement of one over the other is revealed to be a mechanism for bringing oneself closer to God and hearing His voice.

Sound as a spiritual modality in post-Tridentine Catholic reform

Music, "in the broadest sense of the word was ubiquitous to the early modern ear."[5] As a "deployed sound" in cities, music not only enhanced devotion but also encouraged listening to shape and organize the religious identities of individuals in European centers, either to reinforce Catholic Doctrine or to compete with Protestant hymns.[6] In Rome, the papal city, music was used for the promulgation of devotional knowledge. After Trent, many confraternities arose specifically to promote Christian doctrine among laypersons and children, such as the *Compagnia de'servi de'putti della compagnia della carità* founded in 1560. These groups, chief among them being the Jesuits adopted song in their militant commitment to teaching the doctrine in the *Res publica Christiana*, the Christian universal commonwealth, which was felt particularly

[5] Noel O'Regan, "Music, Memory and Faith: How Did Singing in Latin and the Vernacular Influence What People Knew About Their Faith in Early Modern Rome," *The Italianist* 34 (2014): 437-448.
[6] Alexander Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 170-171.

in Rome.

Prior to their accumulation of any real power, music was essential to the small devotional meetings, and to the pastoral activities of the Oratorians. Song punctuated devotions, from the most intimate private meetings in bedroom quarters, to a growing audience in the attics and backrooms of local churches.[7] The order also used song to create opportunity for public worship in the city plazas and gardens. For this reason, sound throughout the dissertation refers to a spectrum of sounds, including music, voice, speech, interior sounds, and silence. In this way, my approach to sound highly localized and transformational to examine the entangled relationships between individual experiences of at times the same sonic phenomena in different ways that created religion.

As I will explain in depth, for Neri and his company, experiences with sound intertwined with experiences with divinity though both were deeply rooted in the body and the most interior thresholds of the body ultimately set the terms of reformed Catholicism. Indeed, as Jonathan Sterne has written, "sound is a product of the human senses and not a thing in the world apart from humans."[8] The Oratorians believed and experienced sound from other worlds, as the realm of the divine, but their piety embraced mortality and corporeality as ways to experience God's world. Eyes, ears, mouths, bodies co-produced the value of sound and silence, and the very terms that allowed these values to be institutionalized in early modern Catholicism. For these reasons, the ontology of sound I assume in the project is material; the propagation of sound highly relational.[9] This lends itself to analyzing the ways in which music and sound could create

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[7] Louis Ponnelle and Louis Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of his Times 1515-1595* (London: Sheed and Ward 1932).
[8] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 11.
[9] Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (MIT Press, 2012); Brian Kane, "Sound Studies Without Auditory Culture: A Critique of the Ontology Turn, *Sounds Studies,* 1:1 (2015): 2-21. While Goodman's material ontology of sound suggests the vibration upon the body precedes

personal spirituality, or even sacred space according to sonic action rather than through the affordances of a consecrated space, per se. The movement of sound between spaces and bodies is *de facto* experiential, as carrying sound with the body can be capacious and widespread but also highly localized, including in a single body.[10]

Reform context for singing the Christian doctrine

Scholars have demonstrated how catechism songs were designed and employed to internalize doctrinal knowledge in early moderns.[11] In particular, O'Regan and Filippi, demonstrate that music had a central role in the education to teach laypersons to instill Counter-Reformation piety. Sound accompanied affirmations of Counter-Reformation piety, in particular the connection between the soul and Christ, and of God as the one true Father. Often music was based on intense pious topics like the suffering in Christ's passion, or versions of the Stabat *mater* that focus on Mary's suffering during Christ's crucifixion.[12] Melodies were also used to enhance the reception of the words of the conventional prayers like the *Credo* and *Ave Maria.* In this way, sound encouraged the memorization of the tenets of faith. As such, music, as sound, could render laypersons susceptible to indoctrination.

---

everything, occurring even before cognition, Brian Kane's critiques this ontology to points out the difficulty in discussing a version of Goodman's sound as listening in phenomenological terms because Goodman figures viscerality and cognition as discrete operations in the body. I agree with Kane that this incorrectly separates sensuality from our understanding of sources of sound, or objects. .

[10] My thinking in this regard is influenced by spatial theorists such as Henri Lefebvre (spatial production), Gaston Bachelard (spatial poetics), Michel de Certeau (geography and orientation), and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (production of presence). Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholon-Smith (Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. Steven F. Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[11] Murray Bradshaw, "Salvation, Right Thinking, and Cavalieri's 'Rappresentatione di Anima, et di Corpo' (1600)" *Musica Disciplina* 2 (1998-2002): 233-250; Daniele V. Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine: Early Modern Jesuits and the singing of the Catechism," *Early Music History* 34, (2015), 1-42. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261127915000030

[12] O'Regan, "Music, Memory and Faith," 440.

Daniele Filippi has demonstrated the ubiquity of niche print genres of music for singing the catechism that call attention to the use of sound for indoctrination of Counter-Reformation piety overlooked in the history of early modern Catholicism.[13] Yet this body of music accounts for the majority of the ways in which laypersons might have been taught to use music as mnemonic device. The Jesuits, in their 1576 *Lodi e Canzoni Spirituali per cantare*, also used laude by interpolating them into a prayer program as a tool to prepare the pious student to then better absorb the messages of the prayers.

Thus, Filippi's recent work offers an important invitation for a concerted study of the counterpart to the catechism songs with the Oratorian books of laude. In his survey of the *longe duree* of catechism songs, Filippe also sites the subliminal quality of Neri and the Oratorians to use the laude to "truly win to God" even libertines and heretics with the "tasty bait of what they liked most."[14] Indeed, the latter music, the laude, was employed by the Oratorians to overtly entice the public with all the trappings of sound. In doing so, however, my research shows they opened up onto other ways of relating to spiritual sound and knowledge creation that operated adjacent to Christo-centric piety and the acquisition of doctrinal knowledge. To this end, I build on the Filippi's singularly important study of the closest repertory to the Oratorian laude intended specifically for lay use and reception in the post-Tridentine era. As I will show in the dissertation, the Oratorian laude, particularly in the 1580s during its most public deployment in the city, expanded the conventions of extant prayer. Ultimately, while sound as an ambiguous modality of spiritual production could encourage indoctrination, sincere faith was not a guarantee.

[13] Daniele V. Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine: Early Modern Jesuits and the singing of the Catechism," in *Early Music History* 34, (2015): 1-42. . https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261127915000030
[14] Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine," 15.

Resituating the historiography of the Oratorian laude in Catholic reform Rome

Conventional music historiographies about late Renaissance music have upheld the Oratorian's spiritual songs, or *laude*, as an important stylistic episode in the long-term development in Europe of the dramatic dialogue and oratorio.[15] The focus of extant work in Anglophone and Italian scholarship specifically has been to historicize the Roman laude, published by the Oratorians, as antecedents to the more fully-fledged oratorios of the later 17th century that were based on similar religious and dramatic narratives. Examples include the music of Giacomo Carissimi, prominent composer of the 17th-century Roman School, whose large-scale dramatic works for singers and instrumentalists depicted biblical figures like *Jephta* (1648), or dramatized morality plays to relay lessons about greed, judgment, or vanities. The foundational work of Howard Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: Vol 1,* published in 1977, catalogues the laude printed in Rome during the Oratorian's early years 1570s and 80s, to reveal seminal dramatic and dialogical elements. In short, the works of Smither, as well as Domenico Alaleona, comprise monumental style histories that tend to offer a teleological approach to the historiography of the laude that ultimately monumentalize the *oratorio.*

Additionally, the scholarship that cemented the extraordinary status of the Oratorians as a musical institution was Arnaldo Morelli's *Il tempio armonico: Musica nell'Oratorio dei Filippini in Roma (1575-1705)*. Morelli catalogues many of the musical scores and records related to the

[15] Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio* (University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 24-25; Christopher Black, "Feast Days and Private Confraternity Devotion," *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Howard E. Smither, "Narrative and Dramatic Elements in the Laude Filippine, 1563-1600," *Acta Musicologica* 41 (1969): 186-199. G. Pasquetti, *L'oratorio musicale in Italia* (Florencse: 1906); Domenico Alaleona., *Storia dell'oratorio musicale in Italia,* 2nd ed. (Milan, 1945); G. Dixon, "Oratorio o mottetto? Alcune riflessioni sulla classificazione della musica sacra del Seicento," *Nuova Rivista Musicale Italiana* 17 (1983), 203-222; M. Boyd., "Baroque Oratorio: A Terminology Inexactitude?" *The Musical Times* 119, 1624 (June 1978) 507-508, and Franchi S., ed. *Percorsi dell'oratorio romano: Da Historia Sacra'a melodrama spiritual* (Rome, 2002); Howard Smither, "Antecedents of the Oratorio: Sacred Dramatic Dialogues, 1600-1630," Oratorios of the Italian Baroque 1 (Laaber, 1985).

activity of the Oratorio dei Fillipini over a span of 130 years. Takne all together, scholarship on the laude generally reputes that the genre was closely related to the early dialogues and monophonic spiritual singing that resemble opera. However, the emphasis of this historiography on the invention of monody obviates a more pertinent consideration of what could have been deeper-rooted processes of lay spiritual listening and receptivity in early modern Catholicism.

It is necessary to reframe the historiography of the laude from a selective history of progressive musical style to one in which the laude are understood in a synchronic context, as they were socially relevant and sonically meaningful to their audiences during the years of their publication under Catholic reform. If the laude has been framed by Italian and American scholarship as a "religious branch of opera,"[16] then the second way the laude has been framed is as a rekindling of the medieval devotional ritual of singing *laude* in front of relics, in processions or as part of funerals.[17] Nils Holger Petersen and Eyolf Ostrem have worked to decouple the genre of the laude from more modern works and conceptions of the sung oratorio. Their study re-contextualizes the Roman laude in the ritual origins of *laudesi* confraternities, or praise-focused brotherhoods with an emphasis on singing rather than penitential acts. They question the fundamental idea of music enhancing devotions and devotional texts through music's function, aesthetics, and the role of musical beauty.[18] Tackling monumental style histories head-on, Anne Piejus has recently offered a richly analyzed counter-study to the work of Smither and others. Piejus offers a more situated study of the laude in late 16th-century Rome that is "freed of historical preconceptions, leads to a complete reversal of such an interpretation [of the laude as

[16] William Sternfeld, *The Birth of Opera* (Clarendon Press: 1993).
[17] Eyolf Ostrem and Nils Peterson, *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music: The devotional practice of laude singing in late-Renaissance Italy* (Brepols, 2008).
[18] Eyolf Ostrem and Nils Holger Petersen, *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music: The Devotional Practice of Lauda Singing in Late-Renaissance Italy* (Brepols, N.V., 2008).

antecedents to the oratorio].”[19] Piejus recontextualizes the Roman laude in the tradition of the medieval monophonic song, as a revival in post-Tridentine Rome for the purposes of public renewal and bolstering public piety.[20] This collection of more recent scholarhip offers a repository in which to deepen our thinking of the role of sound and singing in both group and individual devotion, and serves as a point of departure for the present study in the Roman context.

Neri and the early Oratorians

As a newly formed spiritual community in Rome that also had strong ties to Florence, the Oratorians stood apart from other orders in the papal city because Fillipo Neri was 1) a foreigner, as Florence was a Republic, and 2) imbued his piety and preaching with his experience as a Dominican at San Marco monastery in Florence. Neri, like the monastic orders of the Benedictines and Dominicans before him, never swore allegiance to the pope. Neri came to Rome from the San Marco community of Dominicans in Florence around the time the Jesuits were founded in Rome. Neri had deep connections to Florence, also through his spiritual father and predecessor, the 15th-century radical friar Girolamo Savonarola, who was an extreme conservative of the Catholic faith and always at odds with both Roman curia and the Medici. Neri adopted Savonrola’s republican spirit through public displays of preaching and song. He was also a devout Dominican who did not teach with pomp and piousness; rather, he garnered a reputation for unconventional and eccentric forms of piety due to his straightforward style “adapted to all manner of folk, particularly the common people,” as well as his love of music,

[19],Anne Piejus, “Artistic Revival and Conquest of the Soul in Early Modern Rome,” in *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism. Perspectives from Musicology*, ed. Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 149-172.
[20] Ibid., 150.

humor, and embracing his mortality through humility.[21] Despite his status as a foreigner to the papal city, Neri was a highly influential figure in Rome and spiritual father to countless laypersons across the different regions of the city.

Many founding members and associates in the Oratorian social orbit were not priests, but became convinced to take orders after working closely with Neri. The common ground the men in Neri's company of Oratorian order was a deep interest in the apostolic traditions in early Christian history and lives of the saints. The Oratorians existed as a social collective first before eventually establishing themselves as an order in 1575. They prayed informally, punctuating their devotional exercises with music, poetry, and the humanistic philosophy of Christian Optimism that took a joyous view of the works of God in the world. Key figures of the company include Neri, along with fellow Florentine and Dominican friar, Serafino Razzi. Another key figure to the Oratorian milieu was the poet, Agostino Manni, who composed the majority of texts for spiritual dialogues for Neri's oratory, including the *Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo* of 1600 that is not only a quintessential reform work but also one of the first fully sung dramatic works. Finally, prominent members connected to the order in Rome also include the writer and historian of early Christian, Antonio Gallonio, as well as other ecclesiastical historians, clerics, in particular Cesare Baronio, known for his famous history of the early Church, the *Annales ecclesiastici*, Gabriele Paleotti, the Archbishop of Bologna, and Cardinal Borromeo, the Archbishop of Milan.

In 1575, the Oratorians settled in the rundown neighborhood of the Vallicelliana in a church that was gifted to them by Pope Gregory XIII. The abandoned church, the Santa Maria in Vallicella, had been built around the ruins of an early Christian basilica and "was very small and

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[21] Antonio Gallonio, *The Life of St. Philip Neri,* trans. Jerome Bertram of the Oxford Oratory (Oxford Press: Family Publications, 2005),106 (89).

in bad condition, so the Fathers thought it ought to be restored since it was ideally situated in the most suitable part of the city for the function of the congregation."[22] Neri was fiercely committed to improving what he considered the spiritual wilderness of Rome, and their early pastoral work was highly provincial. The church was located to the east of the Tiber River, across from St. Peter's, and just down the road from the Jesuits' mother church of the Gesù. However, the residential area was a densely built block that had a reputation for poverty and prostitution. Indeed, upon first moving to the Santa Maria in Vallicelliana the locals threw stones in protest of the new occupants and the renovations they had begun on the old site.[23] Thus, Neri wanted to form his congregation in the boisterous Vallicella neighborhood of Rome because it was populous and in need of charity and care.

The Oratorian composers and music publications in the 1570- 1617

The core membership of the early Oratorians included composers of masses, spiritual dialogues, and the popular polyphonic song genre of the *laude* adapted for Roman audiences from older versions of street singing by an untrained public in the 1480s in Florence under the radical anti-Roman clergy preacher, Girolamo Savonarola, and the *laudesi* confraternities of the 14th century. The composers included Giovanni Animuccia, who was a prominent composer also for the Vatican's Capella Guilia, the young Spanish composer, Francesco Soto, who served as Animuccia's predecessor, as well as Giovenale Ancina, who was a wealthy prelate and Bishop.

The Oratorians were highly active in the publishing market,in Rome. They published two full series of books of laude from roughly 1570 and 1600, but could be extended to 1617.[24] The

[22] Antonio Gallonio, *The Life of St. Philip Neri,*125 (109).
[23] Ibid., 126 (110).
[24] Howard E. Smither. *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 1, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 72.

books contained the music of several authords, but not all of them are known. Importantly, we know Animuccia oversaw the editions before 1570, in particular the *Il primo libro and Il secondo libro* of the first series. After Animuccia's death in 1571, the young protégé and maestro di capella, Francesco Soto, oversaw the next series, with assistance from the Gardano family of boutique printers in Rome. Gardano printed some of the books in the second series extending into the 1590s, ostensibly due to the fact that the books were popular.

The third book of laude, *Il Terzo libro,* published in 1588, serves as the primary focus of this dissertation. The third book was part of the second full series produced by the Gardano press after Animuccia's death, and was oversaw by Soto. This book has various laude compositions by Soto and other composers surrounding the Oratory who are not attributed. The collection includes laude with three-voices in relatively basic polyphony (compared with the complexity one might hear in polyphonic masses or motets) and texts range from prayer-like themes, to semi-sacred spiritual poetry. *Il Terzo libro* is emblematic of the pastoral work and public reach of the Oratorians to attract early modern Romans through listening and singing.

A theme that runs through the publications of Oratorian laude is the notion of simplicity as a style of music that might better inspire open participation through listening on the part of a general public. The composers were invested in complementing elaborate music with simpler music to best serve a wider demographic of listeners in the city, and to attract them to the oratory. Animuccia had already published the *Primo libro delle laudi* in 1570 and *Il Secondo libro* that contained more elaborate music than the songs collected by Razzi, and was for "the consolation and needs of many spiritual and devout persons, religious and secular alike."[25] Another elaborate publication followed in part to contrast the popular simple collection of

[25] Quoted in Patrick Macey,*Bonfire Songs: Sonvarola's Musical Legacy,* (Clarendon Press, 1988), 55. Macey also points out that although Animuccia's second book claimed to also contain more elaborate musicpolyphony though it does contain simple, basically homophonic music for 3-4 voices.

Razzi's first book. This next publication, *Il Secondo libro delle laudi* printed in Rome in 1570, also oversaw by Animuccia, featured multi-part voices up to 8 voices in more sophisticated polyphony to attract a higher caliber of noble listener to the Oratorian church.[26] Thus, as complement to the earlier collections, the *Il Terzo libro* 1588 purposefully betray simpler, three-voiced settings.

The Roman laude, along with the Jesuit songs for singing the catechism, competed in the music printing market with other popular secular repertoire such as the madrigal and frottola.[27] The 1588 version features a choir layout printed by the Roman presses instead of the previous part-book format, which had separate voices—soprano-tenor-bass-printed separately. These new choir layouts to the laude books, in a convenient quarto size, afforded professional or even amateur singers the ability to share the same books, singing close together even in the streets. The performative affordances—to blend voices, and have easier, and cheaper access to these small choirbook formats—solidified the Roman laude as unique blend of accessible, popular, and cultivated music than the popular, brash monophonically (all singing the same line) sung

[26] The dedication says that the *Primo libro* 1563 contains music also for the S. Girolamo di Carita**,** that aimed at a certain simplicity: per consolatione di coloro che venicano all'Oratorio di S. Girolamo, io mandai fuori il Primo Livro, nelle quali attesi a servare una certa simplicita, che alle parole medesime, alla qualita di quel divoto luogo, & al mio fine, che era solo di eccitar divotione pareva si convenisse. "for consolation of those who come to the S. Girolamo di Carita, I sent out the First Libro, in which they were expected to serve a certain simplicity, which in the same words, to the quality of that divine place, and to my end, which was only to stir excitement seemed to fit."

[27] Daniele V. Filippi, *Roma Sonora:* An Atlas of Roman Sounds and Musics, *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492-1692,* ed. Daniele Filippi, Barbara Wisch, and Simon Ditchfield (Leiden: Brill 2019), 266- 281.

precedents of Florence and earlier.[28] The Roman laude books were a product of collaboration, as both Soto and Animuccia had a very close working relationship with the printers, Antonio Blado and Alessandro Gardano.[29] Venice had already become the capital for music printing, but the printing business in Rome had the benefit of smaller houses that could work more closely with clients to meet their specific needs.[30] In sum, the Oratorians' ambitious printing enterprise helped amplify the congregation's presence and eventually grow their importance and power in Rome, alongside, and perhaps in sonic competition with, the formidable, more established Jesuits.

Oratorio, social group, building, and musical genre

In order to situate the laude in the specific local context of late 16th-century reform Rome, and avoid anachronistic associations, it is important to clarify the distinction between the Oratorians, as a social group, the architectural oratory, or prayer hall, *and* the musical genre later called *oratorio,* the multi-part choral orchestral work that emerged in full form closer to the 1640s. Howard Smither is perhaps responsible for making the historiographical and stylistic connection between the music of the early company of Filippo Neri in Rome in the 16th century to the later 17th-century musical genre on the peninsula of the oratorio, as a longer, multi-part dramatic work similar to early opera. Smither nonetheless notes the oratorio as a genre was not

[28] James Haar has commented about the *canti carnascialeschi* of 15th-century Florence that these popular songs were typically sung by young boys and the public and must have sounded harsh, brash and were sung monophonically by untrained singers. Haar notes that even modern recordings of the Savonarolan laude from the 1480s that accompany Patrick Macey's research on Savonarolan laude are "too pretty." The laude were essentially beautified in Rome, and the composers were skilled, even when creating the most "simple" music for public listening, or possible singing. See James Haar, "Review: [Untitled] Reviewed Work: *Bonfire Songs. Savonarola's Musical Legacy* by Patrick Macey," *Renaissance Studies* 13. no. 4 (December, 1999) 495-498, 496.

[29] Jane A. Bernstein, "Print Culture, Music, and Early Modern Catholicism In Rome," *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: Perspectives from Musicology,* ed. Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone. (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 112-128.

[30] Thank you to Jane Bernstein for clarifying the distinction between Roman and Venetian presses.

widely recognized as a musical genre in Italy until at least the 1650s.[31] Arnaldo Morelli has done the important work of placing the much earlier work, Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione,* a spiritual dialogue, in the context of Neri's company and its "religious ethos."[32]

Yet, I have found there is still some slippery terminology and conflation in the music-historical imaginary between the specific *oratorio piccolo,* (the focus of Chapter 1) as the epithet to describe the various spaces of early meetings, and between the run-down oratory prayer hall that existed in the original Santa Maria Vallicelliana complex, and finally, the fully erected design of Borromini's *Oratorio dei Filippini,* that opened in 1639. In essence, we are talking about three very different phases of oratorio as a space before we even address Smither's musical genre of the mid to late 17th century, that was more fully orchestrated and organized in two or three major sections akin to an opera in multiple parts. This dissertation, in part, is my offering to help to further articulate the important architectural, musical, and social-spatial distinctions.

Borromini's oratorio, which is a Baroque structure, in many ways stands as an erected monument to the foundational years of the sociality and shared ambience of the *primo oratorio* of Neri's company. This early model allowed for the production of spirituality in the intimate rooms of the San Girolamo and San Giovanni created musical and sonic settings but are still a far cry from the compositional oratorios of the 1640s by the prominent composer of the Roman School, Giacomo Carissimi. In terms of building design, an oratory in the early 16th century referred to an unadorned prayer hall, and often to an unspecified space outdoors, along the

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[31] Smither, *History of the Oratorio*, 4.

[32] Arnaldo Morelli, "The Chiesa Nuova in Rome around 1600: Music for the Church, Music for the Oratory," *The Journal of Seventeneth-Century Music* 9, (2003). https://www.sscm-jscm.org/jscm/v9/no1/morelli.html

roadside or space that could be used to pray at home.[33] Thus, in late 16th century Rome, "oratory" existed firmly as an idea or mental place for prayers as much as a designated locale.

Creating intimacy and religious identity through paraliturgical uses of laude

The non-specificity and fluidity of the early oratory as a space also brings to the fore the degree to which spirituality could be accessed anywhere. Alexander Fisher, in his study of the combined soundscapes of Catholic and Protestants in Counter Reformation Bavaria, offers that early modern devotional space was a "delimited product of human action."[34] Similarly, in early modern Rome during reform this fluidity was possible largely through sounds, including the sounds of cultivated composed music heard by the ears of non-expert listeners. With a "new religious self-consciousness" during Catholic reform, sound and ephemeral human action could produce the possibility for religious experiences that fall out of the line with confessional reform and civic discipline. [35]

At the same time scholars have studied the nature of more personal modes of hearing that shape intimate experience through the laude of late medieval and early modern Catholicism. Patrick Macey suggests the laude played a crucial role in private devotion and mental prayer, especially in the proliferation of sacred laude in Florence. Lay devout might internalize messages

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[33] Evelyn Carole Voelker, *"Charles Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae,"* 1577. A Translation with Commentary and Analysis" (PhD diss, Syracuse Univesrity, 1977), 35-6; Lewine, *The Roman Church Interior;* Milton Joseph Lewine, "*The Roman Church Interior 1527-1580*" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1960).

[34] Alexander Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 170-171.

[35] Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda,* Chpts 2 and 3; CFP Music for Liturgy and Devotion in Italy around 1600. https://goldenpages.jpehs.co.uk/2016/05/06/music-for-liturgy-and-devotion-in-italy-around-1600/

of devotions, encouraged not by doctrine but by the radical leadership and promise of Catholic independence promulgated by Father Savonarola in the Florentine Carnival setting of the late *quattrocento*.[36] In this setting, the laude figured politically, but also in sensorial and individualistic ways across the sacred and urban landscapes.

Pamela Gravestock points to the intimate and sensorial dimensions rooted in the medieval laude to speculate about the "narcotic" quality of late medieval laude, as spiritual advisors strategically deployed these simple songs as a kind of "narcotic for the condemned" in the context of funereal processions and at the final moment before a public execution.[37] Similarly, Italian musicologist Gioia Filocamo posits the laude can be considered as a music that was sung and "orated" to oneself through silent, contemplative prayer in her study of the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Morte. After the Council of Trent, reformers encouraged the singing of laude and spiritual madrigals far outside the physical and mental bounds of the liturgy.[38] Indeed, the laude invites other sensorial experiences and yield spiritual knowledge through performance.

On writing a confessional history of Catholic reform

A growing number of historians have turned to a combined approach that use the secular, humanities approaches to history while also acknowledging the confessional reality of religion or spiritual culture in question.[39] A confessional history accounts for the phenomenon in religious experience that traditional intellectual history cannot. For instance, Neri's piety entailed

[36] Macey, *Bonfire Songs.*
[37] Pamela Gravestock, "Comforting the Condemned and the Role of the Laude," in *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspective,* ed. Christopher Black (Ashgate, 2006), 129-150.
[38] Gioia Filocamo, "Bolognese 'Orations' Between Song and Silence: The *Laude* of the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Morte," *Confraternitas* 26, (2015): 3-17.
[39] Benedict, Philip. "What is post-confessional Reformation history?" *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte-Archive for Reformation History* 97, no. 1 (2006): 277-283.

involvement with the terrestrial world of God's making, but it also involved episodes wherein Neri communed and was affected by divine, invisible but powerful forces, including the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. The presence of the Virgin and of God are at times tangible present to religious observers, yet conventional intellectual history tends toward empiricism, science, and even atheism, to generally deny miracles beyond a scientific explanation.[40]

A confessional approach, by contrast, accounts for metaphysical occurrences of Catholicism as part of the personal realities of believers engaged with the celestial realm through praying to divine beings, divine hearing, and miracles. Scholars of religion once used "confession" to represents an explicit statement of one form of faith and thus acceptance of a particular religious doctrine, such as Lutheranism or Catholicism. Historians using a confessional approach tended to privilege one religion over another (i.e., to choose a "confession"), and in the process might reduce another for comparison.[41]

By turning away from the confessional approach, this also caused a pushback in the secular humanistic and social sciences to merely replace one form with another, creating what Brad S. Gregory has called a "secular confessional history" that might preclude the understanding of religious believers and thus explain and reduce religious beliefs to something else.[42] As Gregory writes,

> "Confessional history appears in a somewhat different light if we regard its distinguishing mark not as the imposition of particular religious beliefs in the study of religion, but rather, more broadly, as the imposition of indemonstrable metaphysical beliefs*,* whatever their content, in the practice of that scholarship."

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[40] Brad S. Gregory, "No Room for God? History, Science, Metaphysics, and the Story of Religion," *History&Theory* 47, (2008): 495-519.

[41] Eric Cochrane, "What is Catholic Historiography?" *Catholic Historical Review* 56 *(*1975): 169-190.

[42] Brad S. Gregory, "The Other Confessional History: On Secular Bias in the Study of Religion," *History and Theory* 45, no. 4, (Dec 2006): 132-149, 136.

Using a combined approach, to my mind, is crucial to a more deeply engaged understanding of sound and sonic materials for reformed devotions in early modern Catholicism. Maintaining a partial confessional approach to account for religious phenomenon and experiences dovetails with the application of secular concepts, such as theories of social value, sound studies (to include sound objects, acousmatic sound, and the body.) Through a confessional approach to history, I take seriously the existence of the metaphysical or imaginary realm of early modern Catholic experience as a part of that history of a collection of individual experiences of piety, the sacred, and, at times, the transcendent. Key to the dissertation, then, is that the body, as corporeal, affords an agency and an opportunity for individuals to commune with the metaphysical, or even transform the mundane through the metaphysical.

The Body as a technology of religion

The state of corporeality serves as the basis for the body as a technology of religion. I use the idea of technology in the socio-historical context of the Oratorians and Catholic reform practices to investigate the religious experiences of bodies. Conceiving of the body as a technology during Catholic reform allowed the individual to be at the center of experience. In the passage from the *ricordanze* we begin to get an impression of the diverse, programmatic, and itinerate nature of Oratorian devotional exercises, around which the corporeal body is the center.

> After the Vespers and sermon given in the Church both on Sunday and on other days of celebration, the summer is enjoyed by those who frequent the oratory somewhere near the city, where [adrenati] made a little music, and recited by one son a short sermon, some are led to talk briefly about spiritual things, and [partonenti] to the salvation of the barnyard and after having made a little bit of music again, the exercise ends. [During] the winter then, that is, from the first of the day until Easter they gather in the mental oratory they say or count the litanies, the Pater Noster, and Ave Maria in the antiphon of the

> mass[.] On other days a sermon is recited by some child [of appropriate age] a little music then one of the priests, according to the order, makes a reasonably, useful [speech] with a simple style, for half an hour then make a little music, say three pater noster and three ave maria as they are recommended, and then end the exercises.[43]

Technology also foregrounds how spirituality during post-Tridentine reform, although ubiquitous, was still a choice, and the individual listener had the free will to engage the limits of the internal and external realities of early modern Catholicism. Each chapter summarized above presents in its own way a kind of micro-historical analysis of listening for this pronounced possibility of free will and choice embedded in expressions of religious creativity and open-ended ways of constructing and engaging with the spiritual through sound and silence.

Catholic reform listening vis-à-vis Foucault's "art of listening"

Michel Foucault has provided a now fully engaged idea of technology of the self whereby individuals in social groups throughout history could know the truth of themselves. In particular, Foucault traces the behavior of silent, unquestioned postures for listening that set a precedent for religious pedagogies of listening. In "Technologies of the Self," Foucault draws on classical philosophy to describe the way in which disciples learned an "art of listening," observed in later

[43] Biblioteca Valicelliana, Ms. O.57, p. 237
Dopo il Vespero et sermone fatto in Chiesa tanto la Domenica quand gl'altri giorni di festa, l'estate si condevono quelli che frequentano l'oratorio in qualche luogo vicino della citta, dove [adrenati] fatta un poco di musico, e recitato da uno figlio un breve sermone, si isiuitano alcuni a discorrere brevem.te di cose spirituali, e [partonenti] alla salve dell aia et dopo fatto di novo un poco di musica, finisce l'essercitio. l'Inverno poi cioe dal primo di giorno fino a Pasqua s'adunano nell'oratorio mentale dicono o vero contano le litanie, li pater noster, e ave maria i l'antifona della ma.on si repetano all i stesso modo che gl'altri giorni si recita da qualche figliolo un sermone conveniensi al tempo vita un poco di musica poi uno de nossi sacerdosi, secondo la tocca per ordine fa un raggionamente all'ordino con stile semplice, et utile per mezz'hora poi fatta un poco di Musica, si dicono tre noster? et tre ave maria per diventi bisogni, che si ravommandano, essi da fine a questo d'essercitio.

religious practices from Biblical interpretation to monasticism.[44] In brief, Foucault is describing a model of the technology of the self that resembles the orator of post-Tridentine Rome. The orator created a relationship with the listener, to paraphrase Foucault, in which a master, or teacher speaks, does not ask questions while the disciple meanwhile does not answer, but must listen and keep silent. Drawing on Philo of Alexandria's reference to reading the Bible, for Foucault this presents the same pedagogy, or art of listening. The teacher gives a monologue on the interpretation of the Bible and Philo writes that the people—the listeners—must always assume the same posture when listening.

Foucault's approach is influential, but I move in another direction with regard to the affordances of a technology of the body in religion. As I show in Chapter 1, the Oratorians did not cultivate a pedagogy, or "art of listening," as he calls it, that centered on the master speaker, as was featured, for instance, in post-Tridentine oration, often from the pulpit. For Foucault, this was ultimately an act of listening not to the master, but to *logos* to learn truth.[45] The Oratorians chose to turn to the example of the early Apostles in more dialogical ways of communicating "truths" in the early gatherings. Foucault might call this a reappearance of the lost dialogic pedagogy of Plato, or the loss of the dialectical structure between the obligation of listening to truth externally and listening to the self for truth within.[46] I am thinking of the technology of religion of the body not as ultimately listening for *something* in particular, as logos or truth, but instilling value at the level of the individual as well as the level of the institution later. Though I acknowledge that the question of whether Oratorian practices over a *longue durée* did enforce

[44] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, 16-50, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, PatrickH Hutton. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988),32.
[45] Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" 32.
[46] Ibid., 33

devotional practices that disciplined the body through possible ideology of The Church could be one that ultimately falls into Foucault's thinking on technology and power.

Jeremy R. Carrette provides a further connecting thread between Foucault's thought and my conception of a technology of the body in religion. Carrette investigates the nature of religion in Foucault and concludes that the latter's work realigns traditional religious meaning in the space of the body and politics of the subject.[47] This is a helpful conception, as Foucault was already concerned with the site of the self as a means and an end to the consumption and verification, of particular truth and knowledge, depending on the situation.[48] For Carrette, Foucault has taken the "'truth' of religious discourse and taken it out of the binary opposition between spirit and matter and rewritten it in terms of the dynamic of power-knowledge and embodiment."[49] Understanding the transformation of truth from religious discourse to power-knowledge discourse is constructive as a heuristic, however, as with Catholic reform, the ecclesiastic and civic could intermesh and entangle into the experiences of spiritual production of lay early moderns.

Therefore, I think across Foucault's formulation of the technology of the self in power-knowledge discourse with a slightly recalibrated conception of the body as a technology in religious discourse that is entwined back into spirit (i.e., spirituality) and matter (i.e., sound and silence). I suggest that repositioning meaning in the body opens up the possibility of individuality and agency in religious discourse and spiritual experience. Furthermore, a technology of the body in religious discourse allows for a corporeality that is generous and

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[47] Jeremy R. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporeality and Political Spirituality.* (Routledge 2000), 6.
[48] Carrette, *Foucault and Religion, 6. .*
[49] Ibid.

generative of the ways religion might work against the power of the institution.[50]

[50] Agamben on Foucault's *dispositif,* or "apparatus," notes that for Foucault, an apparatus can be anything and is always located in a power relation. Agamben, *"What is an Apparatus?"* trans. David Kishik and Stefan Padatella, (Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-24, 3.

Figure 1. *Filippo Neri Hearing an Ode Sung by Angels*, in Giacomo Ricci, and Pietro Giacomo Bacci *Vita di S. Filippo Neri fiorentino fondatione della Congregazione dell'Oratorio* 1703, Rome, Giovanni Francesco Buagni, British Library

The body as central to the institutionalization of Oratorian piety is apparent in episodes used in the processes of canonization of Filippo Neri: his acousmatic hearing of the Virgin, celestial musicians, as well as his mutation of his heart by the Holy Spirit that spurred his purported joy and effervescence of piety (Figure 1). St. Filippo Neri was physically changes from sensations, often from sound, to such an extent that he was know until the moments of his death for fits of ecstasy in which he heard celestial music, and was visited by the Virgin and the physical sensations of Her loving embrace.[51] The body as a technology of religion encompasses the *embodiment* of listening as much as *producing* the sound through singing or performing. As I will show in more detail, the Oratorians construct listening as participation. The early gatherings in the 1550s of Neri's company reveal listening as the mode that helped to shape the individual as engaged in the co-production of reform Catholicism. Although there is an affinity, the listener-participant arises from a less suspicious and constricting pedagogy than Foucault's art of listening as a silent, still and unquestioning posture.

In closing, as a technology of religion, the body in Oratorian institutionalization and spirituality allowed for the believer to be situated at the center of all experience and to manage perceptions and resonances of sound that can organize realms to produce spiritual value. Technology also implies the application of something through boundaries. The body manages the boundaries between realms – celestial and terrestrial, interior and exterior, sound and silence(s)—it is the traversing of the sensations of these boundaries between each realm that constitutes the sacred. Through its most generous affordance, the body as technology of religion allows for the individual to be available to the divine anywhere as an extension of individual agency—possibly freedom. In contrast to the orders of the Capuchins taking ascetic forms of

[51] Giacomo Ricci, and Pietro Giacomo Bacci *Vita di S. Filippo Neri fiorentino fondatione della Congregazione dell'Oratorio* (Rome: Giovanni Francesco Buagni, 1703).

piety to disavowing the flesh, for the Oratorian, the real, corporeal body is at the heart of Oratorian practices that co-produced spiritual value.

A note on transcription

All transcriptions and translations, language and musical, are my own, unless otherwise cited. Any remaining errors are also my own. All sources from the Biblioteca Vallicelliana are transcribed from the manuscript handwriting and all transcriptions are my own. Thank you to Alessandra Campana and Giovanni Spani for graciously checking many of the transcriptions, and to Jane Bernstein for the helpful feedback and encouragement to create modern transcriptions of the laude in *Il Terzo libro* 1588.

CHAPTER 1

The Body as Site of Reform: *il primo oratorio* ca. 1551-1571

Christ's silent sweet laughs, the sun that shines, harmony that sounds: the ears are in heaven, and the eyes in Paradise. With these phrases the body is cast into space three-fold, as if it were a mirror reflecting three ways: the corporeal, acoustical, and divine. These phrases are borrowed from their place in the final verses of the poem *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa*, composed for the Oratorian community of the Santa Maria in Vallicelliana in Rome. The library in which the poem is housed, in fact, is part of the Oratorio dei Filippini that was built by Francesco Borromini and completed in 1643.[52] The *oratorio* was at once a social, built and acoustical site for Oratorian exercises, and was a fixture in the historical imagination of early modern reformers who congregated around Filippo Neri. *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa.* As I will show, the physicality of the *primo oratorio* allowed for idiosyncratic processes of reformed spirituality to coalesce around the body, virtually and acoustically, in the intimate reform community of Neri.

In this chapter, I use historical and archival evidence to argue the Oratorians of Rome embraced a sonorous corporeality to expand the body as the primary site of spiritual production. This in turn helped Neri's company effectively traverse spaces of Rome during periods when they did not have a built, consecrated Church. Historical evidence suggests that the body was

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[52] Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Ms.O.36 *Raccolte di diversi e canzonette spirituali compose dai primi padri della congreg. dell'orat.o di Roma et Emendate in varij Luoghi di propria mno Dal V. Giovenale Ancina Prete della stessa cong.e E poi Vescovo di Saluzzo.*
Kerry Downes, *Borromini's Book: The 'Full Relation of the Building' of the Roman Oratory by Francesco Borromini and Virgilio Spada of the Oratory* (Oblong Creative, 2010).

made wholly available for sensational experiences and in this way constitutes a technology of religion. This technology of religion under Oratorian reform thus allowed the group to amplify their humanness across space and into realms both divine and terrestrial for the purposes of spiritual renewal and reform.

The Oratorians shaped their reform efforts through improvisatory meetings that bolstered sentiments around corporeality usually punished in the Catholic confession. The meetings also foreground the way a spectrum of vocal sounds from speech to song operated differently than other religious technologies, including doctrinal prayer. First I introduce the Oratorians and Filippo Neri, historically situating them as one newly formed group among many in the dynamic reform climate of post-Tridentine Rome. I then draw on historical records and archival evidence to investigate, in particular, the importance of sound and listening as available to the body as a religious technology. Additionally, I partially reconstruct important facets from the available evidence to posit that sound and the body in Neri's early meetings in small attics and personal quarters helped to foster a quality of acoustic intimacy central to the rise of their presence in Rome well before their founding in 1575.

The Sonic Landscape of Rome

Whereas Florence was a Republic, Rome was the seat of the State of the Church and Papal States and as such could only serve as an illusion of any sort of polis-republic.[53] There existed in Rome several nations, or national communities, which speaks to the plurality of reform after Trent, as there were several imaginary polises. These entities held onto bits of power across the urban landscape, including the sounds of that landscape. Each community competed for

[53] Laurie Nussdorfer, "The Politics of Space in early Modern Rome," in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42 (1997): 161-186.

space, which often meant purchasing and owning physical land and property. They might also impose their presence in the city through visual markers such as façade decoration, but some also imposed presence through sound, such as singing litanies or laude during pastoral work.

Musically, post-Tridentine Rome was also a multiplicity of competing communities each with representative devotional and recreational music, from street singing, to processions, the common singing of various litanies and professional chapel singers.[54] Musical devotions could be quite localized and depend on the physical site of the order or national institution. These groups in Rome included, for example, the Jesuits at the Oratorio del Gonfalone, the Franciscans at San Girolamo della Carita, as well as the Spanish at S. Giacomo in the southeastern part of the Piazza Navona, and the French at the San Luidi dei Francesi, also near the Piazza Navona.[55] The Jesuits were particularly present in urban musical life, as they frequently held processions and passion plays at the Coliseum. In short, to illustrate the plurality in the city, Cardinal Baronio claimed that by the late 1590s there were about eighty forms of litanies in use. Baronio and other church officials recognized that, up against strong local traditions, their attempts to buttress the Catholic Church needed a more assertive approach. Finally, with a decree by Pope Clement VIII in 1601, the Church officially narrowed prayer and litanies to six acceptable ones. This decree became a symbol of uniformity.[56]

Historically, the Oratorian reform confraternity was part of the fabric of this dynamic period after Trent when the Catholic Church above all was trying to exert power and influence

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[54] Daniele V. Filippi, "*Roma Sonora:* An Atlas of Roman Sounds and Musics, in *A Companion to Early Modern Rome 1492- 1691,* ed. Pamela Jones, Barbara Wisch, and Simon Ditchfield (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 266-281,

[55] Anna Esposito, "National Confraternities in Rome and Italy in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Identity, Representation, Charity," in *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities,* ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Leiden Brill, 2019), 235-256.

[56] Father Albert J. Herbert, S.M*, A Prayer Book for Favorite Litanies* (S.M. TAN Books: Charlotte, NC, 2010), no page.

over parishes doing reform work in Europe, including Rome.[57] Christopher Black notes, however, that it was the Christian doctrine confraternities that most served as ideal "adjuncts" to the kind of streamlined and controlled parish system desired by the Church.[58] Thus, the Oratorians are emblematic of the last quarter of the 16th century when local parishes also embraced their independence when possible, and confraternities took governance into their own hands, often deciding on their own devotional practices, including devotions and teaching. At the same time Neri's brotherhood was unique as they were situated geographically close by to St. Peter's and the papacy, just across the Tiber River, though never swore allegiance to the Church.[59] At the time of its founding, in 1575, the brotherhood included figures like the Florentine, Serafino Razzi, who was responsible for collecting and publishing the first book of Florentine laude, the writer Antonio Gallonio, who composed Neri's biography, and Antonio Bosio, who was the first explorer of the catacombs beneath Rome. These men all found inspiration in the idea of an older, purer, mystic Church as a means to renew sacred experience. Returning to the roots of early Christianity provided the congregation with one path toward reform and reinvention.

The Beginnings of the Oratorian Order

The Oratorians were founded as an order in 1575, though in practice they retained features of a semi-secularized brotherhood.[60] Not all members were ordained, and the rules of

[57] Simon Ditchfield, "Of Dancing Cardinals and Mestizo Madonnas: Reconfiguring the History of Roman Catholicism in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Early Modern History,* 8 (2004): 386-408, (408).
[58] Christopher Black, "Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform," in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain.* ed. John Patrick Donnelly, S. J. and Michael W. Maher, S.J. (Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 13.
[59] They did not request final approval of the congregation until 1612.
[60] Ian Verstegen, *Federico Barocci and the Oratorians: Corporate Patronage and Style in the Counter-Reformation* (Truman State University Press, 2015), 23-24.

governance were set collectively, so as not to require taking orders. It seems most members eventually took orders, such as the author and historian, Antonio Gallonio, and Giacomo Bosio, who was a historian of Christian archeology. A shared aspect of the members that perhaps captures the semi-secular characteristic is how they sought out frequent opportunity in private devotion and pastoral care to experience the divine through sensuality. The Oratorians also embraced devotions in the natural world, moving around from church to church, and taking frequent walks. The practical need for space affected Neri, Razzi and other brothers in the earliest gatherings during the 1550 and 1560s. In 1575 Pope Gregory XIII gifted to Neri the old site of the Christian basilica of the Vallicelliana. Although the Oratorians were an order, they functioned as a semi-secular confraternity, as well; the membership consisted of ordained as priests, and laypersons, such as intellectuals, nobles. This community of men had been gathering in borrowed rooms of the neighboring churches in Rome. Neri held meetings in the attic of neighboring churches, the San Girolamo and San Giovanni, and in private quarters. The members would also frequently gather outdoors, in squares and gardens in the city.[61] As I return to below, eventually they did use the prayer hall that was attached to the right side of the transept of the preexisting Santa Maria in Vallicella church.[62] The whole complex underwent significant renovations beginning around 1586. The architect, Matteo da Castello who produced for Neri design ideas close to the Gesù design, the followed by Martino Longhi the Elder who put design changes into effect that diverged from the Jesuit's Gesù church.[63]

The various evidence and unique characteristics of Neri's piety and Oratorian spirituality, invite us to re-think sound and sense in spiritual production and to consider sound's inextricable

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[61] Antonio.Cistellini. *I primordi dell'Oratorio filippino in Firenze.* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1968).
[62] Murray Bradshaw, "Salvation, Right Thinking, and Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione di anima, et di corpo* (1600)," *Musica Disciplina* 52, (2002): 233-250 (233).

[63] Joseph Connors. *Borromini and The Roman Oratory: Style and Society.* (MIT Press, 1980), 9-10.

ties to social, material, and religious processes of institutionalization during Catholic reform. Musical sound was one category among others, including the sonic presences of speech, vocal prayer, and "sounds" heard in the mind. This task of unsettling the fixity of primarily musical sound, as it were, I carry throughout the next chapters, as a historical consideration of spiritual experience in the context of Oratorian reform. This approach, in many ways, serves as a complement to the extant scholarship on the compositional music history of the Roman Oratory by Smither and Morelli. As presented in the introduction, I aim to shift the focus of music historiography away from sacred opera and *oratorio*, as musical genres, toward the Oratorians' broader practices of sound based in the corporeal, human experiences of devotion. Neri's reformers used creative outlets of sound in intimate ways to prop up the faculties of the body, such as hearing, to support individual experiences.

This does not mean the Oratorians neglected to incorporate its members with shared values. The Oratorians significantly engaged in individual interpretation, of poetry and music. This aspect alone stood apart from the interpretative authority over the Word and tradition claimed by the Catholic Church through the Magisterium, or official teachings of the church.[64] Responding to Protestant Reformers, the Pope, bishops, and new religious orders like the Jesuits, deferred to the Magisterium as the source for their divinely guided authority over doctrine, and for Catholicism as the true faith.[65] The Church emphasized its sacerdotal, or priestly, powers through systematic procedures, including catechism. Archpriests distributed the main catechistic prayers for rote learning by laity.[66] In contrast to these official responses to the Reformation, Neri

[64] Catholic Catechism, Part 1 Section 1 Chapter 2 Article 2, III. 86, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s1c2a2.htm
[65] "Roman" Catholicism became understood at the end of the 16th century through resistance to the Church of England.
[66] Daniele Filippe, "A Sound Doctrine: Early Modern Jesuits and the Singing of the Catechism." *Early Music History* 34, (2015), 3.

approached the instruction and teaching of religion as something open-ended, individual and interpretive, while his company reformed hearing into listener-participation after the Apostles.

