# The *Orlando Furioso*

## A STOIC COMEDY

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# The *Orlando Furioso*

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Clare Carroll

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It goes without saying that I alone am responsible for all errors here.

# Abbreviations

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| *S.V.F.* | Arnim, H. von, ed. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta.* I, Leipzig: Teubner, 1903; II–III, 1905; IV (Indices by Max Adler), 1924. |
| *LCL* | Loeb Classical Library |
| Rajna, *Le fonti* | Rajna, Pio. *Le fonti dell' "Orlando Furioso".* 1876. Reprint, Florence: Sansoni, 1975. |
| *Epistulae morales* | Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales.* 3 vols., with English translation by Richard M. Gummere. Loeb Classical Library Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1917–25. |
| *Moral Essays* | Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. *Moral Essays.* 3 vols., with an English tranlsation by John W. Basore. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1928–35. |

*For Mom and for Dan*

*Codex Huygens, fol. 6 (13.2 by 18.5 cm)*
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CHAPTER ONE

# *Introduction: The Limits of Theory*

> Quare depone istam spem, posse te summatim degustare ingenia maximorum virorum; tota tibi inspicienda sunt, tota tractanda. Res geritur et per lineamenta sua ingenii opus nectitur, ex quo nihil subduci sine ruina potest.[1]

[So give up hoping that you can skim, by means of epitomes, the wisdom of distinguished men. You must study their wisdom as a whole. They are working out a plan and weaving together, line by line, a masterpiece, from which nothing can be taken away without injury to the whole.]

> ... Democritum potius immitemur quam Heraclitum. Hic enim, quotiens in publicum processerat, flebat, ille ridebat; huic omnia quae agimus miseriae, illi ineptiae videbantur.[2]

[We ought ... to imitate Democritus rather than Heraclitus. For the latter whenever he went forth into public, used to weep, the former to laugh; to the one all human doings seemed to be miseries, to the other follies.]

AFTER THE MANY BOOKS AND ARTICLES of the past thirty years—not to mention five centuries of criticism—how could anyone imagine that there might yet be "cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima" [1.2.2: things not said in prose or rhyme] about the *Furioso*?[3] The

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[1] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, 3 vols., trans. Richard M. Gummere, LCL (1917–25), 33.5. The translations of classical Greek and Latin texts are from the Loeb Classical Library, with some revisions by me.

[2] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 15.2 in *Moral Essays*, 3 vols., trans. John W. Basore, LCL (1928–35).

[3] The edition of the poem cited throughout is *Orlando Furioso*, 2 vols., ed. Emilio Bigi, Classici italiani per l'uomo del nostro tempo, ed. Vittore Branca (Milan: Rusconi, 1982). The translations are my revised versions of *Orlando Furioso*, trans. Guido Waldman (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983).

irony of Ariosto's boast as epic narrator strikes the right note of scepticism about the production of academic criticism. How could I say anything about the *Furioso* that was not indebted to past criticism on the poem? I am motivated to present yet another reading by the frustration and near despair I feel when faced with this criticism. Rather than weep or slit my wrists, I have decided to enter the critical fray laughing—as worthy a fool as any other academic. The reason for my frustration is not simply the amount of criticism but, especially with respect to American criticism of the late 1970s and early 1980s, its virtual unanimity—a unanimity, as I will later show, not found in either contemporary or Renaissance Italian criticism. So many critics have agreed that the poem is chaotic in form, and in theme a celebration of incompletion, confusion, and endless multiplicity that such interpretations have become boring. Nevertheless, the critical studies that have viewed the poem as an expression of narrative, epistemological, and linguistic error have offered important insights into the experience of reading the *Furioso*. And it is because of these insights that I think such criticism deserves to be contested, rather than dismissed. I challenge these readings to admit their strength but also to argue that other readings are possible.

American criticism of the last thirty years has made the *Orlando Furioso* an important text, not just for understanding Renaissance literature, but even for understanding contemporary literary theory. Many of the American critics who wrote about the *Furioso* during the 1960s—Greene, Carne-Ross, and Giamatti, for example—were influenced in part by New Critical close reading, in part by the literary historical tracing of a motif, and in part by finding a reflection of their own late twentieth-century experience. Their conclusions that the poem reflects the need to live within limitations, a modern sense of ambiguity, and the tragic ephemerality of human experience still make sense.[4] (I have been similarly influenced since I was taught by

[4] See A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966); Thomas M. Greene, *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), 129; D. S. Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many: A Reading of the *Orlando Furioso*, Cantos 1 and 8," *Arion* 5, no. 2 (1966): 195–234; "The One and the Many," *Arion* 3, no. 2 (1976): 146–219.

New Critics, literary historians, and historians of ideas.) The topical emphases of the larger comparative studies in which these readings occurred dictated their fragmentary character. Giamatti had focused on Alcina's earthly paradise, Greene on the angel Michele's descent from heaven, and Carne-Ross on the oft-repeated phrase "di qua, di là, di su, di giù." Carne-Ross emphasized the theme of instability and viewed the action as chaotic, and so rejected the last third of the poem. He even ventured that here "Ariosto's nerve simply failed him."[5]

It seems to me rather that Ariosto's work on the poem—through twenty-five years and three editions—attests to the poet's perseverance. Carne-Ross's reading, though extremely suggestive, did not meet the critical challenge of reading the whole poem. To focus narrowly on one part of the poem or, worse, to lop off the last fifteen canti flies in the face of such an ancient notion as the wholeness of the work of art, a notion adopted by New Criticism. My attempt to read the entire poem is in this respect more thoroughly New Critical than the approach of any of these critics. It is also more thoroughly historical. In literary historical matters Greene is observant and careful, but when it comes to connecting the text with a larger moral philosophical framework, his readings are anachronistic. I particularly wince at the progressive Whig notion of history that informs his portrayal of the syncretist and skeptical Christian humanist Ariosto as an enlightened *New York Times* reader and liberal atheist.

More historically minded critics, such as Durling and later Saccone, were interested in interpreting the poem in relation to specifically Renaissance concepts of poetics and consequently in considering the poem as a whole rather than a series of fragments.[6] For Saccone and Durling, the poem expressed a total harmony, however subtly shifting between "viaggio" and "spazio," however paradoxically based on "the reader's accepting the [poem's] manner of not totalizing reality but of being critical of it."[7] C. P. Brand analyzed the structure of the *Furioso*

[5] Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many" (1976), 204.

[6] Robert M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965); Eduardo Saccone, *Il "sogetto" del "Furioso" e altri saggi tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Naples: Liguori, 1973).

[7] Saccone, *Il "sogetto,"* 215, 246–47; Durling, "The Epic Ideal," in *The Old*

in relation to the medieval technique of *entrelacement* and noted the motif of weaving a tapestry of intricate threads in the poem and in some of the sixteenth-century defenses of the poem's order.[8] Acknowledging that the interpretation of the poem as a work of conscious craft has been a minority view in the critical tradition, Brand still could trace a line of Italian critics who have commented on Ariosto's narrative method—from Panizzi through to Momigliano, Segre, Pampaloni, and Delcorno Branca.[9] Unfortunately, more recent proponents of the poem as fragment have overlooked these readings of the poem as a consciously ordered whole.

The next generation of critics took the side of disorder.[10] These critics analyzed what Carne-Ross had described as the sense of flux in the multiplicity of the poem's action in terms of applied deconstruction. For Patricia Parker, writing when deconstruction was at its peak, the *Furioso*'s meandering romance plot was an instance of Derridean *différance*. The deferral of action was analogous to the deferral of meaning which the deconstructionists considered characteristic of all language. Unlike Carne-Ross, Parker accepted the last third of the poem, if only from the disillusioned perspective learned from the rest of it. Her analysis of the character of romance narrative and of the way even epic demonstrates the impulse towards digression asked important questions about what such complex and apparently wandering plot construction means for the experience of reading and for our understanding of language itself. Whether or not "presence, *parousia*, or meaning, is studiously circumvented by the detours and divigations

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*World: Discovery and Rebirth*, ed. David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby, 5 vols. (London: Aldus Books, 1972–75), 111–12.

[8] C. P. Brand, "L'Entrelacement nell' 'Orlando Furioso'," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 154 (1977): 509–32.

[9] Brand, "L'Entrelacement," 510, where he cites Antonio Panizzi, *"Orlando Furioso" di Ariosto; With an Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians* (London: W. Pickering, 1830–34), vols. 7, 95; Attilio Momigliano, *Saggio su l'"Orlando Furioso"* (Bari: Laterza, 1928), 310–19; Cesare Segre, *Esperienze ariostesche* (Pisa: Nisi-Lischi, 1966); L. Pampaloni, "Per una analisi narrativa del 'Furioso'," *Belfagor* 26 (1971): 133–50; Daniela Delcorno Branca, *L'"Orlando Furioso" e il romanzo cavalleresco medievale* (Florence: Olschki, 1973). The one American critic whom Brand notes is Durling, *The Figure of the Poet*.

[10] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979); David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1983).

of an 'errant' plot,"[11] as Parker claimed, must remain a question for anyone reading Ariosto today. Closely looking at how Ariosto makes fun of a variety of misreadings, I will show some of the limits of applied deconstruction in accounting for how the poem generates meaning.

Because of her focus on the erring plot and her dismissal of the closure of the poem as a mere "literary *tour de force*,"[12] Parker chose not to consider the meaning of the last third of the poem. In her reading, she treated the poem as a fragment. Her mistrust of totalizing systems led her to dismiss the poem as a whole and to single out certain passages as key to undoing that sense of the whole.[13] She zeroed in on the self-reflexive passages in the text—especially the literary excursus delivered by San Giovanni to Astolfo on the moon. For Parker, the important insight gained here is that romance is a "revelation of [literature's] very nature, of the fact that all fictions 'stray.'"[14] Parker used San Giovanni's lecture on literature to authorize her reading of the endlessly straying character of romance, both as a representation of life and as a formal type of plot.

For David Quint, the evangelist's discussion of poetry and patronage proved that no text can authorize the truth of another. Quint claimed that this part of the *Furioso* undermines all textual authority: "No text can pose as an anterior point of origin and truth upon which a subsequent allegorical system can be based."[15] Taken to its logical conclusion this would mean that the *Furioso* challenges not only Dante's method of allegory but also the *Furioso*'s own production of meaning through intertextuality. The ludicrousness of San Giovanni's literary judgments makes me question Quint's suggestion that what San Giovanni says is what Ariosto's text means—"insist[ing] that all texts tell lies out of self-interest." For instance, San Giovanni blames Virgil for Dido's supposed bad reputation, "che riputata viene

[11] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 52–53.

[12] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 53.

[13] For a different reading of both Quint and Parker, see Albert Ascoli, *Aristo's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 376 n. 198.

[14] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 48.

[15] For all quotations from Quint in this paragraph and the next, see *Origin and Originality*, 90–91.

una bagascia, / solo perché Maron non le fu amico" [35.28.3–4: that she was reputed to be a whore solely because Virgil was not friendly to her]. Quint would have us take these lines unironically to mean that Virgil, patronized and controlled by Augustus, portrayed Dido as a whore because she was a threat to Roman imperialism. If we read the text this way, however, we miss the joke in the irony and absurd incongruity of these statements. Of course Virgil was not Dido's friend; she was a fictional character. Nor was she a whore—either in Virgil's *Aeneid* or in the many texts indebted to it for their portrayal of Dido, Ovid's *Heroides, Roman d'Eneas*, and Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, among others. Part of the humor of San Giovanni's outrageous statement derives from mixing low style with high matter—using such slang to describe the elevated tragic epic figure of Dido. Another part of the humor derives from the confusion between the literary—Dido—and the historical—Virgil. Quint's assertion that the "'higher' truth delivered from Ariosto's moon is merely that poets lie" raises a whole set of problematic questions. How can the critic posit the notion of "higher truth" and remain consistent with the deconstructive position on the corrosive character of all language? On what grounds can Quint defend his giving greater weight to this episode in the poem above all others? Isn't the logical consequence of this claim that "all poets lie" the notion that only literary critics like San Giovanni can perceive the "higher truth"?

Ariosto, with the "perception of the Western poetic traditon as a pack of lies," emerged in Quint's version as an early precursor of late twentieth-century canon revisionists. I would argue rather that new poetry does change, but does not destroy, preexisting poetic tradition. Following the old Italian saying, *tradutorre, traditore*, I would argue that by translating the tradition into something new, every poem both transmits and betrays the inherited tradition. But to destroy poetic tradition is to undermine the possibility of literary change, the possibility of new interrelationships among texts within the tradition. Ariosto's comic poem creates new perspectives on the texts it parodies, and in creating these new perspectives it contributes to rather than undermines the memory of these texts. The revisionary perspective is defined by its relation to the inherited tradition. At the same time that the *Furioso* revises our view of classical epic and medieval romance by impressing upon us that these forms can never be simply reproduced

or repeated, the poem also creates a new form that relies upon its complex relation to these past forms to produce the comic effects of parody. In other words, Ariosto's intent in writing the *Orlando Furioso* was not merely "to destroy the authority and influence of the books of chivalry" any more than this was Cervantes' intent in writing *Don Quixote*.[16] Both Cervantes and Ariosto created new forms which rely upon knowledge of old forms for their humor. Not to see this is to miss both the humor and the regenerative, and not simply destructive, force of the *Furioso*'s parody of traditional epic and romance literature.

In some sense in reaction to, but unfortunately not in open and direct debate with such, applied deconstructive criticism, some other recent scholarship has attempted to place the *Furioso* in a Renaissance cultural and literary context.[17] While Cuccaro and Marinelli have done traditional history-of-ideas influence studies (Cuccaro on humanism, Marinelli on Neoplatonism), Ascoli has described the poem in a much more closely contextualized way. His book deals with the intellectual context of the poem, i.e., Renaissance theories of education and the humanist debates about the nature of man and language. He has written not an influence study but rather a description of the intellectual context. While also incorporating deconstruction and postmodernism into his reading of the *Furioso*, Ascoli attempts at least in part to historicize the *Furioso*. A more thoroughly contextualized approach is that of Daniel Javitch, who has written a history of how the *Furioso* became part of the Italian canon through the influence of sixteenth-century Italian literary theory and publishing practices.[18]

My own work on the poem, like that of those I have been criticizing, reflects current critical preoccupations. Following Foucault, I want to emphasize the discontinuity between past and present cultures.[19] My emphasis on historical difference attempts to forestall the

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[16] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1950), 30.

[17] See Vincent Cuccaro, *The Humanism of Ludovico Ariosto: From the "Satire" to the "Furioso"* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1981); Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*; Peter V. Marinelli, *Ariosto and Boiardo* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1987).

[18] Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991).

[19] For the principle of discontinuity in Foucault's method, see "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F.

likelihood that I will simply reproduce my own cultural prejudices. Although this approach strives to uncover difference rather than continuity, the emphasis on discontinuity is itself a reflection of current fashion. But rather than set out to view the text as a vindication of contemporary literary theory, I will note in passing how the text resists appropriation by many recent critical concepts. The Foucauldian notion of discontinuity acknowledges limits upon the translation of the poem into contemporary theoretical terms. The extent to which the *Furioso* cannot be translated into contemporary theoretical terms is, I believe, due to the concept of language which it presupposes and, therefore, to its concept of poetic composition, and finally to its understanding of the physical cosmos and the relation between humans and the cosmos—all of which are inimical to current academic discourse.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault described the pre-seventeenth-century concept of language as Stoic:

> Ever since the Stoics, the system of signs in the Western world has been a ternary one, for it was recognized as containing the significant, the signified, and the "conjuncture" (the *τύγχανον*). From the seventeenth century, on the other hand, the arrangement of signs was to become binary, since it was to be defined, with Port-Royal, as the connection of a significant and a signified. At the Renaissance the organization is different, and much more complex: it is ternary, since it requires the formal domain of marks, the content designated by them, and the similitudes that link the marks to the things designated by them.[20]

The *Furioso* needs to be read in terms of the radical discontinuity of this Stoic ternary system of language from the binary system upon which the deconstructive critique of logocentrism is founded. The Stoics were materialists, and so for them, even words have a material

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Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 153–54: "We must dismiss those tendencies that encourage the consoling play of recognitions. Knowledge, even under the banner of history, does not depend on 'rediscovery,' and it emphatically excludes the 'rediscovery of ourselves.' History becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being."

[20] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Random House, 1973), 42.

reality. Indeed, Foucault would have been more accurate in his account had he added to marks, content, and linking similitudes, the notion of language as sound. Underlying the Stoics' concept of language is a material universe based on a biological model, in which constant and apparently random activity issues into unity.

Hugh Kenner used the adjective "stoic" to describe the comic literary universe of Joyce, Beckett, and Flaubert, in which the writer foresees everything in and rationally orders the entire text.[21] Ariosto imposes a similar authorial control over his epic to produce comic effects like those Kenner attributes to the "Stoic Comedians." I call the *Orlando Furioso* a *Stoic* comedy because the poem evokes the laughter of Democritus that Seneca recommends in response to the madness of the world. Ariosto represents the vice and misery of his characters as sheer folly. As Margaret Ferguson has observed, the *Furioso* provides a kind of comfort, if not a cure, for the unfulfilled desire of Orlando: "Epistemological skepticism, combined with a wry moral stoicism, may protect the psyche from the grief of a character like Orlando."[22] Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is much more Stoic in the sense of the morals, physics, and logic of Hellenistic philosophy, than simply stoic, in Kenner's suggestive sense of aesthically controlled or Ferguson's perceptive sense of emotionally detached. Ariosto's narrative presupposes Stoic notions about reason and order, both ethical and political as well as physical and poetic. In this study, I will trace these Stoic presuppositions, shared by a number of other early sixteenth-century Italian writers, to actual Stoic texts that were available to Ariosto.

This approach comes into conflict with the preconceptions of contemporary literary criticism, which have overlooked the explanation of some of the *Furioso*'s poetic effects. To make the philosophical preconceptions of Ariosto and his contemporaries, rather than our own, the critical point of departure is to concentrate on the role of the writer. This is not to say that this approach will exclude the role of the reader. The reader is in dialogue with the writer and the text. And the narrative structure, the irony, the philosophical content of

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[21] Kenner, *The Stoic Comedians* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974).
[22] Ferguson, *Trials of Desire* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1983), 132–33.

the text have effects upon the reader which also need to be accounted for. Nevertheless, even to speak of the role of the writer rather than the reader runs counter to contemporary interest in reader-response criticism and to Foucault's critique of authorship.[23] Rather than "What is an author?" we should ask "What is a critic?" The personae of contemporary critical discourse are often just as fatuous as Foucault's bugbear, the nineteenth-century monumental construction of the author. Ariosto's two revisions of his 1516 text for the press in 1521 and 1532 give evidence of his authorial control, a control much greater than that of most early modern authors, or indeed that of late twentieth-century critics, limited by academic censorship of what can be said in the current discourse, and who is writing letters of recommendation and book reviews.

This focus on the writer in turn means that I will read the poem from the vantage point of what I have reconstructed as its possible method of composition, the vision organizing the poem's protean plot. A structural reading of the poem as an alternate cosmos, analogous to the Stoic cosmos, proves useful in remembering the plot and thus in better understanding how the parts of the poem are related to one another. My own experience in the past nine years of introducing this way of reading the *Furioso* to students has convinced me that I have discovered a workable mnemonic device, which may have functioned—either consciously or unconsciously—as such for the author. When I speak of the "structure of the plot," I am not unaware of how problematic such a notion is. Without any evidence of Ariosto's intentions external to the three editions of the poem, my analysis of the structure of the *Furioso* remains a critical construct. Ariosto's intentions with respect to the organization of the poem remain in question. Ariosto may have stumbled upon the plot haphazardly; but it seems much more likely to me that the writer, working on his epic for over twenty years, had a vision of the action of the poem as a whole. However he improvised within this vision, he needed it to bring his narrative poem to an end. My intuition is based on how writers write. However the writer changes the work in the

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[23] See Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 113–38.

process of writing, he has a vision that initiates the work and that is modified through that process.

Reading the poem according to the process of composition also requires a reading of the entire poem, instead of selected passages. Rather than single out any one passage of the poem as particularly revelatory of meaning, I will consider each passage in relation to the action of the whole poem. This may seem an impossible task. There are so many plots begun and suspended sometimes in just one canto that to keep track of them must seem beyond the power of memory. But this is where the notion of a structure or an organized vision will help the reader, as I believe it helped the writer, to remember the poem's varied and intricate plots. The passages that critics who have read the poem as fragment have chosen to emphasize—Michele's descent and Astolfo's lunar voyage, among others—are central to my analysis of the plot.

In reading the poem as a whole rather than as a fragment, the critic must replace the concept of the endless deferral of action and of meaning with an analysis of how action is concluded. How do these conclusions reflect back upon the digressive complications of the plot? How do these conclusions shape our understanding of the way the poem produces meaning? Is meaning endlessly deferred, as Parker has claimed? Is it the case that "deconstruction in the world of the *Furioso* from which the Logos has been removed and in which signification is entirely man-made reveals only nonsense and madness"?[24] My reading will investigate the extent to which Ariosto's poem does make reality present and does construct connections between words and the world.

I will also scrutinize the political implications of recent critical conclusions about how the poem constructs the relation between poetry and power. I will analyze such problematic passages as Ariosto's praise of his patrons and San Giovanni's assertion that poets are paid liars in relation to *how* they are expressed—in what tone, in what context, with which meanings for which audiences, and to what ends. Does the poem's presentation of the poet-patron relationship persuade us that the meaning of poetry is controlled by the powerful because

[24] Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 91.

they finance the writing of poetry? Does the *Furioso* support the practices and values of the despotic government of the Estensi? Or does the poem evade and/or distort contemporary Ferrarese reality in an attempt to create an alternate world that is, if not in open reaction against that reality, certainly resistant to it?

If certain kinds of blindness to the poetic effects of the *Furioso* have resulted from attempts to use the poem in order to justify contemporary academic theory, there are also excesses in historicist criticism. Whereas once it was fashionable to deny the philosophical content of the poem, deconstructive critics as well as the historicists have viewed the poem as engaged in philosophical questions. However, there is a need, I think, to be on guard against destroying the humor of the poem by viewing its philosophical content unironically, as some historicist critics have. For instance, the expression of Neoplatonic notions in the poem does not necessarily mean that the author affirms them, any more than he affirms the notion that poets are paid liars.[25] As Ascoli has said, "The poem's sunny, nonsensical side will never be fully denied."[26] It is all too easy for the historicist critic to make the *Furioso* merely the vehicle for Renaissance debates about education, politics, and philosophy at the expense of the poem as literature. That is to say, we need to question the extent to which the poem merely reflects its world. I challenge the view of the poem as subservient to the purposes of power by attending to the ways the poem creates an alternate world—through narrative and through literary parody. Does the poem either affirm or challenge the ideology of the context in which it was created, and if so how?

The question *how?* is of utmost importance, since the poem criticizes power by making us laugh at it. Those, who, like De Sanctis, assert that with the *Furioso*, "you don't know whether it is a serious matter, or a joke,"[27] have only half-understood the poem. The poem is a joke *and* a serious matter at one and the same time. As parodic

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[25] For instance, Marinelli's Neoplatonic reading of the poem is strained when he claims that Astolfo, Ruggiero, and Orlando respectively represent the three types of Neoplatonic love: divine, social, and bestial (*Ariosto and Boiardo*, 110–11). The notion of the mercurial Astolfo as a divine lover seems to stretch the reading a bit.

[26] Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 392.

[27] De Sanctis, quoted in Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 393.

literary comedy, the *Furioso*, like Rabelais' *Gargantua* and Joyce's *Ulysses*, among others, is serious through being funny. To pose the problem as a matter of *either* serious matter *or* joke misses the humor of Ariosto's parody and the seriousness of that humor.

Ascoli uses the term "crisis" to describe not only the issues that the poem represents but also his method of reading the poem. "Crisis" is defined as "rupture" or "threat to meaning," and as "judgment" or "that which discovers or invents meaning."[28] Ascoli borrowed the term from Kermode's apocalyptic sense of crisis, Girard's notion of "sacrificial crisis," and de Man's formulation of crisis in criticism. De Man called the competitive ideological struggle, the almost craven vogue of the "new" in continental criticism "crisis-like."[29] Mallarme's use of "crisis" to describe the work of his friends is for de Man an example of "crisis ... inspired by propaganda rather than insight." But the authentic sense of crisis, for de Man, resides in criticism as self-criticism. De Man asked: "Is it [criticism] asking whether it is necessary for criticism to take place?" It is also important to keep in mind that for de Man the critical crisis of deconstruction was developed as a way to explain Romantic literature and the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reactions to it. Deconstruction was not posited by de Man as a universal literary phenomenon but one specifically tied to the modern European reaction—both in philosophy and literature—to Romanticism.

It seems to me that by using the term "crisis" in his approach to the *Furioso*, Ascoli astutely acknowledges some of the philosophical and political crises of Ariosto's context. By the same token, in characterizing his own method as one of crisis, Ascoli also claims an identification between his work and de Man's sense of critical crisis. I am not convinced that most academic work, including my own, is engaged in this sense of crisis. On the one hand, to claim that a literary study embodies de Man's deconstructive notion of crisis assumes that it grapples with urgent cultural philosophical questions. On the other hand, the demand for a criticism of crisis may further discredit the already politically suspect practice of deconstruction—as if through

[28] Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 41.

[29] Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 5, and for the rest of this paragraph, 7, 8, 18.

literary theory we could reduce every crisis, every event, to a mere problem of the lack of connection between signifier and signified. For me, Ascoli's use of the term "crisis" in part demonstrates the risk that applied deconstructive criticism often runs of becoming mystified. Criticism is mystified when it claims that criticism alone has the power to demystify literature. As de Man wrote: "When modern critics think they are demystifying literature, they are in fact being demystified by it." In other words, literature embodies its own self-criticism, as well as the criticism of its possible misreadings. I would call my own work on the *Furioso* philological, hermeneutic, literary formalist; it is only critical in the limited sense that it is in a debate with a kind of criticism that is more interested in developing critical theory than in interpreting the poem.

For Ascoli's concept of crisis, I substitute parody. Bakhtin's definition of parody, developed in his study of Rabelais, conveys the ambivalent and paradoxical effects of this form. According to Bakhtin, parody is at once destructive and regenerative, subversive and conservative of the traditional forms which it both mocks and celebrates.[30] The concept of parody has an advantage over the more politically correct notion of crisis, with all its echoes of Italian Marxist discourse. Like Alasdair MacIntyre's notion of philsophical tradition as "ongoing argument" with the past, literary parody is in dialogue with the past.[31] Unlike "crisis," which suggests a kind of cultural centrality—the crisis of political events, the turning point in history, the tortured epistemological dilemma—"parody" in its root meaning (παρά=next to, alongside of, in mockery of; ᾠδή=a song) suggests the secondary character of the form, its ironic tone and its exaggerated and incongruous distortions of its models. Furthermore, parody suggests the secondary character that Nemoianu has recently analyzed as constituting the category of literature itself in its marginal relationship to the world of power and to the central and governing practices of the

[30] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984), 21, 84–95, on the "regenerating ambivalence" of parody.

[31] MacIntyre argues for "tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive inquiry" as "understood in terms of historical context" and "engaging in ongoing arguments . . . and debates" (9, 394). See his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

society—the economy, the government, and the media.[32] Parody is a primarily literary and formal term, not an ideologically laden term like crisis. Parody also escapes the charge of anachronism since it is a concept formulated in literary theory as early as Aristotle's *Poetics* and practiced in literature throughout medieval and early modern Europe.[33]

The five oppositions that I have described here—between critic and writer, fragment and whole, deferral and presence, historicism and literariness, crisis and parody—inform my approach to the poem throughout. In the next chapter, I discuss Renaissance cosmological structures of thought—in Pomponazzi's ethics, Leonardo's theory of representing the body, and Machiavelli's historiography—as analogies to the narrative structure of the *Furioso*. I provide some historical context and points of comparison for my hypothesis that the poem parodies the Stoic cosmos. Following this comparative analysis, I attempt a structural reading of the entire narrative of the *Furioso* as alternate world, as literary cosmos. I base this reading of the *Furioso* on a comparison of the three editions of the poem, which reveals Ariosto's strategic placement of new material to create a greater degree of formal order. This structural analysis highlights central literary and philosophical parodies. I call them central because they happen to occur at spatial centers of narrative action but also because they have been the most discussed passages of the poem in the critical tradition. These episodes are key to understanding the way the poem plays with its literary and philosophical models.

Since I have indicated where I differ with recent American criticism, I want to discuss briefly how my reading of the poem affirms parts of the critical tradition on the *Furioso*. There is some Italian criticism of tremendous suggestiveness and explanatory power that has been overlooked by some of the American critics discussed above.

[32] Virgil Nemoianu, *A Theory of the Secondary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989).

[33] See the entry for parody in *The New Princeton Enclyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* ed. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 881–83. Aristotle's *Poetics* 1448a12 is the *locus classicus* for the term in literary criticism. See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 73–101, on the medieval and Renaissance traditions of sacred and popular parodies, as opposed to the purely formal literary parody of modern literature.

(Ascoli is a notable exception; he seems to have read and been able to synthesize an enormous range of Italian criticism.) If we are not unknowingly to repeat either the insights or blindnesses of past critics, it is necessary to have some sense of where we stand in relation to this complex body of criticism.

Many critics from the sixteenth century to the present seem to share the reaction of Ariosto's patron Ippolito d'Este: "Where did you find these balls, Mr. Ludovico?" ["Dove hai trovato queste coglionerie, Messer Ludovico?"][34] "Coglionerie," which derives from "coglioni" ("testicles" or "balls") and conveys the sense of "all balled up," contains a wide range of meanings that correspond to judgments of the *Furioso* that my reading attempts to correct. If we take "coglioneria" to mean "sproposito," the poem becomes a blunder, as such rigidly normative sixteenth-century critics as Camillo Pellegrino contended.[35] If we interpret "coglioneria" to mean "grossolano," or "rozzo," the poem appears a choppy rather than a sublime flight, as Montaigne disparaged the *Furioso* in comparison to the *Aeneid*.[36] If we translate "coglioneria" to mean "balordaggine," the poem is reduced to a stupid and unoriginal imitation of greater models, as it was by Rajna's disparaging philological scrutiny.[37] If we construe "coglioneria" to mean "sciochezza," the poem becomes what De Sanctis saw as ironic comedy lacking serious moral thought.[38] If we take "coglioneria" to mean "sbaglio," the poem becomes the "mod-

[34] De Sanctis renders this line, "Dove hai trovato queste corbellerie?" in his *History of Italian Literature*, trans. Joan Redfern (New York: Basic Books, 1921), 2: 515. Barbara Reynolds quotes the unbowdlerized "coglionerie," but translates it as "balderdash" in the introduction to her translation of the *Orlando Furioso* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 1:72 n. 3.

[35] For the various meanings of "coglioneria," see *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, ed. Nicola Zingarelli (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1970), 358. See Bernard Weinberg's summary of the critical controversy, "The Quarrel over Ariosto and Tasso," in *A History of Literary Criticism of the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), 2:954–1073.

[36] Book 2, 10, of *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1965), 300.

[37] Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell' "Orlando Furioso"* (1876; reprint, Florence: Sansoni, 1975).

[38] De Sanctis, "The *Orlando Furioso*," in *History of Italian Literature*, 485. Here De Sanctis speaks of Ariosto as the poet of "art for its own sake."

ern" recognition of epistemological disorder and of the error of all literature, as some recent American critics would have it.[39]

To deny the poem's philosophical content and narrative structure is to subject the poem to the gaze of power, whether it be the power of Cardinal Ippolito or the power of the academic critic. Must criticism subject the poem to a standard—whether it be Aristotelian or deconstructive? Or is there some sense in which the poem itself can tell us how it wants to be read? The early debates on the poem show that some critics allowed the *Furioso* to be its own standard. We can gain historical perspective on contemporary Ariosto criticism by examining its relation, whether acknowledged or not, to the initial debates over the poem. We can also see that there is plenty of precedent for viewing the poem as a well-crafted whole.