We must first understand Neri's interest in the human experiences of piety within the context of the Catholic reform movements and activities that took place in Rome after the Council of Trent (1545-63). The need for a deeply felt, inward participation of faithful of the sort that Neri advanced was implicit before Trent and as early as 1513 with the *Libellus a leonem X* of Pietro Querini and Paolo Giustiniani.[67] This text was a joint letter to the new Pope Leo expressing their opposition to the formalistic, ostentatious practices that seemed to prevail in the Catholic world prior to their appearance.[68] Reform movements were underway before the Protestant reformation, and were not necessarily responses or defenses to the threat of Protestantism. Catholic reform describes movements that were concentrated on moral and social reform and even personal spirituality.[69] Although the Council did call for clear and fixed parish boundaries, in reality, there were many obstacles to a regulated parish system.[70] An archpriest might spend decades trying to claim authority over a pre-existing dependent churches.[71] Proponents of Tridentine reform had no choice but to allow for flexibility, as the Council's changes created potential setbacks for the Catholic Church to assert univocal power.

Augmenting the Human Body: Neri's Encounter with the Holy Spirit

The body as material afforded externalist and internalist experiences of piety depending

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[67] Giorgio Caravale. *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Ashgate, 2011), 5.
[68] Black, "Introduction," *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas,* ed. Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock (Ashgate, 2006), 5.
[69] Christopher Black, "Introduction" 1-2.
[70] Ibid., 5.
[71] Ibid.

on the predilection of the reform order. In all cases the body could access sensations of the divine but was often rooted in the embodiment of rote prayer. A joyous piety, deeply engaged to the body went hand in hand with the Oratorians relaxed position on salvation and prayer as an instrument of that piety. They emphasized laudatory, or praise-based piety stemming from medieval *laudesi* confraternities. God's presence could be accessed by the believer in all things, as part of Neri's reformed humanistic ideas. Thus, the Oratorians believed all mortals were granted God's Divine Grace as a feature of His goodness and love.

The Jesuits and Capuchins constructed the body of the pious around the Crucifixion. In this way, they tended toward Eucharistic piety, which featured meditating on the Crucifixion and on Christ's body as reminders of his great suffering for human sin. Meditating on the crucifix was also at times interpolated into Oratorian evening devotions, particularly at the hours of *oratione mentale.* However, the lived reality of the believer's corporeal, human body was essential to Neri's expressions of piety. Neri's understanding of divinity was based in his deeply personal experiences with his own body and corporeality. In a famous piece of hagiography, the Holy Spirit is depicted to have irreversibly changed Neri's body. The Holy Spirit entered his chest cavity, injuring him and breaking his ribs. The extraordinary power and Divine Love carried by the Holy Spirit enlarged his heart. This fact was proven in a later autopsy report that proved the sanctity of Neri was based in the material change of his body as much as belief.[72]

This human connection set a precedent for his followers. In a richly illustrated *Vita* with 45 engravings of the saint by Pietro Giacomo Bacci and Giacomo Ricci represents this encounter with the Holy Spirit in the foreground (Figure 2). The corporeal effects of the Spirit's presence

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[72] Brad Bouley, *Pious Postmortems: Anatomy, Sanctity, and the Catholic Church in Early Modern Europ.e* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). According to period sources, an autopsy revealed that Neri did indeed have an enlarged heart and broken ribs. Autopsies to prove sanctity were based on the desire to prove materially that someone was worthy of canonization.

can be seen to the left of this expressive engraving, depicting multiple temporal events. In one he is awestruck by the Spirit, and to the left he Neri has fallen to the ground from the force of the blow to his body cavity. The transformation of this indelible encounter established a fundamental dialectic in Oratorian spirituality and devotions between the internal and external, the material and immaterial. Furthermore, as emblem, the heart aflame reinforced the pious connection between divine experience and material bodily change that cemented his status as a new apostolate of Rome, expressed on the right side of the printed image.[73] The heart aflame became a lasting symbol of Neri, who was canonized in 1622.

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[73] Massimo Leone. *Saints and Signs: A Semiotic Reading of Conversion in Early Modern Catholicism.* (De Gruyter, 2010), 209.

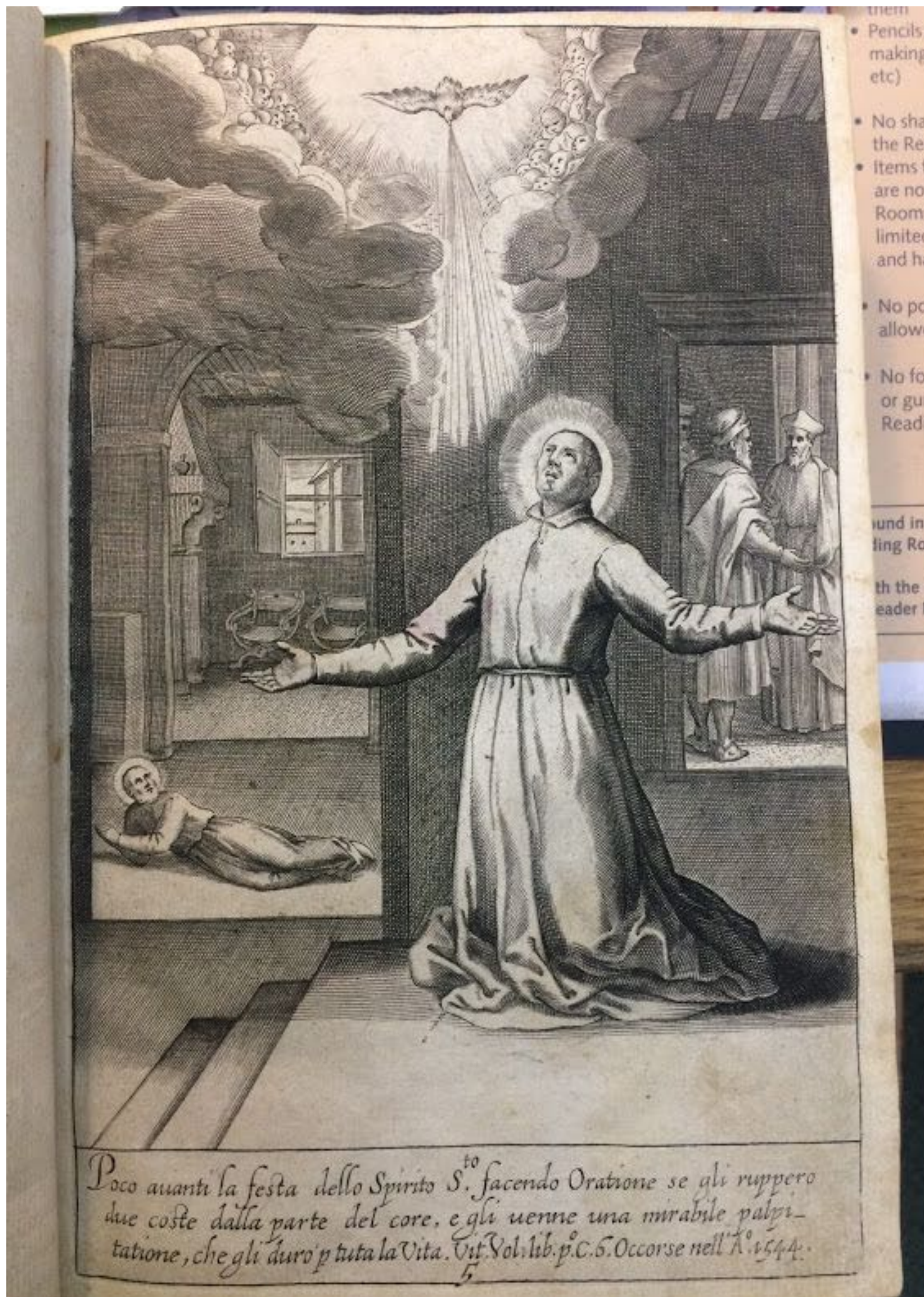

Figure 2. *Filippo Neri Receiving the Holy Spirit Into his Chest*, in Giacomo Ricci, and Pietro Giacomo Bacci *Vita di S. Filippo Neri fiorentino fondatione della Congregazione dell'Oratorio* 1703, Rome, Giovanni Francesco Buagni, British Library

The Body as a Technology of Religion: The Oratorian Approach

I have introduced the distinctiveness of the Oratorian's approach to Catholic reform among new orders in post-Tridentine Rome. Their reform spirituality and piety was inextricably tied to beliefs and practices that develop further the expansive capacities of the humanness of the body as the site of devotion. With the Church's efforts to renew a centralized Christianity after the Protestant Reformation—the Jesuits were committed to incorporating the bodies of priests and of laypersons by suppressing other modalities of hearing and listening. For instance, they worked to incorporated individuals into the Church through voices of discipline and instruction, including lessons of Jesuit masters, and speaking catechism and doctrinal prayer.

After Neri's transformation, the Oratorian's use of the body to experience sensations recalibrated the purpose of the body from a sinful condition to be suppressed in pure supplication to one in which the divine's physicalize effects on the human body were meaningful themselves, thereby making the body itself a technology of religion. The body as a technology of religion in this early context of Neri's company was a body constructed as the mediation between the production of spirituality and human experiences of the divine through personal experience. I take religious experience to be one in the same with all experience, and with this, all sound to be a material ontology of sound. This does not mean sound vibrates undifferentiated across all mediums and space; rather, it was important for the Oratorians as reformers interested in individualist spirituality, to manage the boundaries of corporeal parts to the celestial and the

terrestrial, natural worlds.[74]

The affordance of material objects to shape religious experience and identity is often rooted in the study of the physical, material objects as technologies of religion. The rosary, statue, automaton, relic, or book might galvanize for the observer-user an intense moment of religiosity as a meaningful experience.[75] Technologies of religion in Catholicism also intertwine objects with individual states of mindfulness to induce piety such as gazing at an icon of the Virgin. One of most ubiquitous object is the set of rosary beads that the user gently manipulated, one by one, while reciting the appropriate prayer intentions.[76] What these examples share in common as religious technologies is their externalized state as objects of mediation—through touch or sight. Their external quality implies they interpolate the body into an organized devotional exercise.[77]

The study of material culture of religion has grounded the activities of early modern reformers in the objects that made piety tangible to further decontextualized oversized concepts

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[74] My usage of corporeality as a condition that spans realms of the divine and mortal, the living and dead, across all materialities in including those invisible in confessional history is influenced by the late Capitalist material concept of "corpaurality" as designed by Benjamin Piekut and Jason Stanyek, "Deadness: Technologies of the Intermundane," *The Drama Review* 54, (2010): 14-38. DOI:10.2307/40650520.

[75] David Morgan, *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*. (Routledge, 2009); For a critique of the anthropocentric bias in religion studies and the move toward objects under "new materialism" see Sonia Hazard, "The Material Turn in the Study of Religion," *Religion and Society* 4 (Berghahn Books, 2013). http://doi.org/10.3167/arrs.2013.040104. Amy Whitehead, "Conference Report: 'Material Religion: Embodiment, Materiality, Technology," *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 12, (2016): 530-532. https://doi.org/10.1080/17432200.2016.1227640.

[76] On the soul and the materiality of the body, see Philip J. Webster, "Psukhai That Matter: The Psukhē in and behind Clement of Alexandria's Paedagogus," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016).

[77] Giorgio Agamben, *What is an apparatus?: and other essays*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

like Catholic reform in the "rise" of the modern world.[78] Reform movements could invite laity to come closer to God through personal devotion and material objects and, as such, religious aids have also been considered as technologies to help people to regulate interior emotions.[79] For example, individuals used rosary beads as a technology since the 13th century, including in the 16th century reform devotions. Nathan Mitchell argues that the continued use of rosary beads through the Counter Reformation suggests the reform movement was not as monolithic and conformist to Tridentine demands as some suggest. He highlights the rosary as one of the diverse ways that objects constructed personal identities, by organizing interior emotions for Catholics.[80]

In light of these interventions geared toward material objects, I reinforce the argument that Neri and his earliest followers allowed the body itself to be a personal site in which to freely modify sensations arising in earthly devotions. In general, they relieved the body from constraints of mortification and suppression to embrace mortality possibly in ways that exceed the body's interpolations with the materiality of objects. To account for this reality, I use the term technology rather than body technique or practice because technology implies a fluid, pervasive, and unprescribed way of relating to God whereas a technique typically entails a specific skill for efficiency that needs to be mastered, often with an instrument, or using the body as an instrument.

Technology of religion can also move one step away from delimited material objects to

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[78] Simon Ditchfield, "Tridentine Catholicism," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter Reformation,* 15-31 (19).

[79] Mary Laven writes of the primacy of tangible piety in the Counter Reformation and the need for a vital understanding of this in relation to individual collective experiences of early modern Catholicism. See, Mary Laven. "Introduction," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter Reformation,* ed. Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven, 1-5. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2013),. .

[80] Nathan Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism.* (NYU Press, 2009), 114-18.

virtuality of piety, in the late 16th century. A prominent example of the body as a technology of religion in Rome is the *Imitatio Christi,* a book championed by the Oratorian's rivals, the Jesuits. The Jesuits adopted, disseminated and frequently reprinted the *Imitatio Christi,* written by Thomas à Kempis in the 15th century. The *Imitatio* involved imitating the life of Christ. The *Imitatio* featured images of Christ's bodily suffering that invited the user to turn their mind inward, away from theological precepts, even. This text had a deeply contemplative dimension and was fundamental to the Jesuit founder, Ignatius Loyola, who identified personally with the *Imitatio.* The Jesuits transformed this practice of repeatedly imitating Christ's suffering into a didactic tool at the end of the 16th century through their official Spiritual Exercises.[81] Users are instructed to "look upon the corruption and foulness of [their] bodies, and to look at [themselves] as if [they] were an ulcer or an abscess...and of great infection."[82] The influence of the *Imitatio* is found in Loyola's Exercises, which emphasize mortification and sin.

Reading Loyola's structured *Exercises* was akin sonically to transition bead by bead the with each Ave Maria while saying or thinking the rosary while praying. The object mediates the interior and exterior in this mechanism for the production of piety. Oratorian devotion that prioritized the body I offer, untethered the body from an organizing object that left the individual open to sensual experiences. As I will show, sound enveloped followers of Neri in ways that converted the body of the listener into a technology of religion through conversation, song, and prayer in the space of their early meetings.

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[81] Maximilian von Habsburg, "The Partridge of Spiritual Books": Ignatius Loyola, the *Spiritual Exercises* and Jesuit Appropriation of the *imitation,* c. 1522-c.1620, in *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the* Imitatio Christi, *1425-1650 From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller,* 199-218, (Ashgate 2011).206-207.

[82] Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises, Personal Writings,* ed. Joseph A. Munitiz, trans. Philip Endean (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), [58], 297.

Neri's Christian Optimism

A far cry from feelings of scorn, guilt, sorrow, and repudiation found in ascetic piety, Neri developed new principles of joy that gained currency on the Italian peninsula. His joyful approach to humanity's existence in God's world became known as Christian optimism, stemming from the radical acceptance of Divine Grace, mentioned above. Christian optimism was a category of religious thought attributed to Neri's joyful, even humorous, pastoral style. His contemporary, Cardinal Agostino Valieri, used the term to describe the overabundance of joy and openness that characterized Neri's piety and its emulations during his life in Rome.[83] Importantly, Christian optimism embraced the natural world, including the ways God's goodness was apparent to the individual in this world. This openness allowed the company to feel safe in God's care in all surroundings. Joy, optimism, and a love for nature distinguished Neri and his circle from the Catholic Church and catechism, and from other orders including the Jesuits, Capuchins, and Theatines, who, by and large, emphasized different guiding principles of mortification of the flesh, asceticism, austerity and contemplation.

Each of these new orders swore full allegiance to the pope and each group was equally concerned with correcting the perceived abuses of purity to the Church. In many ways, Neri endeavored to achieve quite the opposite goals: he advocated for self-governance as an orde to remain separate from the Church as a central governing entity. He also kept his sense of a sovereign authority over his brand of reformed pastoral work separate from the established communities, in which he frequented, such as The Oratory of St. Giovanni, an established community in Rome of fellow Florentines. Indeed, even at the San Girolamo, although it could offer Neri and his spiritual followers a larger space, they did not feel they had the independence

[83] Cardinal Agostino Valier (1531-1606) *Philippus. Dialogus de laetitia christiana.* (unpublished)

they wanted.[84] In the early days of their social meetings at neighboring reform communities Neri and his followers felt subjugated as they lacked heir own spiritual independence.[85] In this way, Neri's Christian Optimism served as a worldview with civic and political implications. His piety and leadership modeled ways to strengthen personal latitude for early moderns, so that virtually everyone—the illiterate faithful, prostitutes and the poor, and even the libertine and heretics, might commune with God, the Virgin, the angels and saints.

Divine Grace

Neri did not participate in the admonishment of heretics but rather approached non-believers as an opportunity to reform society through his teachings of "ascetismo pratico," or practical asceticism. With the same brand of practical piety he also instructed his congregants not to become mired in institutional rigidity and theological "hardness matured only later."[86] The generous quality of Divine Grace—in that anyone could access it—extends to Neri's position on heretics, or non-believers, as well. Although some members were focused on draconian moral action and a striving of the pious self toward Christian perfection, Neri and his corporate membership were on the whole, almost apathetic in their stance toward salvation. [87] Indeed, Neri

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[84] Ibid., 173.

[85] Louis Ponnelle and Louis Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of his Times 1515-1595* (London: Sheed and Ward London, 1932), 310-311.

[86] Giuseppe, Finocchiaro. *Baronio e la Tipografia dell'Oratorio Impresa e ideologia.* (Olschki, 2005) 10. Full quote:

> "Li instruira a rispecchiarsi nella Chiesa delle origini, non ancora schiava delle rigidezze istituzioneali e delle durezze teologiche maturate solo piu tardi col potere temporale, per vivere un misticismo concreto fatto di opere. Fara in definitiva credere loro che le armi migliori per vincere le eresie non erano le istituzioni repressive quali il Sant'Uffizio, l'Inquisizione o l'Indice, bensi il consenso sociale, l'impegno pastorale, il compromesso politico e la creazione di modelli culturali legati alle quotidiane forme dell'esistenza. In effetti per gli oratoriani curare gli ammalati, visitare i ricchi o gli indigenti, confessare gli empi, assistere i pellegrini, scrivere le historiae, cantare le laudi spirituali, predicare con parole semplici o stampare libri contro i novatores sono tutte azioni morali che hanno il fine di riformare dal basso la societa e di raggiungere un ideale di perfezione cristiana."

[87] Finocchiaro, *Baronio e la tipografia*, 10.

encouraged them to live a "concrete mysticism" made of good works.[88] Consequently, the Oratorians, though firmly in the Catholic confession (who believed in the Resurrection, in the one true God and of the communion of Angeles and Saints), rose to power in contradistinction to the post-Tridentine Church. They established their piety and spirituality through nature and lived experience that celebrated the divine gifts of Optimism and Grace.

The unusual latitude—even apathy—toward salvation was in many ways legitimized through Christian Optimism (as coined by Valieri), and by Divine Grace. [89] These tenets encapsulated the Oratorian's entire approach to mortality as a condition of divine receptivity (recall Neri's encounter with the Holy Spirit.) Mankind was a receptive vessel for God's goodness. This positive view on mortality recast the sinful nature inherent to man with the potential for joy, and replaced harmful practices like flagellation with the direct, uncognized reception of God's Grace and Love to support mortal human existence on earth.[90]

The automatic promise of Divine Grace allowed the company to feel safe in God's care in any surroundings. To this end, the Oratorians frequently adapted their pastoral work to any space. Neri encouraged prayer outside, in the open air of a garden, the acoustically booming portico of the Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (The Pantheon), or found comfort in the small, familiar rooms above the S. Girolamo or S. Giovanni. There he would sometimes gather his peers in the upper balconies of the nave. The S. Girolamo, in particular, served as the neighboring Tuscan congregation in which Neri was specially accommodated. It is actually in

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[88] Finocchiaro, 9
[89] Verstegen, *Barocci and the Oratorians,* 15.
[90] The Oratorians established a particular mortality in which the viscerality of the earthly was studied as a humanistic topic, although they notably did not engage in flagellation, or in extreme mortification of the flesh in any way. For example, Oratorians Tommaso Bosio and Antonio Gallonio possessed a deep interest in the human body of saints who underwent trials and grave tortures. Gallonio's famous work, *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio*, includes vivid, gruesome imagery of the tortured body for intellectual study, not moral.

the S. Girolamo rooms where Neri established the foundations of his own spiritual company.[91] These informal localities they later collectively refer to in the *ricordanze,* as "il primo oratorio" beginning in the year 1551 or 1553 depending on account. [92]

In sum, the Oratorian's approach to Divine Grace was particularly sensual, direct, and generous in its comportments of the body, as evidenced by Neri's encounter with the Spirit. Grace could affect the soul directly without the need for introspection. Divine Grace allowed for states of human fulfillment felt by God. Importantly, this translated to modes of listening for indoctrination and persuasion purposes under the reform age in Rome. At the same time Neri sanctioned a kind of compulsory type of Divine Grace, as an available sensuous outlets for all individuals regardless of sincere faith, the Council of Trent had been reaffirming the principle of *justification,* as the steps an individual must take to acquire the readiness to receive Divine Grace in the first place, along the path to salvation. Often the steps toward salvation were made through listener—to vocality and sounds of the preacher, or orator. Thus, speech and listening were intended solely to persuade the listener to cooperate with Divine Grace, and eventually, accept salvation through Christ.[93]

Music and sound as fluid methodologies of spiritual production

In view of this directed approach to listening as a means to justification, the Oratorians created few artificial barriers to listening for possible spiritual gain. This openness to non-restrictive listening extended also to both public and semi-private gatherings. Music, as a material conductor, amplified God's joy and optimism to reach and pulse through the listener.

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[91] *Il secondo libro delle laudi,* dedication page.
[92] Ponnelle and Bordet, 172; Process of Canonization, fol. 13 Vatican archives.
[93] Frederick McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome.*(Princeton University Press, 1995), 32.

Sound comprised the material for a host of fluid methodologies of piety and spiritual production in the Oratorian private *oratorio* and in the public galas, alike. The earliest group devotions in the attic and domestic quarters of the San Girolamo featured singing of spiritual songs, casual conversation, improvised speeches, and short sermons, as well as other forms of prayerful sound and vocality, the Oratorian composer, Giovanni Giovenale Ancina, writing to his brother Giovanni Matteo Ancina, in the 1580s, notes that music was already a part of worship since they had started gathering in the San Girolamo.[94]

The nature of the music was pleasurable and entertaining, as a way simply to assemble people together, as much as a means toward spiritual uplift. Father Pietro Giacomo Bacci, in his biography of Neri foregrounds how music "lift[ed] the souls of the listeners" from the rooms of S. Girolamo to the streets of Rome.[95] And in 1570, Giovanni Animuccia, another fellow composer who is responsible for several of the spiritual laude discussed in the next chapters, writes in the dedication *Il secondo libra delle laude,* "for those that came from the Oratorio di S Girolamo" (*per consolazione di coloro che venivano all'Oratorio di S Girolamo*). The S. Girolamo was the material founding of a space for the new order well before they possessed any semblance of their own church let alone plans for a new church.

The double importance of music for pastoral health and group recreation bolstered the reputation of the order from an early date, as well. Neri frequently led site-specific activities in the city, using his rise to apostolate status and his network of clerical friends to secure grander locales to meet. Among these connections was the prominent spiritual writer, Buonsignore Cacciaguerre, who helped Neri to hold the gala Oratory, which was an outdoor more public

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[94] Ponnelle and Bordet, *San Filippo Neri,* vol. II, 172, 309.
[95] Bacci, Pier Giacomo. *Vita di San Filippo Neri fiorentino fondatore della Congregatione dell'Oratorio. Raccolta da' processi fatti per la sua canonizzazione*. (Rome: F. Cavalli, 1636), 63.

version of the *primo oratorio* also called *oratorio della sera*. Cultivated, composed music as public sound featured prominently at the public *gala Oratory*. Such galas, in contrast to the *oratorio della sera* in domestic interiors, were enjoyed outdoors in the summer months with fairer weather in places like the Janiculum Hill overlooking all of the ancient city limits of Rome from the west, in the Trastevere.[96]

In the 1580s, the galas reached a critical mass of listeners that represented a cross-section of Roman populace, and as such were dedicated to the literary and musical enjoyment of all Romans.[97] The styles of music that would have been heard represent diverse demographics, and also cut across lines of traditional church music and popular music. The tone across the various sounds was also not uniform or strictly limited to the religious character of psalms or litanies.[98] Neighboring professional musicians, sometimes from St. Peter's, for instance, might perform motets. Trained singers and musicians might also lend their smoothly blended professional voices as pockets of spiritual or even sacred-seeming space in the streets to perform from the Oratorian laude books. In particular the *Terzo libro* series featured manageable three and four-voice polyphonic settings for public performance, or even amateur use. In total, the music for the *galas* would have been quite varied and accentuated the pleasures of accessible, though still quite cultivated music for entertainment.

Il Primo oratorio as Fluid Sacred Space

Cardinal Cesare Baronio and others' first-hand accounts inform us that the oratory was

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[96] Louis Ponnelle and Bordet, *St. Philip Neri,* 217.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Arnaldo Morelli, *Il Tempio Armonico Musica nell'oratorio dei filippini in Roma 1575-1705* (Laaber-Verlag,1991), 9-12. "Nell'ultimo … si canta un mottetto sempre, per grazia di Dio, con musica eccellente, senza che per questo i cantori sieno pagati o concertati di venire, ma più di vent'anni sono che sempre manda Dio diversi all'Oratorio che insieme con alcun di casa possono supplire."

first referred to as such to refer to the extemporized meetings held in the 1550s before Neri acquired the Vallicelliana complex.[99] Devotional meetings outside Mass and Holy Days were seminal to Oratorian institutional identity while also helping to distinguish them from the Church and neighboring orders in Rome. These gatherings comprised of a varied program of spiritual media that became known by its members as the *oratorio della sera,* or the "evening oratory."[100] Personal prayer was just one segment among a multi-part program of spiritual media. Group prayer, discussions on sacred texts, song, meditation, and even jokes all made up the daily para-liturgical activities.

Often the social gatherings of the *oratorio* were quite intimate. The *oratorio* could refer at times to Neri's personal quarters. Neri would gather his companions in his personal living quarters, with several needing to find room in the narrow space outside the room.[101] Neri often leaned up against his bed as he spoke to them at the San Girolamo. As Neri included more people in these gatherings in the afternoons, the conversational method became untenable with so many speakers now present.[102] Cultivated music, often in the form of laudes or motets, as well as vocal prayer, punctuated the conversations. The presence of musical sound presumably helped to establish a comfortable atmosphere and could generate a sense of closeness that could be replicated from place to place. Thus, acoustic intimacy was one way in which the Oratorians reformed Christian devotion together, without the necessity of the Church.

Speaking Together: *Ragionamento*

The manner in which sound circulated freely among the *primo oratorio* betrays a radical

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[99] Ponnelle and Bordet, 170; Baronius. *De Origine Oratorii,* fol. 19 Vatican library.
[100] Morelli, *Il Tempio Armonico;* Antonio Cistellini, *I primordi dell'Oratorio filippino in Firenze.* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1968.).
[101] Ponnelle and Bordet, 171; Process of Canonization, fol. 19.
[102] Ponnelle, 170-172.

stance against the use of formal rhetoric for *justification* for divine grace and salvation. The Oratorians effectively skip these guided steps to use freer vocalities and an assumed reception of Divine Grace, almost in a reversal of the justification-to-salvation order imposed by the Church at the time. Communal speaking in the Oratorian gatherings also attempted to serve the spiritual health of the inner circle of members and the Roman laity.

The Oratorians infused their forms of speaking with the directness inherent in Divine Grace. The central practice of *Ragionamento sopra il libro, or* "the speaking on the book" involved the individualized elaborations on sacred topics in small devotional gatherings that resembled the gatherings of the Apostles.[103] *Ragionamento,* provided a manner of speaking for spiritual production that was unembellished, open and accessible. This practice, borrowed from the ancient Apostles, went against the goals of the Reformation Church, which was actively working to quell the traditions of older Christianity, in part due to the ties to mysticism and the clandestine roots of early Christians persecuted under the Roman Empire.[104]

During 16th-century reform in Rome, conveying effective rhetoric was an important way to engage and persuade listeners toward faith. Yet the *primo oratorio* valued improvisatory and exploratory paths toward spiritual growth that were participatory to a greater degree than Counter-Reformation rhetoric. Members in attendance could take turns being the primary speaker, to develop a discourse organically from texts that typically included the lives of saints, suggesting opportunity for individual inspiration in the moment.[105] To further substantiate the ethos—ethics, even—of speaking together to foster open accessibility of the Oratory, the historian and writer, Antonio Gallonio, conveys Neri's down to earth and compassionate

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[103] A.R. (Archivio della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di San Filippo Neri), letters December 1588, in Ponnelle, 170.
[104] Giorgio Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer*: *Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy (*Ashgate, 2011), 200.
[105] Ibid., 203

approach toward ministry. In his early biography of the spiritual father, published in 1600, Gallonio emphasizes the father's joyful, humorous personality.[106] Like Baronio, he also praises Neri's plain, accessible nature displayed in his sermons, which helped to establish among the early brothers a strong sense of kinship. Gallonio also writes of Neri's spiritual gatherings as full "of useful matters, and necessary to the well-being of the listeners (leaving aside obscure and subtle problems), [and] simply explained without the pomp of words, or mixing rhetorical colors [colori rettorici]."[107] This direct, unornamented style also extended to Neri's compassionate stance on the Sacrament of Penance, or atonement for ones sins, for which the Oratorians tended to treat sinners with gentleness rather than admonishment.[108]

Ragionamento sopra il libro encapsulated the Apostolic way of engaging individuals through listening. The Oratorians looked back to the Apostles in ancient Christian times for guidance in this regard. To illustrate, in one of the greatest written histories of the Church, the *Annales Ecclesiastici* by the young Milanese, Cardinal Cesare Baronio, the author extolls Filippo Neri for his unique ability to engage the listener in a manner similar to the early Apostles. Baronio, who became involved with the Oratorian community, writes in a quasi-testimony style about how Neri's spiritual gatherings evoked the early Christian Church. The Cardinal, in this rather measured, understated passage, writes how Neri revived the Apostolic use of conversation:

> And it was the providence of God, that in our time, in the city of Rome, that which the Apostle [St. Paul] had established for the benefit of the Church regarding the discussion of divine things has been revived, for the listeners' benefit. It has been revived, mainly thanks to the work of the Reverend Father Filippo Neri, a Florentine who, as a cautious architect, laid the foundation, and of the Reverend Father Francesco Maria Tarugi from

[106] Laetitia christiana, see Antonio Gallonio, *The Life of St Philip Neri,* trans. Jerome Bertram of the Oxford Oratory (Oxford: Family Publications, 2005), 144.
[107] "*I Sermoni erano di materie utili, e necessarie alla salute de gli Ascoltanti, (lasciate da parte le questioni oscure, e sottili) spiegati semplicemente senza pompa di parole, e senza mescolarvi colori rettorici" ;* Verstegen, 32, from Gallonio, *La Vita,* 144; Touber, 40.
[108] Michael A Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, (Routledge, 1999),102.

> Montepulciano, his spiritual son, who, when he was preaching, seemed a *condottiere* of the divine words.[109]

Despite Baronio's staid, heightened way of presenting the published history of the early Oratory here in this passage, he is referring to what was really a practice of "institutional informality" harkening back to early Christian times.[110] He highlights the benefit of the listener who is exposed to intimate, natural conversation—that is, not to oration but to discussion. Specifically, Baronio is referring to Neri's practice of *ragionamento sopra il libro,* which is mentioned repeatedly in the archival materials.

The Oratorians as Listener-Participants

The *ragionamento* co-production of speech constructs listeners who are participants in the social construction of spirituality as much as their own. Those present for the quasi-devotional meetings were incorporated into Neri's company as listener-participants because forms of *ragionamento* exercised in the meetings anticipated the active engagement of everyone present. The practice of *ragionamento sopra il libro* allowed for alternative means of expression and participation than listening and elocution. Neri presented those in attendance with improvised humor and jokes to challenge them to reflect in a lighthearted way on the profound

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[109] *Annali ecclesiastici. Tratti da quelli del cardinal Baronio per Odorico Rinaldi Trevigiano Prete della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma,* 3 vols. (Rome: Mascardi: 1641) I, 162. E di vero e stata previdenza di Dio, che a questa nostra eta si sia rinovato in gran parte nella città di Roma ciò che l'Apostolo determino si facesse a profitto della Chiesa intorno al ragionare delle cose di Dio con frutto degli uditori: si sia rinovato, dico, per opera principalmente del R.P. Filippo Neri Fiorentino, il quale come saggio architetto pose il fondamento, e del R.P. Francesco Maria Tarugi da Montepulciano suo figliuolo spirituale, che pareva nel sermone il condottiere della divina parola.

[110] Ian Verstegen, *Federico Barocci and the Oratorians: Corporate Patronage and Style in the Counter-Reformation*. (Truman State University Press, 2015), 31.

existence of mortality.[111] Sermons could also be spontaneously created and were part of the diverse program of meetings but as a rule kept shorter to about half an hour so as not to bore or fatigue the listener.[112] Often there was a central speaker, as Padre Maria Tarugi tended to distinguished himself, and everyone might sing at the conclusion of a meeting.

In sum, the *ragionamento* realized orally those Oratorian spiritual principles of joy and optimism that were intangible and felt inside but delivered externally with a plain manner and directness. The near-unmediated directness of Divine Grace influenced practice and interactive forms of discussion. To this end, the *primo oratorio* incorporated attendees as listener-participants by avoiding the supremacy of one spiritual idea over many in a manner that would deter those present from engaging.

The Virtual Body in Oratorian Spiritual Poetry:

Felicità dell'anima contemplativa

Under Oratorian spirituality and piety, the mortal, human body was also technologized for religious purposes through listening to and reading spiritual poetry. In the example, *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa*, or "Happiness of the Contemplative Soul" the corporeal body renders, even amplifies, the sounds and sights of the Divine across material and immaterial realms. The poem survives in manuscript at the Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Rome (Figure 3).[113] The original

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[111] A.R. letters December 1588.
[112] Pier Giacomo Bacci, *Vita di San Filippo Neri fiorentino fondatore della Congregatione dell'Oratorio. Raccolta da' processi fatti per la sua canonizzazione* (Rome: F. Cavalli, 1636), 44–45.

[113] B.V., Ms. O.36 *Raccolte di diversi e canzonette spirituali* .

poem, beginning "Felicità dell'anima contemplativa," was likely composed by one of two founding members of the institution: Agostino Manni (1548- 1618), or Giovenale Ancina (1545-1604), whose contributions to the Oratorian's spiritual laude, or popular spiritual songs, I discuss in the next chapters. Manni was a prolific poet and one of the founding members of the order. It is likely he composed the majority of texts for the second and third collections of spiritual laude printed by the Oratory in the latter part of the century. Stronge circumstantial evidence suggests then that Ancina served in an editorial capacity in the production of these poems, as Ancina was a ruthlessly vigilant editor of spiritual texts, including those from preexisting madrigals and laudes.[114] The opening line on the archival folder suggests Ancina, if not the original author, then possible editor to Manni's prose: "Collections of diverse and spiritual songs composed by the early fathers of the congreg. of the Orat.o of Rome and amended in various places of his own name by V. Giovenale Ancina Priest of the same congregation and Bishop of Saluzzo."[115] Regardless of authorship, the poem, as well as laude texts, are valuable objects that exhibit how the order conceived of corporeality in their spirituality.

[114] Anne Piejus, "Musique et censure," in *Musique, censure et création: G. G. Ancina et le "Tempio armonico" (1599)*. Biblioteca della "Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa": Studi 33. Florence: Olschki, 2017.

[115] B.V.Ms.O.36 *Raccolte di diversi e canzonette spirituali compose dai primi padri della congreg. dell'orat.o di Roma et Emendate in varij Luoghi di propria mno Dal V. Giovenale Ancina Prete della stessa cong.e E poi Vescovo di Saluzzo.*

Figure 3. Manuscript for *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa*,
Biblioteca Vallicelliana Ms. O.36

Perhaps the most arresting feature of *Felicità* is that the text is replete with sounds and resonances that are framed by the contemplative soul, signaled in the title. I interpret the poem as

relaying the sensations of acoustic intimacy and the expansive corporeality of the body. In addition to piecing together the historical evidence of the small acoustically and spatially intimate localities of the *primo oratorio,* we should also imagine a scenario of the listener-participant. Those present might have physically attuned their bodies through the virtuality of the poetic media. The records in the miscellaneous *ricordanze* (records and remembrances) of the archive are compilations, or snapshots of any given *oratorio della sera,* rather than prescriptions. However, the meetings were highly improvisatory in nature and I suggest we can practice informed speculation about experiential spiritual knowledge formed from listening if we interpret the poem in view of the Oratorian precepts and approached discussed above and fully consider their implications for sound, the body, and spiritual production.

The text to *Felicità* supplies for the listener-participant a scene around their body as the site of convergence of all the senses, including hearing and listening. This sense-based quality to the *mise-en-scene* of the poem renders it also a mediating frame for virtual engagement also with the real, physical environment, in a fully enmeshed, sonorous sacred performativity.[116] In this way, *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa* exemplifies the Oratorian's approach to Divine Grace, Optimism, mortality, and acoustic intimacy.

Felicità dell'anima contemplativa

Felicità l'alma che per Dio sospira
E a lui drilla i suoi affetti ardinsi
Con gl'honesti disii e dolci accenti

[116] Barry Traux, "Imagining Acoustic Spaces through Listening and Acoustic Ecology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Imagination Vol 1,* ed. by Mark Grimshaw-Aagaard, Mads Walther-Hansen, and Martin Knakkergaard (Oxford University Press, 2019).

Manda fuor alto al ciel, dov'ella aspira.

Godisi l'aura che soave spira
Per ben fiorita valle, e l'aria, e i venti
Veste d'odor, gustando I bei concenti
Che sonan [dentro], e fuor tragon ogn'ira
Mentre à lo sposo sue laudi risona
E quando assisa tace, un dolce riso
Par che di lui pur [senta], onde si sprona
Pur sempre il cor inanzi intento, e fiso
Al sol che splende a l'armonia che sona,
l'orecchi sta in ciel, e gl'occhi in Paradiso

Happiness of the contemplative soul

Happy is the soul who sighs for God
Who drills his ardent affections,
With honest honors and sweet accents
Send out high to heaven, where She [Virgin] aspires.

Enjoy the aura that gently blows
Through the flowery valley, and the air, and the
Winds dressed of odor, enjoying the beautiful contents
That ring inside and beyond wrath
While the bridegroom [Christ] resounds
And when he [courts] silently, a sweet laugh
Seems to be spurred [pushed] from him
Still always [the] heart intently forward and firm
To the sun that shines, the harmony that sounds
The ears are in heaven, and the eyes in Paradise.

In the social and material context of the poem, the mortal body of the listener-participant serves as sacred sensorium that mediates the divine while also representing to the beholder the

sensation of divine experiences. By the end of the scene, the listener could have imagined, felt, or tried on, even, the ears of heaven: their ears and eyes have been in heaven: “Al sol che splende a l'armonia che sona l'orecchi ha in ciel, e gl’occhi in Paradiso.” Ancina and Manni’s poetics in *Felicità* traverse the physicality and virtuality of realms—from the sigh of the soul, to ardent, quasi-violent pleas, to hearing the ineffable laugh of Christ. The poem is an example of the kind of poetry that could be read aloud along with the *ragionamento di libro* in evening and midday oratorio di casa. We read in the lines expressions of Christian Optimism. The references to natural imagery may have also been inspired by real experiences in the outdoor gatherings around Roman gardens, led by Neri.

Felicità illustrates a brand of reform spirituality that fully embraced corporeality as the mediating technology of Divine Grace. For Neri, Divine Grace, though immaterial, had considerable physical consequences, arresting him to the ground, and changing the interior of his body. The poem is less forceful and direct in its causalities and effects between human agency and Divine agency. In this way, the language does not solicit rapt attention; rather, the sensuous phrases intricately weave the agency of the listener into the scene, sometimes juxtaposing dramatically between corporeal parts (eyes, ears, mouths) and vast realms. The soul, as figured here, has a sense, and a deeply human materiality. The believer modulates from the quietude of the soul (the sigh to God) to the loud, ejaculatory metaphor of drilling ones affections, sending them up to heaven--the latter akin to outbursts of ejaculatory prayer. Even if one aspires, the mere breath of the pre-vocalization is elevated to contemplative prayer, the highest form of prayer.[117]

With the line “Per fin fiorita valle, e l'aria, e i venti” the listener-participant could be

[117] Chapter 4 discusses the traditions of vocal and mental prayer and their application to the Oratorians constructions of sound and silence.

swiftly heralded back down to earth, and the natural world. They could be guided briskly through an outdoor garden, through a panoply of senses, almost synesthetic, of winds and odors. The mortal sensuality is overwhelming, even contradictory. Christ resounds, resonates, even, in lauds, and yet He is also silent when He laughs. Sonic or silent, Christ the Bridegroom is virtually present through enveloping sounds. Manni's text contains overtones of Neri's Christian optimism and humor, perhaps — in which he used jokes to prompt the listener-participant in the oratory to reflection on oneself and ones place in both worlds. Additionally, to represent the positions in both worlds, Manni seems to use poetic devices of synecdoche, referring to parts for the whole of corporeal experiences, in a way that scatters part and sense across the natural, human, and divine. Sometimes, things are collapsed or neatly woven together, as with the sense of warmth and sound together, "To the sun that shines, the harmony that sounds/ The ears are in heaven, and the eyes in Paradise." The poetry synthesizes contemplative aspects like silence (the soul sighs), with the experience of the sensuality of hearing Christ, and of seeing God's works in the natural world.

The poem shows us two salient features of how the Divine was made material, or at least ambiguously enmeshed, and how the mortal body served as technology of religion under Oratorian spirituality. First, the poem uses the mediating power of verse to center all the sensory experience of the sacred, even of divinity, around the mortal body, offering a virtual, even emblematic experience to the listener that parallels and augments the meaning of their own experience hearing the poem. Second, *Felicità dell'anima contemplativa* brings forth the possibility of undifferentiated sacred space, at once virtual and real. The metaphysics of heaven are nested closely to the listener's mortal eyes and ears, and breath. In this way, it captures and mirrors or parallels in verse hearing the poem spoken in a small space. In these rooms or attics,

the close sound from familiar mouths and shared by ears across the devotional meetings that might often spill over into different locales via outdoor walks. In turn, the recitation of Ancina and Manni's poetry could have also contributed to a sense of intimate immensity created by the dialectic of the intimate interior vocality and the extrapolation of that sound quality to the immense exterior world rendered by God.[118]

Spiritual poetry played a distinctly different role than prayer. Both could encourage embodiment, and personal relationships with God and the communion of saints. However, the original form and content of *Felicità* weaves the sonorous into the human body, into new arenas; ones that perhaps can never truly be experienced in the worldly life but that vividly and sensually create a virtual one. The poem helps to modulate the body in space. This experiential unfolding, as it were, into spaces, highlights the decidedly non-imitative or Christo-centric implications to the body as religious technology. A special feature of the poem is that sound is figured through the textual content, as well as aurally as it would be read and heard. Importantly, these aural and oral dimensions to the poem do not present a distraction from the contemplative aspects in *Felicità* that support the listener engaging with Divine presences. Intensities of sound thus work in tandem with the experience of the poem as a stand-in for prayer. Dynamics of loud and soft, heard and mute sound—render corporeality as a sacred thing.

The progressive concept of *oratorio* as a designated space for prayer to building

The evidence presented above of the earliest meetings, *primo oratorio, and oratorio di casa,* while not musical, per se, enmeshed the comfort and closeness of domestic space with the

[118] I use the term "intimate immensity" from Gaston Bachelard's thinking on phenomenology of space and how the intimate could unfold onto immense spaces within ourselves. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetic of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places.* trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 183.

sociality of conversation, and the sense of importance of sacred space to create a unique character. Morelli has similarly categorized study of the Neri's Oratorian community and core musical forces as the history of an environment or ambience ("*storia d'un ambiente*").[119]

The physical, acoustical attributes of the spaces for impromptu meetings meaningfully shaped the social and spiritual make-up of the *primo oratorio.* The gatherings coalesced with the unique state of each microlocality, and ambience, according to the time of day ("mezzahora"), the weather, or the size of the room and problems with limited space for guests to listen. The meetings are often described as occurring in domestic spaces, in the *oratorio di casa*, as they often moved around, sometime mid-meeting, as is evident here: "Let the evening oratory be followed by a [beacon] in the oratorio of the home […] the evening oratory will be held every feast day and in the afternoons only on Sundays in ordinary time [of the religious calendar]."[120] In the early 1580s, a few years after the acquisition of the Santa Maria church and grounds, the meetings would have been held amid construction and re-fabrication to the church. By this time, the *oratorio della sera* could also be held in the oratory space erected in 1593 that stood along the right transept of the new church, (Chiesa Nuova), though Neri continued to hold *oratorio* meetings in the rooms of San Girolamo.

Later records point to the gradual distinction made by the fathers of the official oratorio only on feast days, or Catholic holidays, while continuing with the casual oratory for frequent gatherings. Finally, in 1599 we see evidence of full accommodations and changes to create a more formalized evening oratory due to the nature of the weather:

"Due to the distress of the season, humidity in the church, Mass should not be sung on

[119] Morelli, *Il tempio armonico,* 107.
[120] I-Rf, C. I. 4, *Libro primo de'decreti,* 26. 30 dicembre 1582; Morelli, *Il Tempio,* 108.
Che l'oratorio della sera si seguiti di faro nell'oratorio di casa […] l'oratorio della sera si farà ogni festa e della mattina solo le domeniche per l'ordinario.

> Fat Thursday, nor should those of the oratory be led to another place of recreation outside, but make the church oratory more solemn than usual with some nice musical intermezzos."[121]

Here, the description is written in an official tone but the desire to create a "solemn" thus sacred and ceremonial, atmosphere, reveals the typically casual nature of gatherings outside the church, and even outside the oratory. The fathers made plans to utilize the adapted oratory of the Valicelliana grounds for the purposes of a cooler, shorter, but still musically punctuated service. They did this presumably to save everyone the discomfort of sitting in the heat for a full mass with sung liturgy. Thus, the oratory, as a still malleable conceptual and architectural space, was beginning to take shape, and to reify from an idea to a kind of collective *sprezzatura,* to a fully-fledged locale that could stand-in for the church if desired.

A Shared Value of Sound: Acoustic Intimacy in *il primo oratorio*

I want to gesture to the significant role of sound in the *primo oratorio* evidence I have already described. Acoustic intimacy created by members speaking communally in small spaces was part of a material scaffolding of sound in the *primo oratorio*. The presence of sound was not always musical, but comprised a broader spectrum from vocality, of prayer, other spoken words, poetry, and even mental prayer (examined in Chapter 4). Devotional sounds of all types had a continuous presence in Oratorian meetings and music and poetry often prepared attendees, for vocal and mental prayer. Similarly, listening of all intensities, external and internal, was at the center of Oratorian piety. The gatherings in the 1550s hosted by Neri around the San Girolamo set an important precedent for later acoustic intimacy as a feature of group devotional

[121] I-Rf, C. I. 4, *Libro terzo de'decreti,* p. 92 16 febbraio 1599; Morelli, *Il Tempio,* 113.
per l'angustia del tempo, humidita della chiesa, non si canti la messa il giovedi grasso, né si menino quelli dell'oratorio ad altro luogo di ricreatione fuori, ma si facci l'oratorio di chiesa piu solennemente del solito con qualche intermedio di buona musica.

experience. Specifically, acoustic intimacy was a shared quality of experience in these impromptu spaces of speech, prayer and song. Those gathered would read books that would stir their affections, take long walks to other nearby sites such as St. John Lateran, St. Peter's and Santa Croce, while talking and singing.[122] Later, with Borromini's formal oratorio, this acoustic intimacy will be more concretely institutionalized, in architectural, religiou, and acoustic terms.

The small narrow conditions of the rooms in which the company held *il primo oratorio* meant that sound could envelop and pervade the body. The same invasive power of the material over the mortal body of the Holy Spirit that Neri experienced also runs through this shared value of sound. Neri, when he felt tired, or feared being arrested by a sudden fit of ecstasy, seizing and shaking, would pass the speaking mantel to another member. Others could speak, or interject when they felt inspired by the spirit, in the *ragionamento* method.[123] The first private gatherings of the early oratory, as a social group, established a shared value of sound as a real material presence.

As I have demonstrated, close sound in small spaces was essential to the founding of the confraternity values and personal chambers were essential to the oratory meetings. As co-creators of the gatherings, attendees could take equal part in speaking. The poem, *Felicita* shows how transient spiritual objects could offer another set of spatial and acoustic opportunities than sacerdotal, or priestly, duties typically presented in a set order.[124] The *oratorio della sera* could coalesce and dissipate around the rhythm and tone of improvised conversation. The oratory meetings were often held at the end of the day, "at the hour of the Ave Maria", as historians Ponnelle and Bordet write, and transformed steadily into regular programs of prayer: silent

[122] Process of Canonization, fol. 209.
[123] Ponnelle and Bordet, 171
[124] Biblioteca Valicelliana, O.67, Augostino Manni, *Raccolta di versi e canzonette spirituali composte da prima padre della cong. della orat. di roma,.* .

meditation for half an hour, a second half-hour was devoted to reading and the recitation of various prayers.[125] Meetings might even change locale in the midst of devotions. For instance, in a letter from an attendee of the oratory, a one "Rossi," recounts the early oratory. Rossi writes how members would go to lunch mid afternoon, after gathering for "ricreazione all camera" in the morning. When the room grew too crowded, and no longer suited for hearing the *ragionare,* they would move to another place. He recounts the early gatherings:

> "We go to dinner after three o'clock, after the *ricreazione all camera,* where we were in the morning; and this and that passes, and when my room could no longer accommodate those who came to hear the *ragionare*, then you can think of alighting down to some other place that God will show. I will go slowly to adore things there, because one cannot continue to be few, and therefore I do very little."[126]

This personal vignette illustrates the casual style and nonchalant manner that characterized the meetings, which could ostensibly take place anywhere shown by God. This anecdote offers an impression in stark contrast to the heightened historical account from Baronio's *Annali ecclesiastic,* quoted in the previous section, which suggests the elevation of the Roman Oratory tradition even shortly after its inception.

Speaking in private rooms entailed nuanced intensities on par with the actual sound levels of polite conversation, on the one hand, and contemplative prayer, on the other. These included

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[125] P.C. (Process of Canonization), fos. 131v, 164v, 936. Originals at the Vatican Library and copies at the Archives of the Filippini, Rome.
[126] Antonio Cistellini, *I primordi,* 196; Lett. al de Rossi 27 Nov. 1632, 1. c.

"Si va alle tre a cena doppo la ricreazione alla camera, dove si fa la mattina; e questo e quanto passa, e quando la mia camera non sara piu capace di chi verra a sentire il ragionare, allora si potra pensare a scendere in qualche altro luogo dove Dio ci mostrera. Andro adagio ad adosar ci le cose, perche non si puo continuare per esser pochi, e percio e ben far pocho." (Last sentence meaning is unclear)

varying intensities of vocality in conversation, inspired readings, poetic recitation, song, *oration vocale* (spoken prayer), or songful prayer in the form of *laude* (discussed in the following chapters). An analogous early modern space to the *oratorio di casa* and the *oratorio della sera,* also for shared cultural production tied to intimacy is the early modern *sala.* Across similar early modern spaces, we should perhaps consider the religious space of the *oratorio di casa* with that of the domestic music room and the private courtly interior.[127] As Mark Markham shows of the early modern courtly *sala,* singing and composing of song in such small spaces served an essential communal and ritual function.[128] The vocal music of Italian composers such as Guilio Caccini arose out of informal, private gatherings that included long durations of polite conversation with the occasional song. Similarly, the Oratory used sound in its informal and settings to have a shared spiritual experience.

Both scenarios created micro-soundscapes, of leisure and sacredness. The writer and member of the Roman curia, Silvio Antoniano recognized this intimate dimension and identified another appropriate use for the Oratorian devotions. In Antoniano's popular treatise at the time, he encouraged individuals to recite and sing Oratorian pslams and other devotional materials at home because of their accessible nature while still upholding a certain value over 'amatory poems'.[129] The possible uses of Oratorian song at home, and the descriptions of the early oratory setting suggest the brotherhood used informality of sound in equal measure with formal doctrinal

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[127] Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, ed. *The Music Room in Early Modern Italy and France: Sound, Space and Object.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

[128] Mark Markham, "Caccini's Two Bodies: Problems of Text and Space in Early-Baroque Monody," *gli spazi della musica* 2, no. 1 (2013): 33-54.

[129] "In an influential pedagogical treatise, Silvio Antoniano (1540–1603), a frequent visitor to Filippo Neri's Oratorio, recommended singing at home the psalms and devotional songs issued by the Oratorians": "Even a few singers of average ability can sing them; and it is much better and more profitable for children and servants, and even for daughters, to learn by heart similar songs than vain rhymes of romances and other amatory poems.";S. Antoniano, *Tre libri dell'educatione christiana dei figliuoli* (Verona, 1584), bk. 3, ch. 52, "Della musica," fols. 157v-158r. Also quoted in Filippi, *Roma Sonora,* 269.

exercises. To this end, I want to acknowledge the possibility of a radical attitude among the reformers of Rome to the open receptivity of sound and music that is perhaps understated in Oratorian-related scholarship, and that I will discuss in depth the possibilities for laypersons from this openness to sound and poetry. *Ragionamento sopra il libro*, poems, and singing satisfied two important roles: they encouraged divine experience for all individuals and offered a practical way to appeal to a wider Roman populace. In the iterations of the *primo oratorio*, the music and words were used less as methods for indoctrination than as open invitations to members and laity merely to enjoy themselves in a semi-sacred environment outside the Mass.

In sum, the Oratorians group devotions connected musical and non-musical sound intimately to the early modern listener of Catholic confession. This connection enacts a sanctioned relationship between the believer with Divinity, perhaps in the way his early contemporary, Martin Luther, began to break down all barriers except faith between the individual and God. Using sound, specifically, as a conduit ameliorated the guilt over the sensuality of musical sound versus the Word of God that had been strongly associated with sacred music and the hesitancy involved in spiritual listening. Neri, rather than discipline or even diminish the faculty of spiritual hearing, emboldened the individual to merely listen, as best they could, or wanted to. This undermined the tradition of guilt surrounding listening going back to St. Augustine. In his writing, *De Musica* of The Confessions, St. Augustine famously wrote about hearing and enjoying beautiful music. At the same time, he was overwhelmed with guilt for being distracted from contemplating God, deriving a greater degree of pleasure from the external trappings of the music than from the Word of God penetrating his mind.[130] In his meditative devotions, Augustine all but sought a complete escape from the body but ultimately

[130] Augustine. *De Musica*. *Patrologia Latina* 32:1081-1194, edited by J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1904.)

realized an escape from his own body in order to find God was a futile pursuit.[131] The Jesuits subsumed Augustinian techniques of the body when adopting the *Imitatio Christi* in their literature. Neri was educated in the Augustinian tradition, having studied theology at St. Augustine's monastery. Yet, in contrast to the Jesuits, and also to Luther, who preached and guided people to personal piety through the doctrine of faith alone, Neri did highlight the attractiveness of the trappings of the external sonic means of devotions.

The Divine Made Material in Oratorian Spirituality

In this chapter I have presented evidence to support the deeply human-centric foundations to Oratorian spirituality that were practiced before the institutionalization of the order. The tenets championed by the Oratorians—Optimism, Divine Grace, and spoken practices of vernacular improvisatory conversation—all converge through sound and materiality on the quality of acoustic intimacy. The value of acoustic intimacy reinforces the humanness of the body ascribed by the early Oratorians is an example of a positive technology of religion (rather than mechanizing the body and thus negating its fleshy presence through rote prayer or litany, or even violent mortification of the flesh). The materiality of sound and the sonorous capacity of the body opens onto experience with the divine. If the divine is immaterial and unreachable within a Catholic worldview, approaching sensations of the divine's presence was made dialectical, to feel approachable, or at least possible, in Oratorian spirituality.

The Council in 1551 had declared the doctrine of transubstantiation as dogma, so that the whole substance of bread and wine changes from the immaterial presence of Christ into His literal body and blood, known as the Real Presence. This transformation established a central

[131] B. Dobell, *Augustine's intellectual conversion*: *The journey from Platonism to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

tension inherited by all 16th century reformers—Christ's body and blood as ingestible products of his mortality, and also a reminder of the gift of ever-lasting, immaterial life. With Neri's heart-based transformation, and the virtual transformative experiences that amplified the listener-participant's body as a technology through spiritual poetry, spaces, and acoustic intimacy, we might even conceive of Oratorian spirituality as the belief in the Divine made material.

Key to distinguishing the Oratorians from new reform orders after the Council of Trent is the body's availability across the boundaries of the external and internal, the immaterial and material. Neri, Tarugi, Ancina, Manni, and the rest of the early company of Oratorian reformers congregated just down the street from the Jesuit mother Church of the Gesù. With the increasing urbanization of Rome and the presence of many reform orders in Rome by the 1550s, the Oratorians focused sound and space into micro-localities, or micro-soundscapes, as it were, of salvation.

To conclude, acoustic intimacy was a byproduct of the early company of Oratorian reformers under Neri that ultimately established the terms of spiritual production of the order. Part of the framework of the body as technology of religion is the way the body managed the fluidity of spaces of the *oratorio di casa*, which in turn, presents the possibility of creative and group-imposed definitions of the sacred. Indeed, participation was not so much solicited as co-produced. An unique and often transformation feature of Oratorian reform spirituality was the fluid use of sounds and spaces in ways that were closely managed by groups of individuals—whether standing under the massive portico of the Pantheon, taking evening devotions in the private rooms at the San Girolamo della Carita or San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, or congregating for music in the old built oratory at Vallicella.

The next chapter turns more closely to the contents of *Il Terzo Libro* (1588) book of

laude, which was used in various spaces around Rome for pastoral care in order to develop the inward life of members and laypersons. Early modern Romans and visitors to the papal city could participate in this inward life through sensuous scenes and sounds that enveloped the body. The historical evidence shows the body served to impart the sensations of heaven to earth, and likewise from the sensate body toward heaven. These convergences happened in ordinary spaces that might otherwise not be endowed to do so. The evidence shows there were other implications of the body as a religious technology than mimesis, mechanization or didacticism of prayer books, rosary, or the crucifix as other kinds of technologies. I suggest from the context above the body freely materialized virtual worlds and delimited the terms of the sacred itself.[132]

[132] Paolo Scarpi, "Delimitations of the Sacred," in *Civilita e Religion* 2 2015, 13-44. Simone Weil, "La personne et le sacré," in *Ecrits de Londres,* Paris, 11-39.

CHAPTER 2

Oratorian *laude* and Religious Creativity during Catholic Reform

Sixteenth-century Catholic reform transformed Italian social life as the papacy began to encourage patricians and nobles of localized parishes to align their work with the unified goal of Christian renewal in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. This created the widespread, though not absolute, effect of deploying forms of piety as mechanisms of social control.[133] Wietse De Boer, in his study of Catholic confessionalization and the public after the Council of Trent posits that the primary goal of clergy in the latter *cinquecento* was the militant "conquest of the soul."[134] The notion of conquest accentuates the invasive nature of conversions through proselytism, the sacraments and, importantly, through musical forms of faith building. In short, social control has served scholars as an important historicist and hermeneutical lens of the effects of the Counter Reformation on early moderns.[135] Various regional studies of Catholic reform in early modern Italy have shown the ways in which ordinary groups enjoyed devotional sovereignty through elected community engagement like processions. The idea of a social "history from below," in this regard, has informed work on the social activity of street singing and how it could shape and contest the nature of public and privates spaces separately from

[133] Jetze Tauber presents the confessional view of the Oratorians as trying to discipline the world in his introduction to the study of Antonio Gallonio. See Tauber,"Introduction," in *Law, Medicine, and Engineering in the Cult of the Saints in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Hagiographical Works of Antonio Gallonio, 1556-1605,* (Brill: 2014),1-43, 18-19.

[134] Wietse De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan.* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). A. Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin, 1996); Paolo Prodi and Carla Penuti eds., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed eta moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

[135] Anne Piejus offers a more equitable study of the beneficial effects of the Oratorian's music during reform. Anne Piejus, *Musique et Devotion a Rome a la Fin de la Renaissance: Les Laudes de l'Oratoire* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

ecclesiastical control in early modern cities.[136] Equally as present in the history of confessionalization were individual performances of faith based in the intimacy, flexibility and customized prayer life of laypersons.[137]

Ann Ramsey, in her work on the Catholic League in Paris during the French Wars of Religion and Catholic reform offers a pathway to begin to move from the macrodimensions of religious culture of institutions (the Oratorians formation of values) to the microspaces of individual religious experience.[138] Ramsey suggests ideas of civic and sacral imminence applied to the Catholic League were "designed to have interpretive structures broad enough and precise enough to connect political and religious culture with personal religious experience in a non-reductionalist manner." [139] The idea of an "ontology created by a fusion of civic and religious experience helps to relate microexperiential changes to more comprehensive frameworks for describing social, political and cultural change," thus, "through minute investigations of the ontologies of personal religious experience, [we can] work our way toward a better understanding of the relationship between individual agency, group experience, and the structure of long-term social, cultural, and political change."[140] For example, during Catholic reform, the League's belief in "sacral imminence"—or that the sacred can be enclosed in finite objects, in

[136] Rosa Salzberg, and Massimo Rospocher, "Street Singers in Italian Renaissance Urban Culture and Communication," in *Cultural and Social History* 9, (2012): 9-26. Paul V. Murphy, "Politics, Piety, and Reform: Lay Religiosity in Sixteenth-Century Mantua," in *Confraternities & Catholic Reform in Italy, France, & Spain* (Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 45-54. For the original source to the approach to history from below, see E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*. (London, 1963).
[137] Nathan D. Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism,* (NYU Press, 2009), 35; Noel O'Regan, "Church Reform and Devotional Music in Sixteenth-Century Rome: The Influence of Lay Confraternities, in *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Culture and Religion* (Ashgate, 2009).
[138] Ann Ramsey, "From Ontology to Religious Experience: Civic and Sacred Immanence in the Holy Sacrament Confraternities of Paris during the Catholic League", in *Confraternities & Catholic Reform in Italy, France, & Spain* (Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 137-151.
[139] Ramsey, 150.
[140] Ibid, 150.

particular the Eucharistic Host—were also part of a very personal ordering of the self, the world, and even one's psychic world.

This chapter investigates the Oratorian laude specifically as an organizing object to raise the historical possibility of religious creativity and sacred imminence through personal experience. More specifically, through a close poetic analysis of the Roman laude, the possibility of intimacy and freedom of lay individuals comes to the foreground in a history traditionally focused on media as mechanism of social control. Two genres that most defined and shaped pastoral work in late *cinquecento* Rome are the laude of the Oratory of Rome and the Jesuit *dottrina christiana* books, the latter of which Daniele Filippi calls the "most ubiquitous and characteristic elements of Catholic sonic cultures."[141] Both series of books were both printed in Rome ca. 1560s-1600, and feature what was considered by church composers to be decidedly less complex polyphonic verse music with vernacular spiritual poetry for the ease of use of laity. These genres were disseminated in Rome and exemplify the pastoral approaches of two major and competing orders active in the papal city, the powerful Jesuits, and the smaller but influential Oratorians. Together, they represent a large share of the popular religious media circulated among early modern urbanites on the Italian peninsula, and were produced concurrently in the latter 16th century for lay spiritual health. In order to fully understand the unique nature of the Oratorians and their dissemination of the laude as part of a sensuous, comparatively relaxed approach to pastoral care within Catholic reform, we must also analyze the Jesuit *dottrina* as a closely related genre that also targeted laity, though in a more disciplinarian way.

Similar to Ramsey's thinking with regard to traversing the macrodimensions of religious culture to the microspaces of individual religious experience, I argue that the Oratorian laude

[141] Daniele Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine: Early Modern Jesuits and the Singing of the Catechism," *Early Music History* 34, (2015): 1.

supported individual agency by inviting alternative paths to experiencing the sacred through individual engagement. My methodology is threefold: historical, to re-contextualize the broader narratives and myths about the far-reaching power of the church after the Council of Trent; comparative, to understand the close but very different approach to musical pastoral care by the Jesuits and their song books; and, finally, analytical: While the next chapter investigates the sonic and musical dimensions to the laude, in the present chapter analyzes the poetic dimension to the laude as part of a history of experience. The Oratorian poet, Agostino Manni's semi-secular textual content is reflexive and features meta-references to sounds, to suggest that this form of devotional media expanded the sonic and imaginative possibilities for regimented prayer. In this way, the laude served as fluid events of sound intended for listening that were at once bounded objects (songs) and highly situated in their context of origin (the *oratorio* or plaza), whether as a voice attached to a singer or fully detached acousmatic sounds heard from afar. Therefore, the laude were sound objects created by sonic, musical, spatial, spiritual and personal experience. Sound object does not require "reduced listening" in the Schaefferian sense, so much as attempts to posit that no single fixed framework can accounts for the listener's historical experience. The laude resounded across too many porous territories of early modern Catholicism: private and public, prayer and song, internal and external, sound and silence, secular and sacred, personal and communal, body and space.

My historical-analytical approach requires overcoming the entrenched historicist lens of confessionalism and control, mentioned above by Tauber, de Boer, and others, this chapter builds on their work by supporting a dialectical understanding of the post-Tridentine period, one in which materiality, value, and power that necessarily circulate around the performance of religion are re-located within the religious creativity of individual faithful, as

well. I do not wish to collect observations into the basket of culture or a "sonic culture." When approaching the Oratorian spiritual poetry, I take a cue from Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics to bear in mind a hermeneutics of faith applied to a study of the body engaged with new spiritual media rather than the Bible or Catechism.[142]

By drawing on the coeval genres of the *dottrina* books and the laude books, a crucial distinction about the co-creation of religious experience appears in the foreground, one that perhaps picks up where Ramsey left off with regard to religious creativity. For the Oratorians, neither sacred immanence nor salvation was the primary labor, or motivation toward belief, let alone their pastoral work. Likewise, their laude served a more relaxed purpose and casual attitude, as salvation through Christ was guaranteed if one was human.[143] Indeed, Manni, once recorded that Filippo Neri would merely laugh and encourage others to laugh to receive God.[144] Moreover, as distinct from the Jesuit approach, their pastoral work dissemination sound as sensual experience through spiritual song as an extension of Grace, which they believed was a sensual category of direct comprehension, rather than sound as figural or mnemonic vessel for catechism learning, the latter a strong belief of the Jesuit author Diego de Ledesma.[145]

The Oratorians were uniquely inclined to use attributes from popular and sacred music for the attraction of faithful as much as for spiritual edification. This fact is significant, as

[142] A "hermeneutics of faith" as a dominant way to interpret religious texts, stands in opposition to Paul Ricoeur's interpretive lens which critiques modern, predominantly Marxists readings of religion. Thus, Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion" would be in the service of demystifying, or rationalizing, Catholics mysteries and doctrines of belief rather than incorporating them into historical truths.
[143] Ian Verstegen. *Federico Barocci and the Oratorians: Corporate Patronage and Style in the Counter-Reformation*. (Truman State University Press, 2015), 1-5.
[144] Incisa della Rocchetta, *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri Vol 1* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 1957-1963), 139; Filippi, 213.
[145] Smither, *History of the Oratorio,* 51, discusses how the Oratorians desired to keep all sermons simple to follow this style of receptivity, as well. An example of a reformer and Oratorian writer is Gabriel Paleotti's *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (1582), which propounds a type of sensual, immediate cognition through spiritual images.

catechism songs were the most effective markers of confessional identity.[146] According to Daniele Filippi, the sung catechism invites us to reassess the public nature and role of catechesis in the early modern period.[147] However, the laude served a different role than strictly sonifying the catechism; they were an extension of the Oratorian's practice of Grace and created an "improvisatory catechesis," which took the open and spontaneous nature of their group meetings and evening prayers in the Oratory space directly into Roman public spaces.[148] This avenue of investigation into ostensibly ancillary spiritual media, takes us also beyond the overbearing trope of liturgical music during Catholic reform—that music and textual content are in a hierarchical relationship and music is predominantly the servant of sacred words. To this end, the Roman listeners were the co-creators not only of faith but also of the value of spirituality and sound.

The historical analysis of early modern Catholicism as an engine for social control and discipline suggests devotional song attached to both poetry and prayer could stifle personal faith as much as grant opportunities for freedom over the terms of belief. Among several new Catholic orders of the 16th century such as the Capuchins and Barnabites, it was the Jesuits and Oratorians who were at the forefront of recognizing the power of singing and listening to encourage devotion and support the belief of layperons.[149] Jesuits fathers from Spain who traveled to Italy in the mid 16th century, such as Diego de Ledesma, touted prayer to be the most effective way to instill faith and regiment piety.[150] At the same time, the most influential early

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[146] Daniele Filippi, "'Catechismum modulans docebat': Teaching the Doctrine through Singing in Early Modern Catholicism," in *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: Perspectives from Musicology,* ed. Daniele Filippi and Michael Noone (Brill, 2017), 129-148.
[147] Filippi, "Catechismum," 141.
[148] Nathan D. Mitchell, "Reframing Religious Identity," in *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism,* (NYU Press, 2009), 126.
[149] Noel O'Reagan, "Music, Memory, and Faith: How did singing in Latin the vernacular influence what people knew and thought about their faith in early modern Rome?" *Italianist* 34, 437-448, 2015, https://doi.org/10.1179/0261434014Z.000000000101 ,
[150] Diego de Ledesma, *Modo per insegnar la dottrina christiana,*(*Rome: Blado Press*) 1573.

Oratorians, like Serafino Razzi, a collector of Catholic Florentine street song, and Giovanni Animuccia, a learned composer, published, produced, and promoted their own books of spiritual laude for use both within the church and in the public piazzas and gardens of Rome. The great growth in Reformation spirituality through prayer and song after Trent also linked together the desire to control spiritual knowledge formations with devotional behaviors of sound, from song to oration.[151]

On the one hand, singing, and listening, outside the liturgy could put the power of faith into the ears, minds, and hearts of the people. On the other hand, according to John Bossy, the consequences of reform could have the adverse effect of alienating laity since "imposing a regime of ritual conformity on ordinary Catholics" now extended beyond the mass into devotional activities ostensibly controlling individualist behaviors of piety, as well.[152] Indeed, according to Nathan Mitchell, even local worshipping institutions such as parishes could "exclud[e] laypeople from autonomous religious action."[153] Thus, under Catholic Reform, the creation of devotional programs and materials for laity could have a doubly alienating effect, severing lay faithful not only from the mysteries presented in the Sacrament of Mass, but also from personalized domestic devotions. Giorgio Caravale remarks on the nature of control over laity as an attempt to control devotions styled as "simple":

> "the control of the religiosity of the 'simple' became the strategic priority of the Church of the Counter Reformation, and the fight against using the vernacular became the symbol and instrument of that priority. As part of an offensive aimed at imposing

[151] Frederick J. McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter Reformation Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 29-40; 69-71.
[152] Quoted in Mitchell, "Reframing Reform," in *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism* (NYU Press, 2012), 14.
[153] Ibid., 14.

ecclesiastic mediation as the sole channel for cultural production and enjoyment, many texts which in recent decades had satisfied the devotion of the 'simple', introducing them to an inner, intimist religiosity, were taken out of circulation."[154]

Thus, one dominant historical narrative maintains that Church attempts in the mid 16th century at widening the possibility for lay devotion and faith building could actually stifle believers' sense of individual responsibility as well as their power of discernment of their faith.[155] Simplicity of style did not necessary correspond with an intimist style of devotion, as well.

At the center of this investigation of devotional song texts is a discourse about simplicity as the proper style for the production of lay devotional song. In some cases, simplicity was a byproduct of Tridentine proceedings, which expressed some official decrees regarding the importance of clarity of the word of God during liturgical celebrations, yet in other contexts, particularly for smaller orders like the Jesuits and Oratorians, simplicity meant unornamented polyphony, or even homophony, of multiple lines of music to ostensible allow for easier participation by laity. Yet, as I discuss below, the realization of simplicity was not so straightforward as the concept might suggest and could also represent more of an ideal about the reception and performance of spirituality than of what people actually did. For example, the Oratorians used what they idiosyncratically deemed "simple" music for the third book of laude, but the poetry is semi-secular and complex in its imagery. Furthermore, they also continued to patronize and perform a variety of musics, including complex polyphonic masses and antiphonal,

[154] Giorgio Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Taylor and Francis, 2016), viii.
[155] Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* ix

or two choir, masses.[156]

Considering the dominant narrative of Church control extended to the modalitiy of listening, a holistic analytical approach to lay experience is needed, one that takes into account the historical and experiential possibility of non-clergy as expert listeners and as creators of their own faith. By applying the concept sacred performativity instead of devotional song, singing and listening to sound can be understood, perhaps more radically, as encounters with the sacred, and thus as sacred relationships in themselves.

In sum, the above context about centralized control versus individual experience is necessary to understand the ways in which the Oratorians of Roman participated in a more intimist spirituality by employing their own ideas of musical simplicity, as well as to speculate about the types of experiences of laity afforded by Oratorian musical pastoral work. The Roman Oratorians offered a sonorous alternative to the perceived control of conciliar reform. Several localities of Rome —the Vallicella, rione Regola, Trastevere, etc.—were the lands of Oratorian pastoral care, and one could more easily access music in such public-oriented spaces as a way to practice newfound spirituality, itself a reform concept, and, more importantly, to obtain a sense of individual sacredness.[157]

From oral tradition to print: The Oratorians and the Roman laude 1563-1588

[156] The full breadth of musical style in Rome at this time is beyond the scope on one study, but it is worth noting that polyphonic and plainchant masses continued to be sung throughout the 16th century, after the Council of Trent, including in the Church of the Vallicella of the Oratorians. To be sure, Spanish composers of polyphonic masses and motets, Tomas Luis de Victoria, studied in Rome and joined Neri's Oratory, ostensibly participating in the musical life, before he returned to Spain. Likewise, Palestrina is documented in the *decreti* for composing for the Oratorian's celebrations, as well.

[157] This move to make personal piety *mostly-public*, is an odd reversal and part of a larger history of pre- and post-Tridentine Catholicism, in which the seamlessness between late-Medieval local corporate worship and domestic religion becomes fractured and supplanted by new forms of "popular" piety and parish control. See Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (Yale University Press, 2005).

The Oratorians and Jesuits took full advantage of the smaller printing presses in Rome rather than the major presses of Venice to disseminate devotional books to their specification. The laude books features slightly more modernized notation and an inventive choirbook layout so as to fit all vocal parts on the same folio for easier use in small groups of singers. These types of books are distinct from the common book of prayer or pocket missals, and from overtly politicized pamphlets. Additionally, these musical devotional books tended to be spiritually didactic in nature, and were printed and disseminated locally with the intent of enhancing the pastoral work of a particular order or parish, by acting as a mobile authority to direct the pious practices of the individual.

For the purposes of this chapter, I identify the three primary types of genres that comprise the sonic media of the reform activity in Rome. These include 1) books that contain printed musical composition intended for singing devotional texts and prayers, 2) books that are primarily prayer with very simple music added as a memory aid to recite the prayer, and 3) textual prayer books that may suggest the application of a melody but that do not contain notated music. I focus on the first and second type of musical prayer books published by the Roman Oratory, and known as laude, or praise songs, and the Jesuit Dottrina Christiana books, as the latter genre contain only enough melodic musical content to serve as emorization tool. The Oratorian laude and catechism books, then, together comprise a formidable share of the sonic media circulating among Roman public in the last quarter of the 16th century.

The beginning of the Oratorian publishing project in Rome actually began with one Florentine edition of songs compiled by Serafino Razzi, a Florentine and follower of Filippo Neri. Razzi compiled Catholic street songs into a first edition of laude of 1563. This project materially advanced a previously oral tradition from a new, printed genre. The preface is seminal

to the entirety of the series of prints in Rome because Razzi highlights the unique journey of its contents from oral tradition to a fixed collection of devotional compositions. The preface references the "cantasi come" tradition of singing text "in this way" as in adding a preexisting melody to the words so as to make group singing more accessible to laity. The passage of the preface below contains a glimpse at the printer's satisfaction having had at last transcribed an important Florentine oral tradition into a concrete printed book. The printer, Filippo Giunti, writes in the preface to Razzi's 1563 edition,

> "I wished for many years, for these and many other reasons, to have a collection of laude, not like the ones that have been around until now, without music, but ordered in a better form. I still had not attained this when[…]I learned that the young Rev. Father Serafino Razzi […]of your order of [Dominican friars], who is not only highly trained in Christian Philosophy, but also in all the more laudable studies, had gathered, almost as a hobby, a book of the most beautiful ancient and modern [laude], and included the melodies as well, thus avoiding the silly manner of saying: "to be sung like this or like that [cantasi come]."[158]

Razzi created the model for a solidified print genre whereby Animuccia could produce second and third collections of devotional music to use in Filippo Neri's chosen pastoral city of Rome. Stylistically, the first and third books contain music intended for the easy delivery of the words.

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[158] My translation, Razzi, *Libro primo,* Prologue. Also quoted in Eyolf Ostrem and Nils Holger Petersen, *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music: The Devotional Practice of laude singing in late-Renaissance Italy* (Brepols 2008), 47: "Havendo io, per queste, & altre molte cagioni, molti anni disiderato d'havere una scelta di laudi, non come quelle, che infine a hora sono andate attorno senza musica, ma in miglior forma ordinate; non mi era anco venuto fatto d'haverla, quando intesi pochi mesi sono, che il Rev. Padre Fra Serafino Razzi da Marradi, dell'ordine de' vostri frati Predicatori, giovane, non solo molto esercitato nella Filosofia Christiana, ma ancora in tutti i più lodevoli studi, n'haveva, quasi per suo passatempo, raccolto un libro delle più belle antiche, e moderne, & aggiunto loro il modo di cantarle, lasciando quella scioccha maniera di dire: Cantasi come la tale, e come la quale."

In the passage above, Giunta mentions a type of extant laude books that "have been around, without music." He is referring to cheap prints of textual laude, or similarly pocket books with prayers of the Dottrina Christiana that were printed with increased regularity around the peninsula at this time, intended for lay use. These prayer books featured texts but did contain any musical notation or instructions (i.e., "cantasi come," or "sing it like this"). With these books, the user might hum along a preexisting tune their family members or parishioner taught them, or perhaps apply the music of a responsorial or chant used in sacramental worship or mass.

Razzi's edition also marks the first time since the Petrucci Press in the early 1500s that laude were collected together as a named genre from oral traditions of Florentine carnival songs.[159] In Florence, the laude, also known as *travestimenti spirituali*, helped to rally and energize followers of the radical prophet Girolamo Savonarola. Indeed, many of the songs in Razzi's collection would have been lost were it not for his publication, if they were not sung by ear by members of a local parish tradition.[160] What began as a project of oral collection steadily transformed into a devotional tool of reform through the material setting of print by enterprising printers in Rome competing with the large market in Venice.

The significance of the Roman laude in the rise of Oratorian spirituality thus stems from the fact that the laude books were fully fledged printed collections with both original music and original poetry. They established a new fixity of the text separating them from the oral *travestimenti.* In this way, the Oratory had a template that could be more carefully curated in subsequent prints for their imaginings of what public devotion could be like and achieve for lay belief.[161] Although not a musician himself, Razzi had served as a Dominican monk in the St.

[159] The laude in Tuscany were mainly kept alive by the Dominican monks, and, as the printer Giunti mentioned, laude were also sung by nuns in convents.
[160] Patrick Macey, *Bonfire Songs: Sonvarola's Musical Legacy* (Clarendon Press, 1988), 49-58.
[161] I refer here to the notion of texts being "fixed" in their materiality due to printing press technologies.

Mark monastery in Florence, the environment in which he would have regularly heard street tunes. As a collector, he compiled the tunes he knew were popular since the days of Savonarola leading hoards of followers in street singing against Medici control of religious freedom. The Venetian presses then standardized the musical text setting rather than provide a short hand "to be dung in the tune of so-and-so" that was commonly paired with devotional texts, and to which Guinti explicitly mentions in the preface above.[162] As Edward J. Dent points out, the Oratorians did not try to hide the fact that much of the music is, or is inspired by, secular folk tunes even if they were deployed for devotional purposes.[163] Thus, the *Libro primo delle laudi spirituali* of 1563 set an important material and spiritual precedent for the Oratorian's next print runs, especially the third, the *Il terzo libro* 1577, and 1588 editions.

The texts that best represent the Roman laude as spiritual media for the Oratorian's pastoral work are the 1577 *Il Terzo Libro* by composer, Giovanni Animuccia, and the later series printed by Blado, the 1588 series of the *Il Terzo libro.* These books mark the period of production of original music intended specifically for the enjoyment of lay listeners. The 1588 series of the *Il Terzo libro* was oversaw by the young Spanish composer, Francesco de Soto, who was also the successor of Animuccia, is significant because it solidified the new laude repertory throughout the late 16th century in the pastoral landscape of Rome. While the later addition includes a new set of music by Soto and various composers, this second series is a testament also to the popularity of the books, as well as to the Oratorian's corporate commitment to engaging

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The nature of fixity versus the malleability of the form of textual objects is a central debate in the history of the book. See Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), 77-88. Adrien Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 378; 624-637.

[162] Serafino Razzi, *Il libro primo libro delle laudi spirituali* (Venice: Francesco Rampazetto, 1563), sig. 2-2v. "Studi sulla storia dell' Oratorio musicale in Italia," Turin, 1908; "Le Laudei Spirituali italiane nei Secoli XVI e XVII e il loro rapporto coi canti profani" in "Rivista Musicale Italiana," Turin, 1909.

[163] Edward J. Dent, "The Laudi Spirituali in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Proceedings of the Musical Association,* Published Royal Musical Association (1916-1917): 63-95, (68-69).

the public even as they were producing elaborate vocal polyphony. Some modificaitons in the 1588 for use in public seem to include more modernized notation and an inventive choir book layout so as to fit all vocal parts on the same folio for easier use in small groups of singers, a design offered by boutique printers in Rome. These design changes for the edition suggest the book's import as physical object for devotion while also placing the Roman laude book yet another degree away from the purely oral tradition of the Florentine devotional songs that Razzi compiled his seminal project a few decades prior.

The 1588 collection also marks the period in which the Oratorians gained stature and power in Rome as a Catholic order. By the 1580s, Filippo Neri was already planning the interior artistic program for their official Church. The *Il Terzo libro* of 1588 is dedicated to Federico Borromeo of Milan, who was a great benefactor to the renovation and new construction of the Chiesa Nuova beginning in the 1580s. Borromeo was also the nephew of Carlo Borromeo, the Archbishop of Milan, and both men were close with Neri. As a point of confluence, Federico Borromeo also oversaw the commissioning of paintings for the interior of the Chiesa Nuova from Federio Barocci during the 1582.[164] The dedication to Borromeo connected stylistically the naturalistic simple portraits he commissioned by Barocci for the church to the new simple style of singing introduced by the third book of devotional song. The dedication to Borromeo was a gesture of gratitude and a symbol of continuity of the order's spiritual style.

The Council of Trent in Perspective: Intelligibility and Simplicity

It is important to frame the contents of the Jesuit and Oratorian books in their social context after the Council of Trent. The Council was the main source for discourses on

[164] Ian Verstegen, "Federico Barocci, Federico Borromeo, and the Oratorian Orbit," in *Renaissance Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2003): 56-87 (62-64). http://doi.org/10.2307/1262258.

intelligibility and simplicity surrounding liturgical and spiritual song. It is necessary to parse out more deliberately the ways in which music could be "simple" and how simplicity could become attached to spiritual mechanisms that both the Oratorians and the Jesuits believed to be best suited for the spiritual health of laity. Animuccia's commentary on musical aesthetics, which helped to guide the Oratorian pastoral project, is also couched within the larger context of stylistic censorship. Several clerics were concerned with church composers abusing the denser multiple-voice style of musical polyphony so that they obscure the clarity of sacred words. The Council of Trent represents this project. According to Giorgio Caravale, however, what the church actually campaigned to suppress was the scope of "unofficial" liturgical activity, including prayers and litanies specific to a single parish.[165] Caravale's work suggests that simplicity, as a general style of Reformation spiritual media to include prayer, is a red herring for the study of music and experience in early modern Catholicism.

To this end, some clarification of the *de facto* power over music by the Council of Trent is required. The Council of Trent (1545 to 1563) concluded around the time that Razzi produced the first book of laude for Neri's nascent order of Oratorians in Rome. While the Protestant Reformation in Europe placed external pressure on the Church, the curias were also motivated refortify internally the communal spirit and effectiveness of the Catholic Church. Musical aesthetics mattered in this project, and are discussed in the final decrees. The story of Tridentine decree outlawing polyphony and musical artifice for devotional use has reached near-mythic status in early music history—in particular, the notion that "intelligibility," closely related to simplicity of music to word relationship.[166]

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[165] Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer,* ix.
[166] Karl Gustav Fellerer, "Church Music and the Council of Trent," *Musical Quarterly* 39 (1953): 578-80;

However, Craig Monson has revealed in detail how the Tridentine proceedings, 1) did not necessarily outlaw musical polyphony and 2) how music is discussed in the drafts and official published canons is much more terse and generalized terms than has been presented by musicologists. [167] As Monson shows, the proceedings "ensured that post-Tridentine Catholic Church music would be anything but uniform and monolithic."[168] What this also meant is that individual opinions and tastes could have a greater impression on Catholic life than the staid effects of conciliar pronouncements about upholding the propriety of the mass. Oratorian associates were included among the council, such as Giovanni Animuccia, Carlo Borromeo as well as Garbriel Paleotti, who were all major agents in the proceedings. Both Borromeo and Paleotti were concerned first and foremost with arousing the faithful to the love of God. Similarly, the comprehension of all listeners concerned Animuccia. In his 1567 published masses used at the Vatican's Cappella Giulia, Animuccia writes that he aimed to "disturb the hearing of the text as little as possible, but nevertheless in such a way that it may not be entirely devoid of artifice."[169] Although comprehension concerned him, he also did not want to capitulate to the oversimplification of musical writing even if the clarity of words may be compromised by sound. The connection between intelligibility and simplicity may represent one reactionary ideal that was never fully realized by churchmen, composers, or heard by laity.

Lewis Lockwood, *The Counter-Reformation and the Masses of Vincenzo Ruffo* (Vienna, 1969), 74-5; Preliminary versions rather than approved passed of the Council appears in histories such as Donald J. Grout's *History of Western Music,* 5th edition, ed. Claude Palisca.

[167] Craig A. Monson, "The Council of Trent Revisited," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55, (2002), 1-37. As Monson shows, the famous quote referred to in Grout and Palisca's canonical *History of Western music* is actually much briefer than previously quoted, with only the following stated; "Let them [prelates/bishops] keep away from the churches compositions in which there is an intermingling of the lascivious or impure, whether by instrument or voice." (CT 8:963)

[168] Monson,19.

[169] "Animuccia," in *The New Grove Dictionary Of Music and Musicians, 2nd edition,* ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London, 2001).

The final canons of the Council feature only three that mention music.[170] These are the "Abuses of the Mass" in the 22nd sessions, as well as the 24th and 25th sessions, and the final statements in each session eliminate almost all specificity in musical prescription.[171] This truth about the Council is important to analyzing the musical pastoral work of the Oratorians, as well as the Jesuits because it disproves arguments for the influence of the Council of Trent, on the "abuses of the mass" —licentious or profane-sounding music—that are purported in prior historiography.[172] The canons instead feature terse, general statements that left, and leave, much to interpretation. For example, a canon in which the draft was accepted virtually unchanged and published in almost identical form appears in the twenty-fourth session, 11 November 1563:

> Canon 12: "Let them all be required to attend divine services and not by sub-stitutes; and to assist and serve the bishop when celebrating or carrying out other pontifical functions, and to praise the name of God reverently, clearly and de-voutly in hymns and canticles in a choir established for psalmody.... With re-gard to the proper direction of the divine offices, concerning the proper manner of singing or playing therein.... In the interim, the bishop, with no less than two canons, one chosen by himself, the other by the chapter, may provide in these matters as seems expedient."[173]

Indeed, the Council, as a symbolic authority, is quite reserved in its final remarks on sound aside from claims about proper music that praises, broadly, the "name of God."[174] Music in divine services should meet the decency of clerics and that "singing be such that the words are

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[170] Monson, 18
[171] Ibid.
[172] Karl Gustav Fellerer, "Church Music and the Council of Trent," *Musical Quarterly* 39 (1953): 578-80; Lewis Lockwood, *The Counter-Reformation and the Masses of Vincenzo Ruffo* (Vienna, 1969), 74-5; Preliminary versions of the Council proceedings rather than official versions actually appears in canonical histories such as Donald J. Grout's *History of Western Music,* 5th edition, by Claude Palisca.
[173] Monson, "Trent Revisited," 18.
[174] Monson, 18.

understood rather than the music."[175] There is no straightforward mention of simplicity or intelligibility.

In conclusion to the above analysis, the relationship of style to musical experience and spirituality after Trent is more complication and a matter of correlation rather than a direct causation between the actual proceedings and decrees of the Council to parish and confraternal activity. Along these lines, Chiara Bertoglio demonstrates how a more symbolic communication of the Word of God was more important to conciliar members than the literal transmission of words as worldly language.[176] Likewise, K.G. Fellerer and Moses Hades go so far as to expound upon the ways in which composer-authors publishing during and after the Tridentine years who "invoked the Council of Trent in their prefaces of works which incline to homophony… really have no justification for so doing with reference to the technical musical basis, but they are more fully justified in pointing to the Council of Trent as providing the spiritual basis for the new art."[177] And although some confraternities and parishes did strive toward some idea of simplicity, this work occurred apart from the Council's influence, going back to at least The Oratory of Divine Love of in the beginning of the century, in 1517.[178] Finally, the responsibility to enforce the decrees was left to the discretion of provincial synods, like bishops, which also made the landscape of post-Tridentine music more diverse.

Debriefing important misconceptions about the Council of Trent, and associated notions of simplicity when dealing with music and words is necessary to understand that lay devotional

[175] Ibid.; (CT 8:922).
[176] Chiara, Bertoglio, *Reforming Music: Music and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century* (De Gruyter, 2017), 166.
[177] K.G. Fellerer and Moses Hadas, "Church Music and the Council of Trent," *The Musical Quarterly* 39, (October 1953): 576- 594 (590).
[178] The Oratory of Divine Love can be viewed as a precursor to 16th century confraternities, as it was an ecclesiastical reform movement in the end of the 15th century that reached Rome around 1517. However membership was very exclusive and aristocratic. The focus was on charity and care for the sick.

music produced by new orders like the Jesuits and Oratorians was made in large part by their own design, and decided upon on their own terms through self-governance and not from influence by the Church as an umbrella institution. Daniel Fillipi demonstrates how studying what he describes as the "unusual" repertoire of Jesuit catechism prints for singing invites us to explore a broader scope of music in Early Modern Catholicism.[179] However, focused study of the Jesuit books, along with the Oratorian laude comprises a more recent and important subdivision of study on the music contained in them, but also of laity experience with and through music.[180] The section below will clarify some of the key differences between the Jesuit catechism and Oratorian laude books.

Diametrical styles: the Jesuit *Dottrina Christiana* as foil to the Oratorian *laude*

Creating a collection of self-declared, stylistically simple music for all was actually something the Oratorians labored to achieve. When Francesco Soto took over as music director at the Chiesa Nuova after Animuccia's death, one of the fathers wrote in 1588 how the young *maestro di capella* was making "significant progress" in all matter of simplicity.[181] Morelli notes how the founding members considered simplicity as a cardinal aesthetic quality, yet one that necessarily existed alongside musical worship of some complexity, as well.[182] In the preface to the first print of *Terzo Libro* of 1577, Animuccia explicitly writes about a return to simplicity, which sets up perhaps the conceit of the whole of the Oratorian's third printed collection of

[179] Filippi, "Catechismum," 130: Along with the catechesis books, Filippi has noted "there are some points of contact that would deserve to be explored: notably the Italian *lauda* and other devotional genres which presented a variety of contexts, uses, and performing situations, reaching across social and cultural."
[180]Ibid., 129-148.
[181] M. Borelli, *I documenti dell'Oratorio napoletano,* Vol 1, (Napoli, 1964), 26-27.
[182] Morelli, Arnaldo. "Il muovere e non il far maravigliar*," Italian History and Culture* 5 (1999): 13-28 (19).

music and poetry. As Animuccia writes, the third book of laude is for the consolation of all devout, provided with more ease and musical simplicity, so as to be sung by everyone.[183] He adds that this was not the case for the first two books. In the preface to a later 1589 collection of songs, we read how the compilers chose not only "laude composed with artifice and polish to satisfy men of acute and refined judgment, but also to include many simple, plain ones for the common use of the people."[184] Indeed, the Chiesa Nuova, even while under renovations, featured polyphonic, and even double choir ensembles, for mass and Holy Days.

Yet, how is simplicity exemplified in the Oratorian's laude for popular devotion? Does the poetry betray to the listener a welcoming sound or style that corresponds to the Tridentine desire for "intelligibility," or were a different goals for spirituality at play? As I broached above, the laude are not strictly prayer, and I offer we should consider them as sound objects.

The laude of the first generation of Oratorians, to include Animuccia and Soto offer are imbued with tenants of Oratorian spirituality—such as the unquestioned reception of Divine Love and the embracement of the mortal body as a positive attribute of earthly devotions, discussed in Chapter 1. Going another level deeper, the laude encouraged the user to create intimate microsoundscapes and scenes of salvation through their engagement. This occurs at the level of acoustical sound, ringing in ones chest, ears, and throats, and through sense and meaning bolstered by the highly physical content of the poetry. For instance, the laude *Or che la fredda,* from *Il Terzo Libro* 1588, betrays through vivid, semi-secularized imagery the splendors not of

[183] "E parso a' Padri, per onor di N[ostro] S[ignore] e per consolazione e'devoti, procurar quest'alto, che fosse il Terzo libro, ma con più facilita e semplicità musicale, faccio possa esser cantato da tutti, il che per la maggior parte non avveniva de' due primi libri[.]"
Animuccia, *Il terzo libro delle lauti spirituali* (Rome: Antonio Blado 1577), n.p.
[184] Arnaldo Morelli, *Il Tempio Armonico Musica nell'oratorio dei filippini in Roma 1575-1705.* (Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 64

heaven but of divinity in the natural world on earth. I will return to this in more detail below. Under Christian optimism, to which Neri is credited and to which the Oratorians subscribed wholeheartedly, nature was cherished as a manifestation of God's goodness. Neri even preferred to pray in nature and it was common to find him in the gardens of Rome. This view of the natural world was also a belief of Federico Borromeo, the dedicatee of the *Il Terzo libro* 1588 collection.[185] Several laude texts contain sophisticated description rendered in plain (vernacular) language. It is important to note also the texts seem to avoid the gnosticism of the contemporaneous style of secular poets like Pietro Bembo, that believed in the near-magic of word sounds before meaning.