In *Il Carrafa* (1584), the first published comparison of Tasso and Ariosto, Camillo Pellegrino defended the superior epic unity and dignity of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.[40] For Pellegrino, its single theme, dominated by a single hero, and its gravity of language qualified Tasso's poem as classical, in conformity with the models of Homer and Virgil, while the lack of these qualities made Ariosto's poem a "brilliant but shallow tour de force."[41]

Although some of the early critics simply contradicted the restrictive demands of the "ancients" with an affirmation of the *Furioso* as entertainment, other critics combatted Pellegrino's claim that the poem does not fulfill the Aristotelian requirement of unity.[42] In *Il Carrafa*, Pellegrino stated that the perfect epic should be "as Aristotle

[39] For the first view, see Greene, *Descent From Heaven*, 129; for the second, see Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 38.

[40] Peter M. Brown, "The Historical Significance of the Polemics over Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*," *Studi secenteschi* 11 (1970): 3. Camillo Pellegrino's defense, published in 1584, was entitled *Il Carrafa, ovvero dell'epica poesia, Dialogo di C. Pellegrino*.

[41] Brown, "The Polemics over Tasso's *Gerusalemme*," 14.

[42] See Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism*; for objections to Ariosto's tendency to interrupt a story, see Antonio Minturno, 971–73, and Nicolo degli Oddi, 1032. For praise of variety, see particularly Orazio Ariosto, 1000–04, Lionardo Salviati, 1004–09, and Giraldi Cintio, 967–71. Cintio speaks of "variety" as the "primary source of pleasure," 969, and Caburacci, too, sees pleasure as the end of poetry, 908–83. Salviati, Ariosto, and Malatesta look for unity in the *Furioso*'s variety.

would want it ... understood in a single view."[43] In his *Difesa*, later known as the *Stacciata Prima* (1585), Salviati responded to Pellegrino's disparagement of Ariosto. Salviati argued that Aristotle's theory was based on reason rather than on the practice of Homer and Virgil and that Ariosto had interpreted the rational principles of plot, character, thought, and diction for his own time.[44] Following Ariosto's own metaphor for his plot, Salviati compared the *Furioso* to a tapestry of many threads. Later, in *Lo 'Nfarinato secondo* (1588), Salviati argued that the episodes of the poem that had been viewed as merely ornamental were integrated into an epic plot, the unity of which could be compared to an almond-shaped structure, as opposed to the ribbon-like structure of drama.[45]

Most suggestive for my reading of the poem are the metaphors of Torquato Tasso, Gioseppe Malatesta, and Orazio Ariosto, all of whom presented the poem as an alternate world.[46] Unlike Salviati, who saw epic and romance as one genre, Malatesta defended the *Furioso* as romance, but his conception of romance showed a considerably more sophisticated grasp than that of many previous critics. The variety of romance was organized on the model of a little world:

> it seems that the romance imitating in this the most marvellous effects of the one who is the master of all craftsmen, by which I mean Nature, has made the human imagination wonder at seeing in a poem as if in a little world many diverse things, dissimilar to one another, converge to produce a totality so well disposed and ordered.[47]

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[43] Weinberg, *History of Literary Criticism*, 992: "da una sola attione formar un sol carpo, il quale, come vuole Aristotile sia tale, che possa comprendersi in una sola vista."

[44] Brown, "Polemics over Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*," 19–20.

[45] Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 1007, 1040.

[46] Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 1063–64. Malatesta in *Della poesia romanzesca* (1596), like Francesco Patrizi in *Parere in difesa dell'Ariosto* (1585), objected to Pellegrino's interpretation of Aristotelian unity because this notion of a single dominant action has no basis in Homer's poems. For Malatesta, this requirement could be seen as "consisting in the organization of many actions depending on one another through verisimilitude ... then Aristotle becomes the theorist of multiplicity."

[47] Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 1062: "par che il Romanzo imitando in questo i più maravigliosi effetti di colei che è Maestra di tutti gli

This *topos* of the poem as microcosm had been earlier expressed by Tasso in his *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* (c. 1562–65; published 1587): "as in a little world, we read of mustering armies, land and sea battles, conquests of cities, skirmishes and duels, jousts, drought and starvation, tempests, fires, prodigies."[48]

Orazio Ariosto applied the metaphor of the poem as a world to the *Furioso* to defend its adherence to the Aristotelian requirement of organic unity:

> And if the poem with a single action is most similar to an animal, then most similar to a very great animal, which is the world, will be the poem with the most actions artfully woven together, because, as the world is composed of five separate bodies all equally important to the constitution of the whole (however more or less noble), so it is possible to compose a poem out of many actions, all equally important; indeed such a poem has been created by Ariosto.[49]

Malatesta's analogy of the poem to a "little world ... a whole, well disposed and ordered" ("picciol mondo ... un tutto bene disposto & ordinato"), and Salviati's concept of the three-dimensional amplitude of the epic are here synthesized into the image of the greatest animal, the World, with its five bodies, or parts. It would seem that the

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artefici, della Natura dico, habbia procurato di far si che gli humani ingegni, si ammirassero di vedere in un Poema quasi in un picciol mondo molte cose diverse non conformi tra loro concorrere à produrre un tutto cosi bene disposto & ordinato."

[48] The translation is by Lawrence F. Rhu, *The Genesis of Tasso's Narrative Theory* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ., 1993), 131. For the original, see Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, ed. L. Poma (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1964), 36: "quasi in un picciolo mondo, qui si leggano ordinanze d'esserciti, qui battaglie terrestri e navali, qui espugnazioni di città, scaramucce, e dueli, qui giostre, qui descrizioni di fama e di sete, qui tempeste, qui incendi, qui prodigii."

[49] Orazio Ariosto, *Difese Dell' "Orlando Furioso" del Ariosto*, in Tasso, *Apologia* (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini , 1586), 211: "E s'il poema d'una sola attione è più simile ad un'animale, più simile ad un grandissimo animale, ch'è'l Mondo, sarà il poema di più attioni artificiosamente intrecciate insieme, perche, come di cinque corpi semplici tutti egualmente principali, quanto alla constitution del tutto (se ben poi più, e men nobili) e composto il Mondo; cosi di piu attioni, tutte egualmente principali, si può comporre un poema; anzi è stato composto dall'Ariosto." Compare Weinberg's summary, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 1002.

"cinque corpi semplici" correspond to the "cinque parti del Mondo," the five divisions of the world as globe. The analogy of the poem to a world that can be represented in a map or globe divided into five equal parts is a precedent for my analysis of the poem's structure as a cosmos. Orazio represents the totality of the poem as composed of five bodies just as my analysis of the poem yields a comprehensible five-part scheme. More specifically, Ariosto's indication that all the many actions of the poem "artfully woven together" constitute its totality as an alternate "world," in which all the many diverse parts are equally important to the whole, expresses a dynamic model of order that is particularly characteristic of the Stoic cosmos that I use to explain the poem's order. In the Stoic cosmos, multiplicity is not opposed to but rather issues into unity. The image of the poem as a very large animal, the world, makes Orazio's version of the poem as cosmos both organic and biological, like the Stoic cosmos, as opposed to static and geometric, like the Neoplatonic cosmos.

Benedetto Croce's criticism is the most important modern contribution to the genealogy of criticism that sees the poem as an ordered whole. In his essay on Ariosto, Croce developed the concept of cosmic harmony, and yet at the same time he denied that this harmony had any philosophical content.[50] While Croce's identification of the poem's harmony with the poet's personality is clearly a limitation in his reading, I think it is still possible to view Croce's observation of harmony as the foundation of the most fruitful twentieth-century interpretations, even when they contest Croce's abstraction and denial of the poem's philosophical content.[51]

Such historically minded critics, because of their interest in literary tradition, also owe some debt to the most extensive study of the poem's sources, Pio Rajna's *Le fonti dell' "Orlando Furioso"*. In fact, most important for my work have been two diametrically opposed approaches—the criticism of Croce and the philology of Pio Rajna.

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[50] Croce, "Ariosto," in *Ariosto, Shakespeare, e Corneille* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), 1–72.

[51] Durling, *The Figure of the Poet*; Saccone, *Il "sogetto"*; Walter Binni, *Metodo e poesia di Ludovico Ariosto*, 3d ed. (Messina-Florence: D'Anna, 1970); Enzo Noè Girardi, "*Ariosto, Shakespeare, Corneille* e la definizione crociano del *Furioso*," in *Studi sull'Ariosto* (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1977), 15–38.

The critic and the scholar establish two chief characteristics of the *Furioso*: Rajna, its wealth of literary ancestors; Croce, its harmony. Each unfolds that characteristic with an approach radically different from the other: Rajna with philology and Croce with intuition. Each is in turn terribly suspicious of the other's approach. Rajna fears "concezioni subiettive,"[52] and Croce dismisses the search for sources as capricious in its actual selectivity, and "impossible" in what Croce sees as an unlimited field of inquiry.[53] Each is limited in his understanding by a particular philosophical bias. Rajna's positivism permits him to see only direct borrowings from literary sources and to miss significant indirect borrowings and the larger conceptual structure within which all these are transformed. Croce's particular version of idealism permits him to see only harmony of sentiment but neither the philosophical nor the literary tradition which controls and affects that sentiment. And yet Rajna possesses a staggering erudition and Croce a synthetic elegance—neither of which could be easily equalled.

It was just this erudition and synthesis which made it possible for me to follow that interpretive circle Leo Spitzer describes:

> What [the scholar] must be able to do ... is ... to work from the surface to the "inward life-center" of the work of art: first observing details about the superficial appearance of the particular work (and the "ideas" expressed by a poet are also only one of the superficial traits in a work of art); then, grouping these details and seeking to interpret them in a creative principle ... and finally make the return trip to all the other groups of observations in order to find whether the "inward form" one has tentatively constructed gives an account of the whole.[54]

First, I observed Rajna's comments on the poem's sources; second, I tried to tie the particular use of sources as well as the psychological effects of the narrative control of the author to a complex of philosophical "ideas"; and third, making use of Croce's analysis of the

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[52] Rajna, *Le fonti*, xiv.

[53] Croce, *Ariosto, Shakespeare, e Corneille*, 5–6.

[54] Leo Spitzer, *Linguistics and Literary History: Essays in Stylistics* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948), 19.

"creative principle," as a way of explaining the aesthetic realization of these ideas, I took the "return trip" and tested my hypothesis on the whole. It was Rajna's philological gloss on the title which first led me to read Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and *Hercules Oetaeus*; and so began my investigation of Stoicism, which reached back to Roman and Hellenistic texts. Far from being a source for the poem, Stoic physics provides an analogy for the world of the poem, a way of uniting Rajna's observations on the particulars of literariness and Croce's on the general principle of its harmony.

For Rajna's positivism and Croce's idealism I have substituted a more historical sense of Ariosto's eclectic and parodic treatment of classical philosophy as it was received by his contemporaries. On the one hand, Rajna's positivistic approach to cataloguing Ariosto's sources cannot tell us why he chose those sources and why he ordered them the way he did; on the other hand, Croce's idealist approach to the soul of the poet in the spirit of the work cannot tell us how that spirit can account for the form of the work as a whole. The conflict amongst different schools of philosophy—particularly that between Neoplatonism and Stoicism—can provide a more historical way to discuss the method by which Ariosto's work is ordered and the philosophical concerns which underly his use of past literature.

Exactly how Ariosto received Stoicism—what books he actually read, for instance—is difficult to ascertain.[55] But the works of Cicero and Seneca were part of his humanist education and were read and commented on by many of his contemporaries. The influence of Hellenistic Stoicism—particularly Stoic logic, little discussed by the Roman Stoics—is more difficult to ascertain. Ariosto could have known of Hellenistic Stoicism through such authors as Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus, who wrote well after Zeno and his school.[56] Nevertheless, the historian Bouwsma maintains, "The an-

[55] Cesare Segre, "La Biblioteca dell'Ariosto," in *Esperienze ariostesche* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1966), 45–50.

[56] The Latin translation of the early third-century Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* was printed in the early fifteenth century, but his work had been read throughout the Middle Ages. The late second-century Sextus Empiricus' works were published in Latin in 1526. There is also a Latin manuscript which the Teubner editor, H. Mutschmann, dates as thirteenth century. For Diogenes Laertius, see *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, LCL (1938), 1:x; for Sextus Empiricus, see

cient sources on which Renaissance humanism was nourished were not hellenic but hellenistic."[57] These Hellenistic influences were often indirect and perhaps not even consciously acknowledged. At times it is even difficult to distinguish Stoicism sharply from Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism, since, like much of Renaissance humanism, Stoicism was eclectic and heterogeneous.

I do not explain the rapport between Ariosto's *Furioso* and Stoicism through passive source study, but through careful analysis of the formal and philosophical affinites between the poem and Stoic texts. This comparison will yield observations concerning the poem as a whole—not merely glosses on individual lines. Stoic cosmology provides a way of describing the structure of the poem. Stoic moral writings, which rest on that rational cosmological order, help me describe the poem's treatment of moral issues—both ethical and political. Stoic concepts of language and art explain how the poem represents the world and how art, like nature, is dynamically ordered. Before discussing the poem itself in detail, I will examine how some other early sixteenth-century Italian texts embody the presuppositions of Stoicism. I interpret the poem as a cosmos not simply to observe its beautiful form, but to inquire into the larger cultural and philosophical significance of this form.

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*Sextus Empiricus*, trans. R. G. Bury, LCL (1933), 1:xiv. I introduce Sextus Empiricus and Diogenes Laertius into this study not to suggest that they were sources for Ariosto but to clarify the tradition of Stoic thought which Ariosto may have received indirectly, and which, in any case, seems well suited to describe the philosophic outlook of the *Furioso*.

[57] William J. Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought," in *Itinerarium Italicum: The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations*, ed. Heiko Oberman with Thomas A. Brady, Jr. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 5.

CHAPTER TWO

# *Analogies to Stoic Cosmology in Early Sixteenth-Century Italian Texts: Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli*

THIS INVESTIGATION OF TEXTS ROUGHLY CONTEMPORARY with the *Furioso* is designed to provide my interpretation of the poem with what Gadamer calls an "historical horizon." It is impossible to recapture the past completely; Gadamer, however, argues that we can still attempt "to see the past in terms of its own being, not in terms of our contemporary criteria and prejudices."[1] The structure of the *Furioso* resists the concerns of contemporary theory, particularly the concern with fragmentation. Each of the poem's parts has its necessary place in the harmony of the whole. In the unity of its narrative, the *Furioso* forms an alternate world or cosmos. This alternate cosmos resembles the Stoic cosmos in at least three respects: (1) in its harmony, which expresses the order of both physics and morals; (2) in its spherical structure, which symmetrically frames and moves towards the center; (3) in its dynamic order, in which unity and symmetry result from multiplicity—from continuously shifting and apparently random action. In these respects we can compare the poetic structure of the *Orlando Furioso* to similar representations of order in other early sixteenth-century Italian texts: the treatise *De fato* of Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), the *Trattato della pittura* and the *Libro del disegno delli Moti Naturali* of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), and the *Discorsi* of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527).[2] There are deep affinities be-

[1] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, ed. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 269.

[2] Pietro Pomponazzi, *Libri quinque de fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione*, ed. Richard le May (Lugano: Thesaurus Mundi, 1957); Leonardo da Vinci, "Libro del Disgno delli Moti Naturali," in *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. 1, ed. Jean Paul Richter, commentary by Carlo Pedretti (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977); *Trattato della pittura*, 2 vols., ed. A. Borzelli (Carabba:

tween the structures these authors use to explain the field of inquiry—ethics, visual representation, political history—and the structure of the Stoic cosmos. These examples of structural models analogous to the Stoic cosmos provide some specific areas of comparison to the cosmological structure of the *Furioso*'s narrative action.

The point, however, is not that these authors directly influenced one another, but that the concept of order which their texts have in common can be explained in terms of common presuppositions. Fernand Hallyn has developed this notion of *retombée*—"the production of analogous effects from common presuppositions forming part of the anonymous intertext"—in order to account for the relation between such similar but not causally related cultural productions as the central place of the altar in Renaissance churches and the central place of the sun in Copernicus' system.[3] The theoretical relevance of Hallyn's notion of *retombée* for my argument is two-fold. *Retombée* accounts for the mediated and yet real relationship between similar structures in roughly contemporary texts. Even though these texts did not influence each other directly, they are "sustained by the same presupposition, ... several events falling from the same point." Because these parallel events refer to common presuppositions they have a real ontological status; I did not simply invent them. The common presuppositions of Ariosto, Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli can be precisely and systematically articulated in terms of Stoic philosophy and even located within Stoic texts. But because of complex formal parallels amongst cosmological structures in such diverse systems as astronomy, architecture, philosophy, and theology, I would add an important qualification here. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine if one representational system was the primary influence on the others. All these structures, in so far as they are analogous to one another, tend to reinforce each other's meaning. The embodiment of Stoic cosmological principles in poetry, ethics, art, and

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Lanciano, 1914); Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe e Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983).

[3] Fernand Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of the World*, trans. Donald M. Leslie (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 27. Hallyn has significantly revised Severo Sarduy's concept of *retombée*; Sarduy defines the term as the "consequence of something that has not yet happened, resemblance to something that at the moment does not exist" (*Barroco* [Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1975], 7).

history precedes their systematic explanation and explicit designation as Stoic within natural philosophy.

In fact, there is a major objection to this attempt to trace a Stoic genealogy for the common structural principles of these early sixteenth-century texts: that is, their authors could not have consciously thought in terms of Stoic physics. The prevailing view in the history of ideas is that Renaissance natural philosophy is predominantly Aristotelian.[4] And it has been claimed that Stoic physics and logic cannot be discussed in terms of systematic articulation until Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) and the late sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century writers who were influenced by his work.[5] But there remains the possibility of indirect interest in Stoic physics and logic. Lipsius' interest in Stoic philosophy itself is directly indebted to such earlier work as Erasmus' edition of the works of Seneca.[6] And although it might be argued that Erasmus was primarily concerned with Seneca as a moralist, the counterargument could also be made that because of the unity of logic, morals, and physics in Stoicism, Stoic ethical texts imply or presuppose Stoic physics. Lipsius' direct explanation of Stoic physical theories is preceded by the indirect or unconscious embodiment of these theories in Ariosto's *Furioso*, as well as in the works of Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli. While these authors might not always have made a sharp distinction between Aristotelian and Stoic physics, and while they might not have consciously connected the cosmological structures in their works with Stoicism, these structures—whether directly derived from a Stoic text or indirectly derived from an intermediate source—share the common presuppositions of Stoic cosmology.

Pomponazzi's *De fato* shares with the *Furioso* an understanding of

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[4] See William A. Wallace, "Traditional Natural Philosophy," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt, Q. Skinner, E. Kessler, and J. Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 201–35.

[5] Jason Lewis Saunders, *Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), 82–83, 118–19. On Stoic logic, see Gunter Abel, *Stoizismus und Frühe Neuzeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 187–207, 228–310; Père Julien-Eymard D'Angers, "Le stoïcisme en France dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle," in *Recherches sur le stoïcisme au XVIe et XVIIe siècle* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975), 133–205, and, in the same volume, "Sénèque, Epictète et le stoïcisme dans l'oevre de René Descartes," 453–80.

[6] Seneca, *Opera*, ed. Desiderius Erasmus (Basle, 1520).

how good and evil are harmonized in a rational cosmos. Leonardo's representation of the body as a microcosm parallels the patterned represention of action in Ariosto's poetic cosmos. For Leonardo, organic change produces order in the natural world; similarly, the seemingly chaotic narrative of the *Furioso* actually produces its own order. Machiavelli's explanation of the effects of historical repetition and change illuminates the meaning of narrative repetition and change in Ariosto's epic.

## Stoicism and the History of Ideas

A brief review of the literature on Renaissance Stoicism reveals that, with a few notable exceptions, this period has been largely overlooked in the history of ideas. The first and still most thorough treatment of Renaissance Stoicism is Léontine Zanta's *La Renaissance du stoïcisme aux XVIe siècle*. Zanta concentrates on the emergence of neo-Stoicism and the harmonization of Christian and Stoic thought. She catalogues the participants in this tradition from its originators, the Church Fathers, to both humanist and Reformation authors. The neo-Stoic tradition reaches its fullest realization in the works of the two major late sixteenth-century philosophers, Justus Lipsius and Guillaume Du Vair.[7] Like most other studies of Renaissance Stoicism, Zanta's account treats ethics exhaustively but only briefly mentions physics—specifically the rediscovery of Stoic physics by Lipsius.[8]

Although Lipsius had difficulty reconciling certain aspects of Stoic physics with his Christian neo-Stoic ethics, the relation between these two branches of philosophy is important for the development of his thought.[9] So crucial are the implications of this renovation of Stoic physics for a full understanding of Stoic philosophy that Saunders, the author of the only book-length monograph in English on Lipsius, begins his study with the following observation:

> Stoicism, as a philosophical system, can be formulated in a very general fashion, as follows: that morality consists in using every endeavor to obtain an ultimate end which is in accordance with

[7] Zanta, *La Renaissance du stoïcisme aux XVIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1914).

[8] Zanta, *Renaissance du stoïcisme*, 234–35.

[9] Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 117–217.

> Nature, and that this endeavor, even if it should be unsuccessful, is in itself the sole thing desirable and the sole good; that ethics is the chief aim, but not the only concern (for the early Stoics); that physics is a necessary foundation for valid moral theory; and that this central ethical doctrine implies and postulates all physical notions.[10]

Zanta's lack of attention to Stoic physics results in a number of omissions: no discussion of the crucial relation between physics and morals, and no discussion of the implications of this relation for philosophy, let alone for politics, history, or art. Pomponazzi describes man's relation to the cosmos according to this Stoic correspondence between physics and morals. Leonardo's analogy of nature to art shows the aesthetic implications of this correspondence. Machiavelli's concept of cyclical change in history shows the political consequences of the Stoic connection between physics and morals.

Not surprisingly, the most recent studies of Renaissance Stoicism concentrate on late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century French authors and neglect these earlier Italian authors.[11] The many French translations and editions of Stoic authors and the important contributions to Stoic philosophy by Charron and Du Vair account, at least in part, for this Gallic focus.[12] Though emphasizing French versions of Stoicism, Spanneut's *Permanence du stoïcisme* is useful for comparative research because it identifies many writers from many different countries and periods in western history who could be described as Stoic. However, Spanneut gives only a very general explanation of why any of these authors might be considered Stoic. So, for example, Spanneut mentions Giordano Bruno for the importance of cosmology to his thought, even though his theory of infinite worlds corresponds more to an Epicurean than to a Stoic physics.[13]

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[10] Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, xiii.

[11] See Père Julien-Eymard D'Angers, *Recherches sur le stoïcisme*; Abel, *Stoizismus und Frühe Neuzeit*; and even to a certain extent Michel Spanneut, *Permanence du stoïcisme* (Gembloux: Editions J. Duculat, 1973).

[12] For a bibliography of the Renaissance translations and editions of Stoic authors and sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century texts on Stoic philosophy, see Père Julien-Eymard D'Angers, *Recherches sur le stoïcisme*, 507–27.

[13] Spanneut, *Permanence du stoïcisme*, 222. For a comparison of the difference between Epicurean and Stoic physics, see Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 188, 194–95, 209.

Conversely, Spanneut omits Leonardo and Machiavelli, whose works are informed by the structure of Stoic cosmological theory. In his biography of Coluccio Salutati, Ronald Witt discusses the appeal of Stoic ethics—the emphasis on virtue for its own sake, the need for the individual to stand against the ignorant crowd—to the early Italian humanists.[14] There is still much work to be done on the tradition of Stoic philosophy in the Renaissance, especially on the connection between the earlier fourteenth-century phase of interest in Stoicism with the later sixteenth and seventeenth-century neo-Stoicism. My discussion of Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli only begins to reconstruct some sense of the Stoicism of the early sixteenth century.

In particular, when it comes to Renaissance intellectual history a combination of critical prejudice and positivistic methodology has caused the neglect of Stoicism. The critical prejudice may be Epicurean, Platonic, Aristotelian, or a combination of these philosophies.[15] This in itself is not a fault, but it becomes a fault when the orientation of the intellectual historian pretends to objectivity. It is easy to see why intellectual historians tend to concentrate on Plato and Aristotle, since their works are so important in the Renaissance reinterpretation of ancient philosophy and since they are considered the two greatest ancient philosophers. However, positivistic source study has its limitations. From the point of view of source study, had Pomponazzi never identified some of his positions as Stoic, scholars would never have commented on the Stoic content of his works.

The more recent studies of Marcia Colish and Jill Kraye attempt to remedy the neglect of Stoicism in intellectual history.[16] For both Kraye and Colish, Renaissance thinkers were interested exclusively in Stoic moral philosophy, not in Stoic physics. Kraye, in particular,

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[14] Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1983), 63–65.

[15] See, for example, Eugenio Garin, *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano* (Florence: Sansoni, 1961); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979); Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1972).

[16] See Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985); Jill Kraye, "Moral Philosophy," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 301–86.

makes the distinction between the earlier humanists' criticism of the harshness of Stoic morals and the later sixteenth-century neo-Stoics' embrace of Stoic morals as a response to the turmoil of the religious wars in Europe. In Kraye's account, not until the late sixteenth-century was there positive expression of Stoic philosophy, the focus of which was upon Stoic morals.

The limitations of intellectual historical methodology—both that which caused the earlier total neglect of Stoicism and that which underpins the later, more responsible, if still limited, approach to Renaissance Stoicism—is implicitly criticized by William Bouwsma. In his suggestive and wide-ranging essay on Renaissance Stoicism and Augustinianism, he corrects the imbalance of attention to Platonism and Aristotelianism in the history of Renaissance thought, and he also stresses the Stoic foundation of morals in physics:

> The Stoicism of the Renaissance, perhaps especially when it was least aware of its Stoic inspiration, was based, like ancient Stoicism, on natural philosophy and cosmology, a point of some importance in view of the common supposition that Renaissance thinkers only drew isolated, practical ethical precepts from Stoic sources.[17]

Bouwsma's point here is that whether the Renaissance thinker realized the connection between Stoic morals and Stoic physics—indeed especially if he did not even fully realize the Stoic origins of his thought—this connection was implicit in the very character of Stoic reasoning. In other words, Stoic accounts of morality necessarily imply Stoic physics.

Bouwsma was not the first to comment on the importance of Stoicism in the intellectual life of the Renaissance. John Herman Randall calls certain Renaissance views "Stoic" in characterizing Pomponazzi as representative of the "spirit of the age":

> its view of human nature as a link between heaven and earth, its reverence for the authority of the ancients—for him, Aristotle—and despite all theory, its Stoic temper of mind.[18]

[17] Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism," 17.

[18] John Herman Randall, Jr., "Pietro Pomponazzi: Introduction," in *The*

This "Stoic temper of mind," as Eugene Rice argued, resides in the view of human nature as a link between heaven and earth. The notion of human things, not just divine things, as an object of wisdom, the belief in human reason as an interpreter of the material universe, and the importance of strictly human concerns as intelligible through human means—all these ideas, Stoic in their inspiration, Rice argued, contributed to the growth of secular thought.[19] More recently, Renaissance intellectual historians—including Rice—have qualifed or even rejected this earlier emphasis on a secular civic humanism. Still, the renewed interest in human reason and in the material world that so much of early modern Italian culture displays need not be rejected because of the anachronistic concept of "secular humanism." Until the work of Peter Barker and B. J. T. Dobbs on Stoic physics in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bouwsma's view of cosmology as the basis of Renaissance Stoicism had been a minority opinion amongst intellectual historians.[20] My analysis of the cosmological ordering principles in the works of Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli will further bear out Bouwsma's view.

The cosmologically based ethics of Pomponazzi are a point of comparison for the ethical issues raised by the *Furioso*'s structure. Leonardo's account of how the motion of the human body describes its order as a microcosm sheds light on how the *Furioso*'s action creates a pattern analogous to the cosmos. The structure of history in Machiavelli's *Discorsi* provides a parallel to the structure of narrative in the *Furioso*. Turning to the political implications of Stoic cosmology, I will examine whether or not these versions of Stoicism confirm that it, like Cynicism, presents a "post-political conception of self,"

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*Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (1948; reprint, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), 268.

[19] Eugene F. Rice, Jr., *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958).

[20] Peter Barker, "Jean Pena and Stoic Physics in the Sixteenth Century," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 (1985) Supplement: 93–107; B. J. T. Dobbs, "Newton and Stoicism," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23 (1985) Supplement: 109–23. See Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism," 4 n. 1, for his indebtedness to Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970).

and whether Stoicism allows for something other than indifference to or fascination with power.[21]

## The "Harmony" of the *Orlando Furioso*: Neoplatonic or Stoic?

In his essay on the harmony of the *Furioso*, Croce gives this suggestive description of Ariosto's irony:

> One might say that Ariosto's irony is similar to the eye of God, who watches creation moving, all creation, loving it all equally, in good and in evil, in the greatest and in the smallest, in man and in the grain of sand, because he has made it all, and only seizing in it the motion itself, the eternal dialectic, the rhythm and the harmony.[22]

Croce conceived of the formal perfection of the *Furioso*—the controlled ironic tone, the rhythm of its ottave, the harmony of the poem as a whole—as the effect of the order of the poem as an alternate world, or cosmos. Certain of the cosmic qualities which Croce attributes to Ariosto's epic could be explained in either Neoplatonic or Aristotelian terms. Taken as a whole, however, these qualities are those of the Stoic cosmos. First, implicit in the notion of "creation moving" is the biological model of the Stoic universe. The Stoics, like Aristotle, thought of the cosmos as a living organism. For the Stoics, the principle of vital heat governed the constant motion of the universe as well as the human body. Furthermore, as materialists, the Stoics identified this vital heat with the human soul and with the soul of the universe, unlike Plato and Aristotle, for whom the soul was

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[21] Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism," 12. Gordon Braden, "Stoicism and Empire," in *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985), 16–17. See especially these remarks: "Stoicism is not finally a philosophy of political resistance. The essential Stoic strategy for dealing with a tyrant is not interference but indifference" (17).

[22] Quoted by Durling, *Figure of the Poet*, 250. Benedetto Croce, *Ariosto, Shakespeare e Corneille*, 49: "Si direbbe, l'ironia dell'Ariosto, simile all'occhio di Dio che guarda il moversi della creazione, di tutta la creazione, amandola alla pari, nel bene e nel male, nel grandissimo e nel piccolissimo, nell'uomo e nel granello di sabbia, perché tutta l'ha fatta lui, e non cogliendo in essa che il moto stesso, l'eterna dialettica, il ritmo e l'armonia."

nonphysical.[23] The biological dynamism of the Stoic model differs from the geometric stasis of the Neoplatonic universe. Second, the assertion that "God ... lov[es] it all equally, in good and in evil" is reminiscent of the Stoic account of the harmonization of good and evil, in which both good and evil are equally necessary.[24] From a Neoplatonic point of view, everything that is, is good; evil has no ontological status.[25] Third, the implied analogy between "the greatest and the smallest" between "man and ... the grain of sand" suggests the analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm, which was characteristic of both Stoicism and Neoplatonism.[26] Finally, the equation between "motion" and "harmony" again makes Croce's cosmos a Stoic one. The Stoics as materialists embraced the concept of unified order issuing from change in the natural world, while Plato feared and distrusted natural change.[27]

Durling objected to Croce's attributing the poem's harmony to "Ariosto's irony ... similar to the eye of God": "The idea that God loves evil as much as good is a vulgarism which would have been incomprehensible to [Ariosto]."[28] Croce's interpretation, Durling claimed, was antithetical to Ariosto's "idea of the world" and "utterly anachronistic." According to Durling, Croce's view of Ariostean harmony did not relate to "the [Neoplatonic] conception of harmony prevalent in the Renaissance." I would argue that Croce's description of the poem's harmony could be described as Stoic. Indeed, Walter Binni characterizes Croce's conception of the *Furioso*'s harmony as

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[23] See Friedrich Solmsen, *Cleanthes or Posidonius? The Basis of Stoic Physics*, Mededeelingen der Koninklijke, Nederlandsche Akademie Van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 24, no. 9 (1961): 15.

[24] See Emile Bréhier, *The Hellenistic and Roman Age*, trans. Wade Baskin (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), 54.