Arnaldo Morelli suggests the Oratorian approach to music is diametrically opposed to the "artificial, intellectual style" of the Jesuits.[186] To build on Morelli's important observation, the Oratorian opposition is not as much about style but about creating a particular embodied, experience for the listener-participant. The Jesuit catechism songs had very basic melodies that may suggest music was indeed intended to be as simple as possible to merely sonify but not embellish the canonical prayers like Pater Noster, or Credo, or similarly patterned texts that were repetitive and formulaic. Nevertheless at face value the two genres—catechism and laude books—are the most similar books for public use with prayer and music in Rome.

These books represented the pastoral reach of each order, which would have competed for the attention and edification of the Roman public.[187] Ian Verstegen, noting this important plurality, characterizes the end of the century ca. 1582-1608 as a robust period of Catholic renewal known as the age of the Church Triumphant, when the Church was confident in its

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[185] Borromeo extolled the beauty of nature as a result of God's goodness in his own devotional treatises. Pamela M. Jones, "Federico Borromeo as a Patron of Landscapes and Still Lives: Christian Optimism in Italy ca. 1600." *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (June 1988): 261-272.
[186] Morelli, *Muovere,* 19
[187] Fillipi, 130.

confessionalism, and sought, in particular, to be renewed by its public.[188] It was during this period that Rome saw dominant forms of Catholic pamphleteering, the most successful campaign of which was the Jesuits *Dottrina* books, as the Oratorian reach was more provincial by design.[189] While the *laude* books would not have been placed into the literal hands of every *cittadini* in Rome, like the Book of Hours or even catechism books, their presence nonetheless helped fostered a tangible and direct relationship with the public and shaped individual and group religiosity. Together, the catechism and the laude books are part of an early modern archive of public-oriented genres for spiritual literacy and devotion with a lineage going back to at least the Book of Hours to the Anglican Common Book of Prayer.[190] Both encouraged singing, as both included printed notation.

The Jesuit *Dottrina:* Music as use value for didacticism and memorization

Jesuits, through their organizational prowess, promoted the uniform learning of prayers with basic manuals for memorization and personal use. The Jesuits valued above all the usefulness and didacticism of musical books of prayer. Simplicity and reliability of melody and verse could better ensure memorization by children and the illiterate or semi-literate. For example, a foundational print was Giacomo Ledesma's *Modo per insegnar la Dottrina Christiana* 1573, published by the Baldo Press for the Jesuits in Rome. Ledesma's collection was

[188] Verstegen, "Federico Barocci," 57.
[189] Morelli, *Muovere,* 14.
[190] See T.F. Kennedy, "Some Unusual Genres of Sacred Music in the Early Modern Period: The Catechism as a Musical Event in the Late Renaissance—Jesuits and 'Our Way of Proceeding,'" in Comerford K.M. -Pabel H.M. (Eds.), *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honor of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* (Toronto: 2001) 266-279. Kate van Orden, "Children's Voices: Singing and Literacy in Sixteenth-Century France," *Early Music History* 25, 1 (2006) 209-256.
V. Reinberg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400-1600* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 103-108.

one of the most important and widely disseminated Jesuits spiritual text and is emblematic of the dottrina genre. The book serves as a masterguide for Jesuits teachers to allow students to learn through repetition "line by line, and starting with the Creed or the Lord's Prayer, they will answer [the instructor] on the same tone; then [the instructor] will have someone repeat aloud what was sung before." The doctrinal prayers included are the Credo, Pater Noster, Salve Regina, Ave Maria.[191] Additionally, Ledesma discloses a catalogue of the benefits of singing to memorize texts, which also imbued the book with a further didactic import. These books appeared regularly during the same years as the Oratorian's series of laude collections. Two other notable examples of the Jesuit Dottrina books are the *Laude spirituals della Dottrina Christiana, usata della sue missioni dal Padre Segner,* based on the mission work of the Jesuit priest Segneri, as well as the collection, *Lodi devote per use della Dottrina Christiana* 1589. These books, often accompanied with engravings that captured the passion, and pathos of Christ's crucifixion, engaged targeted audiences of ordinary people through a much more regimented approach to sacred performativity than did the Oratorians. (Figure 4).

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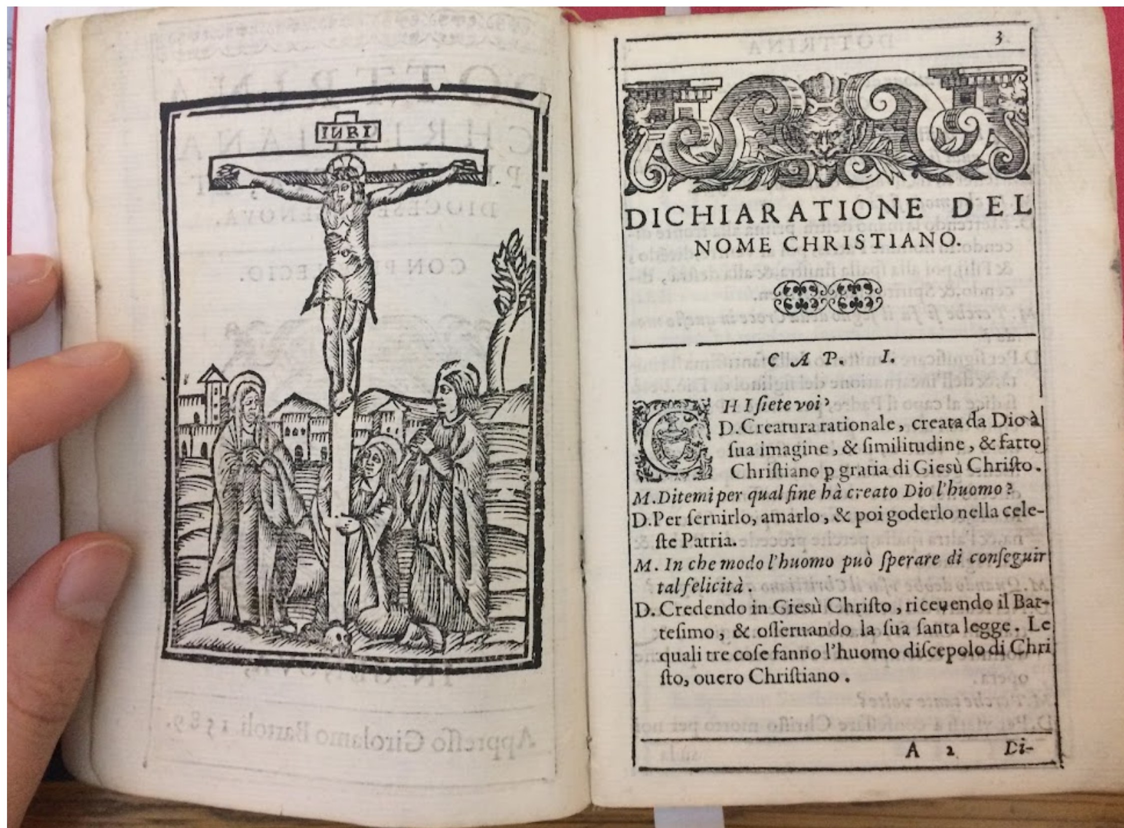
[191] Eyolf Ostrem and Nils Holger Petersen, *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music: The Devotional Practice of Lauda Singing in Late-Renaissance Italy* (Brepols, N.V., 2008), 61-62; Giancarlo Rostirolla, *La lauda spirituale tra Cinque e Seicento : poesie e canti devozionali nell'Italia della controriforma*. (Roma: Istituto di bibliografia musicale, 2001), 303-306.



3

DICHIARATIONE DEL NOME CHRISTIANO.

CAP. I.

CHI siete voi?

D. Creatura rationale, creata da Dio à sua imagine, & similitudine, & fatto Christiano p gratia di Giesù Christo.

M. Ditemi per qual fine hà creato Dio l'huomo?

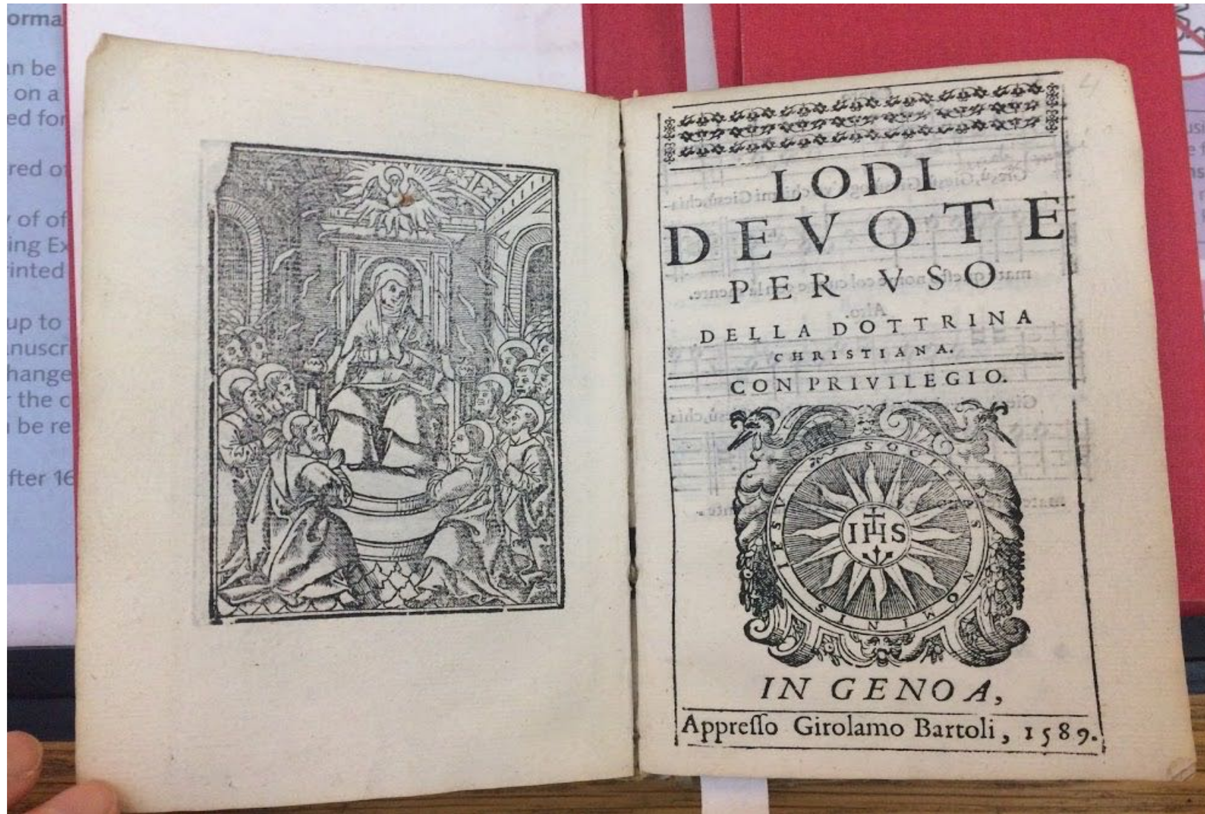
D. Per seruirlo, amarlo, & poi goderlo nella celeste Patria.

M. In che modo l'huomo può sperare di conseguir tal felicità.

D. Credendo in Giesù Christo, riceuendo il Battesimo, & osseruando la sua santa legge. Le quali tre cose fanno l'huomo discepolo di Christo, ouero Christiano.

A 2 Di-

Figure 4.
"Declaration of the Name of Christ ", *Dottrina Christiana,per la citta et diocese di Genova.*
Girolamo Bartoli, 1589 (British Library)



LODI
DEVOTE
PER VSO
DELLA DOTTRINA
CHRISTIANA.
CON PRIVILEGIO.

IHS

IN GENOA,
Appresso Girolamo Bartoli, 1589.

Figure 5.
Lodi devote per use della Dottrina Christiana Genoa: Girolamo Bartoli,1589, (British Library)

These texts propounded the usefulness of music as an epistolic tool.. Books with music for the Dottrina Christiana such as Ledesma's edition were printed with "per uso" on the cover. In the example below (Figure 6), the Genoan print of *Lodi Devote* features very simple four-part harmony for prayers. The example features predominantly step-wise, or note by not writing, and repeated intonations on the same note. The phrase, "Jesus, each one call, Jesus, with your heart and mind," is also repetitious, and the patterned quality of both word and melody together seems to mirror the technique of memorizing doctrinal sentiments to internalize faith.

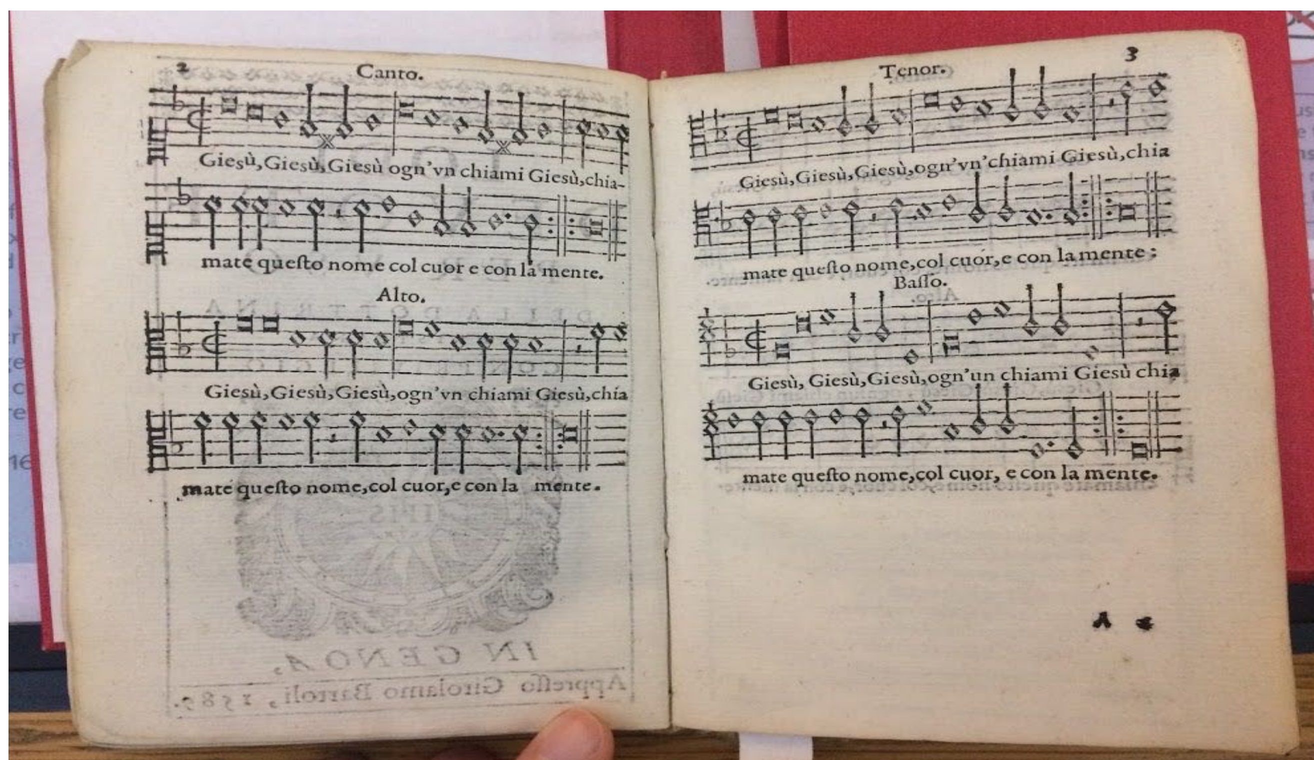


Figure 6.
Lodi devote per use della Dottrina Christiana Genoa: Bartoli, 1589, "Giesu, Gesù, Giesu"

The contents are chiefly singing aids that could help with the instruction and memorization of prayers, similar to the Doctrine of Divine Grace, as to learn by heart was to learn with greater facility. The books were not neutral, however, and with their use and dissemination came the claim of moral benefits, including the benefits of avoiding bad songs. For instance, in the 1576 print in the introduction compares basic songs of little or bad worth to the eternal praise of the canonical hours of the Church:

> "[T]he reason for singing, especially in places where to sing like this is a novelty, is because thus the pupils learn more easily and especially those, who do not know very well how to speak or how to read…since the memory is reinforced by singing and the teaching is made more sweet; also in places where rude songs are commonly sung, [it is

better] to sing those holy and good songs."[192]

As is apparent through Ledesma's writing above, the Jesuits used music as a means to memorize texts and, as such, they disseminated this method to all, in particular the semi-literate. More than the musical content, however, the structured, systematic way in which one would engage with the full Jesuit educational program of prayers and songs contrasted the Oratorians more improvisatory devotions and relatively passive manners of engagement. Jesuit writings outside the realm of music further support the goal of directed learning through the use songs between prayer, to heightened the effects of internalization.[193] Taking a closer look at the didactic framework Ledesma provides, Filippi has noted that even those vernacular songs that did not fulfill a doctrinal function were nonetheless sung by laypersons immediately following the explanation of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, for example. In this way they acted as sonic "bridge between catechetical explanation of the Eucharist and the acts of adoration that the Sacrament requires."[194] The opportunity for any latitude for casual, free listening on the part of the lay student, then—while we will never know for sure what went on inside individual's minds—was at least limited and highly structured, by Ledesma's design.

In contrast to popular books that were intended to improve upon the literacy of unlearned readers, it is therefore unlikely that the laude as the prime form of popular devotional activity for the Oratorians relayed the same kind of catechistic literacy as the most similar devotional prints in the same orbit. For example, extant books such as the anonymous but popular late 15th-century, *Giardino de Oratione fructose* ("Fruitful Garden of Prayer), invited a more meditative

[192] *Modo per insegnar la dottrina Christiana. Composto per il Dottore Ledesma, della Compagnia di Gieu* (Rome, 1573), fol. 8v. Quoted in Rostirolla, *Lauda spirituale,* 298.
[193] Verstegen, "*Federico Barocci and the Oratorians: Corporate Patronage,"* 33; See also the Jesuit father, Cipriano Soare's *De arte rhetorica* (1562).
[194] Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine," 13.

action on the part of the user, akin to Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* that followed the form of meditating on an object, by praying the rosary. Grouped together with Ledesma's *Dottrina,* these books have a common foundation in rote prayer as the dominant form of literacy, as well as a focus on the life and suffering of Christ.

Meditating on Christ as a reminder of pathos, especially a suffering Christ, was not the focus of most laude, as the suffering of Christ did not figure as a central theme of Oratorian's more joyful piety based in Christian Optimism. Importantly, the series of Oratorians laude general do not invite imitative piety drawn from Christ's life. The Jesuits held nighttime processions that featured flagellating *confratelli,* or brothers who beat themselves in public displays of penance to showcase their piety and devotion to God [195] Christ's Passion, and His suffering were central foci to the Jesuits, as well as the Capuchins, the latter of which scourged, or whipped as an instrument of penance, and lived a life of austerity.[196] Indeed, the Capuchins "ma[de] an effort feel a small part of His most distressing pain."[197] In stark contrast, none of the Oratorian corporate and popular devotions like the laude dwell needlessly on Christ's sufferings and sacrifices, setting them apart from the *imitatio Christi* tradition.[198]

The enveloping nature of the laude worked to present full scenes of the celestial interacting with the temporal that functiondifferently than emblem or sacred relic as symbol. In thia ways, the laude allude to contemporaneous intellectual thought on imagistic spiritual consumption, as well. During the height of the Oratorian's pastoral care in Rome, the fellow Oratorian Gabriele Paleotti published a highly influential treatise on the efficacy of Christian

[195] Barbara Wisch, *Acting on Faith: The Confraternity of the Gonfalone in Renaissance Rome* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press), 2013.
[196] Elisabeth G. Gleason, "The Capuchin Order in the Sixteenth Century," *Greyfriars Review* 16, (2002): 203-226, (216.).
[197] Ibid., 217.
[198] Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 123.

images. Paleotti, in addition to believing the words of sacred music should be comprehensible to hearers, also believed above all that proper Christian images should be immediately and ineffable legible to observers, and that spiritual pleasure was a good thing. In his *Discorso interno alle immagini sacre e profane* 1582, published just a few years before the *Terzo* book, he extolls the virtues of images for giving delight and explains the ways in which artificial representation provokes spiritual pleasure.[199] By comparing imagistic experience of the spiritual at the same level or above even sacred oration, Paleotti all but equates sensations, of hearing with observing, enmeshing the two, though he ultimately extolls the image above the orator: "That of which a man may, by means of faith, have formed a mental conception after hearing about it, is miraculously confirmed and lodged in his heart when he sees it with his eyes."[200]

In sum, I have begun to show how we can think historically about the personal experiences of devotional songs as Catholic sound objects that afforded opportunities for embodiment of faith. The Jesuit Dottrina and Roman laude, while they diverge in their content and user-experience as prayer, teach us about the connections between sound, personal agency, and knowledge production during the late stages of 16th century reform. The Jesuit's "per uso" dottrina approach deploys music for one specific use, in an organized effort to support a mnemonic system for prayer. In the next section, I provide a close analysis of three laude from *Il Terzo libro* 1588*,* all of which exemplify the sacredness tied not to locality of a consecrated space but to the individuality of sacred space beyond the catechistic knowledge.

Sacred Performativity in *Il Terzo libro* 1588

[199] Gabriele Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, trans. William McCuig (The Getty Research Institute, 2012).

[200] Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane*, 115.

The Catholic catechism after Trent emphasized that sincere faith of the individual was contingent upon hearing.[201] More specifically, "correct hearing" or *recte sentire,* was exemplified by proper oration, a style of sermon-delivery defined by propriety and persuasion to which the Jesuits adhered their styles, as well, as the Jesuits were concerned with instilling faith through didacticism above all else. Similarly, the Tridentine council had more draconian stances, as well, in expressing concern for the proper hearing of sacred words as part of the clerical ideal of "sacredness of the sacred," and of purity of ritual.[202] On the contrary, Neri was deeply concerned with the dramatic rift that might form between the unattainability of clerical purity versus the daily life of most believers.[203] In response to this, the third book of laude contains original lyrical poetry in the vernacular by Agostino Manni. Padre Manni took minor orders in 1579, and stood out among Neri's early members for his gift of refined poetry.[204] The laude poetry, which Manni composed early in his tenure at the Oratory, is also intended to be more accessible to the average believer. The core moral conceit of a play between the Body and the Soul can be found in much of Manni's writings, notably his prominent spiritual dialogues that later helped to form the benchmark spiritual drama of the Oratory, *Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo* 1600.[205] Yet in this earlier work, the content of the poetry avoids overtly moralizing dialogue and instead is more lyrical in nature. The collection *Il Terzo libro* 1588 thus marks an important period of the genre's publicity and accessibility at a time when upholding perceived

[201] Frederick, J. McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter Reformation Rome* (Princeton University Press), 1995. Murray Bradshaw, "Salvation, Right Thinking, and Cavalieri's 'Rappresentatione di Anima, et di Corpo' (1600)" *Musica Disciplina* 2 (1998-2002): 233-250.
[202] Bertoglio, *Reforming Music,* 491.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Manni, Agostino Dizionario di eretici, dissidenti e inquisitori nel mondo mediterraneo Edizioni CLORI | Firenze | ISBN 978-8894241600 | DOI 10.5281/zenodo.1309444
[205] Warren Kirkendale, *Emilio Cavalieri, Gentiluomo Romano: His Life and Letters, His Role as Superintendent of All the Arts at the Medici Court, and His Musical Compositions* (Florence: Olschki, 2001), 246.

states of sacredness and purity became even more rarefied and draconian.

Laude figured in more open-ended, sensorial ways across the urban landscape. They were used equally across spaces and listeners, for casual and solemn devotions inside the church and oratory. As Animuccia writes of the original collection, the *Terzo libro delle laudi spirituali* 1577, the laude was appropriate for all, and used particularly across spaces, as "special exercises that are held publicly on holidays, now in one, now in another part of Rome."[206] As the *dottrina* was intended by Ledesma to be memorized and internalized, the laude served spiritual and purely entertainment purposes. Neri and his followers merely aimed with the *Terzo libro* for all to be attracted by dulcet harmonies to come to the Church, or to a public gathering in the city.

Listening was the chief modality through which alternative spiritual experiences could be possible—whether one actively interpreted content, or simply engaged in passive hearing. To this point, Anne Piejus distinguishes between the laude of Rome and its medieval origins as the former developing into an aesthetic object from its ritual contexts. She emphasizes the great "attention paid to reception" of Oratorian devotional music, as "the most original trait of [their] pastoral care."[207] This is supported by an insight that the Oratorian laude "appears as a symptom of an impressive switch between two worlds—not successive, but contemporary worlds." Such worlds to which Piejus refers are first, the Florentine street singing of Savonarola's followers that Razzi collected, and second, the early meetings in Rome held by Neri discussed in Chapter 1. In the latter world, those original songs from Razzi's early edition of 1563, *Libro primo* may have caused confusion and distaste for those melodies collected from a different socio-political environment. Many in attendance would not have known the Florentine melodies and thus the

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[206] "estraordinarii esserciti che pubblicamente si fanno il giorno di festa, hor in una, hot in un'altra parte di Roma." Animuccia, *Il Terzo libro delle lauti spirituali* Rome: Blado, 1577, preface.
[207] Anne Piejus, "Artistic Revival and Conquest of the Soul in Early Modern Rome," in *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism. Perspectives from Musicology*, edited by Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone (Brill, 2017), 149-172 (167).

"aural transmission [would have] been broken and the devotees [accustomed] to listening to music than to singing it themselves."[208] While Guinti, the editor and preface author, and Animuccia, pronounced that the books were intended for all to sing, the reality is perhaps that listening and hearing were the dominant mode of receptivity over and above performance, for laity and for the more privileged members of the Oratory, as well.

That listening was a predominant mode of engagement for reform piety across the social make-up of audiences in Rome allows us to postulate the importance of non-expert or semi-expert listening over the expert listening by professional singers. An untrained public member of Roman society would constitute a listener-participant , who engaged possibly from a distance, interpreting alone as much as in a group. Piejus' point about two worlds of experience, listening and singing is pertinent because she highlights a kind of fallacy of the simple style and its intended purpose for mass group singing. Singing was probably not the dominant form of lay participation. As the compact choir layout (or all voice parts printed o the same open folio pages instead of partbooks) of the laude books strongly suggest, a group of professionals might perform the part-singing, or at least lead one line of singing. This experiential disconnect between listening and singing is also analogous to a point Patrick Macey makes about the reception of the Latin motet. Both the acoustical and discursive contexts for the Latin motet in Italy depended deeply on the listener to follow the musical discourse. But such music, as the Latin motet, addresses an "audience of connoisseurs gathered together in a quiet chamber or chapel."[209] In short, the laude addressed an audience of non-connoisseurs and casual listeners.

Perhaps most radically the Oratorian laude offered early moderns experiences of self-

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[208] Piejus, "Artistic Revival," 163.
[209] Macey, *Bonfire Songs,* 3.

reflexive and personal encounters with Christ without consequence or embodied guilt; Laughing, gazing, and lovingly lurking humanized Christ. The Oratorian technology of the body as a means to afford sonic experience as spiritual knowledge plays an important role here, as even at the microlevel of the poetic lines the listener-participant is encouraged to fully embrace the multisensory abilities and sensuality of the body. In other words, there is spontaneity inherent in intimate interpretive experiences. There is a virtual dimension to the laude in relation to spatiality, aurality, and the body. Through content analysis of poetic image, voice, body sensations, Manni's vernacular poetry invites the allure of intimate experience. At the microlevel of experience, focusing on the poetic content illuminates how the Oratorian poets and composers constructed these laude in ways that expanded the possible virtual worlds of religion by expanding the terms of regimented prayer. Sacred imminence of sensuality overturned the clerical purity that Neri feared was too rarefied and unattainable to the average person.

Poetic Laude Analysis: *Hoggi che el Padre eterno*, *Hor che la fredda*, and *Tu più pura di me*

Each laude represents the ostensible style of Catholic reform "simplicity," ranging from liturgical psalm, traditional prayer, to more experimental, secular poetic forms. The contents were quite diverse though a shared aspect of the laude was the inseparable combination of the divine with sensory experience. As complex sound objects, thee laude occupy a hybrid place in Catholic devotional media, possessing features of both external and internal prayer, and of sound as referential as well as acoustic vibration.

In the first example, *Hoggi che il Padre eterno*, Manni's poetry combines the raw feeling of a divine intercession with the more ritualistic groundedness of the liturgical responsorial form. There are traces of traditional liturgical form ("adornan lieti") reworked by Manni, ostensibly for

poetic license (Figure 7). For example, a responsorial would typically have been sung as part of the liturgy in many parts like the Alleluia, Gradual, and Divine Office, which all have highly patterned verse-response formats.

Il Terzo libro 1588, p. 11
Hoggi ch'el Padre eterno

Hoggi che el Padre eterno
introduce il figliuolo
Mezzo al terrestre suolo onde s'adori

Tutti i celestri chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adornan lieti

Chi Maria Verginella
Saluta con diletto
Perché sente nel petto, nova gioia

Tutti i celesti chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adornan lieti

Cantan le belle squadre
Canto amoroso e pio
Gloria nel Ciel à Dio e in terra pace

Gode il fanciul, che giace
Vedendo il paradiso
Che per vedr suo viso in terra cala[210]

Translation

In this day when the Eternal Father
Introduces his Son on Earth
So that people may adore Him,

[210] The last sentence is a bit unclear and could read "che per veder suo viso in terra cala" that "he falls on earth in order to see his face."

All the heavenly choirs
fly downward
And the King with the Queen   gladly adore Him

Who Maria, Verginella
Greets them with delight
Because [she] feel[s] in the chest a new joy

All the heavenly choirs
fly downward
The King with the Queen   gladly adore Him

The beautiful crews sing
A loving and pious song,
Glory in heaven to the Father   and peace on earth

Happy/Pleased is the child who lies
watching heaven
In order to see his face   (as he falls on earth/on Earth descends?)

CANTO 11

Oggi ch'el Padre eterno introduce il figliuolo

Mezzo al terrestre suolo onde s'adori. ij

BASSO

Oggi ch'el Padre eter no, introduce'il figliuolo,

Mez o'al terrestre suolo onde s'adori. ij

ALTO

Oggi ch'l Padre'eterno introduce il figluo lo,

mezzo al terrestre ij suolo onde s'ado ri

onde s'ado ri.

Tutti i celesti chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adoran lieti

Chi Maria Verginella
Saluta con diletto
Perche sente nel petto, noua gioia,

Tutti i celesti chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adoran lieti.

Cantan le belle squadre
Canto amoroso e pio
Gloria nel Ciel à Dio, e in terra pace

Gode il fanciul, che giace
Vedendo il paradiso,
Che per ueder suo viso in terra cala.

Terzo libro delle Laude D

Example 1.
"Hoggi ch'el Padre eterno," *Il Terzo Libro* 1588, 11-12 (Royal Holloway repository)

The poetic license by Manni in absorbing the responsorial into the laude genre it based also on popular vernacular songs like the *frottola.* Here the call and response effect of which serves at the same time to complete a self-standing phrase, or melody. For instance, the repetition after each stanza "[We] gladly adore Him" (adoran lieti) breaks only at the third stanza, where it is replaced by a sudden reference to bodily sensation. Here, both spiritual experience and knowledge of the sacred is married with visceral—even anatomical—feeling: "Perché sente nel petto, nova gioia"/ Because [she] feel[s] in the chest a new joy." Yet, the line contains ambiguity, and could refer to the feeling inside the Virgin Mary herself, alighting to the earthly domain.

This further connects sacred imminence to the body rather than a rarefied object. This phrase affords the space for possibly inciting feeling inside the listener, who might imagine standing in as the embodied surrogate of a divine entity's feeling, notably of a Marian type, and not a Christocentric one, or imitation of Christ. The blatant physicality and externalized acoustical sound required for this encounter runs counter to the extant bias at the time against external devotion and verbal prayer forms as disingenuous and vain. In this sympathetic exchange, music vibrates in the chest, and the experience—the relational knowledge, even—is deeply intimate.

Hoggi che il Padre occupies a unique position as both external and internal prayer is*,* yet more than this it holds in its form the tension discussed by Piejus between aesthetic object and ritual. It features meta-references to music, yet rather than appeal directly to the act of ritual singing, here the faithful listener-participant is constructed as witness to, and simultaneously audience of, a celestial concert embedded in the verse-form: an angelic group sing a "beautiful and pious song" /"Cantan le belle squadre/ Canto amoroso e pio." As lay witness, the physically affected body of the listener is candidly invoked: "[she] feel[s] in the chest new joy" /"Chi Maria Verginella/ Salute con diletto/ Perché sente nel petto, nova gioia." Like the encounter with the Spirit of St. Neri, whose chest filled and bursts with the Holy Spirit, here the sight of the Virginella, already a diminutive description, materializes in the interior body cavity of the listener as both witness and participant, not unlike Neri's miraculous event. The next line is a striking repetition/refrain of "Tutti i celestri chori" that draws the imagination upward not through interior contemplation but externally driven imagery to a grandiose *scena* of heavenly choirs alighting toward earth. Thus, the laude *Hoggi che il Padre* thematizes the act of witnessing divine sounds as well as the very physical presences of a divine King and Queen, a reference to the *Respublica Christiana*, a predominant collective idea of the Christian republic in

the late 16th century.

Hoggi che il Padre bears some resemblance to prayer and perhaps even to an intercessional form of spiritual listening. The grandiose scene of sacred performativity distances the laude from the aims and goals of doctrinal vocalic prayer in two ways. In the first way, the listener bears witness, in a performative way, to divine presence rather than to mediate on divine receptivity through asking, though supplication. In the second, the listener serves as witness and audience member to music from another realm. Although couched in a performative frame, hearing could verify divine encounters, as it did with more personal accounts of Neri, who envisioned heavenly consorts as well as the Virgin and Christ.

Witnessing and intercessional listening converge in a poetic turn (*topos*) from celestial pomp and circumstance announcing the arrival of Christ, to a less conspicuous moment of child-like wonder. In particular, the last stanza of *Hoggi che il Padre* encapsulates this trope by returning us back to the perspective of Christian Optimism on earth:

"Gode il fanciul, che giace /Vedendo il paradise /Che per vedr suo viso"

"Happy is the child who lies/watching heaven/In order to see his face."

These lines express the Oratorian tenet of Christian joy, known as the *laetitia Christiana,* as Christian writer Agostino Valier referred to Neri's humorous and optimistic stance toward Christianity.[211] Recalling the poem attributed to Manni analyzed in the previous Chapter, *Felicita dell'Anima Contemplativa,* here Christ's face is also made accessible as a physical and intimate landscape and as object not just for contemplation, but of wonder. This spontaneous jolt in the final stanza, from the magnificent, yet impersonal, scene of heavenly choirs to the intimate moment of an innocent child gazing at the sky, is further emblematic of Neri's strong influence

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[211] The meaning is a bit unclear. I have alternatively interpreted this as "he falls on earth", or perhaps a version of the refrain "on Earth as it is in heaven."chi

on the order's pastoral work, as he preferred to pray under the open sky to be closer to God.

Thus, the Roman laude offered indeterminate and flexible opportunity to engage. To this end, the laude does not *explain* in the manner of the Jesuit's *Modo de insegnar* of Ledesma or prayer manuals like *Giardino de Oratione fructuoso,* despite the "simple" method to which they are attached. By allowing individual laity to render sacred space through merely participating—whether upon the book, with a literal voice, or merely following along in one's aural imagination from a distant point in a crowd, the individual could bear witness to the sounds merely to avoid boredom, or engage in a performative moment of intercessional listening and hearing.

Hor che la fredda

Let us now observe directly the ways in which the laude offered a realm of different spiritual experiences to laity than regimented prayer. In the first example Manni and Animuccia's collection *Il Terzo Libro*, the laude *Hor che la fredda* features a powerful spiritual awakening on the part of the listener-participant to Christ. This occurs via the metaphor of a bitter frost melting to reveal spring. Manni's poetry was semi-secular at times and quite Platonic in its content. Imagery includes Christ as the bridegroom, as the Church is feminized and thought of as Christ's bride. However, Christ's face, its details, and his laughs, become something physical to be shared.

P. 16
Hor che la fredda

Hor che la fredda neve e'l duro gielo.
Al caldo si distilla nella stagio traquilla
ne piu ricopr'oscura nube il cielo
Et con la focsa notte fugge l'inverno
alle gelate fugge l'inverno alle gelate grotte.

Che più giaci alma mia, che non ti deste
Ecco per la campagna
La tortore si lagna,
E la vite di gemme si riveste
E tra le folte foglie
L'hispido fico, i primi parti accoglie.

Porgi l'orechie a gl'amorosi accenti,
Del tuo diletto sposo,
Che t'inuita al riposo
E in mezzo ai gigli, e a gli'odorati unguenti
Verso il merigge siede
Di gemme ornato, e te sol brama, e chiede.

Vanne a veder le folte chiome e nere,
Gl'occhi pien di splendore,
Dove s'annida amore,
La fronte lieta, e'l collo, ch'a vedere
Terso avorio simiglia,
E la sua faccia candida e vermiglia"

Now the Cold Snow

Now the cold snow is hard frost
In the heat, it distills itself in the calm/quiet season
No more dark clouds cover the sky
And with the hot/fiery night
Winter flees to frozen caves.

Be still my soul, do not rouse[212]
In the country the turtledove coos
The grapevine is clothing itself with gems
And the bristly fig has the first fruits among the dense leaves.

Give ear to the loving tones
of your beloved bridegroom

[212] Unclear if this is an imperative/directive

Who urges you to rest and sits
among the lilies and the scented ointments in the noon,
adorned by gems, and desires and calls only you.

Go and see his dense and dark hair,
the eyes full of splendor, where love lurks,
the happy forehead, and the neck, which is similar to clear ivory,
and his white and ruddy face.

CANTO

BASSO

ALTO

Che piu giaci alma mia, che non ti deſte
Ecco per la campagna
La tortore ſi lagna,
E la vite di gemme ſi riueſte
E tra le folte foglie
L'hiſpido fico, i primi parti accoglie.

Porgi l'orechie à gl'amoroſi accenti,
Del tuo diletto ſpoſo,
Che t'inuita al ripoſo
E in mezzo ai gigli, e a gli'odorati vnguenti
Verſo il merigge ſiede
Di gemme ornato, e te ſol brama, e chiede.

Vanne a ueder le folte chiome e nere,
Gl'occhi pien di ſplendore,
Doue s'annida amore,
L'a fronte lieta, e'l collo, ch'a vedere
Terſo auorio ſimiglia,
E la ſua faccia candida e vermiglia.

Example 2.

"For che la fredda," *Il Terzo Libro* 1588, 14-15 Royal Holloway repository

In *Hor che la fredda,* spring is all but literally felt and both ambient and musical sound is invoked in Manni's verse. The presence of the spring season is made tangibly and balmy—

fragrant and enticing. The poetry is replete with inaction, thereby inviting both contemplation and oral prayer. The natural calm of the spring seems to externalize the metaphor of internal stillness of contemplative prayer, serving as a directive for the subject to rest and still his or her own soul. To counter this calmness, the listener-participant might also sense strong changes between the features of chiaroscuro or Petrarchisms between poetic sensations with the opening imagery of "hard frost" and of skies suddenly lightened by the passing of dense winter clouds:

Hor che la fredda neve e'l duro gielo
Al caldo si distilla nella stagio traquilla

Now the cold snow is hard frost
In the heat, it distills itself in the calm/quiet season.

Later in stanzas three and four the scene transforms again to bring forth a vivid and naturalistic portrait of Christ in a slightly eroticized presentation. Sound figures predominantly in the experience of sensuality. The external trappings of musical sound re embedded in Manni's words as the word-sounds of the lush descriptive phrases bolster further the meta-references to vocality and tone that occur in the third stanza. "Give ear to the loving tones," while referring to the anatomy of the mortal body, as well, to draw ones ear to listen closely to Christ's beloved voice. Since the laude is also musical verse, one might attune only to the shape of the canto line but could also engage with both melodic content and word meaning in order to imagine the dulcet voice of Christ emerging from within the musical form. With the line "desires and calls only you," the listener could realize a personal sacred imminence. Thus, the Oratorian opportunity for religious creativity in this moment of hearing sound within sound creates a close relationship between Christ and the listener-participant.

In this laude, the lay listener-participant is invited to reflect on himself or herself, as both

spiritual subject and object of desire in a deeply intimate and sonorous relationship with Christ. The line, “desires and calls only you,” in the third stanza is an invitation to the listener to yield their faculties to the very seductions of the sonorous. Moreover, this moment invites multisensory experience as ones olfactory senses are also enticed by lilies and ointments. The increasing intensity of erotic references and sensual pleasures in the third and fourth stanzas insists upon the very medium of the mortal body, as the primary technology of spiritual. The scene depicted in the laude is spiritually heightened and erotic because it places the faithful not in a sacred building, but in a naturalistic garden reclining with Christ figured as bridegroom.

Tu più pura di me

The opportunity for personal sacred imminence and religious creativity is perhaps even more heightened in the third example from *Il Terzo libro*, the selection, *Tu più pura di me.* In this laude, the physical perspective of the text shifts in a quite unprepared manner from the innermost part of the body, the heart, to the otherworldly external vignette of a divine throne, and back again, forming a kind of circuit, or microeconomy of spiritual production. In the second stanza, “Intime del mio core,” the listener is situated within the mortal body in smallness of the heart chamber before the next stanza suddenly portrays the most externalized, loftly image “soprano le Stelle.” The latter scene complete with a glimpse of a throne room is another example of imagery typical of Catholic Church Triumphant. Similar to the line “Give ear to the loving tones” in *Horche la fredda,* here a technology of the body offers a way to experience the divine with the appendages and tools immediately available rather than reserve such privileges for silent meditation. Additionally, the strong gestsure of self-minimalization in *Tu più pura di me* draws on the tradtional laudesi confraternities of the *trecento* and *quattrocento,* when praise-based

ritual and song overshadowed acts of penitence and contemplation. However, the laudatory tone of that lineage of piety is tempered here by a deep sense of humility and self-minimization, characteristic of Neri's *sermo humilis.*

Tu più pura di me parte migliore

Tu più pura di me parte migliore.
Con vivo ardente zelo,
Del sommo Re del cielo;
Canta l'alta virtù l'eter no honore.

Intime del mio cor parti secrete,
Accompagnate il canto,
Che el sacro nome e santo,
Orna di lui, da cui lo spirto havete.

Sopra le stelle tien l'eccelsa e degna,
Sede, e lo scettro altiero,
Del suo divin oimpero,
Questo Sig.[nore] che sopra ogn'altro regna.

Opre de la sue mani in ogni parte,
Narrate le sue lodi,
E tu con vari modi,
Canta i suoi pregi, o mia più degna parte.

You, purest of the best parts of me.
With lively ardent zeal, of the highest King of heaven;
Sing high virtue and eternal honor.

[You] most intimate amongst my heart's secret parts,
Accompany the song,
That the sacred name is holy,
[That] Adorns [H]im, from whom you have spirit.

Above the stars hold the lofty and worthy,

Seat, and the haughty scepter,
Of his divine empire,
This Lord who is above any other.

Works of his hands in every place,
Tell his praises,
(2nd) And you in various ways,
(2nd slips to 1st) Sing his merits, oh, my most worthy part.

Similar to the archival manuscript of the poem, *Felicita dell'anima contemplativa*, presented in Chapter 1, *Tu più pura di me* is also a multisensorial quasi-prayer in that it creates a *mise-en-scene* to marry divine presences with the individual mortal body, thereby placing equal weight and equal presence on both. Traditional prayer elements like second person address are present but are enhanced by poetic idioms that upset and soften the strong irreducibility of that second-person voice so characteristic to supplication.[213] The poetic voice slips from one perspective to another when describing celestial royalty on the third stanza. To this end, the fourth stanza renders ambiguous the positioning of the "tu" addressed as if the listener as the familiar subject uses the laude and its mediating text to reflect on themselves, conferring a resonant capability to the body of subject/listener: "oh my most worthy part." To this end, the listener, if they choose to partake, must adopt not the likeness or imitation of Christ, but rather attune their body to the resonances of Christ's purity, thereby enjoying that reformed sense of purity Neri feared was too elite at the time. Therefore, Christ and listener are conjoined through the textual ambiguity and sonic resonance, at least for the song's duration.

Tu più pura is an example of how the laude genre could render tangible the Oratorian's

[213] My interpretation of voice in relation to prayer is supported by a thoughtful paper on the second-person point of view in prayer and Christian dogmatics. Ross D. Inman, "Theology in the Second Person: Christian Dogmatics as a Mode of Prayer," Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

emphasis on divine grace and sensuousness within their spirituality. Despite the opening gesture of self-deprecation through comparison—"You purest of the best parts of me"—the subject's state of humility is heightened and aestheticized as the tone quickly shifts to one of uplift and awe/splendor. With this uplift to a celestial scene, the doubleness of sound in the laude is significant. As a musical composition, it is replete with meta-references to singing and to music. Therefore, both the form and content of the laude draw the faithful subject into a state of laudatory praise by giving them the space to play their part, so to speak, figuratively and literally, especially if one was indeed singing (or humming or listening).

CANTO primo. 4

V piu pura di me parte migliore.
con uiuo ardente zelo, del sommo Re del cielo; canta l'alta
virtu l'eter no honore.

TENOR

V piu pura di me parte migliore. con
uiuo ardente zelo del sommo Re del Cielo; canta l'alta
uirtu l'eterno honore, l'eterno honore.

CANTO Secondo.

V piu pura di me parte migliore. con
uiuo ardente ze lo del sommo Re del Cielo, canta l'alta
virtu l'eterno honore l'eterno honore.

Intime del mio cor parti secrete,
Accompagnate il canto,
Ch'el sacro nome e santo,
Orna di lui, da cui lo spirto hauete.
Sopra le stelle tien l'eccelsa e degna
Sede, e lo scettro altiero,
Del suo diuino impero,
Questo Sig. che sopra ogn'altro regna.
Opre de le sue mani in ogni parte,
Narrate le sue lodi,
E tu con vari modi,
Canta i suoi pregi, ô mia piu degna parte.

Example 3.
"Tu più pura di me," *Il Terzo Libro* 1588*,* p. 4 (Royal Holloway repository)

The text also exemplifies Neo-Augustinian heart-based spirituality, recalling Neri's enlarged heart. This theme of heart-based spirituality in the text places importance on the individual's connection to the sacred as personal.[214] The vibratory co-production of the music parallels the transformed matter when one receives Divine Grace. Thought being touched spiritually is not enough to fully render a sense of purity; the interior poetic voicing also leaves ambiguous the second person "Tu" address of prayer so that by the end of the stanza the listener sings to themselves, "Canta i suoi pregi, o mia più degna parte"/ "Sing his merits, oh my most worthy part." The experiential reality of public devotion out in the city elided with the aesthetical metaphorical act *to sing* encouraged by the laude together establish a sacred space. Through the process of experiencing this sacred poetic scene, the subject enjoins their own heart to accompany the music, "Intime del mio cor parti secrete, accompagnate il canto" in any manner they are capable as they may sing "in various ways"/ "E tu con vari modi, Canta i suoi pregi." To whom or to where the second person "tu" address is directed is left ambiguous, especially as the laude progresses from stanza to stanza.

Moreover, this example, *Tu più pura di me* breaks with the conventional envoicement of prayer tradition: the voice, as the poetic voice, turns to focus on the faithful listener as an object of desire. The poetics upset the relationality of traditional prayer that would facilitate the use of the supplicant's voice as an instrument to address another external divine entity: for example, the vocalization "O" or "Ave" of much vocal prayer, notably the Ave Maria. The text of *Tu più pura di me* mediates the very convention and strength of the prayerful "tu" address. Here, the Oratorian laude already engages the user by both narrowing the distance between the worldly body and the divine with an informal "tu" while at the same time rendering it even more intimate

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[214] Andrew Dell'Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 34.

to the point of a self-reflexive "you" speaking to oneself: "And you in various ways, Sing his merits, oh my most worthy part." In effect, the imagination is distended by words that relay the greatness of sublime realms while the "tu" address creates a space for self-reference and self-reflection in an earthly space. The laude figures the physical body—the mortal flesh—as worthy and as resonating so as to make music in concert with heaven ("Tu più pura di me"). The body of the listener is embraced as an instrument. By keeping the physical body central to spiritual experience, the Oratorian's gentler stance on mortification is foregrounded. The subject participates in the scene fully given in to mortification but nonetheless embraces sensuousness of the flesh to come closer to a personal experience with Christ.

Interpreting religious creativity and possible sacred imminence attached to laypersons' experience supports an one possible perspective of society "from below" at least with regard to sound in early modern Catholicism: sound helped to galvanize the undifferentialed production of spiritual value that could circulate among laity in their own value system to reveal the opposite side to what Giorgio Caravale calls the "imposi[tion] of ecclesiastical mediation as the sole channel for cultural production" of the Counter Reformation years.[215] As I have shown in the opening of this chapter, singing the catechism could often perpetuate ideology with less opportunity for personal latitude of experience.

Regardless of institutionalized intentions, spiritual listening entailed multiple modes, some passive, and some active. It is worth considering a subtle but important distinction from Anne Piejus' work regarding modalities of perception. Piejus odders there exists a stark contrast in early modern experience between laude singing as embodiment and listening as a disinterested activity. The fallacy is that listening does not also entail embodiment. Along these lines, Neri was influenced by the well-known deliberations of Thomas Aquinas' on exteriority and

[215] Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer*, viii.

interiority. The laude accounted for both of these discourses by inscribing within the poetry the individual subject as the site for sacred space, cultivating sonic value, and circulating spiritual value. The Roman laude perpetuated an entirely different form of literacy than oration or catechism.

To this point about listening and embodiment, Andrew Dell'Antonio posits in the early 17th century prelates and other upper class individuals valued music because they began to perceive musical pieces like objects for aural collecting. This shift in attitude among prelates brought about a form of disinterested listening that allowed the listener to exercise and display their good taste and decorum. By gradually shifting the focus away from devotional discussions through listening and prayerful rapt attention to spiritual texts and images. According to Dell'Antonio, the decorous type of listening would be "posited as active and ideally transcendent rather than passive and dangerously sensual," as with the *cinquecento* behaviors of listening encouraged by the Oratorians.[216] This elevated form of listening was enacted freely and connected to upper class identity in early modern Rome and religious hierarchy. This history of spiritual listening as a discourse is valuable, though the laude outlines another category of listening that tells a different story in which the sacred was actively promulgated through personal experience of the "passive" sensate body while also engaging in the active mode *sentire,* "to hear."

The laude straddled both categories: a disinterested listening to a type of performance (autonomous "simple" melodies used for easy listening), and the affective, prayerful "rapt" attention to which Dell'Antonio refers that might facilitate transcendent interpretation. Even the simplest laude of *Il Terzo libro* are unlike the regimented prayer featured in contemporary devotional books. The above analyses expands upon the terms of consideration of both attentive, "expert" listening, and "popular" passive listening in devotion to include a fully embodied

[216] Caravale, 67.

experience in which the material ontology of sound helped to sacralize the quotidian itself, including the personal sacred experience of the individual lay person. By delimiting sacred space for the body itself rather than in relation to the ritualistic space of the Church,, the quotidian could offer experiences through sound instead of a concrete object like the *dottrina* book or rosary. I do not mean to claim that stricter *dottrina* prayer like the Ave Maria, Salve Regina, Pater Noster, or Credo could not also invite embodied experience through recitation, but as I demonstrate, the laude invite many points of entry for religious creativity by the listener-participant.

Conclusion: Religious Creativity and the Co-production of reformed spirituality

I have investigated the extent to which the laude served as complex sound objects for spiritual experience, religious creativity, and, possibly, as unfolding a kind of sacred immanence of personal experience. In many ways this chapter outlines a crux in the history of Catholic reform as social control: to what extent is the co-production of spirituality a function of ideology and to what extent is religious creativity a productive failure of ideology? The next chapter complements and also advances the above analysis by further investigating the experiential nature of the Roman laude at the level of musical style and acoustical sound. The scenes of these laude invite freely determined sensual and spiritual interactivity that strives to embrace and aggrandize the mortal body of the listener –participant as witness and virtual viewer. If the laude operated like Divine Grace, the body as a technology of religion harnessed the sounds and vibrations to modify and create spiritual space.

In short, the listener co-produced the terms of spirituality. And the laude offered a wide demographic of early moderns a pluralistic, multi-vocal, multi-perspectival, sacred experience that contravened the primary purpose of doctrinal prayers to prove sincere faith. While several

new orders during Catholic reform employed sonic media as part of an approach to control the distribution of public piety and devotion, the Oratorians, at least in their nascent formative years represent a less restricted pathway to religious creativity.

In closing, the alternatives to listening for spiritual gain as a member of the lay community might involve the authority of a Jesuit spiritual leader. The appearance of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and Ledesma's *Dottrina* in the 16th century introduced the figure of the expert to guide directed listening. The spiritual father, or as a proxy, the authority constructed by the *dottrina* books, served as instruments of indoctrination. Likewise, the goal of the orator, in fact, was to prevent interpretation that was too personal. As the Oratorian laude shows, spiritual listening as participation was not pre-determined by the close directed listening of the ears to attune to one message, emblem of Christ, or pious behavior. As we have seen, the Oratorian employment of sound objects support the possibilities of self-guided events for microexperiences of spiritual knowledge. Neri's piety anticipated the role of the individual listener as participatory. Listeners were co-creators of reformed Catholic spirituality. Ultimately the laude functioned as sonorous nodes for religious creativity in post-Tridentine Rome while also circulating sound as spiritual value attached to the Oratorian's burgeoning institutional power.

CHAPTER 3

Lay Listening at the Borders of Musical Style

Spiritual independence in an age of Catholic reform

Listening was one of the most powerful ways to encourage piety during the Catholic reform period. As an aural modality, listening was considered by reformers to be necessary for salvation it permitted access to religious instruction and divine truth.[217] The Jesuits endeavored to control the tangible, direct relation of sound and its reception through music curated for catechism prayers. Yet the acoustical dimension to sound heard by individuals across Rome nonetheless creates one of the most elusive fields of historical experience. Experiences of spiritual sound in the past are arguably among the most inaccessible archive in the history of music and sound—accessible only in the resonances produced from modern performance.[218] And even then, our framework for reception is incomparable.

More profoundly inaccessible is the nature of religious interiority created from sensations of spiritual sound, just before conjuring and after decay. Investigating lay piety in 16th-century reform is particularly fraught in this regard, as after reform activities in Europe, many Catholic religious activities that once defined lay independence and autonomy—ritual mourning, devotional practices of singing, and lay participation in liturgical events—became increasingly

[217] Simone Laqua-O'Donnell, "Catholic Piety and Community," *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Ashgate, 2013): 281-297; Noel O'Regan, "Music, Memory, and Faith:" How did Singing in Latin and the vernacular influence what people knew and thought about their faith in early modern Rome?" *Italianist* 34 (2015): 437-448. Alexander Fisher, *Music, Piety, and Propaganda: The Soundscapes of Counter-Reformation Bavaria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[218] For one of the rare recorded albums the Oratorian laude repertory: Concerto Romano, Alessandro Quarta. Sacred Music for the Poor at Santa Maria in Vallicella. Christophorus. B01AXLI7CS, 2014, compact disc.

curated by clergy.[219] European elite could delimit access to lay spiritual life via the aural, spatial and mental dimensions of spirituality more than ever before.[220] To draw on a prominent example related to control over musical practice—and, by extension, decorum of listening and hearing—the Milanese Cardinal Carlo Borromeo was single-handed responsible for, as Craig Monson puts it, the "elevation of textual clarity to the status of a Tridentine decree" in his own mass publication years after and in even more explicit terms than the actual Council.[221] This is one idiosyncratic yet powerful way in which concurrent local activities of Catholic reform were predominantly based in "the inescapable framework of Christian living, mediated by clergy," whose individualistic and noble authority also shaped liturgy and sacraments.[222]

The widespread consolidation of patrician control over confraternal charities over the years spanning the late 15th into early 16th centuries explains much of the notion of Catholic reform as rooted in social control discussed in the previous chapter.[223] In the northern Italian cities toward the end of the *quattrocento,* many lay citizens, or confraternities, comprised small communities based on either intense observant devotions of the *vita contemplativa,* or more actively community life that gave rise to the phenomenon of the civic cult, like the *laudesi* confraternities, of which the Oratorians borrow their practice of laude.

Prior to Catholic reform in the 16th century, the notion of lay independence was rooted in highly localized piety and freely governed confraternities. The terms of lay independence shifted

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[219] Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot, 2009), 235-36.
[220] See Virginia Reinberg, "Liturgy and Laity in Late Medieval and Reformation France, *The Sixteenth Century Journal,* 23, (1992): 526-547; Kaspar von Greyerz, ed. *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984).
[221] Craig Monson, "Renewal, Reform, and Reaction in Catholic Music," in *European Music 1520-1640,* ed. James Haar, Boydell & Brewer Limited.
Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles,* 201.
[223] See Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171-172.

more dramatically after Trent when confraternities were newly formed solely to support the goals of the papacy, or otherwise were met with increased pressure to conform to models of religious behavior determined by the clergy.[224] In these ways, lay independence all but equated to less social mediation. Similarly, this shift in power can be understood, at least from a music-historical standpoint, as shifts in emphasis of particular media (e.g. song, prayer) mediation (e.g., the very concept of *spirituality*). Additionally, the change in governmental topography of the Catholic Church community enacted a general disregard for the importance of pre-reformation forms of ceremony and Catholic confession—namely, the medieval liturgy as an already deeply meaningful activity for laity, including the fascination with the mystery and veneration of the Eucharistic Host.[225] This social causality exemplifies the mediation inherent to religion as a large set of social experiences. If the Roman Rite mass is one level of mediation of the mysteries and divine sacraments, then the clerical class ostensibly imposed yet another layer of social mediation. Crucially, this later mediation of religion can be tied closely to hearing, and critical attitudes about listening behaviors as spiritual listening.

Filippo Neri represented the old Observant lay devotions blended with cult of the civic and public charity. While his renewed forms of piety aligned in some ways with the Church's goals for increased control over parish life. Neri's leanings also derived from his connection to nonconformist, radical publicity in the late, radical preacher, Girolamo Savonarola, who was an expert cultivator of personal piety through the politicization of the civic cult through singing and listening to monophonic laude. Neri's establishment of his company of Oratorians in Rome already was in many ways caught between the penitent observant, mendicant and civic

[224] Paul V. Murphy, Politics, Piety, and Reform: Lay Religiosity in Sixteenth-Century Mantua," in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France &Spain,* ed. John Patrick Donnelly S.J. and Michael W. Maher, S.J. (Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), 45-54.
[225] Reinberg, "Liturgy and Laity," 527.

confraternal traditions, and the ever-tightening control over governances by a reformed Church. Yet the Oratorians prioritized independence, not least of which, as I offer, through their non-restrictive approach to listening as participation. This choice was amplified by the order's extraordinary public access to music, more than most neighboring orders and reformers, including the Jesuits. In this way, Neri's apostolic simplicity represents a pre-reformation ideal of communal piety inspired in part by the populist movements of Savonarola and serves as an entry point into the intricate history of 16th-century Catholic reform ideology.[226]

The composers most active with the curating of music for public use surrounding the oratory are Giovanni Animuccia and Francesco Soto. Along with Neri they shared an interest in ensuring accessibility and attraction for the Roman populace with their music. Neri's spiritual pedagogy already imbued the company with openness to devotions, even using humor, but this seems to have dissipated into the 17th century, with Neri's overt directness and casualness possibly having been the source for some later apologia.[227] Neri's full legacy is out of the scope of the project, though even as early as 1570 with Animuccia's elaborate collection, *Il Secondo libro delle laude spirituali*, the composer was focused above all on attracting listeners, albeit ones of a higher social status. He writes, "with the attendance of prelates and the most elite gentlemen, it also seemed to me advantageous to increase in this Second Book the harmony and the melody, varying the music in diverse ways...weaving into the gaps when I could imitations and inventions."[228] The Oratorians thus targeted the high and low of society, recognizing early in their inception that musical style would gain them noble and lay listeners first before devout followers, but the two went hand in hand.

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[226] Monson, "Renewal, Reform," 414.
[227] Gaetano Volpi, Apologia di G. V. ... per la vita di S. Filippo Neri scritta da ... P. P. A. (Giuseppe Comino: Padua), 1740.
[228] Animuccia, *Il Secondo libro delle laudi spirituali,* (Rome: Blado, 1570); Monson, "Renewal, reform, 414.

Chapter Overview and Goals

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Agostino's Manni's poetry for the laude presents a compelling case for open-ended experiences of non-imitative piety that expanded the possibilities of existing prayer. Reading and hearing this spiritual poetry in the papal city, the heart of Catholic reform among the *dottrina* prayer songs and papal allegiance confraternities, showcases how the Oratorians sacred performativity contrasted with the consummation of control over the authorities of middle-upper nobility as servants to the papacy, exemplified in the didactic techniques used by Jesuit leaders. I established the importance of the poetic style of the laude in the history of early modern Catholicism. Through Manni's poetry, the listener-participant, especially the uninitiated, could glean from these sound objects a freer, semi-secularized kind of experience, one based less in mimesis and pathos than in personal modes of exploration, listening, and religious creativity.

This chapter advances the inquiry: to what extent did the laude, as the primary form of pastoral music of the Oratorians in Rome, afford ordinary listeners opportunities for alternative forms of experience aside from didactic knowledge of faith? I argue the amalgam of styles that resist any one frame of reception help to produce spiritual value for the lay listeners as participants in acts of agency over religious experience outside the seemingly inescapable reality of ecclesiastical mediation.[229] I contend that the laude style, insofar as it could help to mediate sonically the terms of sacred and spiritual space across the city should necessarily take into consideration the vestiges and imaginative possibilities of lay experience.

I first provide historiographical context that illustrates the ways in which clerical and

[229] Juame Aurell, *Medieval Self-Coronations: The History and Symbolism of a Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). I am adopting this language "ecclesiastical mediation" in part from Aurell, and applying it here as the invisible reach of ecclesiastical power into spiritual spaces.

noble class attempted to police listening behaviors. In many ways, I move from the most stringent and policed forms of spiritual listening tied to civic decorum, to a more generous, even ambivalent understanding of music before moving to my own interpretation of the musical score. Indeed, music could account for the boredom that was central to spiritual life. Michael Raposa suggests there is agency is boredom, as it involves choosing to be bored, as a "failure to attend" to spiritual information. Choosing necessarily implies agency. Even St. Thomas Aquinas, whose works were in Neri's personal library, identified this boredom as acedia, a "joylessness, inappetence, a lack of interest in spiritual goods."[230] The Oratorians figured sound itself as a spiritual good, a point to which I will return below. The first selection of evidence includes the introduction and preface to the Oratorian, Giovanni Ancina, from his collection of songs, *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine N. S Prima Parte à tre voci* from 1599. I read this in tandem with the contemporaneous treatise, *Il muto, che parla, dialogo* (The dumbe diuine speaker), by Father Giocomo Affinati from 1601 that centers on the virtues of sound and silence in civil speech. As I demonstrate in Chapter 4, Affinati, and his treatise were closely associated with the oratory. Together these sources help to frame the ways in which the spiritual and the civic could be entangled through expectations and experiences with sound. Ancina and Affinati, being intimately associated with the Oratorian orbit, also demonstrate how local and contradictory the terms of spiritual value could be among individuals once we examined the way spiritual value circulated among highly localized sites of experience. Importantly, the body is figured as a primary site for the production and policing of spiritual value. The corporeal affordances of the body had the power to both relay and receive spiritual sound through the mouth and ears.

I position these sources in a narrative historiography about musical style, mediation and lay experience because firstly, they help to demarcate the short-durée history between the

[230] Raposa, *Boredom,* 12.

Council of Trent and the turn-of-the-century "rise of spiritual listening," according to Andrew Dell'Antonio, and, secondly, because they place in relief the uniqueness of Neri's open attitudes toward sound that are supported by the repeat publications of laude collections evident by the *Il Terzo libro* in 1577 and another in 1588.[231] By turning to select musical analysis, this allows us to consider a more expansive concept of the laude as sound objects and the productive ambiguity of their musical style to create spiritual value.

The laude exemplify the alternative use of musical sound and poetic sound to catechistic prayer. Period debates about prayer decorum –that is, about the best form of prayer, and how one should pray to most effectively connect to God—were mired in debate and contradictions about decorum. A major debate among reformers in the late 15th and 16th centuries was the virtue of silent versus vocal prayer. For instance, vocalic prayers and texts that abetted vocal prayer were deemed external helps. Filippo Neri inherited the tension toward all things external, and acoustical, from his spiritual father, Girolamo Savonarola, who, despite leading public song in the streets of Florence, vehemently believed that external, vocal prayer was "a betrayal of the relationship with God that is only genuine if it is entirely internalist."[232] This negative stance toward the use of voice, words, gesture, implied that sound was inherently distracting or even detrimental to meaningful prayer. This tension and bias against vocal, acoustical rich sound to cloak the content of earnest prayer bears on the poetics and musical composition of *Il Terzo libro* laude. Paradoxically, only a "silent" mind, busy and replete with contemplative thoughts, could block the whispers of Satan. While this lengthy and tedious debate is beyond the scope of this chapter, for our purposes here it is sufficient to state that the Oratorians still believed God could

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[231] Andrew Dell'Antonio. *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[232] Evelyn Tribble and Nicholas Keene, *Cognitive Ecologies and The History of Remembering* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31.

speak directly to the heart of the believer, as Savonarola, Neri and others did, and that music was an acceptable vehicle to do so. The acceptance of the laude as "external helps," as acoustical sound objects, reveals the levels of nuance within the seemingly simple laude, specifically, in the ways the laude helped to support free personal engagement.

As introduced above, by the mid-sixteenth century, the power of ecclesiastical activity shifted principally to churchmen to govern parishes and affect taste making. In Catholic lands that meant the realms of activity that defined the popular, or spiritual, were essentially another ecclesiastically owned space despite being crafted for laity with the intention of educating them toward deeper faith.[233] It is important to remember Oratorians remained independent from the Church, and self-governed.

Investigating Ecclesiastical mediation in early modern Catholicism

Considering the triangulation of power, sound and mediation in Rome, in the seat of the Catholic Church during reform activities, what can we learn about the meaningful experiences of the average layperson who might stumble upon one of Neri's gatherings in the city, and hear or even try to sing with the group? And what effects might the sound of the laud have created within the highly localized Oratorian galas in Rome, especially in terms of sonic practices, or what scholars have variously referred to as acoustic communities and acoustic ecologies?[234] The crux of this inquiry is whether or not there was a readily available technique for close listening, or spiritual listening, to serve self-guidance more so than guidance by a master like a Jesuit

[233] Keith P. Luria, "'Popular Catholicism' and the Catholic Reformation," in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honor of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel, (University of Toronto Press, 2001), 114-130.
[234] Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (UChicago Press, 1999); Barry Traux,"Imagining Acoustic Spaces through Listening and Acoustic Ecology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Imagination Vol 1,* ed. Mark Grimshaw-Aagaard, Mads Walther-Hansen, and Martin Knakkergaard. (Oxford University Press, 2019).

Father, especially in urban spaces territorialized by Jesuit and Oratorian orders alike. If Catholic Reformers were deeply concerned with rules of intelligibility and musical decorum, whether locally enforced or merely stated loftily *de jure* still leaves a vast and deep remainder of the reception to sound that generated so much of the spiritual value circulating around the communities in Rome.

The dissemination of the *dottrina* books, under the guidance of Jesuit fathers, was one way to exert local control over even the most illiterate of citizens, including teaching the proper disposition of the soul ready for salvation through Loyola's methods of guidance with music.[235] Although the Oratorians procured funds from wealthy prelates and bankers, their pastoral focus remained overwhelmingly on the poor, who survived in what Neri considered the spiritual wilderness of Rome. The contents of the third book of laude, suggest the Oratorians were unique in their reform efforts by lessening the control over how precisely how laypersons heard sound tied to a spiritual message.

Therefore themes of agency, control and frames of reference for listening shape the present analyses: did the Oratorian's music result in yet another ideation of the inescapable nature of ecclesiastical mediation? (Regardless of voluntary participation, as possible ideology.) Did the laude as sound objects generate an oppositional mode to social disciplining through hearing and listening? This latter reality would suggest personal religious creativity, even freedom, by creating value, at the level of the individual instead of the institution relaying that social and spiritual value, ultimately capitalizing on its effects. By analyzing examples from the third book we might see and heard how the Oratorian laude occupies a stylistic space that falls between musical artifice and basic prayer, as well as between external prayer and silent, personal contemplation. Finally, the style falls between the contemporaneous fears of "lasciviousness"

[235] Dell'Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice*, 33-34.

entertainment, and the purity sought by clerics. As sound hear by ordinary people, the Roman laude accommodates myriad intensities of sound to yield at once a bounded musical style, and a sonic modality of religious creativity that was less mediated by ecclesiastical power.

Close listening versus generic listening in early modern Rome

I have established that listening was a powerful modality of spiritual production in post-Tridentine Rome, but the expectations for outcomes from listening were as varied as the styles of music, even within the single order and the Oratorian intellectual milieu. The Oratorians were deeply invested in the idea of close listening.[236] Hearing and listening were markers of confessional identity and of lay spirituality in Rome during 16th-century reform. As such, the Oratorians particularly prized the emotive experience of close listening to both music and dialogue. In particular, they valued the way in which listeners could achieve observable responses to prayer. For example, one year after the *Il Terzo lirbo,* the Oratorian priest Maria Tarugi touts the virtues of close listening, as "the holy word of God enters marvelously the ear of those who listen carefully with the harmony and sweetness of music."[237] Similarly, one Oratorian member records in the 1580s that,

> "[Father Agostino Manni] did his best to have some spiritual dialogues performed by young musicians in a *recitativo* style, composing himself the words for these, which being emotional and accompanied by the sweetness of the singing, struck the listeners so deeply that it moved them to tears."[238]

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[236] For example, tears could be a sign of sanctity and were expected in figures like Neri before and after song or prayers. Anne Piejus, "Artistic Revival and Conquest of the Soul in Early Modern Rome," in *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism. Perspectives from Musicology*. ed. by Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone, (Brill: 2017), 168.

[237] Cf. Zucchari, "La politica culturale dell'Oratorio romano nella secondo meta del Cinquecento," *Storia dell'Arte Roma,* 41 (1981), 82, n. 30.

[238] Alaleona, Domenico. *Storia dell'oratorio musicale in Italia* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1945), 38-39; Arnaldo Morelli, "Il muovere e non il far maravigliar*," Italian History and Culture* 5 (1999), 13-28 (20).

The accuracy of the emotional reaction in this account by one of the early members of the Oratory community is questionable but I would like to emphasize the sentiment of the personal, sensual quality of close listening that this passage expresses. Theologian Steven Webb draws on Walter Ong's *The Presence of the Word* to conceptualize the phenomenon of "theo-acoustics" as Westernized habits of intimate and loving hearing that are embedded within the sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church.[239] As evident in the passages above by his colleagues, Filippo Neri evinced a highly personal brand of theo-acoustics, or a love of sound, by offering a generous and autonomous program of spiritual entertainment to support piety and faith for laity. While engaging in personal piety could make space for lay independence and autonomy, the Oratorian order was nonetheless concerned with close listening as a way to measure deep devotion.

At the same time, listening to music and hearing sound in Rome have invited the bare minimum engagement, particularly by lay, or uninitiated ears. There is some discernible style, but this organization could very have been heard as generic sound to combat boredom or inattentiveness, as opposed to the close listening mentioned in previous chapters. Frederick Hammond suggests the reception of generic sound was true but nonetheless important for the Barberini family's ascension to power in early 17th century in Rome. In essence, Hammond offers early modern experience of hearing against close listening by laity, to contend that the general quality of abundant, undifferentiated sound imbued the Barberini's festivities with affective power and sheer sound was a mechanism of influence over common citizens. The very presence of musical sound was perhaps all that mattered to uninitiated listeners than deep engagement. I return to Hammond below but his point is that in early modern history, musical

[239] Steven Webb, *The Divine Voice: Christian Proclamation and the Theology of Sound* (Wipf and Stock Publication, 2004).

perceptions taken at face value are undervalued in favor of deeper music-analysis we can only study later as objects of historical inquiry.

The Laude Style against Clerical and Civic decorum

I offer we can maneuver our historical thinking into informed speculation about experience by harnessing both a practical understanding of the musical score with knowledge of the possible reality that most listeners had a shallow sensibility and comprehension for cultivated sound as generic. In this regard, musical style is not an end in itself. Musical style as it relates to generic sound as well as to the sounds of prayer is a way to consider what type of listening practice the Oratorian laude style was legitimizing: was it a relationship with God, or something more mundane? The style of the laude has received thorough attention, having been defined as a "harmonic style" by Arnaldo Morelli. For Morelli, this style consisted of symmetrical phrases, or melodies, and a tight polyphony resembling blocked chords with a treble-dominated harmony.[240] This style of composition was similar to the simpler part writing for two and three voices of the Jesuit *dottrina* books. Yet it also borrowed from the ornamental and imitative capacities of the polyphonic madrigal without verging on highly illustrative madrigalisms.

Before we can investigate the above inquiries pertaining to the effects on lay listening, and delve more specifically into the laude style, we must first understand expert opinion around the Oratorian milieu pertaining to decorum of music and spiritual listening. Hearing and listening were markers of confessional identity and of lay spirituality. However, certain reformers

[240] Arnaldo Morelli, "The Chiesa Nuova in Rome around 1600: Music for the Church, Music for the Oratory," *Seventeenth-Century Music* 9, 2003, https://sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/morelli.html. Alaleona, *Storia dell'oratorio*,112–21, 245–288; Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, vol. 1, *The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 119–26.

promulgated what were essentially two value systems for sound in early modern Catholicism: first, the clerical ideal of decorous sound that, evocatively, upheld practicing silence and muteness to be the ultimate noble act and best channel to God, and second, the base, more popular sound of song and songful prayer. These two configurations of sound as organizing behavior, value, and spiritual effectiveness are key to understanding the important middle ground between the two, of sound as a socially constructed aspect of compositional style. The Oratorians composers endeavored to achieve lay spiritual health and the third book of laude features a careful style between the pure and the base organizations to spiritual sound.

<u>Sanitized Listening: Giovanni Ancina</u>

Even among the relatively small membership at the beginning of Neri's company of reformers, individual members possessed diametrically opposed views on what constituted appropriate and affective yields of experiences with sound for devotees. The member, Giovanni Giovenale Ancina, illustrates perhaps the most strident opinions about vain recreational sound as music unfit for the devotional realm. In the preface to *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine*, printed in Rome in 1599, Ancina pits the clerical pure side to sacred sound with the more base entertainment side, claiming that even clerics are lazy and make excuses for not employing sufficient sacred music. This massive song collection also demonstrates a third contrasting approach to lay piety other than the didactic approach of the Jesuit *dottrina,* and the more sensual poetics of the Oratorian laude. In his preface to *Tempio*, Ancina writes a dedication first to those "Gli Honesti, Divoti, et modesti cantori," reserving what reads as a second introduction addressed to those "clerics, and religious, [who are] as lascivious singers as dishonest and vain composers" [a clerici, et religiosi, tanto lascivi cantori, quanto dishonesti et

vani compositori].[241] Thus, he saves his more strident and unforgiving qualms for those religious who use the second category of entertaining sound.

Ancina's song collection was printed later though still in succession with the print run of laude books by the Gardano press in Rome, including *Il Terzo libro.* Although Ancina's goals and rhetorical approach differ greatly from Animuccia who, guided by Neri, intended for the laude books to be used by all without a more specific audience, note of criticism, or explicit moral or aesthetic judgment attached. Ancina complains that clergy sing "scandalous airs" all the while claiming they do not have sufficient sacred music.[242] At the same time, Neri was described as being openly "so in love with music that he wanted all the functions at his church of Oratorians to be accompanied by music." [243] In stark contrast to this theo-acoustics, Ancina bemoans the level of pretentiousness exhibited by clerics and so-called religious who he feels are as misguided in their singing and sanctioning of "lascivious" musical diversions as the polyphonic composers some members of the Council of Trent found to abuse the purity of the liturgy.

Importantly, Ancina takes his criticisms beyond the Council, uses scathing prose to further his stance into the personal spiritual realm attached to the body. The Oratorian composes a kind of double introduction that almost reads like an etiquette book for how to use the ears and mouth to avoid lasciviousness and vanity:

> St. Augustine in several places calls them vain & useless songs, sweet for a time, and from then on bitter, & that from such enticed filth the human souls become unnerved &

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[241] Giovanale Ancina, *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine* (Rome: Nicolo Muti, 1599), Preface.
[242] Ibid.

[243] Giancarlo Rostirolla, *La lauda spirituale tra Cinque e Seicento : poesie e canti devozionali nell'Italia della controriforma* (Roma: Istituto di bibliografia musicale, 2001), 582: "Il Santo Filippo Neri fu talmente affettionato alla musica, che tutte le funtioni della sua Chiesa, et Oratorio volle che fossero da quella accompagnate."

> fall from virtue flowing in filth: whence then they feel pains & with great bitterness digest what they drink with temporal sweetness; And furthermore he admonishes the fathers & mothers of families above all wherever they are, in and out of the he house, for travel, in the feast & in the conversations, to beware of uttering obscene words with their mouth, & lustful & dishonest songs with the tongue, so that they should praise God, then they do not come to hurt themselves, & get involved; And he gives a very good and very effective reason, namely: There is no right thing, that from the mouth of the Christians where the Sacred Body of Christ enters into Holy Communion, dishonest song comes out, like poison from the Devil.[244]

Ancina attempts to sanitize spiritual listening by drawing on meaningful figures like the disciplines and St. Augustine. Ancina's project of tastemaking and sanitizing listening was most likely a conservative response to what he viewed as the rampant use of music in poor taste, though virtually all genres of popular music, from madrigals to the *frottola* and other song forms in the 16th century were at one point or another masquerading as spiritual music through creative text setting to preexisting tunes.[245] This evidence suggests to great extent that ecclesiastical mediation could pervade the civic realm. Rather than embrace the love of listening inherent to St. Augustine's accounts, Ancina merely exploits the authoritative power of referencing the saint in order to admonish laypersons, clerics and deacons. His views reach into the sonic decorum of all things uttered by mortals, rendering evil the mortality of their mouths. Thus, his desire for sonic, or clerical purity extends well beyond the ecclesiastical and into the lived spiritual realm.

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[244] Giovanale Ancina, Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine. Rome: Nicolo Muti, 1599, Preface. My translation. Sant'Agostino in piu luoghi le chiama vane & disutili canzoni, per a tempo dolci, e di la poi amare, & che da tali sporchezze allettati gli animi humani si snervano & cadono dalla virtu scorrendo in lordezza: onde poi ne sentono dolori & con grande amarezza digeriscano quello, che con temporal dolcezza si bebbero; Et in oltre ammonisce i padri & le madri di famiglia sopra 'l tutto dovunque si siano, dentro, e fuor di casa, per viaggio, nel convito & nelle conversationi, che guardino dal proferir con la bocca loro parole oscene, & lussuriose & dishoneste canzoni con la lingua, accioche onde doveano Dio lodare, indi non vengano a ferir se stessi, & impiagarsi; & adduce una molto buona raggione efficacissima cioe: Non esser giusta cosa, che dalla bocca de'Christiani per dov'entra il Sacratissimo Corpo di Christo nella Santa Communione, n'esca fuori dishonesto canto, come veleno del Diavolo.

[245] See Craig Monson, "Renewal, Reform, and Reaction in Catholic Music," in *European Music 1520-1640,* ed. James Haar (Boydell & Brewer Limited, 2006), 401-421.

While the introduction relays Ancina's concern for the adulteration of sacred music, his interest in true spiritual matters seem secondary to his project of policing taste and style. He wants to apply the concept of the sacredness of the sacred, the unreasonable clerical purity Neri disapproved of, to the body, beyond the ecclesiastical arena, as such. Here a technology of the body that affords a generous corporeality, as discussed in Chapter 1, is turned on its head and rejected: it is unthinkable that the mortal mouth—the mouth where one receives the body and blood of Christ—should also emit dishonest songs. For Ancina, this discharge of dishonest songs is like producing the "poison of the devil." He does not acknowledge the possibility of faith building, and of spiritual value created through the mere attraction and enjoyment of sound, or the non-imitative piety afforded by theo-acoustics to lay listeners. In stark contrast to Neri's tendency to ameliorate Augustinian guilt of sound, Ancina uses the parables of Paul, and the disciples, and St. Augustine himself, to make featful judgments about the filth of poor, squalid, music with too much sound, and of good decorus music that brings the angels flying.

Ancina's writing could also be a form of posturing to bolster the success of his publication of his own musical collection, but his reactions to the adulteration of spiritual music provide a useful metric for the type of value produced by the human consumption (and emission) of spiritual sound. Notably he brings into dialogue the two value systems I identified above for sacred sound and attaches them to morality: purity and laciviousness. In the first instance, he argues that deacons are emblematic of clerical purity, as they "sing the sacred Gospel in solemn mass." Thus sound is figured as something closest to the language of God. But then in the second case, he returns to complaints of his peers singing, "songs profane, lascivious and dishonest" to thereby "flatterer the vile creatures and serve the devil."[246] Ancina even compares the two kinds of musical habits of churchmen to vastly different languages. Some deacons and ministers are

[246] Ancina, *Il tempio armonico,* preface, np.

“gregarious quacks (ciarloni) and loquacious talkers (loquaci).” The latter, “talkers,” interestingly seems like a direct criticism of his colleague, Neri, who was famously against teaching through formal sermons and instead founded his teachings free conversation (*ragionamenti*) and humor in the intimate *oratorio della sera.*

It is still not evident how Ancina’s opinions and values of unadulterated, pure sounds maps onto actual organized music, in terms of musical style to praise God appropriately. The collection, *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine*, already suggests from the title that the ideal spiritual sounds together make a “harmonic temple to the Blessed Virgin,” like a church. The contents betray meditation and glorification of the Virgin, including songs for the Annunciation and Assumption, and songs to aid supplication to Mary in Ordinary Time (Example 1). Overall, the poetic texts feature repetitious verse in the service of direct supplication, and conventional intonations from formulaic spoken prayer, such as the “Ave” or “O” or name of the divine, “Vergine” (Example 2).

6 Primo Soprano. a 3. voci. Abbate Pitigliano.

ALLA MEDESIMA

O De'Be a ti, e San ti Regina in più so aui, e dol ci can ti Ecco le pure lo di, Ch'à Te gradiscan tanto, e'n cui ti go di, ij Ecco le

O Donna gloriosa,
O del tuo caro Figlio ornata Sposa,
Sposa diletta, e Madre,
Tu Vergin'e Tu Figlia al sõmo Padre:
O chiara Lampa ardente,
O del'Empireo Ciel porta lucente
Co'l Diuin tuo splendore
Accẽdimi ti prego hor l'Alma, e'l core.
Ben scorgi d'ogni lato,
Qual sia'l mio scuro, e tenebroso stato:
Quanti perigli intorno
Mi soprastanno graui e nott'e giorno.

Oime che d'aspri, e fieri
Nemici in campo son forti guerrieri
Contra me forte accesi,
Ma più per castigarmi, ond'io t'offesi.
Tu dunque ò Madre pia,
Prego non risguardar mia vita ria:
Vengone à te confuso,
Che già conosco il fallo, e non lo scuso.
Perdona al cieco ardire
Di giouenil'etade, e al mio languire
Porgi soccorso, e mano,
Che senza te non viuo, e spero in vano,

BRE-

Example 1.
p. 6 Soprano part, from Giovanale Ancina, Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine. Rome: Nicolo Muti, 1599. Digitized, Biblioteca Casanatense Rome

40 Primo Soprano. a 3. voci. D'Incerto.

PER LA MEDESIMA.

VERGINE Tu del Ciel' alma REINA, Se miri, e aſcolti
i miei dolenti guai, Deh prego vieni à conſolarmi homai, ij
Deh prego

VERGINE che di Sol veſtita ſei.
E'l capo cinta di ſplendenti rai,
Deh prego ſcendi à riſcaldarmi homai.
VERGINE con tua man fort' e poſſente,
Soſtieni ogni alma, e non ti ſtanchi mai:
Deh corri dunque à ſolleuarmi homai.
VERGINE che ver noi ſi dolce, e pia
Sempre ti rendi, & tante gratie fai,
Pietà ti vinca à riſanarmi homai.
VERGINE ſenza te languiſco, e moro,
E tu pur ogni ben prometti, e dai:
Volgiti dunque à riſtorarmi homai.
VERGINE chieggio in van' ogni ſoccorſo
Da queſto inſtabil Mondo empio fallace,
E nulla più di lui goder mi piace.
VERGIN ſperanza mia dammi Tu lena:
E s'hor finir pur dè mia ſtanca vita.
Non mi laſciar' à l'vltima partita.

PER

Example 2.

p. 40 Soprano part, from Giovanale Ancina, Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine. Rome: Nicolo Muti, 1599. Digitized, Biblioteca Casanatense Rome

The prayer conventions that organize many of the songs are featured less in the *Terzo libro* collection, however despite Ancina's complaints about popular, recreational music as an adulteration of piety, he is still invested in the quality of entertainment of songs. He is concerned with how they are performed: Three voices are best, not because it is easier or simpler for lay but

because “it is easier to get three good singers than more.”[247] To avoid weariness and to increase elegance and charm of the songs, he suggests they are to be sung not in homophony for all the verses, but to instead stagger the entries so the soprano alone sings the first verse. Additionally, for the laude with several stanzas, they should be sung for three to five at the very most so as to not weary the singer or the listeners.[248] Echoing his earlier point about mouths unfit to both receive communion and later to emit profane sounds, he develops his thoughts by using gustatory analogies. Users of the song collection should sing no less than three stanzas, “to taste properly, but that five should not be exceed, that the stomach be not turned.”[249] Only the most exquisite and clearest three voices (soprano, soprano and basso) in the town with well-tuned instruments together will allow the faithful to “taste nectar and hear the sweetest melody of Paradise:”

> In this way, the sweet sound clearly reverberating with the pronounced words, and well understood besides the pleasing and sensible delight of the most delicate, purged ears of the listeners, [that] whoever shows himself be most judicious in all the best things, [...] hearts will light up with devotion and they will be enraptured [si rapiranno] with love to contemplate the supreme immense Beauty of the Blessed Virgin.

This passage suggests a material quality inherent to spiritual value of sound that had been socially constructed through the period of pluralistic reform activities in Rome. Thus, it is no surprise that the corporeal features of the pious (delicate, purged ears) concerns Ancina as central to the mechanism of listening. With his publication, Ancina sets one standard of consumption of spiritual sound that is as close to the Council of Trent’s concerns for intelligibility, as possible, yet centered on listening in a broader context to include the civic rather than only a liturgical setting.

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[247] Ancina, Tempio Preface, np.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.

There are a three pieces of information to draw out from Ancina's 1599 dedicated that related to spiritual listening. First, *Tempio armonico,* along with Animuccia's *Il Terzo,* provide a fuller context for consideration of the laude as sound objects in support of lay experiences of the spiritual. While the dedication shows how individual spiritual agents could promulgate very different brands of spiritual value attached to sound even within one order, the Oratorian publications expressed a shared concern to promote close listening either way, thereby encouraging a personal and affective experience for lay listeners. Second, it is important to note that while Ancina does not believe silent contemplation as the purest path to God, he does describe a type of spiritual listening that requires skills that approach expert listening, even rapt attention. Ultimately Ancina favors external sound, as musical *style,* insofar as that style attains a particular clerical ideal. Even if used for spiritual entertainment, the musical style maintains the quality of "decent recreation."[250] Third, the diametrical oppositions to sonic decorum is striking among fellow Oratorians, Ancina and Neri is striking. Neri embraces the ability of music simply to attract laity toward the church and toward spiritual health.

To illustrate, the below record exemplifies Neri's unrestricted mode of listening adopted for his reform community. The father, Agostino Ziino, refers to the music in the oratory as a source of allure and "sweet deception:"

> to attain the desired aim so much more easily, and to draw, with a sweet deception, the sinners to the holy exercises of the Oratory, you [Filippo Neri] introduced Music there, seeing it that vernacular and devotional things were sung, so that the people, being allured by song and tender words, would be all the more disposed to spiritual profit; nor was your idea in vain, since some, *coming at times to the oratory only to hear the music,* and then remaining, moved and captivated by the sermons and the other holy exercises that are done there, have become servants of God [emphasis mine].[251]

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[250] Dent, Edward J., "The Laudi Spirituali in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries," *Proceedings of the Musical* Association 43 (1916): 63-95 (64). In his words, Dent remarks that a great deal of the laude music was "extremely dull."
[251] Agostino Ziino, "Testi laudistici musicati da Palestrina," in *Atti del convegno di studi palestriniani,* ed.

The carefree approach mentioned by Ziino, to merely allow people to listen seemingly without expectation of refined, close listening, is illustrative of the Oratorian precept of *misere utile dulci,* a mixing of "the useful" with "the sweet," accepted music as entertainment and took a practical approach to standards of taste to prioritize flexibility and openness in lay value-creation.[252] Although the standard clerical values of mortification and salvation as end results of listening are plainly legible, "captivated by sermons" to "become servants of God," the extra care to policing sound for listeners is at best an afterthought. In light of efforts for overt social discipline and didactics, the Oratorian records betray a willingness to allow people to listen freely with some latitude.

The figuration of Ancina as foil to Neri is borne out also in the critical literature owned by the Oratorian community, chiefly the treatise by Giocomo Affinati, the *Dumbe, Divine Speaker*, (*Il muto, che parla)* of 1601.[253] Affinati serves as a third source in addition to the *Tempio Armonico*, and *Il Terzo libro* to complete the context surrounding the Oratorians in which opposing values for spiritual sound were promulgated in late *cinqucento* Rome. As I have discussed, Ancina represents the clerical elite faction whose policing stretches into the civic decorum. Affinati is addressing directly the civic space. For him, the listener practices total restraint with regard to sounds emitted and taken into corporeal orifices. The listener is busy hearing spiritual silence, for "the mouth, if that not be kept close, it will soon become a recepticle

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Francesco Luisi (Palestrina: Fondazione Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1977), 389; Smither, *A History of the Oratorio Vol. 1,* 121.

[252] On this precept, Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine," and *Selva armonica: La music spirituale a Roma tra Cinque e Seicento.*

[253] The British Library copy seems to have been used in the London Bromptom Oratory. Handwritten script says it was for the Oratory of Rome, so there is at least a link to Affinati's thought in the intellectual history of the Oratorians, especially from around the turn of the 17th century.

for devilles, for vayne thoughts and all other filthinesse."[254] Likewise, the mouth should be kept closed because it is full of the silent sounds of God's sweet words. Perhaps in a more sensual rewriting of the Council's intelligibility criteria, Affinati writes,

> So sweet, delicious and delicate is the word of God, as it surpasseth the sweetnesse of honie, then which there is nothing sweeter in the world. *What is sweeter than honey?* quoth they that expounded the riddle of Sampson. The word of God, saith David, exceeded hony in sweetnesse: *Oh lord, how sweet are thy words unto me, that they surpasse the sweetness of hony,* when I have them [words] in my mouth?[255]

Affinati, like Ancina, also uses gustatory references that cast negatively the corporeal quality of the voice and mouth. This pitting of two perennial value systems of sound—sacred and profane—is equally bound up with morality and civility. At the same time that Affinati is focused on speech and the virtues of practicing silence, he also echoes Ancina's criticism of the mortality of the mouth, inherently bad, and the source of lack of virtue, decorum and social manners. For both, they condemn talkativeness, for it has a direct bearing on all those in the vicinity of the speaker. They both also promote a control over sound that seems to strengthen the limits of ecclesiastical mediation, and which depends upon the intentions of the individual to prove their virtue and humility. In short, God's speech is silent, and God should be the only reason one must open ones lips, or otherwise remain in decorous silence, or what Peter Burke has called ecclesiastical silence.[256]

The reform milieu around the Oratorians in Rome comprised of various agents who associated hearing and listening with participation. Ancina, Affinati, and Neri represent

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[254] Giocomo Affinati, *Dumbe, Divine Speaker,* trans. R. Bradbock (London 1605), 26.
[255] Affinati, *Dumbe, Divine Speaker,* 70.
[256] Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cornell University Press, 1993),127.

completing social standards for spiritual listening.[257] Ancina and Affinati represent early actors in a cultural turn toward a more involved policing of listening in the spiritual realm, bound up with civic decorum. Andrew Dell'Antonio has characterized listening in Rome in the early *seicento* through groups of individuals for whom spiritual listening became increasingly elite, pure, and critical in nature. In many ways, listening aided in the objectification of music in order to use music to participate in discussions of taste and decorum among nobles in Italy.[258] Along with this, hearing and listening was "posited as active and ideally transcendent rather than passive and dangerously sensual" in early modern Rome.[259] He further demonstrates a shift in Rome in the early *seicento* between discussions of devotion through listening, on the one hand, and prayerful attention to spiritual texts and images, on the other.

Ancina's preface exemplifies the changes from a brief period of independence and receptivity toward spiritual sound in the *oratorio della sera* of the 1550s. With Ancina and Affinati writing toward the turn of the 17th century, they betray a desire both to "listen to listening," and to police others listening to increasingly objectified experiences of musical taste and decorum including in the spiritual arena.[260] The *Il Terzo libro* captures the most latitude for listening throughout the 1570-80s as the Oratorian institution was growing in stature, materially and politically. Above all the social and material construction of spiritual sound as a prime source of value for the Oratorian company was heavily influenced by Neri's idiosyncratic openness toward laity's access and exposure to music. In the following section, I consider what this social-material history of sound and listening means "on the ground," for laypersons through a detailed analysis of the music and style of *Il Terzo libro.*

[257] Dell'Antonio, *Listening as Spiritual Practice,* 33-34.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid., 67.
[260] See Peter Szendy, *Listening: A History of Our Ears* (Fordham University Press, 2008).