[25] See Charles Elsee, *Neoplatonism in Relation to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1908), 116, where he describes Plotinus' argument that evil is devoid of real existence (*Enn.* 3.2.2.) as an influence upon Augustine.

[26] See Emile Bréhier on the similarity between the Neoplatonic and Stoic concepts of the analogy between the world soul and the individual soul, *The Hellenistic and Roman Age*, 190–91.

[27] Bréhier, *The Hellenistic and Roman Age*, 44: "Movement, change, and time are not the mark of imperfection or incomplete being, as in the case of the geometrician Plato or the biologist Aristotle. At each instant the world which is forever changing and forever in motion has the plenitude of its perfection."

[28] All quotations in this paragraph are from Durling, *Figure of the Poet*, 250–51.

"più o meno stoico."[29] Croce, however, did not mediate his approach to the *Furioso* by situating the text in relation to other Renaissance texts, as Durling did. At the same time, Durling's richly suggestive discussion of Neoplatonism in the *Furioso* could be complicated by an examination of the text's rapport with Stoicism.

That the Stoic concept of harmony accounts for the poetic effects of the *Furioso* any more precisely than the Neoplatonic concept of order remains to be seen. Only a thorough reading of the *Furioso* (which I will provide in the following chapters) can set forth the evidence upon which to decide between these rival accounts. A necessary preliminary step is to observe the traces of Stoic cosmology in texts contemporary with the *Furioso*. I will show which Stoic texts could have made the presuppositions of Stoic cosmology available to Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli. I will analyze how they embodied Stoic concepts of order in their works, and I will begin to suggest similarities between the ordering principles in their works and in the *Furioso*.

## Pietro Pomponazzi: The Cosmic Harmonization of Good and Evil

In the epilogue to *De fato* completed in 1520, Pomponazzi appeals to the Stoic hypothesis of cosmic harmony to answer the challenge raised by the problem of evil:

> Nevertheless, I maintain two things. First: because the argument is grounded in purely natural terms and because this is as much as human reason admits, thus my opinion is that the most logical position is that of the Stoics. Indeed the strongest argument is against the belief that God is the cause of sins and thus God sins, which is absurd and in error. But, if we grant that human souls are mortal, as I think the Stoics maintain, according to me there is nothing which appears troublesome [in their view]. It is in fact no more cruel, if the soul is mortal, that some are crushed by others, some are dominated, some serve, even that one devours another, than that the wolf devours the sheep and the snake kills other animals. If even one thing is in

[29] Walter Binni, *Metodo e poesia di Ludovico Ariosto*, 149.

> keeping with the proper order of the universe, then the rest is also. If so many things do not seem bad, then so many do not seem good; if you take away evil, you take away good. Whence this very order will always be for infinite ages, and will be for infinity, because it is always the case that [this order] has a necessary cause as such; for that reason it is not in our power but in the power of fate.[30]

Although Pomponazzi's second and final point turns out to be a rejection of Stoicism, he finds the Stoic account of the moral universe the most consistent when he is arguing in "purely natural terms" and according to "human reason." As Martin Pine has argued, there are unresolved tensions "between the Stoic-Aristotelian determinism of the first two books and the Scholastic tradiition of freedom ... in the remainder of the discourse."[31] Pomponazzi's final rejection of the Stoic view, however, seems not so much a matter of philosophical argument as of religious belief. He rejects the Stoic opinion because "*human reason* is almost always in error," because "through *purely natural* things man cannot attain the truth," and therefeore "in all things the determinations of the Church, which is guided by the Holy Spirit, must stand" (emphasis mine).[32] The Church's condemnation

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[30] The translation is mine. Pomponazzi, *De fato*, Epilogus, 451: "Dico tamen duo. Primum: Quod stando in puris naturalibus et quantum dat ratio humana, ut mea fert opinio nulla harum opinionum est magis remota a contradictione quam opinio Stoicorum. Potissimum enim argumentum est adversus eam quod Deus esset causa peccati et sic Deus peccaret, quod absurdum et erroneum videtur. Verum si ponimus animas humanas esse mortales, veluti existimo Stoicos tenere, apud me nihil est quod incommodum videatur. Non plus enim crudele est, si anima est mortalis, quod aliqui conculcentur ab aliis, aliqui dominentur, aliqui serviant, quod etiam unus devoret alium, quam quod lupus devoret ovem et serpens interficiat alia animalia. Si enim unum est pro decore universi, et reliquum similiter se habet; visi enim essent tot mala, non essent tot bona, si demis malum, demis et bonum. Unde cum iste ordo semper fuerit per infinita saecula, et in infinitum erit, quod semper est habet causam necessariam et per se; quare non est in nostra potestate sed in potestate fati."

[31] Martin L. Pine, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance* (Padova: Antenore, 1986), 339.

[32] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 453: "Dico secundo quod cum sapientia humana quasi semper sit in errore, neque homo ex puris naturalibus potests attingere ad sinceram veritatem ... in omnibus standum est determinationi Ecclesiae quae a Spiritu Sancto regulatur. Quare cum Ecclesia damnet fatum ut Stoici ponunt, ideo simpliciter ipsum habemus negare et firmiter Ecclesiae credendum est."

of the Stoic concept of fate, however, does not keep Pomponazzi from concluding his treatise with the strengths of the Stoic account of the origin of evil.

An examination of the arguments throughout *De fato* that inform this conclusion shows how Pomponazzi's moral cosmos is compatible not only with Stoicism but also with Croce's description of the *Furioso* as cosmos. If the harmony of Croce's cosmic analogy depends on God's embracing good and evil equally, then so, too, for Pomponazzi, the "nature of the universe" requires both good and evil. According to Pomponazzi, "experience proves that there has never been a world without good and evil" and "reason proves according to nature that human things are such that they are able to work rightly and wrongly."[33]

Pomponazzi's account of Stoicism corresponds closely with twentieth-century accounts as well as with actual Stoic texts. In discussing Cleanthes' "Hymn to the Sun," a Hellenistic Stoic text, A. A. Long cites Stoic texts that support an interpretation of the origin of evil consistent with Pommponazzi's account. As Long explains, "from the perspective of cosmic logos or universal law, the behavior of the bad was regarded by the Stoics as necessary to the economy of the universe as a whole: without bad good could not exist."[34] Just as virtue has no meaning without vice, so the order of the universe must include both virtue and vice. Cleanthes' "Hymn to the Sun" expresses this harmonization of good and evil:

> Nothing occurs on earth apart from you, O God,
> not in the heavenly regions nor on the sea,
> except what bad men do in their folly;
> but you know how to make the odd even,
> and to harmonize what is dissonant; to you the alien is

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[33] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 202: "Secundum autem Stoicos, peccata sunt in universo quoniam sic exigit universi natura, neque potest esse universum nisi talia sint; quod experimentum ostendit et ratio. Experimentum quidem quoniam nunquam fuit mundus sine bono et malo. Ratio quidem quoniam ex natura habent res humanae ut possint et bene et male operari."

[34] A. A. Long, "Heraclitus and Stoicism," *Philosophia* 5–6 (1975–76): 147. See the evidence Long cites: Plutarch, *Stoic. rep.* 1050E–1051D, *Comm. not.* 1065B–1066D, *S.V.F.* 2.1168–86, Epictetus 1.12.16.

akin
And so you have wrought together into one
all things that are good and bad,
so that there rises one eternal logos of all things.[35]

Cleanthes expresses the paradox that God harmonizes good and evil in a rational universe, where both good and evil accord with logos. A. A. Long notes that "[f]rom the perspective of the individual bad man this means that such behavior is a consequence of his own logos being at fault ... but it is still attributable to logos."[36] Despite the fate implied by the Stoic cosmic logos, man, not God, was responsible for his actions. This divine detachment accompanied by a serene acceptance of both good and evil corresponds well to Croce's comparison of Ariosto's irony to the "eye of God ... who watches creation ... loving it all equally, in good and evil, ... and only seizing in it ... the eternal dialectic, the rhythm and harmony."

For the Stoics, that good and evil exist according to the necessity of nature, which God cannot alter, did not mean that God was the cause of evil. Pomponazzi repeatedly points out that one of the strongest arguments in favor of the Stoic view of evil is that, unlike the Christian view, it does not logically lead to the absurd conclusion that evil is due to the will of God.[37] The Stoics' opinion that "God is unable to act otherwise than he does" seems "more rational" than the Christians' opinion that "God could alter the nature of the universe but does not want to."[38] The opposition between Christian

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[35] Stobaeus 1.25, 3–27, 4 = *S.V.F.* 1.537, 11–21. The translation is by A. A. Long, in *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 181. As Long points out, "This point of view persists from the earliest to the latest Stoicism." Compare Epictetus 1.12.16. For a literary analysis of the hymn and a discussion of it as the Stoic basis of the idea of order of the cosmos in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, see Le R. P. Festugière, O.P., *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismegiste: Tome II, Le Dieu Cosmique* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1949), 310–40.

[36] Long, "Heraclitus and Stoicism," 147. See the evidence he cites: *S.V.F.* 3.445, 459. See J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 22–36; Josiah Gould, *The Philosophy of Chryssipus* (Leiden, 1970), 181–96; A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 175–78.

[37] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 2.7.202–3; 5.6.427; and Epilogus, 451; see Pine, *Pietro Pomponazzi*, 300.

[38] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 2.7.202–3; 5.6.427: "Rationabilior igitur videtur Stoicorum opinio opinione Christianorum.... Secundum enim Stoicos Deus non

and Stoic views can be summed up in the two phrases *ex voluntate* and *ex natura*; for the Stoics evil occurs according to nature, while for Christians evil occurs according to the will of God.[39] In other words, for the Stoics nature is an even greater power than God. In an attempt to free God of culpability, Christians, Pomponazzi explains, see God himself as free of all error—either by nature or by will.[40] According to Pomponazzi, while Christians believe the origin of evil is something man cannot understand—"why God saves some from falling and does not save others is beyond our understanding"—still they believe that God is the cause of all. In support of his argument, Pomponazzi cites the Psalms: "the judgment of God is fathomless." When comparing Christian belief with Stoicism according to rational argument, Pomponazzi has to admit the superiority of Stoic opinion. The Stoic view that evil exists because of the necessity of nature is more rational than the Christian view that God voluntarily commits evil, a logical conclusion, Pomponazzi reasons, which results from the Christian belief in God's all-powerfulness.

There is another aspect of Pomponazzi's thinking on the cosmos which unites it both with Stoic reflections on the cosmos and with the analogy of Ariosto's poem as Stoic cosmos: the sense of conflict between cosmic harmony and individual fate. Bouwsma describes this conflict as the "cosmic optimism which signifies for the actual experience of men the deepest pessimism."[41] The element of chance and of change in human life is vividly evoked in the lively changes of scene, but also more importantly in the frequent dissolutions of various versions of reality in the *Furioso*. The magician Atlante's palace

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potest aliter facere quam facit; quare si mala sunt in universo, hoc exigit universi natura. Secundum vero Christianos, posset Deus sed non vult."

[39] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 5.6.427: "Immo, quod magis est, videtur quod longe sit melior Stoicorum opinio Christianorum opinione ... quod secundum Christianos ... Deus voluntarie facit malum; at Stoici ponunt quod ex necessitate naturae."

[40] For this sentence and the next two, see *De fato*, 4.2.372: "Secundum vero Christiano neque Deus claudicat naturaliter, neque voluntarie; quapropter omnino a defectu absolutus est.... Cur aliquos praeservat ne cadant, quanquam sint in periculo, et si cadunt relevat eos, aliquos vero neque praeservat, et si cadunt relinquit eos? Certud istud est ininvestigabile; credo tamen quod ultima nulla est assignanda causa nisi ex divina voluntate ... neque ut mihi videtur in aliud referri potest quam in divinam voluntatem: 'Iudica tamen Dei abyssus multa.' "

[41] Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism," 12.

disappears only to reappear and to vanish into thin air. Alcina's garden dissolves before Ruggiero's eyes. Human desires and visions of reality are revealed as illusory in Astolfo's voyage to the moon. Because of the ironic detachment with which Ariosto represents these changes, and because he sets them in tension with other actions that offset their effects, such changes seem tragic only very briefly; the poet integrates them into the larger comic framework of the poem.

This fictional representation of an apparently ever-shifting epistemology has its discursive counterpart in the philosophy of Pomponazzi and of Seneca. Just as the creator of the *Furioso* constructs and destroys places, images, and characters, so does the creator of the universe, according to Pomponazzi, seem to raise up and then cast man down in a kind of cruel game:

> Does it not also seem to be a game of the gods that [the universe] generates man in such genius and equipment (for man is *organizatissimus*) and immediately after man has been made it destroys him? For does not God seem like an architect who has constructed a most beautiful palace with great labour and expense lacking in nothing and as soon as he has completed the palace ruins it? Wouldn't this be attributed to insanity on the part of the architect? It is no less unintelligible whether it is as game, or insanity, or folly to guide man to the highest summit and then as soon as he has attained the peak to cast him off and send him down to the depths. And infinite examples could be adduced which seem to argue either insanity or cruelty, or a game, or the like in God; yet all these [appearances] are saved since the nature of the universe requires them to be such. Therefore if the universe is good, all these things are seen to be good.[42]

[42] I have modified somewhat the translation in Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness*, 546. Pietro Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 2.7.195–96: "Nonne etiam ludus Deorum videtur quod tanto ingenio et tot adminiculis generet hominem (est enim organizatissimus homo) et statim facto homine aliquando corrumpat? Nonne enim Deus videtur similis architecto qui multa opera et impensa construxisset aliquod palatium pulcherrimum in nullo deficiens, et statim confecto palatio rueret ipsum? nonne hoc ascriberetur insaniae architecti? Non minus et intelligibile videtur an sit ludus, an insania, an insipientia hominem perducere ad summum culmen, et quam primum limen attigerit ipsum eiicere et in profundum emittere. Et infinita possent adduci

Pomponazzi argues that man's perception of his fate as a game of chance is transformed into something good when viewed as integrated into the fate of the universe, which taken as a whole is good. At the same time, Pomponazzi's rendering of the harmonization of apparent evils in a good universe tends to emphasize how confusing and absurd man's limitations make his life.

Even earlier Pomponazzi had written about the paradox between the perfection of the cosmos and the limitations of man, in *De immortalitate animae* (1516).[43] As Pomponazzi tells us in his *Apology*, the argument of *De immortalitate animae*, that the soul is mortal, had already been formulated in lectures he had given at Ferrara in 1510.[44] In both asserting the soul's mortality and explaining the moral consequences of this mortality, he follows the Stoic position of Seneca. Citing both Seneca's *Epistulae* and *De consolatione*, Pomponazzi affirms the mortality of the soul and the Stoic belief that virtue is the highest good.[45]

In *De fato*, Pomponazzi considers man's fate in the face of cosmic providence from a larger cosmological point of view. Pomponazzi likens the diversity of human nature to that in the natural world. Underpinning this paradoxical Stoic belief in human limitation and the perfection of nature is a cosmology based on change which produces order. It is no accident that amongst those signs of change Pomponazzi enumerates in leading up to the simile of man's life as a game is the process of elemental change, central to Stoic cosmology:

> fire corrupts air only as if air has taken revenge upon fire; and so by successive change the elements are converted into things mixed and mixed again and turned back into elements.[46]

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quae aut insaniam, aut crudelitatem, aut ludum, aut aliud simile in Deo arguere videntur; quae tamen omnia salvantur quoniam sic exigit universi natura. Quare si universum bonum est, omnia haec videntur esse bona."

[43] Pietro Pomponazzi, *Tractatus de immortalitate animae*, 14 (Bologna, 1516; facsim., Haverford College, 1938). The translation which I quote is that of William Henry Hay, II, revised by John Herman Randall, Jr., and annotated by Paul Oskar Kristeller, "On the Immortality of the Soul," in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), 280–381.

[44] See Randall, "Pietro Pomponazzi: Introduction," in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, 269 n. 17.

[45] Pomponazzi, "On the Immortality of the Soul," 374.