The Oratorian Laude, sound objects, and the ambiguity of musical style

The term, "laude" designates spiritual songs used by 15th century laudesi, or praise-based confraternities, that were used by proto-reformers, such as Girolamo Savonarola, to incite public foment against monarchical powers in Florence, years before the Council of Trent. A generation later, the Florentine collector of songs, Serafino Razzi and his spiritual father, Filippo Neri migrated from Florence to Rome. Here Neri's company of Oratorians adopted these popular spiritual songs for the Roman public. Generically, the Oratorian laude and Jesuit catechism songs of the late 16th century have perplexed historians with regard to study the study of their genre and style. The ambiguity of their features lies in their relatively simple style and informal use across urban spaces. The catechism songs reached a wide audience due to the Jesuits' systematic spiritual education program. Anne Piejus has discussed a particular syncretism of sophistication and *semplicita* in the style of the laude, calling it "innovative conservatism."[261] She notes that the laude are closely related to prayer as much as music. The laude are a highly vocal form of prayer, featuring artifice and "external" sound, features that were once met with vitriol by Florentine Neri's predecessor:

> While Savonarola condemned any contrapuntal complexity and any other ecclesiastical ornament, considering laude as one of the few acceptable vocal forms, Neri and his companions adopted a much more permissive position. Laude remains an ideal form of vocal oration, but it coexists with an exterior cult and a certain pomp of which the Tridentine congregations have known how to exploit the powerful springs.[262]

Here Piejus notes the openness to ornamental sound by the Oratorians, and the tension held between *semplicita* and *l'artificiosita.*

Other writers have considered the laude as an oddity, or a mere passing genre in the

[261] Anne Piejus, "Artistic Revival," 149-172.
[262] Anne Piejus, *Musique et Devotion a Rome a la Fin de la Renaissance* (Brepols, 2014), 352.

progressive innovation of more prominent genres of early modern music. Frank Kennedy grouped the laude along with catechism songs as "some unusual genres of sacred music."[263] This treatment of laude and catechism together is an almost complete reversal of the kind of value found in musical style by Alfred Einstein in the early 20th century. Einstein, in fact, thought the madrigal was an "aberration" in the progress of Italian Renaissance music because it did not fit into a clear, teleological history of musical development toward elegant, symmetrical forms of Italian song types, including the *frottola* and *canzonetta*, a group to which the laude could arguably be added.[264] If one dominant narrative exists about the laude style as a collected genre, it is that these homophonic vocal pieces developed into a treble-dominated harmonic style. The treble melody became further rarefied into dramatic monody, or a single vocal line with accompaniment, that then developed into opera.[265] Howard Smither actually began the work of complicating Domenico Alaleona's claim that the laude served a strictly dramatic function that lead to the *oratorio vulgare,* or modern oratorio. Nonetheless, in the whole of Smither's monumental study cataloguing all the Oratorian laude collections, he does not identify a single so-called dramatic or narrative laude in the contents of *Il Terzo libro*.[266] This unique fact itself warrants a closer look at the work of this particular volume.

Insofar as Smither attempted to "quantify the affinity" between musical style and dramatic elements, the method and aim of his study is similar to what Ian Verstegen has regarded

[263] Frank T. Kennedy, S.J. "Some Unusual Genres of Genres of Sacred Music in the Early Modern Period: The Catechism as Musical Event in the Late Renaissance — Jesuits and 'Our Way of Proceeding,'" *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honor of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* ed*,* Kathleen M. Comerford, and Hilmar M. Pabel (University of Toronto Press, 2001), 266-279 (269).
[264] Alfred Einstein, *The Italian Madrigal,* 1949.
[265] For a comprehensive overview of this teleological tendency in the historiography and style history, see Eyolf Ostrem and Nils Holger Petersen, "The Historiography of Opera Reconsidered," in *Medieval Ritual and Early Modern Music* (Brepols: Belgium, 2008), 201-242 .
[266] Howard Smither, "Narrative and Dramatic Elements in the Laude Filippine, 1563-1600," *Acta Musicologica,* 41 (1969): 186-199.

as zeitgeist historicism.[267] Dramatic or not, the question of style is not an end in itself. I contend we should consider musical style as it relates not to style history but to experiences of prayer as a way to understand what type of spiritual listening practice and relationship with God the laude might have legitimized. Analyzing the laude as sound objects expands our thinking to questions of what constitutes a musical style without zeitgeist historicism, based in period-specific cultural patterns or teleological drives, such as the development of drama from the vehicle of the laude to its ostensible final stage as opera. (And, perhaps also what binds the notion of the sacred to any one object, as with sacred immanence, as either acoustical (the voice of God) or material (the Eucharistic Host).

Morelli's "harmonic style"

As discussed in the previous chapter, the composers in the Oratorian orbit who contributed laude to the collections laude desired for a simple music best suited for the enjoyment of listening for a wide-ranging audience. In this section, I will illustrate this possibility for processes of lay spiritual listening through the musical evidence of the scores. I analyze three examples of music from *Il Terzo Libro* printed by Gardano press for the Oratorians in 1588. It is first important to outline the shared qualities of the laude style. Arnaldo Morelli has defined the style of the Oratorian laude as the "harmonic style," because it consists primarily of symmetrical phrases and a tight homophonic texture that resembles blocked chords with a treble-dominated harmony, hence "harmonic."[268] The writing features "refined harmonic effects enhancing the understanding of texts, which were declaimed according to their meter."[269] Unlike

[267] Verstegen, "Federico Barocci and the Oratorian Orbit," 57.
[268] Morelli, "The Chiesa Nuova in Rome," n.p. https://sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/morelli.html
[269] Ibid.

the polyphonic madrigal, which could also underlay a spiritual text as *contrafactum,* or, what were called, *travestimenti spirituali,* which had high level of ornamentation and an independent quality to each vocal line, the harmonization of the laude generally moved toward a collective monodic style in which one main melody was supported by a bass and inner voices.

Piejus and Morelli agree the laude's "minimalist musical treatment emanates an impression of great simplicity. This simple style of composition resembled the basic part writing for two and three voices of the Jesuit dottrina books, and even some of the songs contained in Ancina's decorous collection sampled above, *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine* 1599. The laude drew on the vernacular *ballata,* in that they tended to form melodies into simpler, even-measured stanzas. This feature gave the laude its over-all binary form of antecedent-consequent phrases.[270] The cantus melodic sound supported by the two lower voices (tenor and basso) was also a similar sound to the contemporary popular *villanelle*. To round out the forbearers of the laude, the popular *frottola* poetic song form also featured a top voice that carried the full text, as the lower voices could not always fit the text as smoothly.

The composer with the most direct bearing on the *Il Terzo libro delle laudi*, was the Spanish composer, and protégée of Animuccia, Francesco Soto, who, like his predecessor, incorporated moderate artifice into the musical writing. Animuccia published the first Roman collections and oversaw the laude publications of the early 1570s. As the original maestro di capella of the Oratorian's Santa Maria in Vallicella, Animuccia made it clear in his earlier mass publications of 1567 that he did not intend to sacrifice musical artifice even though he desired for the words of his music to be understood.[271] Upon further analysis, the simple style is more complex and actually betrays sophisticated modalities of the spiritual. Animuccia, Soto, et al

[270] Piejus, *Musique et Devotion a Rome,* 307.
[271] "Animuccia," in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary Of Music and Musicians* (London, 2001); quoted in Monson, *Revisiting Trent,* 24.

seemed to have inflected their collections with the chordal, homophonic texture with some imitative qualities from the polyphonic madrigal, while not entirely writing madrigalisms, which were more artful and illustrative compositional devices for text painting.

Each laude features a three voice homophonic texture in which the voicings are close together, a characteristic that Morelli has defined as "chordality," because the voices resemble a three-note chordal structure.[272] Animuccia and his protégé, Francisco Soto, most likely adopted this chordality as a popular and expressive affordance from the *frottola*.[273] The tight ambitus of the voices generally does take on the façade of an even, monodic, or single voiced. Yet the music and meter of the laude temper an overtly dance lilt and singsong feel heard in a *ballata* or *canzonetta.* Overall, the effect of the treble-driven chordality effectively brings the cantus to the fore of the supporting voices without rendering completely subservient or canceling out the lower voices and cross-relations characteristic of late *cinquecento* sung polyphony.

Reminiscent of the *frottola*, laude were published to comfortably serve non-professional singers and listeners, as well as accommodate an array of available instrumentalists, depending on what was available.[274] Laude perhaps served urban listeners most of all. The contents of the third book, which was used outdoors for worshipping gatherings, needed to catch the ear and the heart of the *cittadini*, whether one was standing across the crowd, or humming along to the cantus line so as to physically feel for themselves a level of meaning of the words. In this way, the accessible style has experiential ties to the way in which speaking, vocality were embraced in the early *oratorio della sera,* through *ragionamento* and improvisatory conversation to listener and participate together. The contexts of the *Terzo libro* allowed for a flexible experience for

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[272] Arnaldo Morelli, "The Chiesa Nuova in Rome," https://sscm-jscm.org/v9/no1/morelli.html
[273] There is a stylistic association with the laude and frottola, too, as Petrucci's early laude prints, the *Laude libro second* (1507/8) feature *frottole* of the composer Tromboncino.
[274] Blake Wilson, "Frottola" Oxford Music Online, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10313

inexperienced listener-participants and for knowledgeable singers and professionals alike.

Listening beyond Ecclesiastical mediation: an analysis of *Il Terzo Libro* 1588

The laude figure not as *music*, per se, but as sound objects for a broader demographic of uninitiated listeners in Rome. As such, the compositional profile of the laude is not pre-cursors to monody as much as an mixed style in its own right. I argue through my analysis that the laude of the third book are a process-based music that invited religious creativity through listening as participation. The unrestricted quality of this music could be heard as pockets of possible freedom for individual laypersons, particularly during a time in which rapt hearing and sacred purity were religious modalities gaining currency for nobles and clerics. This conceptualization of open-ended reception by laypersons offers a different approach to Morelli and Smither by pointing out the laude's more holistic, accessible nature as a process-based music over a solidified type or style.

We can hear and read these pieces ambiguously, as well: as tonal in the modern sense, or through the 16th-century practice of using church modes for polyphonic writing. Evidence that this music could simply be read as tonal is supported by the fundamental movement of the bass voice, as well as some of the *musica ficta* that act like leading tones near cadential figures. While tonality heightens the vertical constructedness of the harmonic style—the chordality—focusing primarily on the treble-driven chordal quality glosses over some of the subtlety with which Animuccia and Sotto endeavored to engage their audiences that separates the music from simpler melodies from the catechism tunes. In summation, the amalgamation of the laude—simplicity, artifice, popular forms, and sacred referential sounds—encouraged neither a brand of policed close listening represented by Ancina's book, or basic mnemonic device, as with Ledesma's

dottrina lessons for the Jesuits' pastoral work.

In what follows, I analyze three settings from the second series of laude collections produced by Neri's Oratorians. The *Il Terzo libro,* printed in 1588, was a collection oversaw by Soto for the Gardano press after the success of the first several collections including the publication of the *Primo* and *Secondo libro* by composer Animuccia's in 1570. This 1588 collection exemplifies the height of the pastoral work across the city of Rome by the Oratorians. The previous chapter's analysis focused on the vivid evocative poetry. Here I complete this analysis of the laude by turning to the music of those same selections, *Hor che la fredda, Tu piu pura di me,* and *Hoggi che il Padre* as they best represent the plurality of styles absorbed into the song-forms of the laude. I highlight features of musical *style* of the laude that are important components of process of listening and spirituality, keeping in mind there are limits to what we can know with precision about personal spirituality and experience, now and in the past. I am not trying to interpret the music; rather I use the known score to speculate about laity as listener-participants through this popular spiritual idiom. My claim of the analysis is twofold: first, the *Il Terzo libro* style demonstrates that style can reach beyond bounded sound to encourage religious creativity through listening, and, second, that laity as listener-participants most likely heard and consumed affect and spiritual knowledge from the musical style differently than listeners with expert knowledge of applied music, or *musica prattica* may have. As I will show, an important feature of the songs in *Il Terzo libro* is they mediate with musical sound the features of spoken formulaic prayer to transform into a new mode of experience.

Expert versus lay listening

Different listeners of the laude highlight distinctions of what was reasonably interpreted and comprehended from a musical style. Style can equate to expressions of religious creativity and spiritualism, however, for singers, from beginner to professional, style could first and foremost relay expert knowledge of sound learned from improvisation and performance, and what precisely should be realized, though not necessarily interpreted for meaning. What would be gleaned from 16th-century lay audiences with next to no musical training or possibly any literacy would be very different than that of a singer. A professional, or even amateur singer would be required to be an expert listener of the musical gamut that underlies so much of 16th-century polyphony as applied music, or performed music. I would even suggest that a casual listener, not trained in *practica musica* would not hear the music in the same way; they would hear it as something different, as sound object with many possibilities of meaning, including none at all.

Singers and composers would internalize the system of hexachords, or solmization of particular groups of six notes that featured for decades in practical music treatises and were used for performing and composing church music—*ut re mi fa so la*.[275] These hexachords could be mutated, or changed as it were, several times within one piece, to facilitate different expressive leaps in the voice by 3rds, or larger, and also to facilitate expressive semitones often at the peaks of phrases, to create sound colors that singers would naturally known how to sing.[276] In the laude the hexachord singerly content and the tonal logic of chordality are intermeshed. This represents at once craft knowledge of professional singing, and also the more modern composition. The hexachords, or groupings of six notes according to the fundamental starting note (C, A, G, etc.)

[275] Anne Smith, *The Performance of 16th-Century Music: Learning from the Theorists* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 20.
[276] Ibid.

could “lean” toward what was considered by practitioners as a “hard” or “soft” sound. However, sound colors were all relative according to groupings and movements of notes within the music, and musical style, more than an inherent sound of hardness or softness. In terms of modern tonality, the flattening or sharpening of notes in the gamut creating a leaning tone, or semitone sound.

These conceptions of sound could sometimes imitate or deepen the relationship to the meaning of the words, or text painting. For example, by mutating (transposing) the hexachord in parts of the musical texture, this moves the musical texture in a cantus durus direction, often by using the raised pitches on “mi” above the fundamental pitch, to accommodate the mutated hexachord beginning on E, A, or D, rather than on the natural hexachord on C, as almost all the laude do at one point. The composer, most likely the talented young Spaniard, Francesco Sotto, thus composed both hexachordally and tonally, (as vertically or chordal). The point here is to note how this late 16th-century musical style can easily be explained by at least more than one sonic logic, and thus heard in even more ways, including as heard during the time of its creation.

Hor che la fredda

To begin, *Hor che la fredda* exemplifies the features of spoken formulaic prayer while exploring sounds in surplus of musical settings for prayer texts indicative of catechism songs (Example 3). The compositional artifice moves beyond a one-to-one relationship between the text and singing. In this way, the music is more ambiguously and pluralistic in its effects than prayer. For example, textures seem to take precedent over imitation and tone painting of the words. In *Hor che la fredda* the music could be heard as the vertical blocked chord texture of the Harmonic style that would support the cantus as the highest tones, but it could also be heard as a

less structured complex of sound due to the hexachord from D at the start, that mutates to E, and then again to cadence on A. This changes the sound colors several times. The opening line, “Horche la freda neve e’l duro gielo,” is highly dynamic in its statement. In the first phrase, the generic modal profile, outlining the Dorian fifth, or D- A sonority of the second church mode, Hypodorian, is instantly disrupted and is heightened by this mutation on E. That is, the middle texture features marked notes of a raised third g# or “mi” of E, then again on A with raised mi/ C#. All together the opening sounds traditional until we hear a marked moment with two raised third harmonizations that are mutated and outside the hypodorian mode, creating an element of interest as much as meaning.

Example 3. Transcription of Hor che la fredda, *Il Terzo libro* 1588

Example 4. Horche la fredda, *Il Terzo Libro, 1588*

The music features mutations of hexachords and cadences that conclude definitively with the base motion in a way that sounds loosely tonal. The mutations of the natural hexachord in the first half of *Hor che* create enough color and melodic interest to hold the listener, as well as the singer, while remaining within the outermost range of the hypodorian. For instance, the apex of G resolves to an F#, the raised mi of the D hexachord (mm. 15). This apex features a bit of text painting with the reference to “cielo”and clouds fading from the sky (ne piu ricopr’oscura nube il cielo). In this way, the voicings also temper sudden leaps that might resemble emotional

outbursts of the cantus line that would also require too may transpositions. Thus, the expansion of the overall ambitus occurs through a hexachord mutation to the soft hexachord on with Bb in the basso, on the word "tranquilla" (mm. 10) on "Al caldo si distilla nella stagio traquilla." The Bb smoothly resolves to a secondary cadence on the mutation on A with raised mi again, before resolving on the primary cadence on D (mm. 15). These choices in vertical textural and melodic content contribute to the overall tempering across the style of intensities and vicissitudes suggestive of an ejaculatory expression of prayer, while creating sonic latitude for the listener-participant.

Hor che la fredda

Hor che la fredda neve e'l duro gielo.
Al caldo si distilla nella stagio traquilla
ne piu ricopr'oscura nube il cielo
Et con la focsa notte fugge l'inverno
alle gelate fugge l'inverno alle gelate grotte.

Che più giaci alma mia, che non ti deste
Ecco per la campagna
La tortore si lagna,
E la vite di gemme si riveste
E tra le folte foglie
L'hispido fico, i primi parti accoglie.

Porgi l'orechie a gl'amorosi accenti,
Del tuo diletto sposo,
Che t'inuita al riposo
E in mezzo ai gigli, e a gli'odorati unguenti
Verso il merigge siede
Di gemme ornato, e te sol brama, e chiede.

Vanne a veder le folte chiome e nere,
Gl'occhi pien di splendore,

Dove s'annida amore,
La fronte lieta, e'l collo, ch'a vedere
Terso avorio simiglia,
E la sua faccia candida e vermiglia"

Now the Cold Snow

Now the cold snow is hard frost
In the heat, it distills itself in the calm/quiet season
No more dark clouds cover the sky
And with the hot/fiery night
Winter flees to frozen caves.

[Because you still rest, my soul, and you do not awake] Be still my soul, do not rouse[277]
[There across the countryside] the turtledove coos
The grapevine is clothing itself with gems
And the bristly fig has the first fruits among the dense leaves.

Give ear to the loving tones
of your beloved bridegroom
Who urges you to rest and sits
among the lilies and the scented ointments
sits in the noon hours,
adorned by gems, and desires and calls only you.

Go and see his dense and dark hair,
the eyes full of splendor,
where love lurks,
the happy forehead, and the neck,
which is similar to clear ivory,
and his white and ruddy face.

Hor che la fredda is an explicitly sensuous laude with music that explores the outer harmonic regions of the Hypodorian mode not as an externalized framework, but more

[277] Unclear if an imperative/directive

intituitively through the inner textures created by hexachordal modulation.[278] In the second half of the setting, the music shifts abruptly to a light fugal texture on another mutation of the hexachord but now on the "soft" of F hexchord, perhaps to makes more tangibly felt the imagery of the melting snow to spring. This blending of the sensuous with liturgical is characteristic creates layers of sound on which to attack ones ear not only as a professional musician but also as an uninitiated listener-participant.[279]

Howard Powers has suggested the use of modes in any polyphonic, or multi-voiced, composition in the later 16th century began to refer to "church" itself, noting that works of the papal composers such as Palestrina and Lasso "seem clearly to reflect the lay piety that came to be encouraged in Counter Reformation practice."[280] To advance his idea while considering my analysis, the musical style of *Hor che* and descriptive poetry might have supported the internalization and replication of personal feelings in response to the familiar but unlearned quality of sacred, or spiritual, sound. This was a distinct process of value production separate from the forced internalization of singing the catechism. Individualist knowledge transformation through sound therefore encompassed the sacred of the church as one self-referential aspect among a host of possible modalities of the spiritual. Perhaps more than intelligibility of word meaning that denotes a correct way of listening and imitating, the lay listener would generally hear changes in sonority to modulate emotion and physically evoke the company of sacred

[278] Howard S. Powers, "Tonal Types and Modal Categories in Renaissance Polyphony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 3, (1981): 428-470 (446).
Howard Powers notes in the second half of century we do see a self-conscious modalism on the part of composers of polyphony. At the same time, composing in a mode could be more of an emic act, as properties of a mode did not necessary serve as an external existing framework to organize musical ideas. For instance, for Pietro Aaron modality was not a pre-compositional property like tonality. Thank you to Olivia Bloechl for clarifying the distinction.
[279] Powers, "Tonal Types," 446. Powers also wonders if using such prescribed musical systems of the church was as much of an affirmation of faith as the use of pious texts.
[280] Ibid.

personae depicted in the textual scenes.

Stylistically, the laude treats the sacred as a second order of sound that is referential, not compulsory like guided prayer. Along these lines, Robert Kendrick has shown how numerous litanies were widely used for popular devotions before they were ruthlessly edited and standardized in 1600. Similar to the laude, the music for litanies was pluralistic and ranged in idiom from high art to simple chant, or *falsobordone,* that was ostensibly suitable for children.[281] The next laude captures a similar range by combining references to prayer itself and to singing, within a popular structure.

Tu più pura di me

The next selection, *Tu più pura di me,* presents a highly intimate scene recalling Dominican contemplative aspects as the listener-participant activates thoughts and sensations in an active space of interiority. The first half of *Tu piu pura* features homorhythm, or all voices in the same rhythm, with some minor exceptions for embellishment and follow at mm. 7 and mm. 9 while the second half deploys melismatic figures and more movement in the lower cantus 2 voice and tenor voices to fill out the sustained tones in the cantus 1 voice. Rather than hear the harmonic style as chordal, the homorhythm is quite flowing, so the music helps enact the mental state involved in supplication. *Tu piu pura di me* seems to embody in sound the act of prayer in a laudatory manner that once again avoids a piety based in imitation. This is notably not imitative piety, but takes a comparative approach as an external sonic activity and highly personal so as to suggest an interior contemplative type of prayer. The dignified yet flowing homorhythm in the opening phrase established a natural flow close to prayerful speech, especially at the very onset

[281] Robert Kendrick, "'Honore a Dio, e allegrezza alli santi e consolazione alli putti': The Musical Projection of Litanies in Sixteenth-Century Italy'," *Sanctorum 6: Plasmare il suono* (2009): 15-46.

of prayer when one would address the divine. In the first measures, we see a dotted minim (half note duration) that creates a momentary stall in the opening statement through a brief triple feel, a thoughtful moment that then shifts to the livelier duple feel. This shift creates an audible flow to the chordal polyphony of the first phrase, which sounds like an incipit to a longer thought of address of supplication, “You, purer than [me].”

Similar to the previous example, *Tu più* is also a subtle amalgam of sonic references to secular and sacred idioms typical to the *Il Terzo libro* (Figure 14). This amalgamation exemplifies also the Oratorian goal to attract listeners through the very human and personal act of private prayer more than to indoctrinate or instruct them to listen one way. Similar to *Hor che la fredda*, the laude, *Tu piu pura,* also outlines the sonic features of the common church mode, Hypodorian, as both the opening and candential figures outline the fifth above, on A, perhaps to enliven and lighten the tone color of the music from the more gloomy and prefunding natural mode that would bring the music to a lower range on D. The ironic admixture of popular idiom with church mode is further accentuated structurally. Specifically, this laude recalls the popular and secular *canzonetta,* with its defined four-bar phrases, as seen in the transcription with modern barlines (Figure 14), as well as the related *villanelle,* though without the rustic or comic feel of the latter. The poetry draws on popular idiom also through with its varied syllabic meter organized into defined four-line stanzas. In this way, Manni’s poetry balances the varied lengths, between the popular Italian *endecasillabo* (11 syllables), and heptameter (7 syllables), in each stanza. The musical structure further tempers this meter into four even phrases.

Tu piu pura di me

Il terzo libro 1588

Transcription
M. Chieffo

©

Example 5.
Transcription of *Il Terzo libro,* 1588, p. 4

Example 6.
Il Terzo libro, 1588, p. 4

The musical interest of all the voices move in a more reserved, even step-wise manner, with few leaps as there are fewer hexachordal mutations than *Horche la fredda*. The few coloristic changes from raised "mi" appear only in *musica ficta* on the cadential moments (mm. 6). This lack of the color of raised mi imbues the selection with the referential sacred church character mentioned above. In second system, however, the popular idiom of *canzonetta* form also imbues the musical structure. The rhythmic impulses of the popular song then take precedence to form a balanced antecedent phrase to a consequent-like passage, while continuing with the sensation of prayer recitation. As the sensation of contemplative prayer climaxes, there is also a clear high point of sonority and meaning (mm. 10-11) with a broadening across all the voices as the ambitus stretches to a 12th. If we listen to word sound, there is modest text painting

pointing to both literal and internal concepts of “cielo” with “virtu” as the upper voices reach their ultimate peak. Prayer and singing are both self-referential in this laude, as “Canta l’alta virtu,” on the first stanza enacts singing itself. The music at this moment accentuated the ambitus, timbres and register of the various parts as the text depicts this literally on the final stanza “E tu con vari modi, Canta i suoi pregi, o mia più degna parte,” for instance. Taken together, the mixture of styles offers various points of entry for experience, to welcome opportunity for creating musical interest for merely listening to the popular stanzaic form, participating in the enactments of mental prayer address, or perhaps by praying to oneself in the presence of sound.

Tu più pura di me parte migliore

Tu più pura di me parte migliore.
Con vivo ardente zelo,
Del sommo Re del cielo;
Canta l'alta virtù l'eter no honore.

Intime del mio cor parti secrete,
Accompagnate il canto,
Che el sacro nome e santo,
Orna di lui, da cui lo spirto havete.

Sopra le stelle tien l'eccelsa e degna,
Sede, e lo scettro altiero,
Del suo divin oimpero,
Questo Sig.[nore] che sopra ogn’altro regna.

Opre de la sue mani in ogni parte,
Narrate le sue lodi,
E tu con vari modi,
Canta i suoi pregi, o mia più degna parte.

You, purer than the best parts of me
You, purest of the best parts of me.
With lively ardent zeal, of the highest King of heaven;
Sing high virtue and eternal honor.

[You] most intimate amongst my heart's secret parts,
Accompany the song,
That the sacred name is holy,
[That] Adorns [H]im, from whom you have spirit.

Above the stars hold the lofty and worthy,
Seat, and the haughty scepter,
Of his divine empire,
This Lord who is above any other.

Works of his hands in every place,
Tell his praises,
And you in various ways,
Sing his merits, oh, my most worthy part.

Hoggi che'el Padre eter

The third example from *Il Terzo libro* most exemplifies a more ornamented, or "learned" style within the gambut of simple music in the Oratorian laude style. Exhibiting some ornamentation, *Hoggi che'el Padre eter* (Figure 16) betrays the sensation of sheer sound in comparison to the others, especially to lay ears. This laude features artifice in moderation by drawing on both traditional and modern tastes. Although it is quite short, this laude would have been sung or listened to in for multiple verses, or possible performed several times by mobile instruments, and hummed along to by laypersons. The music is replete with textural and rhythmic interests through imitation and counterpoint, particularly through the alto voice.

Therefore, Morelli's characteristic chordality, or homophony is not an apt category to capture the textures heard in this selection, which are more strictly contrapuntal in nature.

Hoggi che'el Padre eter

Il Terzo libro 1588

Transcription
M. Chieffo

Example 7.
Modern transcription *Hoggi che'el Padre eter, Il Terzo libro*

Example 8.
Hoggi che'el Padre eter, Il Terzo libro, p. 11

Hoggi che'el Padre eter also features more instances of specific and overt text painting than the sensuous washes of sound heard in *Tu piu pura di me.* We hear expressive imitation and a tightened range with the reference to earthly existence, first between the basso and canto, which then diminishes to an interval of a third in the canto and alto on "Mezzo al terrestre" (mm. 7-8). The three voices deepen and descend in a combined tessitura harmonized quite low around C, on the reference to earthly ground. The distance between voices then abruptly expands to a full two-octaves on the laudatory phrase "onde s'adori" (waves of adoration), once again between the basso and canto voices. The intervallic relationship remains distended at the interval of a 12th (mm. 8-9). Although this episode of imitation and text painting is brief, the effect

created for the listener is deliberate and shares similarities with the level of artifice and expression of the style of the madrigal, or “madrigalisms” on the peninsula.

Hoggi ch’el Padre eterno

Hoggi che el Padre eterno
introduce il figliuolo
Mezzo al terrestre suolo onde s'adori

Tutti i celestri chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adornan lieti

Chi Maria Verginella
Saluta con diletto
Perché sente nel petto, nova gioia

Tutti i celesti chori
Volan'giuso alla china
El Re con la Reina adornan lieti

Cantan le belle squadre
Canto amoroso e pio
Gloria nel Ciel à Dio e in terra pace

Gode il fanciul, che giace
Vedendo il paradiso
Che per vedr suo viso in terra cala[282]

In this day the Eternal Father

In this day the Eternal Father
Introduces his Son on Earth
So that people may adore Him,

[282] The last sentence could read "che per veder suo viso in terra cala" that “he falls on earth in order to see his face.”

All the heavenly choirs
fly downward
And the King with the Queen gladly adore Him

Who Maria, Verginella
Greets them with delight
Because [she] feel[s] in the chest a new joy

All the heavenly choirs
fly downward
The King with the Queen gladly adore Him

The beautiful crews sing
A loving and pious song,
Glory in heaven to the Father and peace on earth

Happy/Pleased is the child who lies
watching heaven
In order to see his face (as he falls on earth/on Earth descends?)

Of the contents in *Il Terzo libro,* "Hoggi che el Padre eterno," integrates into the style and form a connection to the liturgy that would be sung by the full assembly, the responsorial, such as "adorno lieti" and "e in terra pace." Here Manni's poetry has a clear modeling in the text of the ceremony and solemnity of the liturgy with the responsorial form where a congregation would typically respond antiphonal style before the reading of the Gospel. A notable difference in the laude however, is that instead of the response phrases –"adorno lieti" –receiving a contrasting part of music, the psalmody is absorbed into the melodic shape of popular song. Once again the high and the low style are subtly sutured together, to create a middle ground as it were, not strictly of a singing style, but an interesting music for listening-participation. This elision musically on a cadential figure concludes the longer melodic phrase, for example, at

mm.10-11. In *Hoggi che* we even hear shorter rhythmic values enlivening the staid homorhythmic character of the church mode (hypomixolydian).[283] Therefore, the responsorial phrase actively transfigures the sacred into spiritual entertainment, by forcing the words familiar with a responsorial into the melodic shape of popular song.

Musical style and spiritual mediation

To conclude, the substance of the laude style is founded in its mixed style: the musical style itself evident of the ambiguity of sonic mediation. Layers of different referential sound bolster the possibilities for different modes of receptivity and facilitate the free organization of creative spiritual space by the listener-participant. Furthermore, the above analysis pulls into relief the ambiguity of what mediates *what*—sonic units of referential modality of liturgy and sociality, object, or act. The listener ultimately mediates the sacred, the liturgical, the mortal, and the embodiment of singing, or listening as praying. For the lay listener, existing with these sonic qualities in tensions with one another and the self constructs the laude not as organized music, per se, but instead as sound objects that invited multiple points of entry for engagement.

Let us return to Ancina from the section above. By 1599 whe Ancina published his *Tempio armonico* and preface, he was responding to a period of great plurality and variety of spiritual popular music after Trent, including the *travestimenti spirituali* that used preexisting melodies to set spiritual texts. As I have reinforced here through a close read of the laude, Neri's community of Oratorians were producing reform music of the same ilk and yet inherently different to the *travestimenti spirituali.* The overall style, or *maniera,* of the laude during the1580s actively embraced entertainment as inherent to personal transformations of sound into

[283] The plagal version of the mode was thought to be one of the favored ancient modes of early *cinquecento* ecclesiastics for its supposed power to evoke contrition in the hearts and souls of listeners. William Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History vol 3* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1988), 370.

spiritual value. Thus, the laude of the *Terzo libro* engaged the uninitiated listener by subtly transfiguring the sacred into entertainment and back again, actively transforming spiritual space, as well.

Inattentive Listening as a Spiritual Good: The Case for *Acedia*, or Boredom

To properly round out the analysis, we should also consider the external frameowork for listening stemming from lived reality of the genericness of sound in early modern Catholic lived experiences. We should also consider the possibility of ambivalence, or passive listening as inherent to the freedom and autonomy of lay spirituality and piety. At minimum, lay listeners were avoiding boredom through the passive consumption of music, either to achieve piety, or, alternatively, for entertainment. Frederick Hammond, in his in-depth study of the musical patronage of the Barberini in 16th-century Rome similarly remarks on Roman's comprehension of musics as "mere festive noise" used for various sacred festivals and devotions, writing,

> To judge from the chroniclers, it was necessary mainly to provide the right kind of music for each ritual; the quality of the music itself was immaterial…Why and how music was employed in a given situation, and what kinds of music—vocal, instrumental, sacred, secular, loud, soft—were performed are questions whose answers are pertinent to a social and historical inquiry. The aesthetic nature of these artifacts, although a preoccupation today, would have been largely irrelevant and often incomprehensible to the audiences for whom they were created.[284]

Indeed, the Oratorian's might have been optimistic about the payoff of their efforts. We can read

[284] Frederick Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII* (Yale University Press, 1994), xix.

Hammond's honest passage against the accounts mentioned above of more idealized, rapt or close listening in the Oratory.

Taking Hammond's work as a point of departure for further thinking then, could generic sound be a spiritual good? Religious scholar, Michael Raposa suggests that inattentiveness was likely the norm for the average listener, but it would seem the Oratory understood this and accepted boredom as central to spiritual life, and not as an absence of enough content or meaning, but instead a failure of interpretation of the content of ones experience.[285] Raposa suggests that prayer, as a patterned and habitual devotional object, can induce boredom. He examines the connection between boredom and habits of prayer, religious ritual, and meditative practices. Boredom can also have potentially useful effect on the listener to serve as an "information filter."[286] In sonic terms, too much signal—too much repetition (musical mnemonics, prayers, or litanies, can induce a listener's filters, so to speak. However, boredom in spiritual life is important. Raposa seems to suggest there is agency is boredom, as it involves *choosing* to be bored, as a "failure to attend" to spiritual information. Such negligence, Raposa writes, could be considered a sin of *acedia.* St. Thomas Aquinas, whose works were in Neri's personal library, defines acedia as a "joylessness, inappetence, a lack of interest in spiritual goods."[287] St. Aquinas' "lack of interest in spiritual goods" is particularly important, as the Oratorian reformers were concerned with using sound itself as a spiritual good.

Boredom, closely related to *acedia,* can be conceived as a kind of "semiotic breakdown" when its cause is judged to be a person's "inability to interpret meaningful information embodied

[285] Raposa, *Boredom and the Religious Imagination,* 110.
[286] Raposa, *Boredom,* 110-111.
[287] Ibid., 112.

in a given situation."[288] As discussed in the analyses above, the characteristics of the laude offer multiple points of entry into sound object and the materiality of sound perhaps falling between a musical style and the state of boredom. Indeed, Piejus similarly highlights the quality of "vagueness" that characterized the performances of laude, *vaghezza* as meaning a kind of charming vagueness, as if to suggest wandering. The musical style of Soto, learning from Animuccia and his peers, achieved an "intermediate status" between the *humilitas* of prayer and the pleasant wandering, or *vaghezza* of a modern aesthetic of the laude as sung by professional singers, but heard by lay listeners.[289] In contrast, Ledesma and the Jesuits seem to have been fearful of boredome or *vaghezza,* any kind of individual wandering through sounds. Their answer to this was *dottrina* books with step-by-step instructions for user or Jesuit teacher. This was though to ensure the listener would follow meaningful information parsed down to its simplest parts – to Aves and Pater Nosters, and Credos to mnemonic-like patterned sound. The semiotic breakdown is less likely.

This framework within which sound can be a calibration by boredom, acedia, and vaghezza for some spiritual or para-spiritual gain invites us to continue to consider and unlearn comprehensions of style outside a professional performer, applied music background. Furthermore, we can consider "style" as a broader realm of possibility inhabited by laity.

Listening beyond Ecclesiastical Mediation? The Individual and Spiritual Value

The reputation of the laude as simple music has obviated the study of the music for experiences in the time of its publication and dissemination to Roman public instead of as a piece

[288] Ibid., 113.
[289] Piejus, "*Musique et Devotion a Rome,*" 309.
"Elle conserve un statut intermediare entre *l'humilitas* de la priere et la *vaghezza* du concert, et joue sur une forme de delegation de parole, selon laquelle les musiciens professionnels sont devenus les porte-voix des fideles."

of evidence in broad style histories to place it has precursor to the musical genre of the oratorio. The emphasis of previous historiography by Smither on the invention of monody obviates a more pertinent consideration of what could have been deeper-rooted processes of lay spiritual listening and receptivity in early modern Catholicism. To this end, Morelli claims the legacy of Oratorian simplicity should be interpreted as a "sober and natural manner" that was diametrically opposed to the Jesuits' "artificial, intellectual style."[290] The style of simplicity and naturalness of the laude also forged a kind of relationship between to as part of an ethical and philosophical tradition of humility and a strong rejection of rhetorical elaboration.[291] At the same time the Oratorians rejected rhetoric and formulae for *Il Terzo libro*, they also appear to have purposefully absorbed and synthesized contemporary styles to create a new, mixed style of music.

Though the musical features varied, on the whole, the *Il terzo* collection comprises a mixed style that tempered layers of sounds for the ears of a diverse community without diminishing the mortal faculty of hearing through narrow or artificial formulae. Indeed, as Piejus had commented, the deep concern for reception on the part of the Oratorians in the last quarter of the *cinquecento* is the most original trait they offered, and is "the most important precondition for the development of Baroque aesthetics." Piejus's line of thinking returns us yet again to style history with a teleological element to it, but I agree with her that the Oratorians represent the "special attention given to the construction of a spiritual individual in contemporary pastoral care." [292] Rather than claim to know the constructedness of an individual or their spiritual subjectivity, I offer that the laude is a historical sound object situated by a generous conception

[290] Morelli, *Muovere,* 19
[291] Piejus, "Artistic Revival," 164.
[292] Piejus remarks that the Oratorians had a penchant for "measuring" the reactions of musical devotion. This interest extends back to Savonarola, and the tears of his followers, known as *piangioni,* or "blubberers" who excessively emoted during their public demonstrations in Florence. This became a sign of effectiveness. See "Artistic Revival," 168 - 170.

of musical style that is not teleological but synchronic, and which encompassed the uninitiated lay listener not as religious subject but as an active producer of spirituality. The style supported the potential to create more than one kind of catechistic knowledge through sound.

In closing, this Chapter has offered a new perspective on spiritual music in early modern Catholicism that could galvanize spiritualized experience outside, or adjacent to, ecclesiastical mediation. Embedded within the harmonic musical style of *Il Terzo libro* is the pleasurableness of tone colors and the sacredness of words that are concomitant with the body of the listener not as faithful ventriloquist of Christ, as much as a full participant in the making of their own spiritual value. Piejus notes how the Oratorians, in their music books and writings, probably overvalued singing over listening, as a collective embodiment of laity, and mode of expression shared by all.[293] The Oratorians were one of many new reform communities in post-Tridentine Rome. They were unique in their potential to use sound as an open-ended medium for spiritual listening. While the laude were intended by Neri to entice souls to salvation, this music nonetheless made early moderns susceptible to creative acts of listening beyond ecclesiastical mediation.

Although writing much later in the 20th century, the French philosopher Simone Weil, thought deeply about the nature of the sacred in a way that aligns with Neri's emphasis on the improvisatory catechism and mortality, discussed particularly in Chapter 1. Weil considers the sacred to be something loaded with content, almost as if the sacred is content itself.[294] Paolo Scarpi, in his study of the delimitations of the concept of the sacred cites the philosophical thought of Weil that the self, as an individual, mediates the sacred: "There is something sacred in every man. But it is not his person. It is not the human person either. It's him, that man, quite

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[293] Ibid., 164.
[294] Paolo Scarpi, "Delimitations of the Sacred," *Civilita e Religioni* 2 (2015-16), 13-44 (13).

simply."[295] And yet, she also writes, "What is sacred, far from being the person, is what, in a human being, is impersonal. All that is impersonal in man is sacred, and that alone [is sacred]."[296] In crafting a public music not as *travestimenti spiritualit,* or as didactic exercise but as wholly sound objects, the Oratorians's also crafted a version of the sacred that straddles two conceptions: the *impersonal* of musical style, and the personal consumption merely of sonic content itself to produce spiritual value.

[295] "il y a dans chaque homme quelque chose de sacre. Mais cen'est pas sa personne. Ce n'est pas non plus la personne humaine. C'est lui, cet homme, tout simplement."
[296] "Ce qui est sacre, bien loin que ce soit la personne, c'est ce qui, dans un etre humain, est impersonnel. Tout ce qui est impersonnel dans l'homme est sacre, et cela seul."

Chapter 4

Institutionalizing Silence

"Those who have recommended the singing of spiritual songs as part of the domestic rites of worship have not considered that by means of such a noisy (and precisely for that reason usually pharisaical) form of worship they have imposed a great inconvenience on the public or they have forced the neighborhood either to join in their singing or to give up their own train of thought."

- Immanuel Kant, Third Critique

A Visitor to the Oratory: Gregory Martin's Guidebook to Rome, 1581

In his 1581 guidebook to Rome, *Roma Sancta,* the English priest, Gregory Martin includes an entry under "Charitie of Rome," in which he describes the devotional exercises of the "Reformati" as an

> internal lifting up of the mind to God, and a still, secrete, and quiet meditation (with lippes and voice) of the joys of heaven, paines of Hell, [and] the miserie and vanitie of this life feedeth the mind exceedingly with comfortabe contemplations and warmer feeling of devotion...and so stirreth the mind toward God much more effectually to consider his benefittes […] more effectually I say and with greater devotion by this close and deepe consideration, then if a man should utter it in many wordes by vocal prayer, wherein there are greater and easier distractions.[297]

Here Martin provides a snapshot of the devotions of the young order of the Oratorians, who he refers to as the *Reformati* of Rome, formed a few years before his publication in 1575. Although there were several reform groups in Rome by the 1580s, including the Jesuits, this name was probably an acknowledgment of the way in which the Oratorians made public displays of

[297] Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta* (1581), ed. George Bruner Parks, (London, 1969), 210.

"Charitie" in part through older popular Christian practices involving lay Romans, particularly the singing of laude around the city.

The passage also shows how Martin was struck by *the Reformati's,* or Oratorian's, use of silent mental prayer to "stirreth the mind toward God." The use of both silent and external signs of prayer together intrigued Martin enough to include an entry on this new order shaping Rome's spiritual landscape. Through his entry we learn the Oratorians had integrated mental prayer, a monastic practice, into their usual devotional programs. Martin describes a "still secrete" meditation that used "lippes and voice." It might have occured to him that the Oratorians absorbed both the Augustinian and Aquinas conceptions of prayer as necessary to excite the mind internally, to both "speak in the heart" and "cry to the Lord with one's voice."[298] For instance, interior intensities could include the memory of sounds heard in past devotions, recalled in the mind during contemplation, that are as real and prominent as vocal devotions for communication with God.[299]

Filippo Neri's spiritual upbringing was in the San Marci Dominican monastery in Florence, and the group practiced silent prayer to facilitate internalist piety. The Oratorian laude similarly dealt with the sensory boundaries of song as something that could be orated to oneself and used in tandem with contemplative prayer. [300] The juxtaposition of sonic and silent tendencies suggests refined thresholds between the interior and exterior modalities of prayer that both had purpose in reformed spiritual practice.

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[298] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* "Whether prayer should be vocal," https://ccel.org/ccel/Aquinas/summa/summa.SS_Q83_A12.html.

[299] Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Ms. O.67 and O.57.

[300] Gioia Filocamo, "Bolognese 'Orations' Between Song and Silence: The *Laude* of the Confraternity of Santa Maria della Morte," *Confraternitas* 26 (2015): 3-17. Pamela Gravestock, "Comforting the Condemned and the Role of the Laude," in *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspective,* ed. Christopher Black (Ashgate, 2006).

Martin's passage also showcases the bias prominent in late medieval and early modern devotion against vocal prayer as a distraction from mentally connecting to God. This bias stems from a tradition of invectives by radical reformers in the late 15th century like Girolamo Savonarola, who was also educated in the monastic practice of contemplative prayer.[301] Savonarola had a fraught but powerful legacy as a great reformer to the Catholic masses who wanted religious freedom from the corrupt clergy in the Medici family in Florence. His concern for widespread spiritual health made him attractive as a chosen spiritual hero to Neri, who, like Savonarola before him, was also educated in the San Marco Dominican Order in Florence.

Silent Prayer and Listening types

Martin finishes the entry by noting the silent form of prayer is "much used in all Italy of contemplative men and is called *Meditation.* [italics original]."[302] Yet, what Martin's passage does not directly mention is the extent to which the Oratorians used vocal, or external, prayer in their public, devotions, as well. Early records show the members frequently combined oration with contemplation, one typically flowing into the other form of prayer, inducing or preparing the devout for the mental prayer.[303] The performance of both forms suggests a programmatic framework that accounts for prayer that is heard as well as thought. To this end, Martin is quite perceptive about comparing the two, *oratione mentale* and *oration vocale*; by adding a colorful preference for the silent type of devotion, Martin nonetheless figures silence and sound as two categorical types, or modes of spiritual production. From this categorical distinction, I offer there

[301] Girolamo Savonarola, *Trattato in difensione e commendazione dell'orazione mentale,* (Florence, 1492); Niccolo Ridolfi, *A Short Guide To Mental Prayer,* trans. Raymund Devas (Benzinger Brother, 1920).
[302] Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta,* 210.
[303] Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Manuscript O. 36, *Raccolte di diversi e canzonette spirituali compose dai primi padri della congreg. dell'orat.o di Roma et Emendate in varij Luoghi di propria mno Dal V. Giovenale. Ancina Prete della stessa cong.e E poi Vescovo di Saluzzo.*

are three types of listening at play. The first two can be identified from the above: The first is internalist listening. This type happens inside the body and operates similarly to monastic contemplation in which voices of supplication are heard in the prayerful individual's mind. Sounds are private, insofar as they are concealed from peers and not shared externally. The second type is what I will call verifiable listening. This is an external form of listening and is heard by both the individual and the group. The third is only inferred right now from Martin's passage and commentary, and is acousmatic listening, or de-visualized listening to a source either concealed or not seen. This third type incorporates the silence of internalist listening with the eternal display of verifiable listening to partially reveal acoustical presences to an audience of peers. It is less common but a potent mode of spiritual production in early modern Catholicism

I distinguish these types of listening in a historicist maneuver to clarify the entanglements of external and internal, and of personal and public in Oratorian spiritual production. The privileged place of silence as a material presence along a spectrum of sonic practices from sonorous vocality to internalist silence, serves as the core investigation of this chapter. Vocalization is not a foil to silent prayer; rather, they induce one another, but it is mental prayer that ultimately brings one closest to God. Importantly, silence as a material presence also substantiates formations of privacy and privatization of spiritual space. This extension of silence into the social and spiritual realms also includes the material condition of interiority in the Dominican tradition of *oration mentale,* in which the mind was kept replete with the sounds of one's prayers so as to ensure the impenetrability of the mind from Satan's messages.[304]

Legitimizing spiritual practices of sound and silence

[304] Girolamo Savonarola, *Trattato in difensione e commendazione dell'orazione mentale* (Antonio Miscomini: Florence, 1492).

In the previous chapter, I argued for the possibility of lay independence and religious creativity beyond, or adjacent to, the reach of ecclesiastical mediation.[305] I demonstrated how the history of the laude style should necessarily take into consideration the vestiges, and speculative possibilities, of lay experience. Along these lines, the conceptualization of the Oratorian laude as sound object brings to the fore the agency of open-ended listening by the lay individual to create spiritual value around, or adjacent to, the institution. I agree with Anne Piejus' conclusion that, above all, the laude show "special attention given to the construction of a spiritual individual in contemporary pastoral care." [306] Nonetheless, the laude as sound objects helped to support only the possibility—but not guarantee—of sincere faith and the potential to create more than one kind of catechistic knowledge.

Chiara Bertoglio and Paolo Prodi capture the ambiguity and multidimensionality inherent in the *oratorio* as an institution, as it was a physical and conceptual place in the late *cinquecento*. He goes so far as to speculate how the tendency toward intimacy posed a threat to the ecclesiastical, or institutional, dimension of faith. For Prodi, the oratory represented two fundamental realities: the *space* and the *time* of prayer. Spatially, the oratory marked a place that was adjacent to but not identical with the Catholic Church; it represented sacredness and spirituality, but it was not the locus of the liturgy:,

> "The Oratory, thus, represented a consequence of the Catholic Reformation focus on spirituality and piety; however, it was also an alternative to Trent's exclusive attention to liturgy, and to the latent risks of dualism inherent within the Council's perspective...[O]n

[305] Juame Aurell, *Medieval Self-Coronations: The History and Symbolism of a Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). I use "ecclesiastical mediation" borrowed from Aurell to mean the invisible reach of ecclesiastical power into spiritual spaces.

[306] Anne Piejus remarks that the Oratorians had a penchant for "measuring" the reactions of musical devotion. This interest extends back to Savonarola, and the tears of his followers, known as *piangioni,* or "blubberers" who excessively emoted during their public demonstrations in Florence. This became a sign of effectiveness. Anne Piejus, "Artistic Revival and Conquest of the Soul in Early Modern Rome." *Listening to Early Modern Catholicism: Perspectives from Musicology*, ed. Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone (Brill, 2017), 149-172 (168–170).

> the other hand, the spiritual experience of the individual tended to subjectivity and intimacy, and the ecclesiastical dimension of faith risked being dangerously downplayed." [307]

Prodi all but tells us that the Oratorians institutionalized not the liturgy as the locus of religion, but spirituality of an intimate kind. He reinforces the distinct duality of the oratory as spiritual space and physical architectural space. In either case, the holistic institution of the Oratorians was a separate entity from the Catholic Church's jurisdiction, and their import and religious power relied on the work of the Oratorians as a self-governed brotherhood to instantiate that power.

Indeed, Neri's oratory was first a social institution, without a physical locus, as Neri gathered fellow priests and other members in ad hoc spaces like choir lofts and personal quarters for much of the early 1570s, until they acquired the old Christian basilica of the Vallicelliana in 1575 from Pope Gregory XIII. Even then Neri continued his residencies at San Girolamo and held itinerate meetings. As incorporated members, the Oratorians actively mediated the social terms of spiritual value connected to the institutional space.

Silence as a medium of value

This chapter demonstrates that silence was a medium of value for personal and group spiritual transformation that became institutionalized by the Oratorians over the last decades of the 16th century. To this end, this chapter serves as complement to the previous analyses of poetic and musical sound to consummate the study of spiritual production as it entails at once of

[307] Chiara Bertoglio, *Reforming Music: Music and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century*De Gruyter: 2017), 491; See also Paolo Prodi, *Arte e pieta nella Chiesa Tridentina* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 48.

the social construction of sound, and in turn, of the exploitation of a spectrum of sounds including silence, to transform the mundane into spiritual, and sacred, space. Moreover, the present examination figures silence as a material presence echoing the importance of acoustic intimacy as part of the material and social foundations of the primo oratorio and Oratorian spirituality, established in Chapter 1. Music, as emblematic in the several editions of laude between 1570 and 1599, is only one way in which individualist spirituality circulated around the developing reform institution. As such, the early Oratorian community exploited a spectrum of sound to silence, including musical, vocal, mental, and transcendent modalities of sound. By now, we have begun to understand how the *oratorio della sera* was constructed socially and materially through various forms of sound and vocality—first as ad hoc meetings space, then as built prayer hall, and by 1640 fully-fledged architectural sacred building. Thus, the *oratorio* functioned as a sound object in its own right, a resonating vessel for modulating bodies that acoustically helped the Oratorians as reformers scaffold the materials of silence and sound, and sound in silence, to their advantage.

Experiences for the Oratorians could be organized, then, as the most acoustical to the least acoustical, or as sound in silence (the acousmate). On one level, the Oratorian's use of vocal and mental prayer was not unique as Loyola promoted mental prayer with his Spiritual Exercises. This set of exercises also taught one how to become more like Christ even, and thus had an imitative, or mimetic quality to them that I have demonstrated was not part of the Oratorian spiritual milieu; rather, it was more about the independence of experience. For such a musical order, silence takes precedence over sound in a hierarchy of value that creates spirituality itself. Sound leads to silence, but silence, then, is conjured by the memory of sound, as voice or as music; the two are outlined as part of the process. Silence does not exist without

sound.

I provide two *sections* of evidence, spanning early archival records from the 1570-80s, as well as primary sources of urban and built design that reveal silence as a medium of value for the Oratory as it was institutionalized between ca.1580-1640. In what follows I show how vocal and mental prayers are part of the unique foundation to Oratorian institutional history in support of silence as a material condition and medium of value.

First, by way of archival and primary evidence, I show that silence becomes materialized through architectural design and an attempt to control the propagation of sound in response to musical and non-musical noise surrounding the Vallicelliana and *Via de parione* (Figure 21 p.196) I posited in Chapter 1 that the intimate musical and spoken practices preformed the idea of the oratory before specific architectural or geographical criteria. *Oratorio* as a specified type of sacred architecture became gradually defined through the 1580s and 1590s, perhaps reaching its paradigmatic form with the opening in 1640 of the new oratory by Borromini, the *oratorio dei Filippini*.[308]

Second, following Prodi and Martin's observations above, I argue that the conditions of silence required for effective prayer laid the foundation for practices of interiority of the Oratory, practices that became legitimized through the body as a technology of religion outside, or adjacent to, ecclesiastical regulation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Oratorians notably abstained from extreme mortifications of the flesh like flagellation, yet their readiness to participate in the diminution of mortality is apparent in the ways they uphold pure notions of silence that emplace the voice of God ultimately as heard in the recesses of the mind through

[308] Joseph Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory: Style and Society* (MIT Press: 1980), 70-71.

extreme contemplation. *I ask what practices and values were legitimized through the constructedness of sound and silence.* What was validated as a shared practice in the institution through mediation of the individual producer of spirituality? For instance, modifying the body through the diminishment and aggrandizement of corporeal abilities became verified as a way to closer to God. Members of the Oratorians, including Ancina's brother, embraced disability of the body as a diminishment or loss of sight in a positive way. As demonstrated through various genres of archival evidence, blindness could be understood within the broader value of silence as necessary for spiritual transformations of the mundane that brought one closer to God. The material acoustic of silence in private spaces could open onto God's voice.

Catholicism reform as practices of mediation

Brigit Meyer offers that religion should be "approached as a practice of mediation between people and the divine (or more broadly: the realm beyond the empirically perceivable).[309] This could very well apply to the practice of the laude, and the practice of prayer to "stirreth the mind toward God," as Martin notes. But there is more to unpack with regard to how processes of religious mediation concretize social behaviors of spirituality. To build on Meyer's premise of religion as mediation, I add that the Oratorians demonstrate that religious mediation does not always involve the divine but first and foremost required the prerequisite of mediation with mundane, mortal conditions. This precept is exemplified in Neri's words and testaments, from the records, "per la [f]testa di San Filippo," as I paraphrase, states, that sage Architect of this great machine of the universe provokes with love the eyes of aging mortality

[309] Brigit Meyer, "Religious Sensations: Why Media, Aesthetics and Power Matter in the Study of Contemporary Religion," *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (2008): 704-723. See also Religion as Mediation, *Entangled Religions* 11 (2020). DOI: 10.13154/er.11.2020.8444 .

[gli occhi della iveca mortalita] so as to leave holy prodigious wonders aside to contemplate and yearn for God in the narrow stem of a simple plant.[310]

Mortal eyes, (*gli occhi mortali mondi)* play a particularly important role in the way members interpreted their mortality to imbue extraordinary value to silence and to achieving proximity to God through diminishing the body, exchanging sight for privileged presence in deep contemplative silence where God's voice may be "heard." Neri's mortal sensorium is repeatedly emphasized throughout the records in a seemingly contradictory trope of miraculous mundane. Neri, in his drastic humanity "lay" with eyes (*occhi del mondo)* not toward the celestial but to the "neglected and trampled world."[311] Valued above miracles in the early institutional records are the unmediated, direct experiences that transformed mundane existence. He was at once celebrated and emulated for his ability to practice his faith under the open skies, and live a life of humbleness before the natural wonders of God. Proof of God in the terrestrial world—not in at the "highest peak of spiritual mountains," but by first "deepening his thoughts in his own baseness."[312] In this way, Neri exemplified religion without the Church.

Investigating the social value of Oratorian sonic practices

In *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value,* David Graeber posits objects, and rituals, and performance as media of value.[313] Graeber's anthropological discourse points to ways objects can store value and exchanged and shared, and this applied to music and sound, as

[310] Biblio Vallicelliana, Ms.O.57 *Discorso diversi in Lode di S. Filippo con diverse orazioni,* 41.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Biblioteca Valliceliana, Ms.O. 57, p. 45 In lode della profondiss.a humilta di S. Filippo Neri: Non giunge mai su l'altizza de' Cieli, chi non profonda i suoi pensieri nelle proprie bassezze su quel monti' di gloria non poggia, e non chi parti dalle valli dell humilita. Non s'abrano i troni i d'oro la su nelle stire celesti, se non a chi giacque agli occhi del mondo negletto e conculcato.

[313] David, Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 74.

available media. In Catholicism, this most obviously points to the value inherent in objects believed to have sacred imminence, like a holy relic, shrine, or the Eucharistic Host. Graeber, by way of Victor Turner, claims we should attend to "the nature of the media through which social value is realized."[314] Following Graeber, then, by locating and identifying media of value, we can access a community's concerns for what religious life should entail. My contention is that the listener-participant creates value and thus has access to religious creativity by producing and storing value, and vice versa.

What if Graeber's formulation of social value is extended into the invisible formations of mediation I am discussing? Value also accounts for the invisible forms of mediation carried out through non-verbal and silent practices of individuals that contributed to generating spirituality that did not stop at the individual level, but needed to circulate in and through the institution.[315] Thus, we must also expand the definition of sound to include voice and music also into the realm of mental space, including *oratione mentale,* and even more indeterminate and silent still, of monastic contemplation. As an immaterial token, experiences of sound create the strong possibility of value being stored in the body of the devout.[316] For the value of something to be realized and amplified in any context, someone else must recognize it, or witness that value.[317]

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[314] Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value,* 78.
[315] Michael Lambek, "The value of (performative) acts," *HAU Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2013): 141-60. All media of value are not material tokens, particularly of the economic type, and Michael Lambek posits value can be preserved in immaterial ways
[316] Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*, 45; Along these lines, Graeber's view, by way of anthropologist, Nancy Munn, states that value is realized mainly in public, consummated through public performance and with an audience. "[T]hough Munn also notes that we are not talking about something that could occur in isolation [...] it [social value] can only happen through that importance being recognized by someone else." See also David Graeber, It Is Value That Brings Universes Into Being, *HAU Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2 (2013): 226.
[317] Graeber, *Theory of Value,* 75: "Value, then, is realized mainly in the public, communal sphere, in the forms of concrete circulating media of value—in part, the ceremonial valu-ables and roles...but mainly in the forms of access to the most prestigious forms of verbal performance in public (ritual and especially political) life: keening, formal oratory, chiefly chanting."

Taken together, value as personal and as public illuminates how the power of the Oratorian order resided in their ability to turn religious practices of intimacy into legitimized forms recognized by the Roman public and by themselves. In his work on Oratorian corporate patronage, Ian Verstegen considers the premise of sociologist Dave Elder-Vass that societies and institutions are not a concrete, material thing, yet they have "causal criterion of existence," asking, if society can have a causal power. This premise is helpful in considering something immaterial like sound and how it could be made into a kind of semi-durable thing of value, and of power. This premise is not outside the argument for religion as mediation, with music into power as a crucial transformation, akin to the Oratorians taking the Eucharistic transubstantiation and making it a daily, material act.[318] As Joseph Connors comments, in light of Animuccia praising the effects of music at the Valicella, the site "was a magnet that drew important guests, particularly cardinals and the entourage of the papal court."[319] To compare to the political sphere, it is not entirely self-evident why the reigning houses of the Medici in Florence, or the Barberini in Rome, needed an audible component or "conspicuous consumption" to their displays of power aside from the ability to instill something of value heard by the people that would reflect also back on their own institutional power to mobilize, perpetuate, and bolster that immaterial hegemony.

Architectural influences on the Oratorian's construction of silence

[318] Buonsignore Cacciaguerra, *Trattato della communion* (Rome 1557), and *Lettera sopra la frequentia della santissima comunione* (1568), essentially argued for the use of more frequent communion to build a closer relationship to laity. He promoted not only more frequent communion (*communion frequente*), as some Jesuits also did, but also daily communion (*comunione quotidiana).* See also *Storia della spiritualità italian,* Cinque a Seicento. L'epoca delle riforme e della Controriforma, "La Pieta Eucharistica," 352.
[319] Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory,* 72.

Paradoxically, consecrated space in Rome was both highly valued and rendered extraneous for the Oratorians. After conducting outdoor, itinerate pastoral gatherings for several years, the oratory as a fixed institutional location rose to power in the final quarter of the 16th century. This occurred during a competitive period of institutional urbanism, by which even seemingly unplanned parts of Rome were "usually planned around the interests of powerful individuals or institutions."[320]Although they did not have the reach of the Jesuits, who were more established in Rome, the Oratory did have the network from Neri's celebrity, the reputation of their musical pastoral work, and, above all, had been gifted an unlikely home, an old but significant Christian basilica, the Vallicelliana, on coveted land in eastern Rome close to the Tiber river bed.

Giovanni Ancina cites in the bass part to his collection, *Tempio armonico* of 1599, that the music is "for use in the private oratory of the Valicella...[from which] I cannot get away… or transport it elsewhere, except the [Sant'] Onofrio [Trastevere] and Rotunda [Pantheon]."[321] This comment attaching the music to a particular performance space, and especially to a private space contrasts with Animuccia touting the versatility of *Il Terzo libro* 1577, as appropriate for "special exercises that are held publicly on holidays, now in one, now in another part of Rome."[322] It is true that the intentions for the *Terzo libro* were more mobile, as the music perhaps offered a kind of musical clarity with the "simple" binary tunes suited for outdoor performances even in partially built spaces. These include recreations in some of the same spaces mentioned by

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[320] Joseph Connors, "Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism," *Romanisches Jahrbuch der Biblioteca Herziana* 25 (1989): 209-294, (209).

[321] "*per uso dell'oratorio privato di Vallicella, tal che non posso alienarsi né fuori trasportarsi altrove, eccetto la state a S. Onofrio et alla Rotonda*…"

[322] "estraordinarii esserciti che pubblicamente si fanno il giorno di festa, hor in una, hot in un'altra parte di Roma." Animuccia, *Il Terzo libro delle lauti spirituali* (Rome: Blado, 1577), Preface.

Ancina, the Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, or Pantheon (Figure 18), the San'Onofrio on the hills of Trastevere, as well as devotional walks to all the Seven Churches of Rome that Neri often lead by foot.

Figure 7. Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (the Pantheon) exterior portico, a chosen site for Ancina's *Tempio armonico,* where laude would be performed for the public,

Ancina's descriptor of privacy with regard to the oratory space invites the modern

historian to consider the meaning and importance of his notion of privacy as it relates to spiritual experience in the city. He may have simply been touting his publication in part to boast his work as a composer and collector of music attached to the Oratorian institution, evidenced in the title, *Tempio armonico,* or Harmonic Temple, so as to signal his own importance in Rome. Although Ancina's comment about the private oratory is also prescient of the Oratories in the 17th century, and their expensive construction of what would become the new church, or Chiesa nuova, accompanying living quarters and a new larger oratory, all designed by Francesco Borromini. These projects, culminating in 1650, effected to create the ideal conditions of both sound and silence, for the future of the institution.[323] This dimension of space related to Ancina's conception of himself in space, both idealizes and sets apart the institution of the Oratory and seems to reflect part of a history of privatization of experience.[324] If there was at times an eroding of conceptual boundaries between public and private worship, there also did not exist a sense of individual privacy in the modern sense, as early modern homes were porous with non-domestic spaces.[325] In extreme times of a plague of 1575 just before the publication of *Il Terzo libro,* and its uses in public, Cardinal Borromeo gave an injunction for devouts to remain at home and there sing together with neighbors litanies and songs resonating between walls. This suggests there were some boundaries to break, as Remi Chu writes this episode "erod[ed] the conceptual

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[323] Joseph Milton Lewine, *The Roman Church Interior 1527-1580,* identifies 7 "oratories" contemporaneous with or that predated Roman Oratory, however these simple rectangular structures were often treated as churches or the rectangular design used as a basis for a more formal church design. The Oratorians treated the Oratory as a separate special location as important to the church.

[324] For a history of privatization across early modern and modern, see Nick Davis, *Early Modern Writing and the Privatization of Experience* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). I take religious experience to be one in the same with all experience. Prayer could manipulate the scale and magnitude of what one heard, as part of the body as technology of religion, recalling sound historian Jonathan Sterne's idea of "audile techniques," or techniques of listening.

[325] Remi Chiu, "Singing in the Street and in the Home in the Time of Pestilence" 27-44, in *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy,* ed. Corry, Maya, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin; 2018.

boundaries between public and private worship."[326] In light of this, Ancina's comment nonetheless expressed his recognition of a particular fixed spatiality as a privileged experience stemming from monastic quiet, in a hyper urban environment. Ancina's attachment of his music to the oratorio exemplifies the needed for spatiality itself to be materialized, and thus legitimized as valuable and powerful.

Figure 8. Topographical Map of Rome, 1561 Giovanni Antonio Dosio, showing the concentration of urbanization in the eastern part of the city along the Tiber river, with Vatican further east across the river, lower right

[326] Remi Chiu, "Singing in the Street and in the Home in the Time of Pestilence," in *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy,* ed.Corry, Maya, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin, (Brill: 2019), 27-44 (40).

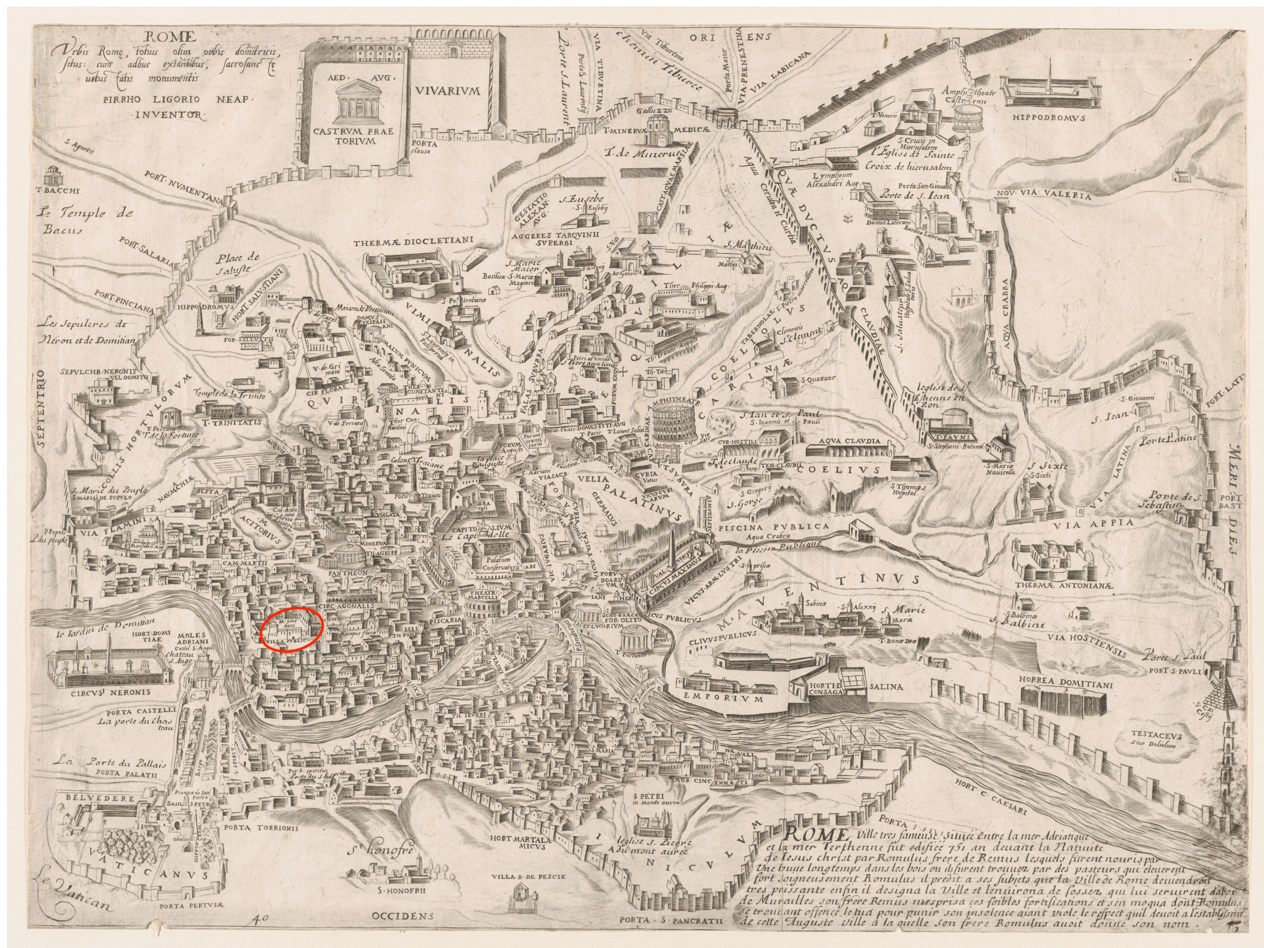

Figure 9. Map of Rome, 1575 Antonio Lafrefi, from *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*. Oratorian's Church of Vallicelliana in red circle to lower left, with the San Onofrio, where occasional laude were sung in crowd located at the bottom south east, in a more pastoral area near Janiculum Hill

The area of the Vallicelliana had always been densely population, as much of the urban development was along the Tiber River and Campus Martius areas (Figures 8 and 9). This is a unique factor in the building projects of the Oratory and how they negotiated with public space for performances while also needing to build in order sanction off coveted space for private spiritual activities. The services Gregory Martin attended for research on his guidebook would most likely have been held in the original structure of the old Church of the Vallicella or, possibly, in the original small oratory space that had poor isolation from the outside, as it opened

to the back onto the *Via di parione*, which was the main, noisy thoroughfare, opposite the open piazza.[327] (Figure 10) When Martin visited, the The Vallicelliana Church was still partially under new construction and the old oratory was smaller, dark and damp.[328] Despite these less than ideal conditions, the Oratorians worked with what spaces were available to perform private and public devotions.

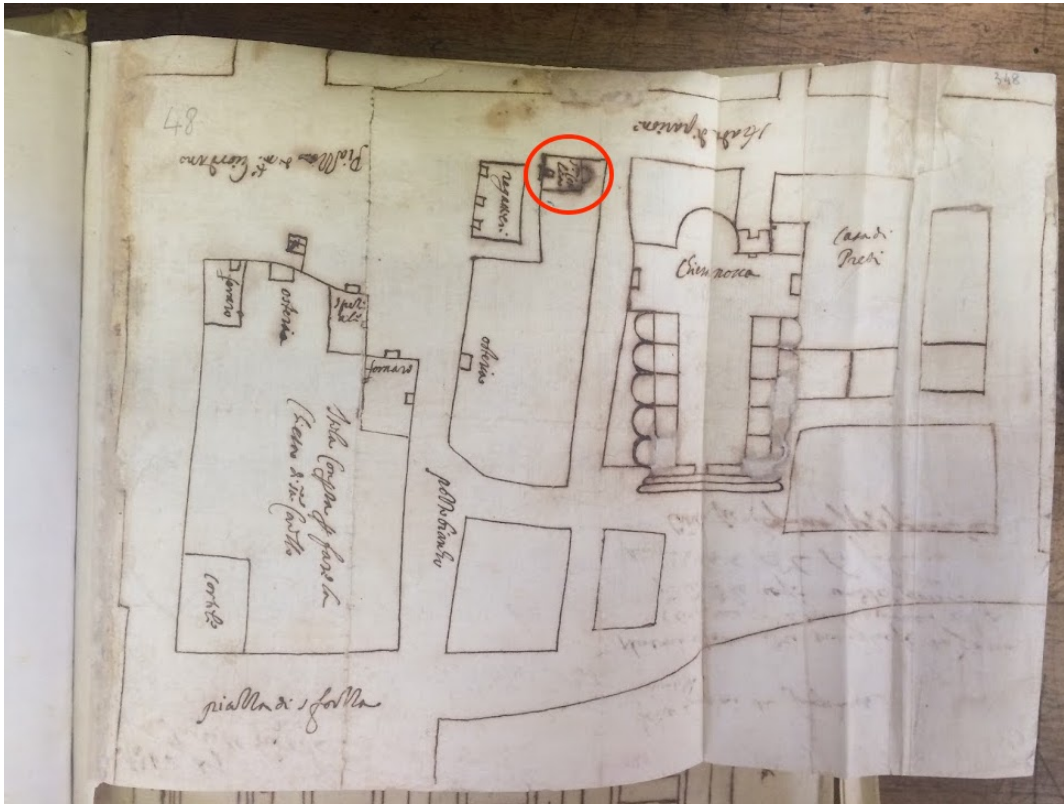

Figure 10. Biblioteca Vallicelliana, O.18, *Raccolta di vari setti e massime spirituali di s. Filippo Neri, de suoi compagni e d'altri.* Drawing of street plan of the old Valicella church and oratory. "Oratorio piccolo" circled in red, on the *Via di parone,* opposite the piazza.

[327] Jacob Hess, "Contributi alla Storia della Chies Nuova (S. Maria in Vallicelliana) *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in Onore di Mario Salmi,* ed. Valentino Martinelli Filippa M. Aliberti (De Luca Editore in Roma, 1961) 215-238; Downes, Borromini's Book: The 'Full Relation of the Building' of the Roman Oratory by Francesco Borromini and Virgilio Spada of the Oratory (Oblong Creative, 2010).
[328] Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory*, 9. The nave was covered with a temporary wood ceiling, and the oratory interior was "dark and damp."

The quality of the new rooms for the Oratorian membership built under Borromini's contract were described during the period in which they were built as a "mediocre grandezza" as they provided a psychological comfort as much as a physical comfort with the quiet and privacy provided by the thick walls and vaults that insulated rooms and protected them from external nuisances like moisture and noise.[329] Joseph Connors emphasized how advances in comfort and privacy made more headway within institutional architecture into the 17th century than did traditional palace design.[330] The Church of S. Maria in Vallicella and Casa dei Filippini together form one of the largest masses of construction in the Renaissance quarter of Rome. The final church and residential complex were quite expensive, and not finished in the 17th century. As Connors explains, the private rooms of the complex were carefully constructed to be impenetrable to sound. When the construction of the domestic complex started, the members continued to live in the *casa vecchia,* which was an agglomeration of old buildings "haphazardly adapted to their needs," as Connors notes.[331] Indeed, younger members saw the preexisting block as "a motley assortment of houses and shacks, full od a thousand degrading annoyances."[332] (The newer construction lines reveals the new privatized property lines draw over the old survey of the block, a kind of sociospatial *recte sentire,* or right thinking, straightening out the remnants of the preexisting neighborhood. See Figure 11.) The entrance doors to the new oratory and church were placed at the most inconvenient side of the building for pedestrians to keep out intruders, while wooden screes scaled the *loggie*, to prevent the circulation of people passing the

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[329] Connors, 67; Borromini, *Opus,* XV, 45r–47.
[330] Ibid., 67.
[331] Ibid, 11; Borromini *Opus,* I, 4r.
[332] Ibid., 11.

sacristy.[333] We also know the roof was outfitted for solitary prayer, particularly for Filippo Neri's use, and presumably because it was well above ground noise.[334]

Guidelines for church designs in the second half of the 16th century were largely codifications of preferences rather than initiators of reform.[335] A major document in this regard is the archbishop of Milan, S. Carlo Borromeo's the *Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae* of 1577. He provides the most comprehensive prescriptive writing on church and oratory in his treatise. Borromeo, a friend to Neri, was particularly concerned with parish churches, so he imagines ways to locate the church in a public place where people can congregate while also sanctioning the church space as apart from life. He writes that the church "be far removed from all noise which might cause disturbances to the divine offices. The church should be removed from all kinds of dirt, from stables, vegetable stalls, taverns[...]"[336] Borromeo communicates what I interpret as a basic material notion of sound as noise. He strongly communicated that all efforts of formal church design are to negate nuisances. Borromeo writes of noise in the same stroke of his pen as the inconvenience of dirt. His particular concern for achieving silence is reminiscent of the Council, to preserve the purity of the divine offices, physically away from commercial activity.

[333] Connors., 68; Borromini, *Opus,* IX, 33r.
[334] Ibid, 11.
[335] Marcia Hall and Nancy Coffelt, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in Maria Novella and Sta. Croce, 1565-1577* (Oxford: New York, 1976).
[336] Evelyn Carole Voelker, *Charles Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae* 1577. A Translation with Commentary and Analysis, (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1977), 35-6.

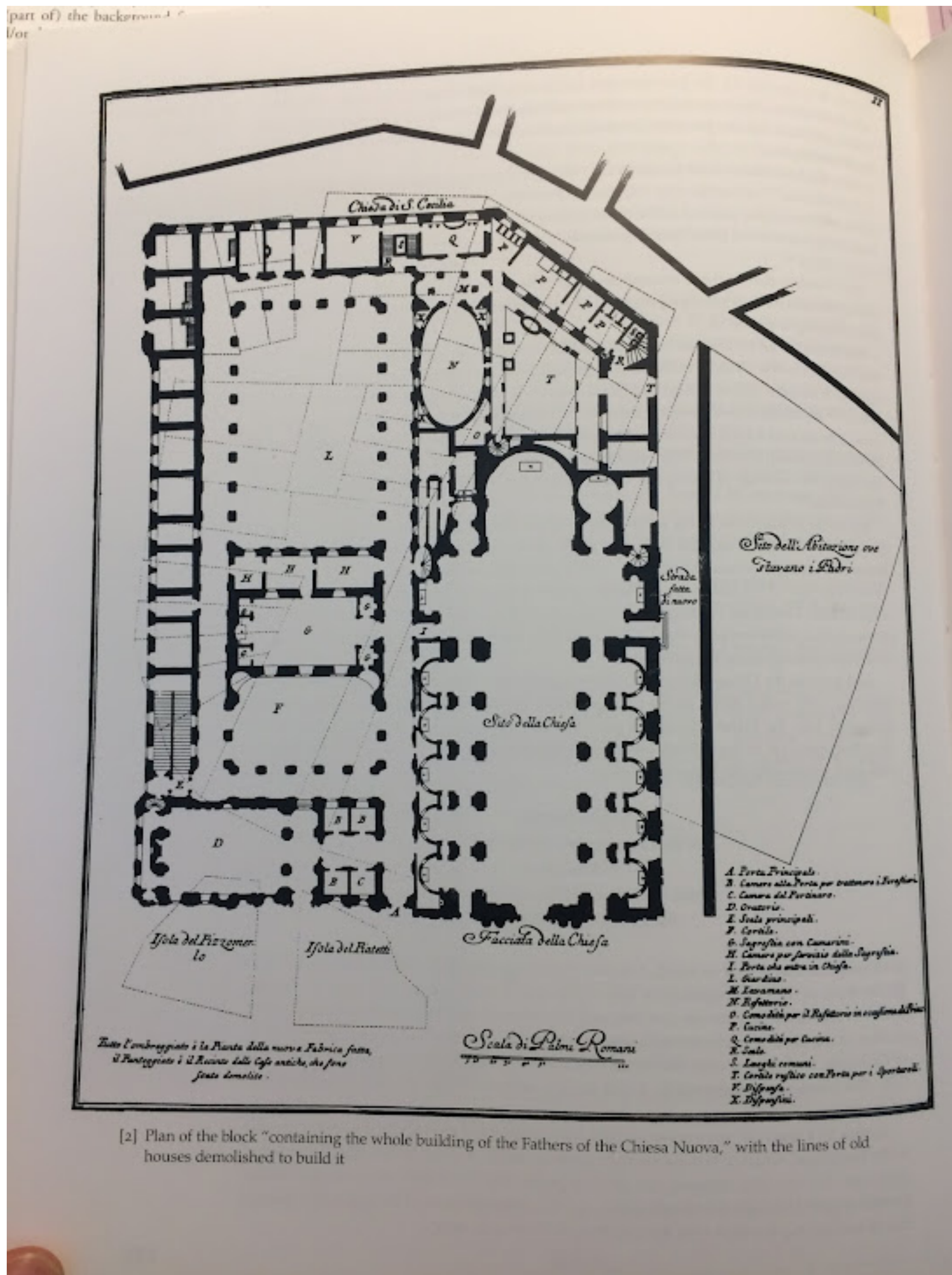

Figure 11. Image from Downes, *Borromini's Book: The 'Full Relation of the Building' of the Roman Oratory by Francesco Borromini and Virgilio Spada of the Oratory,* Plan of the entire block of the Chiesa Nuova and new oratory (lower left labeled "D"). Note the old parameters of the previous oratorio piccolo on the site of the Santa Maria in Vallicella can be seen in faint outline on a diagonal behind the new plans.

Prescriptions for quiet in domestic oratories

The value attached to quietude as an affective condition of (more or less) silent space seems to be an outgrowth of the *ad hoc*, intimate conversations and devotions of the earliest members during the 1550s and 1560s, discussed in Chapter 1. The *oratorio della sera* consisted of casual meetings in choir lofts and spaces of various churches, or small, personal quarters when available. The acquisition of more capital and thus toward institutional, built quiet space magnified what already existed: an idealized spiritual silence that, perhaps in a formulation that is complex because dialectial and reactionary to urbanization, transpired after decades of pastoral work as public outreach with loud musical gatherings. Before beginning construction of the new church and residential complex, Neri, gathered with his followers such as Cardinal Cesare Baronio, Cardinal Borromeo and Antonio Gallonio. Together they wrote in the early book of governance (*decreti),* that the members needed a "better oratory" to suit their needs. An elevated, private oratory now matched the Oratorian's collective desire also to "raise the tone" of the religious ceremonies and evening meetings.[337]

The physical design of the Chiesa Nuova and its residential complex also reflects a primary concern for control of the propagation of sound. As we see from the two figures above of architectural drawings, one from before the construction, and Borromini's official plans completed in 1650, there is a deliberate and drastic change to the nature of the site of the oratory. It was once along a trafficked street, the *Via di parone*, then was placed in a wide plaza away from the actual street with an entrance as prominent as the church entrance. In Borromini's final plans, the oratorio has an entrance at the same level and prominence as the entrance to the Chiesa

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[337] Arnaldo Morelli, *Il Tempio Armonico Musica nell'oratorio dei filippini in Roma 1575-1705* (Laaber-Verlag, 1991), 20.

Nuova. During the papacy of Pope Gregory XIII, the Jesuits and Oratorians had new, unprecedented control over interior church design and they could conceive of a detailed program for interiors.[338] By 1582, the Architect Martin Longhi had substantially rebuilt the Oratorians old Valicella Church, now referred to as the Chiesa Nuova, though it was essentially a nave covered with wooden ceiling for years.[339] As Joseph Connors has suggested, the designs were intended to help sustain quietude in more or less haphazard and noisy conditions, and may have been influenced at least ideologically by ecclesiastical scholarship of the time.

There was definitive precedent for prescriptions that an oratory space should be an almost-consecrated space, like a church. Borromeo, in the *Instructiones Fabricae* discusses different types of oratory spaces, "where mass is held" and where mass is not held, e.g., according to public and private usages. These spaces are presented along a hierarchy of sacredness of spaces among the Catholic community. Importantly, Borromeo contends the domestic oratory, as a worshipping space in the home, was corrupted and had become too casual.[340] The oratory for private devotion was an unsuitable space for spirituality as was also too continuous with domestic living and ordinary life.

It is also clear from Borromeo's writing that the quietude of a space was not standardized, though there was some ideal, even for those small, casual oratories for the home. Furthermore, Borromeo discusses the widespread abuses and problems of existing oratories that were not formally conceived to elevate the experience. In particular, the treatise attacked the use of semi-private oratories, a category seemingly encompassing the *oratorio della sera,* or *primo oratorio,*

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[338] Ian Verstegen, "Federico Barocci, Federico Borromeo, and the Oratorian Orbit," *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003): 56-87 (59).

[339] Connors, *Borromini and the Roman Oratory,* 9-10.
[340] Voelker, *Borromeo's Instructiones,* 378-79; 383.

of the Oratorians, who used the space for private and public devotions. Borromero takes issue with pre-existing spaces used as haphazard oratories for prayer and devotional activity.[341] He adds that the oratory should be large, and not a niche or a "hole," and it be entirely distinct from the house.[342] He also champions the revitalization of poor, dilapidated chapels one would finds "wayside" on the roads outside the cities. By the same token, Borromeo calls for Catholics to upkeep their domestic oratory spaces, and make them into something more respectful.

We can glean additional context for the oratory as an ideational and still mutable space in the 16th century from domestic treatises for quiet in the home. Part of how the Oratorians used their oratory space to institutionalize spirituality was to adhere both to domestic quiet and more public forms of built space together. Oratories were evidently used throughout the 16th century, and 17th in a much more informal ways. For example, the popular book, Giacomo Lanteri's *Della economica* from 1560*,* instructs that one attempt to divide the noisier parts of the house from quiet parts. The daily work noise should be kept toward the front of the house with guest rooms in the posterior, suggesting not only the preference for a quieter dwelling but a hierarchical sound design across domestic spaces.[343] The early *oratorio della sera* held in balconies of other churches and back rooms, crammed with members, bore resemblance to the function and soundscape of the domestic oratory.

In another later work, we see the later established value of the oratory space through published injunctions to make decorous, overall quiet spaces. For example, in Giovanni Nicolo Bandiera's Treatise on the Study of Women, the author conducts a criticism of the domestic

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[341] Ibid., 378-38*,*
[342] Ibid., 381.
[343] Giocomo Lanteri, "Della economica," 1560, accessed in AHRC Domestic Interiors Database, Record ID FD382 http://csdi.rca.ac.uk/didb/detail.php?ID=5795

oratory, albeit has an obvious gender bias. Bandiera, like Borromeo, is exasperated by the abuses of the oratory of the home. He tends to blame wives, but writes of his general concern that the home oratory is too easily turned into a theater, as a place to get drunk (*si ubbriacano*), and make merriment.[344] With Borromeo's *Instructiones Fabricae*, Lanteri's domestic treatise, and later cases, the desire for an absolute quiet, pure space provides insight into the how in the *cinquecento* the oratory becomes defined not just as a sacred architectural genre, but as a more pervasive historical object pertaining to the construction of a replicable practice of quiet and decorum.

To close, although there were clearly domestic and public oratories extant before Neri's company, Borromeo's views imply quiet and silence were qualities becoming synonymous with a space physically and socially removed from the domestic possibilities for devotion. Additionally, the intimacy of the *primo oratorio,* or *oratorio della sera* became a replicable quality of silence through the built environment as much as conceptions of how privileged members of the institution were mediating the space socially as active producers of spirituality of institutional space. Silence in this sense is not facile, but one of the material historical contingencies of religion. Silence was not absence of noise, like cleanliness was the absence of filth; it was a positive acoustical presence and part of the gradual sanctioning off of sound materially. Furthermore, as Connors makes clear, the church and living quarters was an incredibly expensive undertaking, especially by the standards of the time.[345] In this way, silence

[344] Giovanni Nicolo Bandiera, Trattato degli studi delle donne: in due parte, Venice: Francesco Pitteri, 1740: "perciocche l'avere domestici, che fanno parere devoti nell'Oratorio di casa, tengono sovente la corona in mano, e che poi scioperatamente, e da mali Cristiani vivono, son brigajuoli, alzano facilmente le mani, e si ubbriacano; e l'istesso, che mutare la propria casa in un teatro, e l'Oratorio in vera scena. Chi'l crederebbe?"

[345] The Vallicelliana complex, including church, oratory, and rectory, ended up being the most expensive project in Rome in the early 17th century. Connors notes, the project was more in line with the price of a

was expensive, and less capital meant less control over sound. In searching to "raise the tone" of the oratory, the members of Neri's company were in effect trying to control the propagation of acoustical silence and to shape the contingencies of that silence more in their favor, in order to privatize their brand of spirituality.

As evidenced by the changes to the architectural placement of the church and supporting opinions about proper decorum for devotional spaces such as Borromeo's stance on design, we have begin to trace silent experiences tied to monetary capital but that actually generated unbounded non-monetary, immaterial value—i.e., the value of the spiritual. Yet the Oratorians and Borromeo were not identical in their adoption of practices that ultimately constructed different material conditions for silence as a medium of value. For Borromeo, silence was a synonymous with a state of purity needed for the liturgy as an added value to sacred architecture, while for Neri's oratory, silence was already a surplus acoustical presence afforded to the body as a technology of religion.

Silence, Individual Piety and the Constructions of Transcendence

In the next sections, we will begin to trace the ways in which the Oratorian membership constructed silence as a medium of value as a privileged group value and at the level of the individual body that was not necessarily contingent upon consecrated space. The mobility and replicability of silence as carried in the body in memory and as an acoustic presence is emblematic of the body as a technology of religion. The body afforded believers the singular production and circulation of spiritual value as part of the social process of spirituality surrounding the institution. This fact connects back to the thesis I offered in the first chapter that

residential complex rather than a church complex, as they reached nearly 1 million scudi in spending.

Oratorian spirituality, broadly defined, was primarily based in the materiality of sonic propagation through the mortal body, and shared experiences of acoustic intimacy. The body as a technology of religion afforded replicable conditions for spiritual mediation associated with but not causal to church design.

To recapitulate, the middle chapters argued the most musical, external products of devotion of the Oratorian institution allowed for latitudes of freedom for lay spirituality. Now I investigate the concurrent institutionalized effects, as the interior, hidden ways in which the privileged members mediated themselves as agents of spiritual production inside the institutional space. Value theory reminds us that value is generated and circulated at multiple levels and through multiple channels, often recognized by a public or community. While the use of music and poetry in mostly public urban spaces accrued spiritual and arguably, political value for the institution, I suggest that the *idea* of the oratory, although rooted in Roman architecture, also extended beyond specific architectural and geographical criteria. As with the architectural shaping of sound control for the Vallicella complex, silence as a medium of value required private confirmations of its value as a medium as much as public. Silence figures as a positive presence rather than just a *negation* of sound and noise from without the church, or without the "space" of the mind.

Neri's piety embraced all the trappings of mortality including mortality's shortcomings as a technology of religion for the Oratorians. As an eventual canonized saint, his model of piety and behaviors of transcendence featured ecstatic and acousmatic hearing of sound, something only possible through the Oratorian construction of a kind of positive presence to silence rooted in the body. Again, aspects of the mental prayer tradition, silence is founded in the body not by its negation but instead by the construction of an immediacy and presence to silence as part of a

dialectic to external sound, or vocal prayer. Thus, the active participation of the bodies of individual believers helped produce silence as a medium of value as much as built space.

Sonifying prayer after Savonarola

Further context is required to frame Oratorian spirituality in a broader history of prayer forms observed by Gregory Martin, *mentale* and *vocale*. The Roman laude was connected to a widespread vocal prayer tradition that would also include the Jesuit's catechism songs. Within this broader prayer tradition, the laude were was the most sonified manifestation prayer and the most tolerated devotional form of the external cult that was believed by Savonarola to be for the more vain and shallow believers. Indeed, supporters of *oratione mentale*, stemming from contemplation in the Dominican monastery, believed any external, vocal prayer to be "a betrayal of the relationship with the Divine that is only genuine if it is entirely internalist."[346] The external cult, needed "external helps," or mechanized ways to pray. These included reciting from books, reciting dottrina, or saying formulaic prayers such as the Aves Maria, Credo, Pater Noster. Prayers could be interpolated into a program and recited after a priest speaks, thus "annexed into an extended system."[347]

An important distinction between the Dominican tradition of Savonarola and that of Neri is that the Oratorians did not forsake the external cult. Importantly, they advanced a dialectic relationship between prayer forms vocal and mental. Thus, Savonarola, Neri, and even Ancina justified the songful external quality of *laude* as they considered it the only acceptable form of

[346] Evelyn Tribble and Nicholas Keene, *Cognitive Ecologies and The History of Rememberin*g (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31.
[347] Ibid., 31.

the "exterior cult" of vocal devotions.[348] As much as he employed public song as the prophet of Florence, in his writings Savonarola, paradoxically deemed all vocal prayer as inferior and distracting. Anne Pieus rationalizes the quest for an ideal combination of external sound with this purer mental, or silent, devotion. She views the combination of simplicity of expression in music as offering a spiritual affinity with the individual. St. Thomas Aquinas directly inspired this combination, of spoken and mental prayer, in his celebrated pages of writing on vocal oration.[349] Aquinas' well-known work, the *Summa Theologica,* defended prayer as an acceptable exemplum for piety, as spoken prayer was founded in Christ's human perfection requiring a human response.[350] The laude pick up on this positive notion of the human sonic response by embracing the most productive mode of vocalic prayer: the invitation for an immediate human, and therefore imperfect, response rather than the more moralistic and didactic *exempla.* The tempered sound of the laude "mitigated the sharp and unqualified character of expression and the violence of the *exemplas*."[351] The laude were quite literally less exemplary as objects for devotion and piety than the medieval and early modern *exempla* (fables, often about the lives of saints) that a priest might incorporate into their gospel to guide laity toward faith and motivate them to live a moral life.

Whereas Savonarola considered laude to be one of the few acceptable vocal forms, Neri and his companions adopted a more permissive position. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter analyses, the laude successfully mediated the internal and external dimensions to the Catholic confession. This mediation crates an ambiguous hierarchy of which forms are most

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[348] Patrick Macey. *Bonfire Songs: Sonvarola's Musical Legacy* (Clarendon Press, 1988),. 91-97.
[349] Piejus, *Musique et Devotion,* 352.
[350] Corey Barnes, "Thomas Aquinas on Christ's Prayer," in *A History of Prayer,* ed. Roy Hammerling (Brill, 2008), 319-335.
[351] Piejus, 352.

pronounced when listening, among the among sacred and popular music styles and also among the generic markers of song and prayer. In his *Trattato in difensione e commendazione dell'orazione mentale* 1492, Savonarola excoriates the effects of recitation of vocal prayers, paternosters and psalms, on the grounds of their mechanical quality:

> This we see by direct experience: many men and women, reputed to be devout in spirit, have persevered for many years in vocal prayer and nonetheless they are the same as they were before. We see them to be lacking in spirit, lacking in discernment...always ready to chatter away, mostly about other people's business, making fun of others, mocking the simple and pure of heart.[352]

Vocal prayers, for Savonarola, do not accomplish enough mediating work, as the speaker remains unchanged, and, if anything, vocal prayer encourages more extraneous sound from one's mouth, recalling the complaints over the corporeal mouth by Ancina and Affinati's treatise, The Dumb Divine Speaker, wherein the mouth is posed as a problem. The mouth is emblematic of the period issue of sonic and corporeal mediation whereby too much empty noise and chatter was indecorous and distracting from pious thoughts.