[46] Pomponazzi, *De fato*, 2.7.195: "ignis aerem corrumpit, modo aer ipsum ignem

In *De natura deorum*, Cicero describes how this process of natural change orders the world:

> Again the continuum of the world's nature is constituted by the cyclic transmutations of the four kinds of matter. For earth turns into water, water into air, air into aether, and then the process is reversed, and aether becomes air, air water, and water earth, the lowest of the four. Thus the parts of the world are held in union by the constant passage *up and down, to and fro*, of these four elements of which all things are composed.... [T]he world is governed by nature (emphasis mine).[47]

This concept of unity created through continuous motion describes the unity created by the ever-changing plot of the *Furioso*, in which the oft-repreated phrase "di su di giù, di qua di là," echoes the "up and down, to and fro" of Cicero's text. Carne-Ross attempted to locate the philosophical source of "di su di giù, di qua di là" in Plato's use of the phrase, "ἄνω κάτω" (up down). However, in the *Furioso*, the flux which this phrase represents "is welcomed, not hated," as it is by Plato.[48] What Carne-Ross failed to realize is that when Plato uses the phrase "ἄνω κάτω" he is referring to Heraclitus, whose doctrine of the flux of elements left its trace in Stoic cosmology.[49] Plato's description of flux in *Phaedo* 90C, "everything goes up and down like the river of the Euripus, never staying the same for a moment," recalls two Heraclitan paradoxes: "The way up and the

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quasi ultus; et sic successiva vicissitudine elementa corrumpuntur in mixta et denuo mixta versa in elementa." The translation is mine.

[47] The translation is from Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2 vols., trans. H. Rackham, LCL (1933), 203, 205: "Et cum quattuor genera sint corporum, vicissitudine eorum mundi continuata natura est. Nam ex terra aqua ex aqua oritur aer ex aere aether, deinde retrorsum vicissim ex aethere aer, inde aqua terra infima. Sic naturis his ex quibus omnia constant sursus deorsus ultro citro commeantibus mundi partium coniunctio continetur ... natura mundum administrari" (2.84–85).

[48] Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many" (1976), 153, 202.

[49] See Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2 vols., ed. Arthur Stanley Pease (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1955–58), 2:758. As a source for 2.84, quoted above, Pease cites Heraclitus, fragment 76. See the translation of Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), 47, and 147–55, for his commentary on the cosmic cycle in Heraclitus.

way down are one and the same," and "Upon those who step into the same rivers, different and different waters flow."[50] I am suggesting that Ariosto's description of the seemingly random movement of his characters—"di su di giù, di qua di là"—embodies the Heraclitan paradox of the harmony of opposites which informs Stoic cosmology.[51]

When discussing the apparently negative consequences of cosmic change, Seneca considers the meaning of change in terms of morals as well as physics. Change in the cosmic cycle is likened to the change an individual has to suffer in his own life. Seneca challenges the individual to understand his own fate as part of the cycle of life and death which governs the entire universe. In *Epistula* 71, Seneca describes the craftsmanship controlling what seems to be disorder and decay both in the cosmos and in our lives:

> For what is free from the risk of change? Neither earth, nor sky, nor the whole fabric of our universe, though it can be controlled by the hand of God. ... Whatever is will cease to be, and yet it will not perish, but will be resolved into its elements. To our minds this process means perishing, for we behold only that which is nearest, our sluggish mind under allegiance to the body does not penetrate to bournes beyond. Were it not so the mind would endure with greater courage its own ending and that of its possessions, if only it could hope that life and death, like the whole universe about us, go by turns, that whatever has been put together is broken up again, that whatever has been

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[50] G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1954), 307–38, 367. Whether or not Plato represents Heraclitus accurately is much debated. Kirk sees Plato's interpretation as distorted, because it overemphasizes the notion of constant change (G. S. Kirk, "Natural Change in Heraclitus," in *The Pre-Socratics*, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos [Garden City: Anchor Press, 1974], 189–96). For an opposing view, see W. K. C. Guthrie, "Flux and Logos in Heraclitus," in *The Pre-Socratics*, 197–213.

[51] For the Stoics' indebtedness to and use of Heraclitus for their cosmology, see A. A. Long, "Heraclitus and Stoicism." Even though the following downplay the influence of Heraclitus, they still acknowledge the Heraclitan aspects of Stoicism: Friedrich Solmsen, *Cleanthes or Posidonius? The Basis of Stoic Physics*; David Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology* (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1977), 80–81.

> broken up is put together again, and that the eternal craftsmanship of God, who controls all things, is working at this task.[52]

If we are aware that "the craftsmanship of God" works towards recreating what seems to have been destroyed, we will be better able to bear death and change in our own lives. It is the constant awareness that we have of Ariosto's craftsmanship, the self-reflexive writerly quality of his work that creates both the ironic perspective of the narrator and the ironic response of the reader. Seneca's challenge to epistemological pessimism relies on our capacity to understand individual change in relation to cosmic order and the craftsman controlling it; similarly, the comic effects of Ariosto's poem rely on our awareness of the poet controlling the plot and the overall comic order of the poem as a whole. The irony through which we experience the events of Ariosto's poem could be likened to the reason through which Seneca argues we should interpret the events of our lives.

## Leonardo da Vinci: The Body and Nature in Motion

Leonardo's representation of the natural world as at once rationally intelligible and physically sensible exhibits the concrete sense of reason found in ancient Stoicism. Both the Stoics and Leonardo conceive of nature in all its multiplicity as infused with and ordered by divine reason. This paradox of rational order in apparent randomness helps explain how the narrative structure of the *Furioso* works.

In an essay which illustrates the Stoic underpinnings of Leonardo's thought, Giorgio Castelfranco outlines the ancient Stoic ideas he believes influenced Leonardo:

> the concept of this rational soul of the world which gives life and beauty to things; of a reason, that is of a God, eternally creator and individuator, inseparable from the very essence of

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[52] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, 2:81: "Quid enim mutationis periculo exceptum? Non terra, non caelum, non totus hic rerum omnium contextus, quamvis deo agente ducatur.... Quicquid est, non erit, nec peribit, sed resolvetur. Nobis solvi perire est, proxima enim intuemur; ad ulteriora non prospicit mens hebes et quae se corpori addixerit; alioqui fortius finem sui suorumque pateretur, si speraret, ut omnia illa, sic vitam mortemque per vices ire et composita dissolvi, dissoluta componi, in hoc opere aeternam artem cuncta temperantis dei verti" (*Ep.* 71.12–14).

> things; of a rational and sensible world; of a primal fire, essence of the world which has in itself the reasons of the whole development of nature. And not only is there in Leonardo the concept of world soul as fire but above all of the absolute rationality of the world soul.[53]

Castelfranco identifies Stoic concepts in Leonardo's thought which are absent from Pomponazzi's moral and epistemological discussions. First, there is the aesthetic dimension: reason creates beauty and life. Second, there is the synthetic physical dimension that makes God equal to this aesthetic reason, and this reason coterminous with the essence of things, or more simply, with nature. Third, this reason or God is a fire that contains within itself the causes of the whole development of nature. Finally, the spirit of the world that creates beauty, which resides in material reality and which is the creative fire containing the causes of all things, is above all rational. Of these four concepts, those which bear directly upon a discussion of Leonardo's thought in relation to the *Furioso* as a Stoic cosmos are reason as the cause of order in art and nature, and the realization and intelligibility of this order in the concrete variety of both nature and art.

Before considering the ramifications of Leonardo's concept of nature for his observations on art, let me first draw attention to some of Leonardo's comments on nature that show a striking resemblance to the view of nature in Stoic physics. Leonardo's most general statement about nature and the one with the greatest applicability to all his other comments on both nature and art is as follows:

> La natura è costretta della ragione della sua lege, che in lei infusamente vive.

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[53] Giorgio Castelfranco, "Introduzione a Leonardo," *Nuova Antologia*, fasc. 1816 (April 1952): 347: "il concetto di quest'anima razionale del mondo che dà vita e bellezza alle cose; di una ragione, cioè di un Dio perennemente creatore e individuatore, inseparabile dall'essenza stessa delle cose; di un mondo razionale e senziente; di un fuoco primigenio essenza del mondo che ha in sé le ragioni di tutto lo svolgimento della natura. E non solo passa in Leonardo il concetto dell'anima del mondo quale fuoco ma sopratutto quello dell'assoluta razionalità dell'anima del mondo." This is a paraphrase of *I frammenti degli Stoici antichi*, trans. Nicola Festa (Bari: G. Laterza, 1932), 2:81–82.

> [Nature is constrained by the reason of her law, which innately lives in her.][54]

This sense of dynamic reason, which is not imposed upon nature from outside but which both gives life to and limits nature from within, is characteristic of Leonardo's physical theory and of Stoic physics. Leonardo does not conceive of cosmic reason as a static rule that is imposed upon nature, but as a living force, which has its reality in the concrete manifestation of nature. This dynamic reason also characterizes the Stoic definition of nature, as attested to by Cicero in *De natura deorum*:

> Now Zeno gives this definition of nature: "nature (he says) is a craftsmanlike fire, proceeding methodically [literally: by a road or path] to the work of generation." For he holds that the special function of art or craft is to create and generate.[55]

In fact, the biological model of the cosmos influences not just the Stoic concept of nature but also, by analogy, the Stoic concept of art. Both art and nature are generative. Also, the order of each must be understood in its concrete complexity. Cleanthes' definition of craft, "a pathmaking disposition" or "a disposition which accomplishes all things by plan or method" [literally: by a path], seems to be modelled on Zeno's definition of nature.[56] This analogy between nature and craft is expressed by the Stoic argument in Book 2 of Cicero's *De natura deorum*:

> Again it is undeniable that every organic whole must have an ultimate ideal of perfection. As in vines or in cattle we see that, unless obstructed by some force, nature progresses on a certain path of her own to her goal of full development, and as in painting, architecture and the other arts and crafts there is an

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[54] C. 23 v, quoted by Castelfranco, "Introduzione a Leonardo," 347. The translation is mine.

[55] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.22.57: "Zeno igitur naturam ita definit ut eam dicat ignem esse artificiosum, ad gignendum progredientem via. Censet enim artis maxume proprium esse creare et gignere."

[56] Compare Zeno's definition of nature (*S.V.F.* 1.171 = Diogenes Laertius 7.156) with Cleanthes definition of craft (*S.V.F.* 1.72, 490). See Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*, 203 and n. 9, 213.

> ideal of perfect workmanship, even so and far more in the world of nature as a whole there must be a process towards completeness and perfection.[57]

This perception of the common drive of nature and craft towards perfection accomplished through process separates Stoic concepts of both nature and craft from Platonic concepts. If Plato distrusted nature, so much the more did he distrust art. According to the Platonic theory of the forms, nature is a reflection of the true reality of the forms, and art is yet one more step removed from "things in themselves."[58] The Stoics, conversely, viewed all reality as corporeal—including the natural world and the art within it.

An even more striking similarity between Leonardo's and the Stoic theory of nature arises in his articulation of the relation of the microcosm to the macrocosm. Unlike Pomponazzi, who sees man as the mean between the supernatural and the natural world, Leonardo portrays man as neither above nor below nature but *in* nature. Man is the microcosm of the world—but of a physical world that is ever changing. For Leonardo, the transitoriness of the world and of man are both like the fate of the butterfly:

> l'uomo è modello del mondo e a similtudine della farfalla a lume . . . sempre con festa aspetta la nuova primavera, sempre la nuova state, sempre e nuovi mesi e nuovi anni, parendogli che la desiderate cose venendo troppo tarde, e non s'avede che desidera la sua disfazione.
> [man is the model of the world and like the butterfly to the light . . . with festivity he awaits the new spring, always the new summer, always both new months and new years, it seems to

[57] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.35: "Necque enim dici potest in ulla rerum institutione non esse aliquid extremum atque perfectum. Ut enim in vite ut in pecude nisi quae vis obstitit videmus naturam suo quodam itinere ad ultimum pervenire, atque ut pictura et fabrica ceteraeque artes habent quendam absoluti operis effectum, sic in omni natura ac multo etiam magis necesse est absolvi aliquid ac perfici."

[58] See Plato, *Republic* 10.596a–597d, where Plato discusses how the artists' representation is twice removed from "things in themselves," the real world of the forms. The visible physical realm, subject to change, is made analogous to the prison in the Myth of the Cave (*Republic* 7.517b).

> him that the desired things come too late, and he is not aware that he will desire his own undoing.][59]

Just as the butterfly desires the light but will perish by it, so the natural world and man desire the the rebirth of spring that will inevitably bring winter and death. Implicit in Leonardo's analogy is a cosmology in which the world, like nature repeatedly progressing through the seasons, is continually being generated and destroyed.

Leonardo's concept of a world cyclically progressing towards rebirth and destruction finds a counterpart in what the Stoics expressed as the periodic destruction of the world in the cosmic cycle from διακόσμησις (orderly arrangement) to εκπύρωσις (conflagration): fire generates air, air water, water earth, and then the process reverses itself until the world is reabsorbed into a great fire in which all is destoyed, but then the cycle starts again. From the perspective of the whole of nature, this process is dynamic, a cause for optimism. The following evaluation of the Stoic acceptance of natural change could well be applied to Leonardo:

> change, for the Stoics, is not a sign of the imperfection of nature in comparison with God. The universe changes continually, and so does God; for God is the universe. In the Stoics' view, process is a sign of vitality, not a sign of incompletely realized being. At all points in the cosmic cycle, the logos is equally present in the universe; and the universe enjoys an equal plenitude and perfection at all times.[60]

Ever-changing nature brings about its fullness, its perfection, through the ongoing process of creation:

> che la natura è vaga e piglia piacere del creare e fare continue vite e forme perché conosce che sono accrescimento della sua terrestre materia.
> [that nature is mutable and takes pleasure in creating and making continuous lives and forms because she knows that they are the continued growth of her earthly matter.][61]

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[59] Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Arundel*, 156 v, as quoted in Castelfranco, "Introduzione a Leonardo," 353.

[60] Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, 25. See *S.V.F.* 2.584.

[61] Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Arundel*, 263 v, as quoted in Castelfranco,

If Leonardo's attempt to understand and represent the process of nature as a whole exhibits a Stoic optimism, it also shows what Castelfranco calls "regret at the transitoriness of life."[62] Leonardo's cosmic perspective can be viewed as a way of overcoming the suffering and loss that attends individual fate. Similarly, Ariosto's narrative presents many different characters in a multiplicity of actions in such a way that we are not allowed to become involved deeply in the fate of any one character. This is part of what makes the poem comic. If we attempt to understand the *Furioso* through only part of the poem, or through the stories of individual characters in isolation from the entire plot, the poem becomes more pathetic and tragic than parodic and comic. Taken as a whole, the action of the *Furioso* is comic. For example, the fate of the lovesick and deluded Orlando seems pathetic only if we overlook the last fifth of the poem, where he makes a brilliantly comic recovery and heroic comeback. The very instability of the world is less a cause for tears than for laughter in the *Furioso*.

For Leonardo as for Ariosto, the sense of activity hastening from change to change issues into artistic vision, in which differences cohere. As Leonardo sees it, the painter is master of the variety in the universe:

> Se (il pittore) ha desiderio di vedere bellezze che lo innamorino, egli è signore di generarle e se vuole vedere cose mostruose che spaventino, o compassionevole, n'è signore e creatore.... Ed in effetto ciò che è nell'universo per essenza, presenza o immaginazione, esso lo ha prima nella eccellenza, che in pari tempo generano una proporzionata armonia in un solo sguardo qual fanno le cose.
> [If the painter has the desire to see beauties that fascinate him, he is the master of generating these beauties, and if he wants to see monstrous things which frighten, or pitiable things, he is the master and creator of them.... And in effect what is in the universe by essence, presence, or imagination, it is first in excellence, which in equal time generates a *proportioned harmony* in

"Introduzione a Leonardo," 352.

[62] This is my translation of Castelfranco, "Introduzione a Leonardo," 353.

a *single glance* just as things do (emphasis mine).][63]

The "bellezze," "cose mostruose," and "cose compassionevole" evoke the manifold effects of the universe and of the artist's imagination. The artist's protean imagination generates harmony through representing variety. This description of the visual artist's control over the diversity of material through the proportion of his vision could be applied to Ariosto's writerly control over a great variety of images, places, persons, and emotions, through the narrative design of the *Furioso*. The artist's single glance that perceives all these differences in proportion is like Croce's account of Ariosto's irony as "the eye of God."

When Leonardo analyzes how to draw the human body, he shows how proportioned harmony in nature can be visually represented in precise geometrical form. In the *Libro del Disegno delli Moti Naturali*, Leonardo explains how the motions of the parts of the human body, when traced, form circles turning around their respective centers. Indeed, what results is a "design where the motion, attributed to the members of the body, will be its first cause and its proper center" [disegno, dove il moto, che s'attribuisce alle membra si troverà esser la prima causa, ed it proprio centro].[64] In other words, the trajectory of the body's movement produces the design and describes its center. From this center, a circle can be drawn which encompasses all the possible motions of the parts of the body. "Turning around in the form of a circle, the compass traces the stability of possible action of natural motion, permitting each line to turn around its center" [che girando in forma di circolo, il compasso troverà la stabilità di qual si voglia azione del moto naturale, permettendo a' ciascuna linea di tornare al suo centro]. The stability of possible action in turn forms a whole circle which is analogous to the "first order of the heavenly bodies [primo ordine delli corpi celesti]." I reproduce (in Figure 1) the text of Leonardo's explanation and the accompanying schematic drawing from the Codex Huygens, a manuscript featuring the text and figures of Leonardo's *Le Regole del Disegno*, as transmitted by a late sixteenth-century Milanese artist.[65]

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[63] Leonardo da Vinci, *Trattato della pittura*, 9, quoted by Castelfranco, 355–56.

[64] The quotations in this paragraph are all from "Libro del Disegno delli Moti Naturali," in *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, 54.

[65] For Pedretti's commentary on *Il Libro del Disegno* in the Cooper engravings

The text compares the design formed by the possible motions of a human body, turning on its center, to the order of a heavenly body. The relation between microcosm and the macrocosm is represented physically and dynamically. The stucture described by both text and drawing provides an analogy to the *Furioso*'s structure as Stoic cosmos. The action of the poem, like the movement of the body, turns around a center—Orlando's madness. The plot of each section of the poem, like the movement of each part of the body, forms a series of circles around a center. Leonardo's analysis of human motion and Ariosto's poetic method conceive of order in Stoic terms—"made of matter-in-motion."[66]

The Stoic account of why the cosmos coheres illustrates the same principle of proportioned design created by centripetal motion observed in Leonardo's explanation of the body as microcosm. Cicero has the Stoic exponent Balbus argue against the notion that the cosmos was formed at random:

> For all its parts everywhere striving for the middle press on uniformly [*aequaliter*]. Moreover, interlinked bodies endure best when they are bound together by a kind of encompassing bond. This is accomplished by the substance which, performing all things by mind and reason, pervades the whole cosmos and draws and gathers the outermost parts toward the center. Consequently, if the cosmos is spherical and all its parts are therefore held together everywhere uniformly [*aequabiles*] the same must happen on earth, so that with all its parts converging toward the middle, which in a sphere is the lowest part, nothing may break through and so cause its great coherence of weight and heavy things to collapse.[67]

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as a selection of pages from *Le Regole del Disegno* in the Codex Huygens, see *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, 1:48–52. See also Erwin Panofsky, *The Codex Huygens and Leonardo da Vinci's Art Theory* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1940).

[66] Johnny Christensen, *An Essay on the Unity of Stoic Philosophy* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), 46. Christensen makes this valuable comparison of Aristotelian and Stoic ontology: for Aristotle "the world is made up of entities. And since this is so, it is reasonable that formal logic should be an exhibiting of possible relationships between (abstract) entities. To the Stoics the world is made up of matter-in-motion. So, the elements of our experience are primarily events."

[67] The translation is by Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology*, 11. *De natura*

*Fig. 1. Geometrical structure representing the possible movements of the human body (after Leonardo) Codex Huygens, fol. 12. Morgan Library, New York*

Just as each part of the earth, itself a part of the spherical cosmos, converges upon the earth's center, so, too, each canto of the *Furioso* converges upon the center of that part of the poem. According to the analogy of microcosm to macrocosm, just as all parts of the cosmos move towards the center of the cosmos, all parts of the poem move toward the center of the poem.

The *Furioso*'s structure can be representeed as a series of concentric circles surrounding a central point (Figure 2). Each series of smaller circles stands for eight cantos in which the first and last, the second and second to last, and so forth, correspond to one another, by either similarity or opposition, in terms of theme and plot. Each section, in turn, corresponds to that section equidistant from the central episode, Orlando's madness. In the section including Cantos 29–37, following that (19–28) at the center of which Orlando loses his wits, the order is disturbed. When Orlando regains his wits in Canto 39, the order of the poem, too, is restored. Figure 2 illustrates this narrative pattern, which will be explained by the narratological analysis in the following chapters. But first an examination of the structure of Machiavelli's historiography will allow for a consideration of the political implications of Stoic cosmology.

## Niccolò Machiavelli: Historical Repetition and Change

> Oh tempo, veloce predatore delle create cose, quanti re, quanti popoli hai tu disfatti e quante mutazione di stati e vari casi sono seguiti, poi che la maravigliosa forma di questo pesce qui mori. Per la cavernose e ritorte interiora ora, disfatto dal tempo, paziente diaci in questo chiuso loco; colle ispogliate spolpate e ignude ossa hai fatto armadura e sostengo al soprapposto monte.

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*deorum* 2.115–16: "Omnes enim partes eius undique medium locum capessentes nituntur aequaliter. Maxime autem corpora inter se iuncta permanent cum quasi quodam vinculo circumdato colligantur; quod facit ea natura quae per omnem mundum omnia mente et ratione conficiens funditur et ad medium rapit et convertit extrema. Quocirca si mundus globosus est ob eamque causam omnes eius partes undique aequabiles ipsae per se atque inter se continentur, contingere idem terrae necesse est, ut omnibus eius partibus in medium vergentibus (id autem medium infimum in sphaera est) nihil interrumpat quo labefactari possit tanta contentio gravitatis et ponderum."

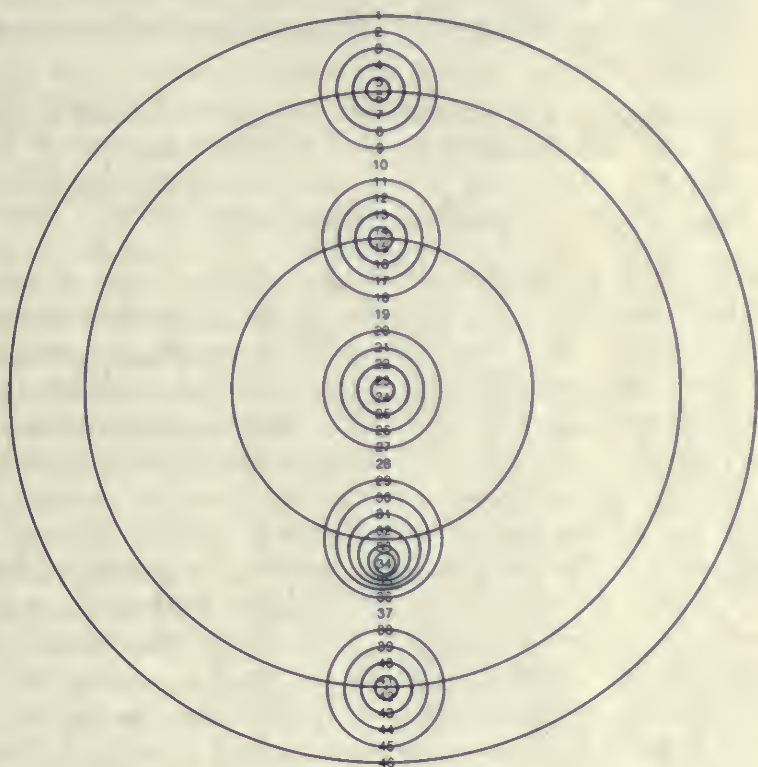


*Fig. 2. Structural outline of the narrative pattern of the*
Orlando Furioso

[O time, swift despoiler of created things, how many kings, how many peoples have you undone, and how many changes of states and varied circumstances have followed, since the marvellous form of this fish died here. Through the cavernous and twisted recess, destroyed by time, you lie patiently in this confined space; despoiled of glue, with bones stripped of flesh and bare, you have made a support and prop for the mountain above you.][68]

[Q]uesta provincia pare nata per risuscitare le cose morte, come si è visto della poesia, della pittura, e della scultura.
[(T)his province seems born to resuscitate dead things, just as is seen in poetry, painting, and sculpture.][69]

Leonardo represents cultural change in the same terms in which the Stoics described natural change. For the Stoics the order of nature was constructed by the continual process of destruction and creation. For Leonardo the passing of kings, peoples, and states could be compared to the decomposition of a fish and its subsequent transformation into the formation of a mountain. A similar analogy between historical and natural processes informs Machiavelli's theory of history in the *Discorsi*. This analogy can be traced back to Polybius' *Histories*, a text influenced by Stoicism. However, whereas the pessimistic Polybian theory only describes the process of decay, Machiavelli's principles explain how renewal can follow decay. Machiavelli attempts to solve contemporary political problems by extolling the virtue of the Romans—the excellence of their constitution, their martial valor—and by comparing the history of ancient Rome to that of the Florentine present. In short, he "raises up dead things" in political thought.

In analyzing the success of Rome, Machiavelli also transforms the Polybian cycle of constitutions into a process which is more paradoxical and accepting of change. At the same time that he affirms the process of change in the case of Rome, he also conceives of human nature as necessarily immutable. Only the constancy of human nature over time allows men to perceive the repetition of events and to

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[68] Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Arundel*, 155 r. The translation is mine.

[69] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Arte della guerra e scritti politici minori*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), 519.

imitate the past. Machiavelli's analysis of repetition and his exhortation to imitation make him appear opposed to change—actively seeking to impose order through the perception of predictable and static order. Yet he also acknowledges the flux of events. The purpose of this discussion will be to examine the relation between flux and order in the *Discorsi*. An understanding of how flux and order are related to each other in Machiavelli's historical analysis will in turn illuminate how they are related in the narrative structure of the *Furioso*. By narrative structure, I mean both the events narrated and the order and meaning of these events—what Ricoeur would call "the fable-and-theme" of the the narrative.[70]

In order to understand why Machiavelli should be mentioned in connection with Stoicism it is important to recognize that he derives several of his central methodological principles from Polybius' *Histories*, and these principles have affinities with Stoic philosophy.[71] Margaret Reesor has pointed out that the second-century BC Greek exile Polybius was in direct contact with the Middle Stoic philosopher Panaetius and that Polybius' *Histories* 6.12–18 were based on Panaetius' political thought.[72] More important for an analysis of the Stoic presuppositions of Machiavelli's text is to explain the Stoic character of the Polybian ideas about history, which Machiavelli deploys. Among the Polybian ways of organizing history that Machiavelli follows are cause and effect, parallels between events, and the cycle of constitutions. All three of these are integrally related to one another in Polybius, as they are in Machiavelli. For Polybius the ability to foresee the consequences of action was at the very foundation of the concept of justice (*Histories* 6.6). In discussing the origins of the law, Polybius describes the rational capacity that enabled men to predict

[70] Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 179: "In a word, the correlation between thought and plot supersedes the 'then' and 'and then' of mere succession. But, it would be a complete mistake to consider 'thought' as achronological. 'Fable' and 'theme' are as closely tied together as episode and configuration. The time of fable-and-theme, if we may make of this a hyphenated expression, is more deeply temporal than the time of merely episodic narratives."

[71] For a detailed comparison of the text of the *Discorsi* with Polybius' *Histories*, see the notes to *The Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli*, vol. 2, ed. Leslie J. Walker (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950).

[72] Margaret Reesor, *The Political Theory of the Old and Middle Stoa* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1951), 29.

that if those ungrateful to their parents were allowed to act so, then all might be treated in like manner. So, too, for Machiavelli the people's anger at ingratitude to a benefactor brought about laws to prevent such behavior (*Discorsi* 1.2). Despite the omission of "reason" from Machiavelli's account of the origin of law, his analysis of government substantially resembles Polybius'. For both Polybius and Machiavelli, the ability to generalize rationally—to see that one event will follow from another—is at the foundation of government. In the historiographical method of Polybius and Machiavelli, both are concerned to explain a direct chain of causes and effects. Both Polybius (6.1.3) and Machiavelli (1.1) want to explain the causal connection between Rome's constitution and her stability.

For both historians, not only is this causal reasoning the way to understand the sequence of events in history, but it is also the very purpose for studying history. Polybius tells his readers at the outset of his *Histories* (1.1) that to draw parallels between past and present makes the study of history a training for political life. Machiavelli, too, stresses the importance of drawing parallels in history. He laments that while his contemporaries have recourse ("ricorso") to ancient prescriptions for curing medical cases, they do not return to ancient examples of ordering republics and maintaining states to solve their political ills (1.1).

These two structures of thought, cause and effect and parallelism, in turn contribute to Polybius' concept of the cycle of constitutions. What for Aristotle were separate entities—the six types of government which include the good and bad forms of state in which authority rests with the one, the few, or the many—become for Polybius a continuous cycle of governments that he likens to the cycle of nature.[73] One form of state always gives way to another, just as in Heraclitan cosmogonal change, which the Stoics adopted, one element turns into another. Like the cycle of elements, the cycle of constitutions (ἀνακύκλωσις πολιτειῶν) forms an alternating scheme. Good gov-

[73] Compare Polybius, *Histories* 6.3–11, to Aristotle, *Politics* 3.6, for the classification of governments and 3.11 (1286a20–b22) for the change of governments. There is no cycle of change in Aristotle, no sense of the unavoidable birth and death of the various forms of government, each of which, for Polybius, supercedes the others in a predictable pattern.

ernments turn into bad governments because the advantages of the good form are abused to the extent that they must be righted by a new type of rule. As all change in nature can be accounted for by cause and effect, so all political change can be accounted for in the inexorable logical descent and rise from Monarchy to Tyranny, Tyranny to Aristocracy, Aristocracy to Oligarchy, Oligarchy to Democracy, Democracy to Mob Rule. Not only is there a repeating pattern in this succession, which Machiavelli significantly calls a cycle ("cerchio" [1.2]), but the whole process can repeat itself. To deny this process that allows men to understand the significance of events and how to imitate them would be to assume "come se il ciel, il sole, li elementi, li uomini, fussino variati di moto, di ordine, e di potenza, da quello che gli erono antiquamente" [as if the heaven, the sun, the elements and man had in their motion, their order, and their potency, become different from what they used to be].[74] Here, Machiavelli places human nature directly within physical nature, in a Stoic fashion that directly links morals with physics. This connection implies a common logos working through man and nature, a principle which is at the foundation of the analogy between the the historical and the natural cycle.

According to Polybius and Machiavelli, Rome, however, staved off political degeneration by its perfect mixed constitution that allowed a role for the one in the consuls, the few in the senate, and the many in the people.[75] It has been argued that Polybius saw Rome's stability as a temporary escape from the cycle in which political change, like natural change, is "an undesired and malignant fate" and that Machiavelli likewise interpreted Rome's stability as an outgrowth of contingencies that defy the timeless cycle.[76] That Polybius and Machiavelli ever completely abandoned a cyclical analysis of Rome's history could be questioned. While Polybius does not explain how Rome arrived at its mixed constitution, he insists at least twice that

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[74] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe e Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983), 1. Proemio. Bernard Crick, ed., *Discourses*, trans. Leslie J. Walker, rev. Brian Richardson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 98–99. All subsequent quotations are from these editions.

[75] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 77.

[76] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 77, 190.

Rome's formation occurred not contrary to but according to nature [6.4, 6.9: κατὰ φύσιν]. He foresaw that Rome ultimately could not escape natural decline.