Neri and company identified a way around this problem. They prioritized only part of the external cult of vocal devotions insofar as the mouth would emit voice and vocality with a natural force of immediacy and uncognized materiality of presence that would be received as the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the Gospel was known to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to move through the priest delivering words. Mechanical prayer, as Savonarola claimed,

[352] Translated in Giorgio Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy* (Taylor and Francis, 2016), 6.
"Questo vediamo per esperienzia chiara: che molti uomini e donne, do, mandati spirituali, sono perseverati molti anni nella orazione vocale e in queste cerimonie esteriore, e nientedimeno sono quel medesimo che prima. Noi gli veggiamo essere senza spirito, senza gusto, amatori delle cose terrene, sensuali nel vivere; cicalono vvolentieri e massimamente de'fatti d'altri, e fannosi beffe dell'altri, dileggiando li semplici e retti di core; non si compungono de'loro peccati; partigiani de' religiosi di diversi ordini; vanagloriosi, invidiosi e superbi, e piu duri di core che tutti gli altri uomini; portano loro la trave nell'occhio e vanno guardando la festuca del compagno."

never changed anyone materially and thus did not yield transformation spiritually. Recall the Holy Spirit changed Neri's physical heart, immediately.

That immediacy became a legitimized practice of the oratory is illustrated in a letter from 1588 from the Oratorian, Nicolo Gigli, on behalf of his spiritual Father Neri, to a familial noble. They reminisce on the simple characteristics of vocal devotions used in the early *oratorio della sera,* which was held in the neighboring rooms of the San Girolamo, now nearly three decades ago:

> The Father [Neri] and the other priests, when they heard that your lordship had been speaking there 'on the book,' in accordance with the ancient use of the Oratory, when they did so *in spirit et overstate et simplicitate cordis,* and when they left the field to the Holy Spirit, that He might infuse His power into the mouth of the speaker, without all that profound study, that premeditation, that analyses of authors of all kinds, scholastic, scripturalist, and positive, such as the "Sorbonnists" are wont to employ. It may be that it would be well and to the purpose to act in a like manner here; and if they tell me that today is no longer the time for such simplicity, and that one must walk with a more elegant gait, well, I have nothing to reply. Who knows? Perhaps they will prove it to me. Let us admit that they are right! But that I can say is this: in my opinion, those days of simplicity, so to call them, did not produce less fruit than our own days. I say that there was then more of fire in the tongues of the speakers, and that therefore conversions were made[.][353]

Gigli refers to the original oratory meetings and reminisces on the use of speech and vocal devotions with an immediate, improvisational quality that were falling out of favor for formal, learned techniques. He desires for a return of heart-based spirituality tied to Divine Grace of the Holy Spirit, as he continues,

What, then, do we need? Fire, faith, and iron: fire to inflame the heart of the speaker,

[353] Ponnelle Louis, and Louis Bordet, *St. Philip Neri and the Roman Society of his Times 1515-1595* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932), 203-204; A.R., Oratorian archives, letter Dec 23, 1588

> faith to convince us that He that gave the spirit in those days will give it still today, iron to shape our wills and to establish us in holy obedience to Him, who, for years and years, has guided us, and let us pray the Lord that he may yet guide us for years and years to come, in the unity of the Holy Spirit! Amen."[354]

This passage suggests that early Oratorian reformers valued religious mediation itself if it felt *unmediated* and direct, like Divine Grace. Mediation between the body, the sounds it emitted and the construction of the listener were operations of spiritual production and the result of the body as a technology of religion. Within this type of reformed spiritual production there was no place for intellectualism and formalized, pre-meditated oration, represented by Gigli's reference to the Sorbonnists. The same bias would have held against the *eloquentia perfecta* rhetoric of the Jesuits who were standardizing their curriculum culminating in the publication of the *Ratio Studiorum* in 1599.[355] Gigli's repeated mention of "simplicity" with regard to vocal immediacy thus represents a competing form of mediation in Rome to the pre-meditated practices of Jesuit and papal orators.

Oratorian rubric for mental prayer: Niccolo Ridolfi's *A Short Method of Mental Prayer*

However, mediation among spiritual individuals had limitations, and the way Oratorians dealt with mediation exploits a specific thread in the silent prayer tradition, or *oratione mentale.* First and foremost, silent prayer helped establish a privileged relationship with the self. A silent mind placed one in the best position for effective and productive communication with God. This personal relationship stands in opposition to sound, including also the liturgy, the symbolic "Word of God." Mental prayer was important to the establishment of silence as a medium of value because it necessarily placed the site of value in the individual. Thus, silence and silent

[354] Ibid.

[355] Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer*, 13.

hearing produced another kind of replicable condition for mediation. One required quiet to pray and become close to God.

For example, the Cardinal Gasparo Contarini's remarks from his *De modo praedicandi* 1539, which was more of a homiletic, or preaching, handbook than a prayer treatise; however, his remarks on vocal devotional forms provide one link between Savonarola's late 15th century opinions against vocality, and Neri's late 16th-century Roman Oratory. He excoriates the external cult of the Lutheran persuasion, in a similar way to Savonarola before him:

> Take away the [Lutheran] pride, take away this arrogance, and everywhere there will be peace, everywhere concord... Deceived by cunning of Satan and puffed up with swelled heads, They have begun to entangle the minds of their listeners with certain questions, and finally have begun to wage war against themselves.[356]

Contarini writes, in an almost comical manner, on the physicalized, negative effects on the mind of Lutheran listeners. Their overfilled, "swelled heads" obviated a productive relationship with oneself in quiet that ultimately would extend a relationship with God.

The Oratorian Father Niccolo Ridolfi composed a short method of mental prayer that is perhaps our most formalized record of Oratorian mental prayer. Ridolfi was a Dominican, like Neri, Razzi, and Savonarola before them. Neri served as Ridolfi's spiritual father in Rome before the former's death.[357] Composed sometime in the early to mid 17th century (Ridolfi's death 1650), the method book instructs one intimately on how to place oneself in the presence of God.[358] The Oratorian method centered on the creation of a meaningful relationship with God

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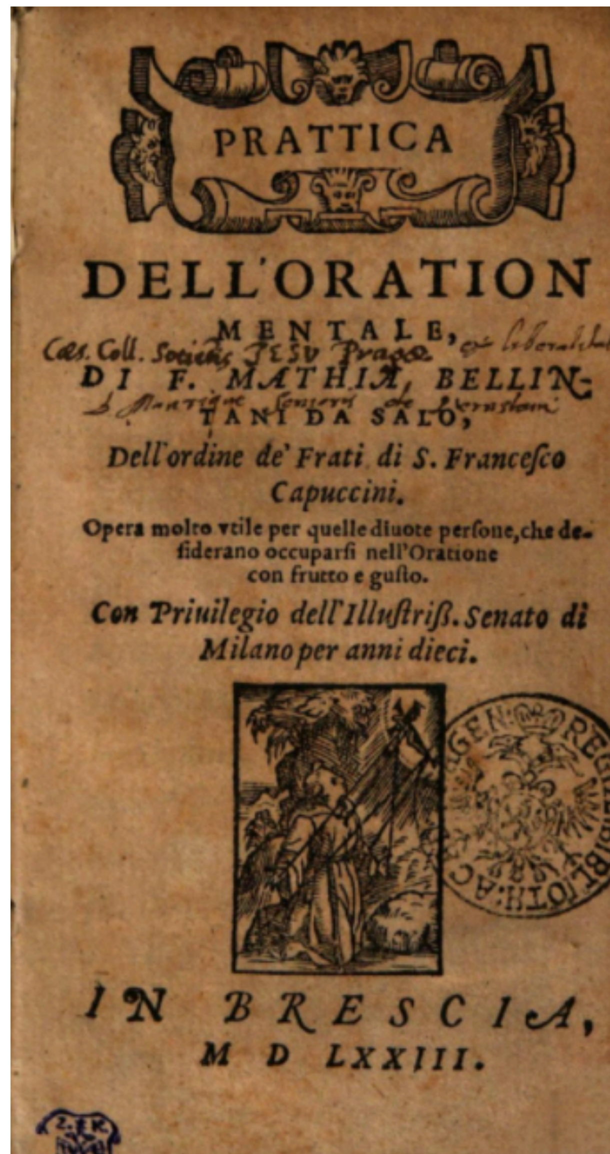
[356] Gasparo Contarini, *De modo praedicandi* 1539, 306; McGinness, Frederick J. *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Princeton University Press, 1995), 42.
[357] Nicholas Ridolfi, *A Short Method of Mental Prayer,* trans. Father Raymund Devas (London: 1920).
[358] Other publications offered precedence outside the Oratorian milieu, such as Alessio Porri's (a Venetian exorcist) *Practica dell'Oration mentale* 1592 which conveys why God allows the Devil to take

that entailed placing oneself in His presence. Ridolfi's adoption from Dominican monastic practice of a three-part method—Preparation, Body of the Prayer, Resolution —establishes for the devout a way to create a productive relationship with the spiritual self that accounts for the preservation of free will. The Resolution made at the end of mental prayer is that the devout actively practice humility and diminish private judgment and a sense of self as will.[359]

This formulation sets an important distinction from the Capuchin method for mental prayer that was focused on achieving a complete union with God in contemplation as the final outcome. This latter basis for the Capuchin approach to *oratione mentale* is explained in the friar, Mattia Bellintani's *Prattica dell'orazione mentale* 1573 (Figure 12) in the section, *Degli effetti dell'amor beaticico e delle varie unioni nel beato,* in which Bellintani writes "in achieving union the will does not actually take possession of God himself, but rather God takes over the will."[360] The height of spiritual productivity for the Capuchins, is to enmesh in what Bellintani writes is the "love and annihilation" of all through this dissolution of the will.

possession of a human subject, as the Devil is nefarious and manipulates the *corpus Christianum.*

[359] Ridolfi, *A Short Method of Mental Prayer,* 77.
[360] Mattia Bellintani, *Prattica dell'orazione mentale overo contemplativa* (Brescia: per Sabbio, 1573), 187.



PRATTICA

DELL'ORATION

MENTALE,

DI F. MATHIA, BELLIN-

TANI DA SALO,

Dell'ordine de' Frati di S. Francesco

Capuccini.

Opera molto vtile per quelle diuote persone, che desiderano occuparsi nell'Oratione con frutto e gusto.

Con Priuilegio dell'Illustriss. Senato di Milano per anni dieci.

IN BRESCIA,

M D LXXIII.

Figure 12.

Mattia Bellintani, *Prattica dell'orazione mentale* Brescia: per Sabbio 1573, Digitized National Library Czech Republic. The cover features an emblem of mimetic piety, and features an engraving of a devout with arms stretched in supplicaton with tethers connecting their hands and chest to the vision of the crucifixion. The emphasis of the image of mental prayer is the suffering of Christ on the cross.

A crucial aspect of mental prayer that may seem paradoxical is its deeply sonic quality. For Ridolfi the climactic moments of silent prayer are full of sound to accompany imagistic presences. Like listening to the laude, the seemingly silent manifestation of prayer relies on the faculty of interior hearing and imagining on the part of the individual who is praying. Ridolfi,

describes the “highest and most divine” way of putting oneself in the presence of God as a union with the soul. However, Ridolfi’s pious union with God, unlike the Capuchin Bellintani’s union, is based on the agency of the individual as the will for charity and humility. Ridolfi explores other avenues to achieve—conjure, even—the presence of God that arise from the individual exercising their interior faculties of hearing and seeing. The first step of the Preparation phase—and the best way to place oneself in the presence of God—is to fill oneself with thoughts of God’s presence in all things, and to imagine his human form “as he conversed among men.”[361] Another way is to consider exclusively in the mind the Divine Word, and yet another was to occupy the mind by “representing Him as passing before our eyes, and by attentively fixing the eyes of the soul upon His Sacred Person.”[362] Ridolfi vividly paints a scenario in which the devout moves themselves toward God, in part through silent hearing: “You who dost call me to Thyself and Who dost though sweetly rouse me, I come to Thee, my Lord, to hear Thy voice.”[363] Ridolfi continues in “An example of Putting Oneself in the Presence of God”, and providing an example of a kind of silent ejaculatory prayer, “What amazing blindness of heart! Though seest me without ceasing, and I, nevertheless, do not see Thee; thou art continually and most intimately present with me.”[364]

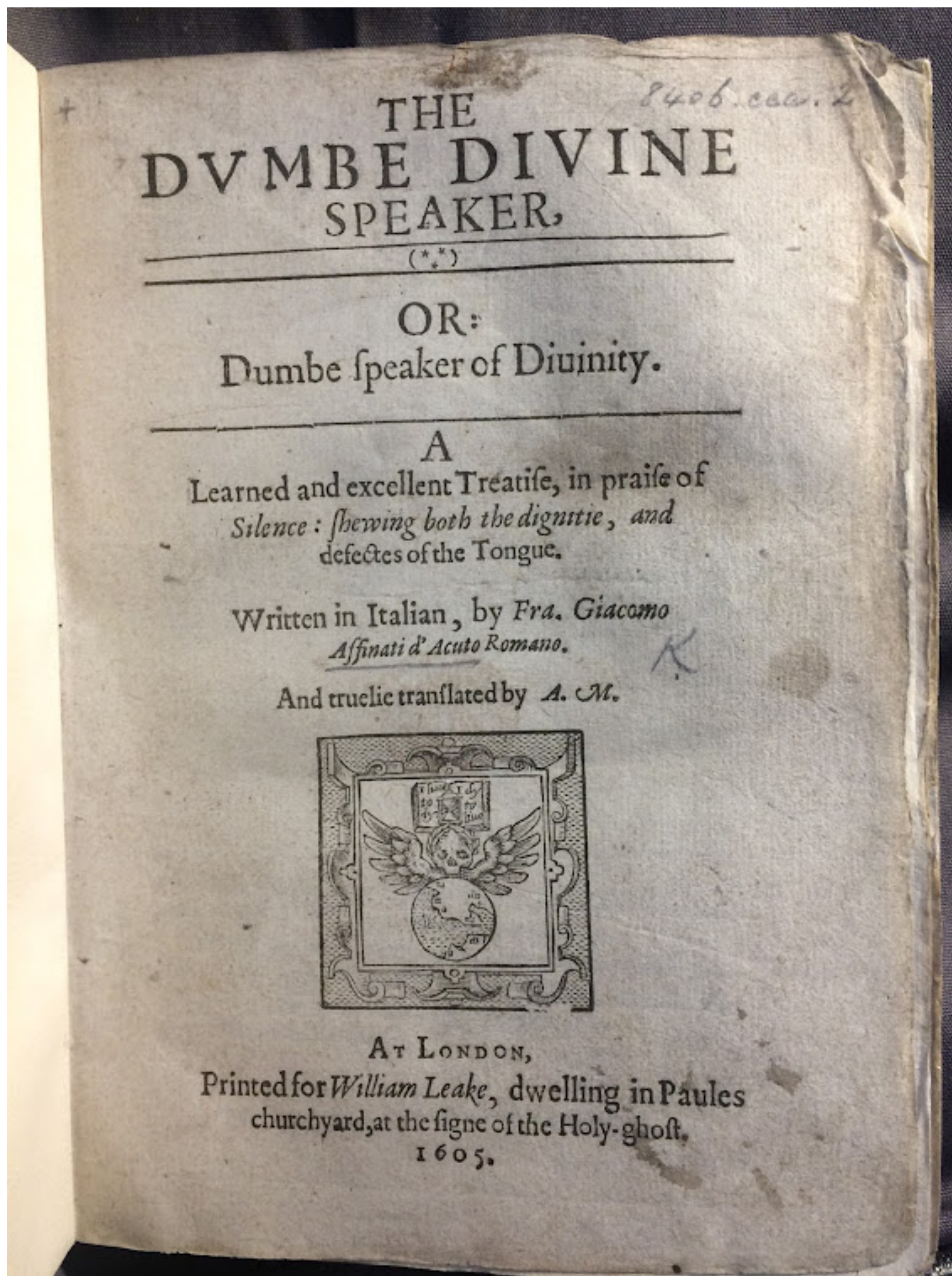
The Oratorian method for *oratione mentale* relies on a more modern ideal, privatized, and absolute, type of silence than the Dominican tradition of “secret” prayer. The original Dominican form entailed the dissimulation of thoughts in prayer, though it was not a separate process from other forms of liturgical and devotional life. Secret prayer was an act continuous with the liturgy in that St. Dominic often performed spontaneous secret prayer to himself while in public during

[361] Ridolfi, *A Short Method,* 13.
[362] Ridolfi, 17-18.
[363] Ibid., 24.
[364] Ibid., 22

the liturgy.[365] The construction *oratione mentale* in the Oratorian institution incorporates both civic notions of holding one's tongue in public and the Dominican brand of "affective love that augments the efficacy of prayer."[366] Recall Ancina's critique of modern devotes for whom the same mouth that prays and received communion is also the mouth that sings and speaks filth. This modern genealogy of silence is further evidenced by a direct intellectual connection between Serafino Razzi, collector of the *Primo libro delle laude spirituali* (1563), and Giacamo Affinati. Affinati's treatise, The Dumbe Divine Speaker (*Il muto che parla*) has a direct link not only to the institutional presence the early Oratorians in Rome, but also to the expansion of the reform order soon after in London (Figures 24 and 25). Razzi, as a follower of Savonarola, had a strong predilection for meditative prayer, and himself was a priest of the Ordo Praedicatorum, or Dominican order, in Florence.

Taken altogether, the institution formed replicable behaviors of listening and silence in Rome that collectively pushed the practice of Oratorian mental prayer toward a privatized acoustical silence. The establishment of this virtual private space from which anyone could enter if they participated in the practice helped to strengthen the power and influence of the Oratory as an institution on a widespread level.

[365] Antolin Gonzalez Fuentes, O.P., "From 'Secret Prayer' to Meditation," trans. Tomás Martín Rosado, O.P., *Dominicana* 55, no 1 (2012): 90-107.
[366] Fuente, "From Secret Prayer to Meditation" 94.



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THE
DVMBE DIVINE
SPEAKER,

(*,*)

OR:
Dumbe ſpeaker of Diuinity.

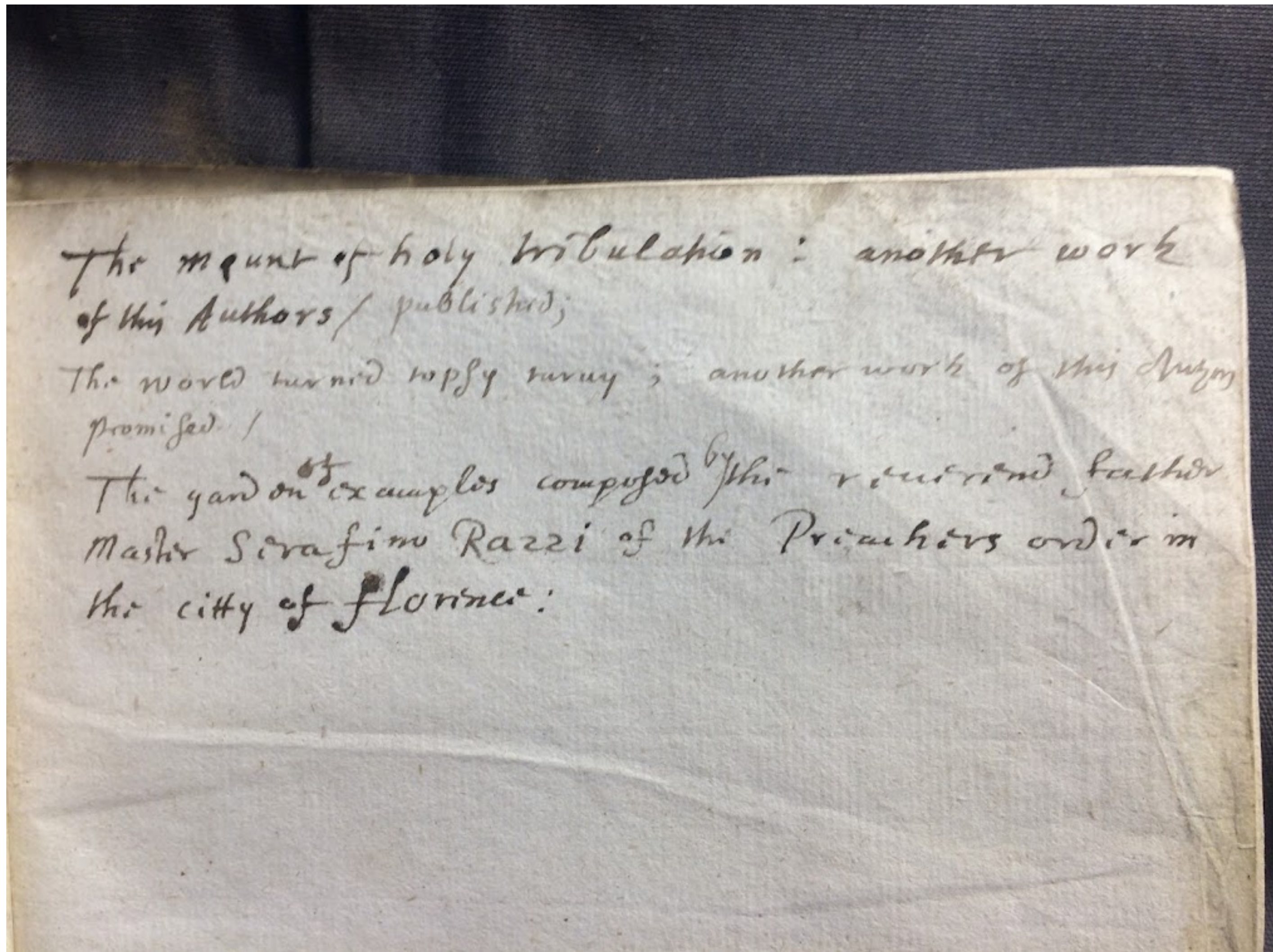
A
Learned and excellent Treatiſe, in praiſe of
Silence: ſhewing both the dignitie, and
defectes of the Tongue.

Written in Italian, by *Fra. Giacomo*
Affinati d'Acuto Romano.

And truelie tranſlated by *A. M.*

AT LONDON,
Printed for *William Leake*, dwelling in Paules
churchyard, at the ſigne of the Holy-ghoſt.
1605.

Figure 13.
The Dumbe Divine Speaker, 1605 BL copy, probably London Oratory, "Silence: shewing both the dignitie, and defectes of the Tongue"



The mount of holy tribulation : another work
of this Authors / published;
The world turned topsy turvy ; another work of this Authors
promised /
The garden of examples composed by the reverend father
Master Serafino Razzi of the Preachers order in
the citty of Florence:

Figure 14.
Back of British Library copy lists two other titles written by Affinati, followed by a note, "These [and other] examples composed [for] the reverend father Master Serafino Razzi of the Praedicatorum order (Dominicans) in the city of Florence."

Transformations of physical and mental space in the *oratorio della sera*

The inner circle of members of the Oratorian order also modified space to create a sense of private silence in the oratory. Group records and personal accounts illustrate how individuals

transformed ordinary space into a sacred space. The ability to convert ordinary reality was possible by harnessing both the interior and external prayer forms. And the modalities of privileged hearing associated with mental prayer also became central to privatizing group devotions. A personal note in the O.57 folio records notes the use of the oratory for mental prayer:

> The way in which there are in the evening all year this sign with the bell, the lamp lit. And I can place the hourglass on the altar on its side in order to practice mental prayer and stop counting time... and say the usual litanies of the saints [.][367]

Under section, *Ordine e Costituzioni da oservarsi nell'oratorio,* a diary record provides an intimate glimpse into the ways the *oratorio piccolo,* or old oratory adjacent to the transept of the Santa Maria in Vallicella (see Figure 10 above), could be transformed into space of optimal privacy and quietude, a jewel box of spirituality:

> After the mental hour & oratione the disciplines are distributed, the children should be sent out of the oratory, the doors and windows are closed and only a lantern is lit above the altar, which does not light up the sermon books which [...] shows the image of Crucifix. All the lights should be extinguished and we start with the priest in a clear [...] voice.[368]

This scene describes the oratory space transitioning between a diverse prayer program into solemn evening devotions. The space is modified in anticipation of a voice and also changed

[367] Biblioteca Vallicelliana O.57, 236, Il modo in cui ci sono la sera tutto l'anno e questo cartello con la campana, la lampada accesa e qualche demi? E posso mettere in ginocchio l'orologio di polvere sopra l'altare per fare mere ore di orazione mentale, su questo firma e accese l'a... dicono le solite littanie desanti il sabato che si dicono quelle della Vergine Maria con il seguente prece et orationi, e quando i sacerdoti a cui tocca l'oro secondo la sua settimana dicono l'oratione deus a quo santa desideri poi degli aiutanti che hanno l'ufficio dei sacrestani traggano dall'altare i quadetti detti pace

[368] O.57, 236, Dopo ... la nell'hora & oratione mentale si disribuiscano le discipline si mandano fuori dell'oratorio i figlioli, si chiudano le porte e le fenestre et acceso solo un lanternone sopra l'altare, il quali non risplende sernon quanto mostra un Imagine di Crucifisso, si spengano tutt'i lumi e si comincia dal sacerdote con voce chiara e pictosa.

response to that priest's voice modifying the space in turn. After contemplation, the process of preparing the space for service or exercises becomes the extension, the social and physical recognition of the value inherent in the *oratione mentale* process that required diminishing the senses to place oneself in a divine presence. The modification of the old oratory space then becomes special because it ensures the acoustical amplification of silence before anything else. In the oratory silence was not achieved by the mere absence of sound. It was a vital presences that converted otherwise ordinary conditions for sensing into privileged spaces for the *emplacement* of voice.

The solemn devotions thus featured the priest's clear voice as a virtual experience of being in the presence of God's voice discerned from a dark resonating material medium of silence. This *sui generis* acoustic was something simple rectangular oratory rooms could achieve whereas the Vatican chapel actually failed at achieving the same acoustically, as it was reported the sheer size of the chapel was boomy, with the vaulted ceilings making it difficult for the preacher's voice to carry.[369]

Together, Ridolfi's method book, Affinati's influence on the expanding of the Oratory practices in Europe, and the descriptive institutional records demarcate one trajectory of mental prayer in early modern Catholicism that prioritized silence as an affordance of the body and as an affordance of acoustic space. The Oratorians adopted and further developed particular aspects of silent prayer that establish silence as a medium of value. The privatization of acoustic silence as *sound-in-silence* allowed individuals to experience a union with God's presence, as in the method for mental prayer. Crucially, solemn devotions created value by using internalist, or

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[369] McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory*, 71-72. The speaker needed to avoid a *quasi cantando* voice: "he should not use a voice too sing-song or too elevated because [setting?] easily carried into the vaults of the chapel it will echo rather than strike the ears of the listeners."

interior personal listening, in tandem with verifiable listening, as a tuning into the external presence of the acoustic profile of the oratory space. Taken together within the group spirituality of the institution, this union of interior and exterior listening transformed ordinary conditions into spiritual value through a sonic communion: the priest's voice was a virtual stand-in for God's voice that only unfolded from the most silent, interior state.

The Construction of Transcendence

As an outgrowth of the built and material conditions of silence as a medium of value, the body also afforded extreme modifications to minimize and maximalize its presence in the social participation of religion. In particular, the body as a technology afforded the believer the diminution of sight and lucidity in support of bolstering, or maximizing, faculties of hearing and listening. The private records of the archive, some used in Neri's canonization proceedings, reveal a strategic diminution of the sense of sight in service of a more powerful sensing of silence. I have already introduced the way Oratorians incorporated mental prayer into group devotions, as well, through a kind of virtuality of God's presence.

In the *oratorio piccolo* the social and material process took place across the group conjured the virtuality of God's presence with the modulation of resources they had available, from the closing of windows, to the vocality of the priest of boy chorister at hand. In Ridolfi's method book, the mental material process took place in the individual level with the conjuring of a divine voice thought to be God's or Christ's. What is highlighted in both instances is that the body as a technology affords Divine presence, and thus uses corporeal gifts of the ears, mouth, and imagination to relate to God's impossible silence. Brigit Meyer is useful to revisit here. For Meyer religion should be "approached as a practice of mediation between people and the divine

(or more broadly: the realm beyond the empirically perceivable).[370] In light of her approach, the impossibility of experiencing the actual heard *acoustical* call of God—of knowing precisely His voice—represents an essential truth about mediation for all spiritual production in early modern Catholicism.

In this final section, I investigate transcendent value as an extreme example of social value produced by combining internalist and verifiable external listening types in the this close study of early modern Catholicism. I began with David Graeber to consider social value as it is created in individual and group settings that validated invisible forms of mediation at the individual and group level in the institution.[371] However, making the invisible observational serves as the final formation of an investigation of social value in early modern Catholicism. Observation and personal accounts of the transcendent and ecstatic experiences with sound of Filippo Neri aided in his canonization in 1622. Privacy is (re)converted into transcendent value when it is a partially shared as a group experience. Neri's emphatic displays of hearing of Divine voices and sounds exemplify transcendent value as it is made socially among the key members of the Oratorian institution.

The *acousmatic* and *state of acousmate*

Gregory Martin's observations cited earlier about the Oratorian's use of mental prayer in public devotions underpin the role of acousmatic listening, or de-visualized listening, within the most private circles of the institution. Acoustic listening, in which a source of sound is either concealed or known but not seen, incorporates the silent behaviors of internalist listening with

[370] Meyer, "Religious Sensations," 434.
[371] David, Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Lambek, "The value of (performative) acts."

the eternal display of verifiable listening to partially reveal acoustical presences to an audience of peers. More broadly, acousmatic hearing refers to the sensing of voices from divine presences. This form of hearing and listening in early modern Catholicism blurred the boundaries between presence and absence, sound and sight, as well as entangled the realms of the personal and public, with the mundane and extraordinary. These conversions could be of a mundane nature, experienced through the body in acts of recitation of private prayer at home, but they could also have significant ramifications across realms could generate social value, and, in special instances, transcendent value.[372] These conversions created a kind of surplus production of observable religious truth that needed to be verified and recorded.

Brian Kane has expanded the use of the acousmatic as to describe an audible sound produced by an unidentified, or invisible, source, into a broader history of "blind audition" or "sound unseen" in history.[373] The terminology of the acousmatic gained currency after Pierre Schaeffer described the acousmatic as an audible sound produced by an unidentified, or invisible, source.[374] But the acousmatic as a modernist category of sonic experience has precluded pertinent experiences in the historical material sources that might involve some relationship with the visual. Kane posits a helpful split, or distinction, of this tradition of de-visualized listening, between the *acousmate* (as an object like a voice heard) and *acousmatic experience,* or *state of acousmate (*as a mental condition like enchantment induced by the invisibalized source, or presence). Both sides to the history of de-visualized listening apply to the Oratorian evidence below, from *vita* and in spiritual poetry. The acousmate creates significant

[372] On the material history of conversion, particularly the social and political dimensions to early modern conversions including the radical transformation of bodies, see Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin's Introduction to the forthcoming volume, *Conversion Machines in Early Modern Europe: Apparatus, Artifice, Body*.
[373] Brian Kane, "*Acousmate:* History and de-visualized sound in the Schaefferian tradition," *Organised Sound* 17 (2012): 179- 188; 187.
[374] Kane, 180.

meaning over a long history of sensations where de-visualized listening, "is privileged for culturally specific and historically situated ends."[375] Kane offers, the *acousmate* is a "sound one *imagines* hearing [...] and one might assume its invisibility."[376] The *acousmate* and *state of acousmate* help to explain the convergence of internal and external practices of sound in the making of transcendent value.

This heuristic of de-visualization applies to the analysis transcendent value in this particular case study of Catholic reform. I identify in the Oratorian materials the legitimization of practices of "transcendent" value in an episode indicative of privileged listening and mental ideations of the divine, which is also described by Gallonio below as ecstatic hearing.[377] The *state of acousmate* in the institutional formation of Neri's church entailed extreme mediation of the body to produce silence as a medium of value. Let us turn to evidence that illustrates what is possible through this nuanced scaffolding of value around the body and its mortal faculties to produce transcendent value. For social theorists, the value of any object of "transcendent value" would simply be an effect of all the efforts people have made to maintain, protect, and preserve them. Even if, from the point of view of the actors, the sequence seems as if it's precisely the other way around."[378] Accordingly, in the institutional setting, transcendent value was recognized, recorded, *witnessed* by others as heard and seen and recorded for canonization, or

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[375] Kane, "*Acousmate*, 187.

[376] Kane, 180.

[377] See Massimo Leone, *Saints and Signs: A Semiotic Reading of Conversion in Early Modern Catholicism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). As with Ignatius Loyola and Filippo Neri, records of ecstasy helped to form new models or ideals of Catholic spirituality from the late 16th into early 17th centuries. Protestants denied that one could have such intimate encounters with God, etc.

[378] Graeber, *Theory of Value,* 45: "One invests one's energies in those things one considers most important, or most meaningful. One could even rework Annette Weiner's argument along the same lines: the value of objects of "transcendent value" would simply be an effect of all the efforts people have made to maintain, protect, and preserve them. Even if, from the point of view of the actors, the sequence seems as if it's precisely the other way around."

sainthood purposes. Yet due to its specialness, is not as easily replicable from silent prayer alone. Thus, the terms of transcendence were carefully maintained and regulated by individuals through silent, internalist listening as also verifiable listening.

Acousmatic hearing: Antonio Gallonio's *Vita* of Neri

The following demonstrates how silence as a medium of value supported *acousmatic experience* that helped to convert ordinary settings into extraordinary episodes of sensing sound..As a prophet of Rome, Neri embodied the observable effects of forces of sound and music that connected the terrestrial to the divine (Figure 1 p. 28). In an account used for his canonization proceedings, Antonio Gallonio describes the ecstasy of Neri with the Virgin Mary. On the brink of death from kidney failure, Neri felt restored suddenly, as Gallonio writes in 1594 that Neri appeared to be embracing someone that no one else could see:

> Then he moved his hands while bathed in tears as if he were hugging the Blessed Virgin in his arms.
>
> As he was calling out to her, the most Holy Mother of God, His Body was lifted up by the space of about a cubit or more with no assistance.
>
> He continued in ecstasy then he became quiet, seemed to lose control of his senses.[379]

Here Neri is in the *state of acousmate* with the Virgin. Importantly, he externalizes the experiences of the divine presences conjured in mental prayer. While invisible, or unseen to official witnesses, the acoustic object is made real, and verifiable through the sounds and sights of physicalized, extraordinary effects. In Neri's episode, the *state of acousmatic* arises from

[379] Antonio Gallonio, The Life of St. Philip Neri, trans. Jerome Bertram of the Oxford Oratory (Family Publications, 2005), 192 (169 of original).

silence as a material acoustic presence that was already upheld as a group through the practice of *oratione mentale* in the Oratorian community to conjure divine voice and presence. Unlike the Protestants with their heads swelled with external, worldly sounds, as noted by Cardinal Contarini, here Neri exploits the transformative benefits of internalist listening to successfully mediate the self and the mundane around him. Gallonio reported that Neri, in his great humility, begged those present not to tell anyone what had happened but that there were too many reliable sources.[380] Verifiable listening by Gallonio and the group of peers with Neri who witnessed the episode from the outside, in turn reified the presence of the divine entity of the Virgin. Furthermore, Gallonio's recounting suggests something different than a disembodied voice, as the body of the Virgin ostensibly embraced Neri. This episode recalls the musical *acousmatic* object of a celestial ensemble of musicians famously heard by St. Cecilia, filling her head with heavenly sounds moments before her decapitation.[381]

The *vita* also illustrates how the Oratorians created and maintained social and transcendent value rooted in corporeality. The corporeal body afforded maximal and minimal modifications to in order to produce spiritualty and transcendent value. Graeber's figure of the maximizing individual, formulated from typically economic settings, represents an individual who works to minimize their output and maximize their yields. In the social religious context, Neri, abetted by his followers, ultimately diminished their mortal senses (he "seemed to lose control of his senses") as a way to experience (and display to others) transcendence. Indeed, value created in any social setting is "the way people represent the importance of their actions to

[380] Ibid.
[381] Rf. C. III. 20 ""inventario per l'oratorio vecchio in dove adesso a la cappella di F. Carlo, e la Portavia? della Carrette" - in fondo "Dialoghi antichi dell'Oratorio piccolo. Tomo 2 [Sec. XVII]" The inventory records of the *oratorio piccolo* list as an item one statue of saint Cecilia: "Una status di Santa Cecilia io il suo adornamento."

themselves."[382] For this powerful reform community that remained separate from the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church, maximalizing individuals like Neri were crucial to bolstering the value of the institution.

Diminishment of the sense of sight in order to hear God thus became wholeheartedly embraced as a necessary sacrifice for religious life. In a letter from Father Maria Taruggi to Ancina's brother, Giovanni Matteo Ancina d'Avingnone, from September 22, 1593, we learn of Ancina's brother's encounter with an eye malady and blindness.[383] In it, he says he is sorry for Ancina's indisposition between the eyes, but that if "coming from God, he judges, that it is for the best." He adds that if Ancina wants to work in the servitude of God, then he should present himself in good spirit, in a way that no less confirms his [God's?] goodness (original script below). Later, in an uplifting sentiment that seems to sublimate the nature of Ancina's blindness as a direct connection to God's voice, he writes,

> you will feel more helped by God and by the sign[signal] that God calls you, I hope that you will find yourself improved by your [diseased/bad] eyes, and that by putting oneself [as a] guide for the blind, you must be illuminated in each human? [Illuminato in utroqs homin.][384]

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[382] Graeber, by way of Nancy Munn, notes the invisible "potency" of the individual in this regard.
[383] Orat. A. IV. 20 *Raccolta di testimonianze, memoriali, attestati riguardo a miracoli ottenuti per intercessione di s. Filippo prima e dopo la canonizzazione* Sec. XVI-XVII

Fran.co Maria Taruggi scritta a Gio Matteo Ancina In qual lettero persuaveva d'accettare il carico delle confessioni, Molto Ado Poss.mo Poiche vi ricordate di me ne le l're posso sperare, che lo facciate ancora ne le orationi, de le quali ho tanto bisogno. State sicuro ch'io non son? meno con voi lontano, ch'io fussi d'appresso nel vivere insieme, lo stare in Avignone puo separare i corpi gli animi non mai uniti col novo de la carita, et amor fraterno. Mi dispiace l'indispositione tra de gli occhi, ma venendo da Dio giudico, che sia il meglio; e volendovi [S.D.M.?] avoperare in servitio suo, quanto piu di buon animo vi andarete tanto piu mostrete non meno confirare ne la bonta sua, che ne l'inferminta tra fate orone per me e state sano D'Avignone li 22 di settebre 1593. D.V.A.

[384] Orat. A. IV. 20 *Raccolta di testimonianze*,

Un Altra lettera: "vi sentirete piu aiutato da Dio et per signale che Dio vi chiama, ho speranza che vi

This personal correspondence reveals how the Oratorians established piety around their embracing the radical reduction of sense to tune into God's call and his goodness, his literal and metaphorical voice. Blindness is a dominant example of how mortality could be reduced to base senses and then sublimated into privileged presence.

Sublimation of the sense from the minimization of the self for maximal effect is also pronounced in the spiritual poetry of the early Oratory. The poem, *Paradiso,* is from the same collection Ms. O.18 in the Biblioteca Vallicelliana, cited in earlier chapters. *Paradiso* has a particular affinity with Giovenale Ancina as his brother suffered a severe eye malady, and possible physical disability. However, it must be mentioned that Animuccia possibly composed the text with Ancina's edits, perhaps connected to his feelings about his brother's malady.

Paradiso

Ogni giorno m' è [novo] in cui non veggio
Risplender del mio sol [vivace] il raggio
Raggio ch' [indrizza] al cielo il mio [viaggio]

Mirabil cecità degl' huomini Mondani

O come vaneggiate,
Ciechi figli d'Adam, ch'il vostro core
Ponete in falso Amore:
Non vi diè il cor Iddio
Per trarlo a van disio;
Ma per orgirlo al cielo,
Ovè senz' ombra, ò velo

---

ritrovarete migliorato del vostro male de gl'occhi, e che mettendovi p guida de ciechi, bisogna che siate illuminato in utroqs homin."

Ai puri amanti scopre i chiari rai
D’eterno sol che non tramonta mai

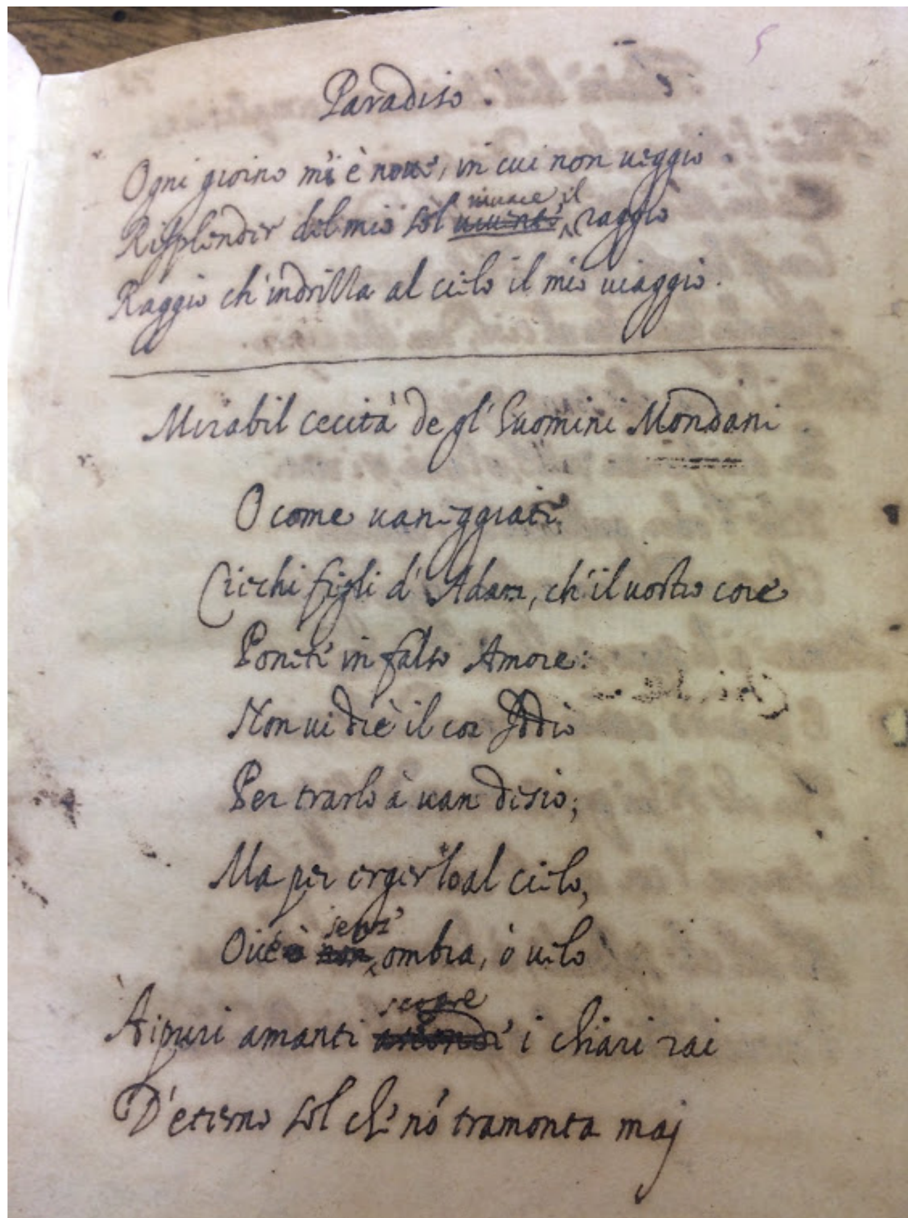
Paradise

Every day is new to me in which I do not see
Shine from my sun a lively/bright ray
Ray that directs my journey to the sky

Marvelous/wondrous blindness of wordly men

O how you rave,
Blind children of Adam, your heart
Placed in false love:
The heart God did not give you
To find it in vain;
But to turn it to the sky
That is without a shadow or veil

Pure lovers discover the clear ray
Of eternal sun that never sets



Paradiso.

Ogni giorno mi è nuovo, in cui non veggio
Risplender del mio Sol vivace il raggio
Raggio ch'indrizza al cielo il mio viaggio.

Mirabil cecità de gl'huomini Mondani

O come vaneggiate
Ciechi figli d'Adam, ch'il vostro core
Ponete in falso Amore:
Non vi diè il cor Iddio
Per trarlo à van desio;
Ma per ergerlo al cielo,
Ove è senz' ombra, ò velo
Ai puri amanti sempre i chiari rai
D'eterno Sol che nò tramonta maj

Figure 15. “Paradiso”
Biblioteca Vallicelliana Ms. O.18

The poem ascribes to the listener a marvelous, mortal blindness that echoes and transforms the innocent account of sight from the poem in the same collection, *Felicita dell’anima contemplative* (Chapter 1, p.60), in which the child ably gazing at the sky provides a virtual experience of intimacy with Christ: *Al sol che splende a l'armonia che sona l'orecchi ha*

in ciel, e gl'occhi in Paradiso / the sun that shines of the harmony that [the] ears have in heaven, and the eyes in Paradise. Like the religious creativity offered by the laude as sound objects discussed in previous chapters, de-visualized hearing and listening in the Oratorian institution was rooted in experiential knowledge beyond a defined type of knowledge, or moral or aesthetic emblem. Blindness in Oratorian institutional spirituality was not only metaphorical; it was an affordance of the corporeal body as a technology of religion. In closing, the idiosyncratic economy of value, sound and body begets a radical acceptance, even positive embracement of disability as blindness that becomes legitimized as practice evident in the opening to Ridolfi's guide to mental prayer:

> Prayer ceaselessly reminds us of the presence of that Divine Lord in Whose sight the mountains are as wax in the rays of a summer sun [...] prayer will make the bright light of the presence of God shine in your minds; it will carry you up to his very Throne.[385]

Here Oratorian piety sublimates blindness itself into omniscient sight similar to the poems, *Paradiso,* and *Felicita.* Internalist listening to sound as demonstrated in the Oratorian institution is notably not a negation in the theological sense.[386] Blindness reformed transformation of mortification of the flesh. The loss was made positive, by unfolding, onto God's voice as the ultimate mediation of religious experience. Through the act of hearing God or the Virgin calling out in a paradoxical silent hailing, the believer transforms personal silence into public transcendent value.

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[385] Ridolfi, *Mental Prayer,* xiv.

[386] Even as a trained Dominican, Neri practiced spirituality in a very different manner than the tradition of apophatic theology in Dominican thought from 13th century and also practiced by mystics who subscribed to the theology of God as immeasurable, unutterable, ineffable. If God is unspeakable and we cannot speak of God, then silence becomes the *only* option and one must turn silent completely.

Conclusion

In conclusion, sound was the primary source of value in the creation and increased spiritual power of the reform institution of the Oratorians. I have shown the ways in which sound and silence were socially and materially constructed both at the level of the individual and the level of the religious institution. Reform spirituality in this particular case resulted from the active modification of acoustic conditions and modifications to the body's corporeal capacity to see and to hear. Setting aside the confessional metaphysical lens momentarily, religion in this 16th-century Roman context could be approached as the mediation between people and sound. Individual and group listening behaviors as internalist, verifiable, and acoustmatic tied to de-visualized and acoustical sound also generated immaterial value that monetary forms of value and power, including church architecture, could not consummate. This multi-level material approach to the study of reform spirituality and invites further investigation into silence as a material acoustic presence through which to hear *musical* sound becomes increasingly potent around the turn of the 17th century with the premier of the Oratorian composer, Emilio Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione di Anima et di Corpo* in 1600. Within the broader highly urbanized geographical context of Rome at the end of *the cinquecento*, the behaviors of sound and silence I have traced from the *oratorio della sera* in the 1550s through to the use of the old prayer hall, or *oratorio piccolo,* exemplify one meaningful thread of the privatization of built space for music, and for the institutionalization of silence for spiritual production.

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