Moreover, Machiavelli's view of Rome's rise and fall maintains the analogy of the natural cycle and explains just how the cycle applies to Rome in a detailed and complex way that was left unexamined by Polybius. At the end of *Discorsi* 1.2, Machiavelli maintains that Rome achieved her stability "dal governo de' Re e degli Ottimati al Poplo, per quelli medesimi gradi e per quelle medesime cagione che di sopra si sono discorse" [from Monarchy to Aristocracy and thence to Democracy, (which) took place through the very stages laid down earlier in this discourse]. In other words, he implies that Rome passed through the very stages of decay and renovation that he outlines in the second chapter. But there is this difference:

> non si tolse mai per dare autorità agli Ottimati, tutta l'autorità alla qualità regie; né si diminuì auorità in tutto egli Ottimati, per darla al Popolo; ma rimanendo mista, fece una republica perfetta: alla quale perfezione venne per la disunione della Plebe e del Senato.
> [1.2: Nonetheless, the granting of authority to the aristocracy did not abolish altogether the royal estate, nor was the authority of the aristocracy wholly removed when the populace was granted a share in it. On the contrary, the blending of these estates made a perfect commonwealth; and since it was friction between the plebs and the senate that brought this perfection about, in the next two chapters we shall show more fully how this came to be.]

Machiavelli promises to explain how this disunity or strife brought about the changes which insured Rome's stability (1.3.4). However, the only cause for political change that he offers is a sort of original sin—"tutti gli uomini rei, e che li abbiano sempre a usare la malignità dello animo loro qualunque volta ne abbiano libera occasione" [1.3: that all men are wicked and will always give vent to the malignity in their minds when the opportunity offers]. This decay in political life and in human political nature necessitates the remedy of good laws. In 1.17, Machiavelli begins to give an account of why Rome was able to undergo these political upheavals without being utterly destroyed:

> Però fu felicità grande quella di Roma, che questi re diventassero corrotti presto, acciò ne fussono cacciati, ed innanzi che la loro corruzione fusse passata nelle viscere di quella città: la quale incorruzione fu cagione che gli'infiniti tumulti che furono in Roma, avendo gli uomini il fine buono, non nocerono anzi giovorono alla Republica.
> [1.17: Rome, then, was extremely lucky in that its kings quickly became corrupt, with the result that they were expelled before their corruption had penetrated to the bowels of that city. This absence of corruption was, in fact, the reason why the numerous tumults which took place in Rome, instigated by men of good intentions, did no harm, but, on the contrary, were an advantage to that.]

It is only the swiftness with which Rome passed through the cycle from Monarchy to Tyranny that allowed her people to interrupt corruption and make changes, however tumultuous, that would lead to the next stage of the cycle.

It is not until the opening of Book 3, though, that Machiavelli describes the process of continual restoration to first principles through which the political cycle becomes the active creation of men, rather that the result of arbitrary change:

> Egli è cosa verissima come tutte le cose del mondo hanno il termine della vita loro: ma quelle vanno tutto il corso che è loro ordinato dal cielo, generalmente, che non disordinano il corpo loro ma tengonlo in modo ordinato, o che non altera o s'egli altera è a salute e non a danno suo. E perché io parlo de' corpi misti, come sono le republiche e le sètte, dico che quelle alterazioni sono a salute, che le riducano inverso i principii loro. E però quelle sono meglio ordinate ed hanno piú lunga vita, che mediante gli ordini suoi si possono spesso rinnovare, ovvero che per qualche accidente, fuori di detto ordine, vengono a detto rinnovazione. Ed è cosa piú chiara che la luce che, non si rinnovando, questi corpi non durano.
> [3.1: It is a well-established fact that the life of all mundane things is of finite duration. But things which complete the whole of the course appointed them by heaven are in general those whose bodies do not disintegrate, but maintain themselves

> in orderly fashion either without change; or, if there be change, it tends rather to their conservation than to their destruction. Here I am concerned with composite bodies, such as are states and religious institutions, and in their regard I affirm that those changes make for their conservation which lead them back to their start. Hence those are better constituted and have a longer life whose institutions make frequent renovations possible, or which can be brought to such a renovation by some event which has nothing to do with their constitution. For it is clearer than daylight that, without renovation, these bodies do not last.]

Machiavelli compares the process of political change that tends to the health of a state rather than its destruction to the process by which a body in nature can maintain itself through change. And this change involves a circular pattern, a return or repetition, as all of those words with the prefix "ri-" in this paragraph—"riducano," "rinnovare," "rinnovazione," "rinnovando"—suggest.

He proceeds then to identify the two ways in which this return to first principles can be accomplished: "per virtù d'un uomo o per virtù d'uno ordine" [3.1: either by the virtue of some individual or by the virtue of an institution]. In the case of institutions, such as the law, this can mean setting the precedent of harsh repressive measures ("esecuzione ... eccessive e notabili") as in Manlius Torquatus' order to execute his son for disobedience (3.1). But in the case of individuals, it is "the simple virtue of one man alone" ("semplice virtù d'un uomo") that brings about the restoration of the state, because the man of *virtù*'s actions are "sono di tale riputazione e di tanto essemplo, che gli uomini buoni desiderano imitarle e gli cattivi si vergognano a tenere vita contraria a quelle" [3.1: of such effect that men seek to imitate them and the bad are ashamed to lead lives that are contrary to them]. With this notion of the imitation of exemplary action Machiavelli returns to the purpose of his *Discorsi*: to examine the history of Roman government in order to provide examples for imitation to his audience, so concerned in other areas of life—such as art and medicine—with the return to ancient principles.

Given the importance of repetition and the return to first principles in Machiavelli's history, we might conclude with Bouwsma that Stoic tendencies in his thought made him distrust change and re-

create a "Stoic stasis."[77] There are reasons, however, to disagree with this assertion—with respect to the Stoics as well as to Machiavelli. It is not at all clear what Bouwsma means by "Stoic stasis." As Colish points out in her reconstruction of what a Stoic historiography would look like, "A historian imbued with Stoicism would have a decidedly metahistorical outlook, reflecting a physics in which change is the paramount reality."[78] If we examine Machiavelli's comments on change in history we can see that Machiavelli, like the hypothetical Stoic historian, saw flux as an inevitable and integral part of history. As the following passage illustrates, it is the recognition of flux which allows man to make judgments about history:

> Replico pertanto essere vera quella consuetudine del laudare e biasimare soprascritta; ma non essere già sempre vero che si erri nel farlo. Perché qualche voltà è necessario che giudichino la verità: perché essendo le cose umane sempre in moto o le salgano o le scendano.
> [2. Proemio: My answer is, then, that it is true there exists this habit of praising the past and criticizing the present, and not always true that to do so is a mistake, for it must be admitted that sometimes such a judgment is valid because, since human affairs are ever in a state of flux, they move either upwards or downwards.]

Machiavelli here replies to the objection he has just raised to praising the past in order to criticize the present. The whole truth about the past is often obscured by the tendency of historians to pass over whatever is discreditable; however, the criticism of the present in comparison with the past is valid precisely because of change. Machiavelli not only accepts flux but gives it a decisive role in his interpretation of history.

For Machiavelli, it is not just because of parallelism but also because of discontinuity between past and present that one can judge and understand the present through comparison with the past. On the one hand, many of the parallels that Machiavelli draws between the

[77] Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism," 49.
[78] Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, 291.

Roman past and the Italian present illustrate the unconscious repetition of events through the neglect of history: "ne seguita che sempre sono i medesimi scandoli in ogni tempo" [1.39: it follows that there are always the same scandals in every period]. Examples of this unconscious repetition abound: the Florentines' abolition and reappointment of the Ten repeated the Romans' abolition and reappointment of the consuls (1.31); Savanarola's denial of an appeal before the people to the five Florentines condemned to death for treason repeated Virginius' denial of the right of appeal to Appius (1.45). On the other hand, the discontinuities between past and present tend to point out where Machiavelli's contemporaries had fallen short of the Roman model. For example, whereas the Roman religion, founded by Numa, contributed to Rome's good institutions (1.11), the Church, by its own corruption, caused the corruption of the people and, by its temporal power, their political disunity (1.12). Machiavelli can hardly be accused of representing history as stasis.

In fact, this very interest in the contrast between continuity and discontinuity, between events considered in relation to a recurring cycle and to their own specific causes is another Stoic feature of the *Discorsi*. According to Colish, Stoic history would recognize both "everchanging realities" and the "metahistorical framework" and focus on the tension or harmony between them.[79] Along with an acceptance of flux, and a cyclical framework, Machiavelli's *Discorsi* shares the following characteristics of Stoic historiography: a cosmopolitan scope, which includes, among others, examples from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, early modern France, Spain, Florence, and Venice; a didactic purpose, which focuses on the practical applications of history for political renovation; and a concern with free will and fate, whereby the *virtù* of an individual can accomplish the return to first principles within the historical cycle.

Machiavelli's attempt to "raise up dead things" in the political consciousness of the Italians is in a number of ways analogous to Ariosto's parodic imitation of classical literature in the *Furioso*. The similarity between fictional narrative structure and historiography can help explain the significance of repetition as a temporal principle.

[79] Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, 291–92.

Repetition functions as both a narrative device and a historical evocation of an earlier ethos in both Machiavelli's history and Ariosto's narrative poetry. Paul Ricoeur argues that repetition allows us to perceive the pattern of the plot. He calls the pattern of the plot, through which the meaning of successive events is construed, the "configurational dimension" of narrative. So the "repetition" of events in a narrative constructs a pattern with meaning. And the pattern and meaning produced by repetition are specifically temporal or historical. Both the wildly fantastical plot of the *Furioso* and the historical analyses of the *Discorsi* produce a sense of a possible world and of the historical past. Ricoeur claims that repetition becomes "the main issue in narrative in which the quest duplicates the travel in space."[80] If this is so, then the *Furioso*, which represents a virtual cast of thousands travelling on myriad quests, is that type of narrative in which repetition will be the key to meaning.

The way in which I have construed the pattern of narrative repetition in the *Orlando Furioso* is represented in my chart (Figure 2). This chart reduces the meaning of repetition to spatial form. The configurational dimension of this repetition needs to be analyzed more fully. The canto-by-canto narrative analysis of the following chapters will explain how this pattern works. The last fifth of the poem, which alternates thematically between stories of erring and returning and structurally between digressing from and concluding the main plot, can be seen as retrospectively describing the repetition of erring quests throughout the poem. Repetition in the *Furioso* unites event and theme. Repetition not only describes the recurrence of events in the poem but inflects their meaning. In a broader cultural historical sense, repetition in the *Furioso* signifies a return, however parodic, to classical literary and ethical models. It is in these respects that a theory of narrative can tell us about the meaning of the poem as an interpretation of history.

Ricoeur suggests that repetition, "the conjunction of temporality and narrative," is the "foundation of historiography" and that thus the inquiry of history is informed by the theory of narrativity.[81] If we

[80] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 178–79, 184–85.

[81] Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 189.

reconsider Machiavelli's theory of history in these terms, it is clear that he articulated the role of repetition in historical inquiry, but also that he included within his reflections on the cycle of history the discontinuities between past and present. This recognition of discontinuity is impelled largely by Machiavelli's desire not only to remember the past but also to regard it as a model for present and future imitation. Rome represents for Machiavelli, as it does for Polybius, a discontinuous moment. In the *Discorsi*, Machiavelli sees the Roman Republic as the moment at which the forces of good fortune and virtuous institutions and men created a new version of the historical cycle. This new cycle is eclectic because it joined together all three types of government; conservative and yet innovative because it tended to retain the same customs and institutions and yet to create new ones when the necessity arose.

If we reverse Ricoeur's application of narrative theory to history and apply historical theory to narrative, we can see how Machiavelli's notion of *ricorso* reveals something about the historical meaning of the *Furioso*. Parody effects a kind of literary *ricorso* or return to first principles. When Ariosto places classical literary imitations alongside medieval imitations, he intensifies the difference between his imitations and their literary models. This literary historical anachronism, this freewheeling, eclectic, and mixed use of literary tradition, adds to the humor of these parodies. And yet, this comic discontinuity, I would argue, makes Ariosto's parodies of the classics—such as that of Senecan tragedy in Orlando's madness and of Virgilian epic in Ruggiero's defeat of Rodomonte—affirm classical literary and ethical traditions more convincingly than a pious imitation would.

Why? Because literary tradition is not a matter of slavish imitation, but of contest and play. Because the very differences amongst Ariosto's early sixteenth-century context (itself represented in the text), the medieval setting of the story, and the medieval and classical literary intertexts, all produce historical awareness. And this awareness of historical discontinuity, like the awareness of such difference in the *Discorsi*, makes possible historical criticism and judgment. Such medieval and Renaissance literary and cultural institutions as chivalry, Neoplatonism, Petrarchism, and even the petty despotism very close to home, all are fair game for Ariosto's parody. Insofar as Ariosto describes madness as being in the thrall of desires bound to these

systems, the poet presents reason in terms of Stoic detachment from such idealizing systems of thought and from such unfulfillable desires. Readers who understand Ariosto's irony respond with a Stoic detachment from the lunacy of this fictional world, at the same time that they recognize their share in the madness.

If Machiavellian *ricorso* is effected by the individual of extraordinary *virtù*, so, too, the action of return at the end of the poem—Orlando's return to battle and Ruggiero's return to Bradamante—is effected by heroic action. Far from constituting some kind of official propaganda, the conclusion of the poem represents the Stoic virtue of living within limitation. Orlando's deluded quest for the metaphysical Angelica is not endless, nor is Ruggiero's wandering. If this narrative closure and renunciation of unlimited desire are inimical to the tastes of some critics, this does not mean that Ariosto failed or that he was merely the cynical servant of Estense power.

We have seen that Pomponazzi, Leonardo, and Machiavelli all think in terms of the whole. All posit the paradoxical concept of cosmic order through flux. But does Bouwsma's notion of "the cosmic optimism which signifies for the actual experience of men the deepest pessimism" apply equally to all three? Pomponazzi's Stoic fatalism suggests a pessimistic resignation to political injustice, and Leonardo's Stoic aesthetic detachment suggests indifference to politics. Though Machiavelli conceives of history as a cycle and politics as an arena where human wickedness will always attempt to seize adavantage, he can also envisage a role for *virtù*. Through *virtù* an individual can bring about renewal within the cycle, but it is a renewal of a conservative, backward-looking sort. This limited optimism is, I think, also characteristic of Ariosto's epic. In the following chapters, I will explore the role of virtue, and of political criticism through parody, as I explain how the poem's apparently chaotic action issues into harmony.

CHAPTER THREE

# An Analysis of the Poem's Structure

> Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori,
> le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto
> [1.1–2: Of ladies, knights, arms, amours, of courtly and courageous deeds I sing.]

THE OPENING LINES OF THE *Furioso* draw our attention to its most important literary characteristics: it is a text about other texts, and it is structured symmetrically. In the standard work on the poem's sources, Pio Rajna noted that these lines recall the following from Dante's *Commedia*: "Le donne e' cavalier, li affani e li agi, / che ne 'nvogliava amore e cortesia" [*Purg.* 14.109–10: The ladies and the knights, the toils and the sports to which love and courtesy moved us].[1] Rajna further observed that the first two editions of the poem preserved the Dantesque resonance even more strongly: "Di donne, e cavalier, gli antiqui amori." Rajna's explanation that the final word order was determined by "ragioni grammaticali" is disappointing, as is his dismissal of the Dantesque allusion. Ariosto's revision of the first line is striking because of its formal rhetorical order, chiasmus—with "cavallier" and "arme" surrounded by "donne" and "amori." The revised first line signals the form that organizes the entire work. Chiasmus in the first line of verse is analogous to the chiastic structure of narrative in the entire poem. The allusion to the *Commedia* that Rajna pointed out needs to be examined in relation to its original context, as do further allusions to Dante and Virgil, contained in these first two lines.[2]

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[1] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 69, from which all quotations in this paragraph are taken. Rajna alters the definite article "li" to "gli," and does not provide the exact location of these lines in the *Commedia*. All translations of the *Commedia* are from *The Divine Comedy*, trans. and ed. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970–75).

[2] For the influence of Dante upon Ariosto, see Luigi Blassucci, "*La Commedia*

The allusion to *Purgatorio* 14 indicates the *Furioso*'s concern with both literary and dynastic genealogy. In this canto of the *Commedia*, Guido del Duca laments both his envy of other men's power and wealth and the fall of the noble families of the Romagna—a fall due to their inability to share power. Just before the lines echoed in the *Furioso*, del Duca cries out about the loss of heirs to the families of Romagna: "Oh Romagnuoli tornati in bastardi!" [14.99: Oh men of Romagna turned to bastards!]. This concern with legitimate succession reappears in Ariosto's concern with establishing an ancient and illustrious genealogy for the Este family. Dante's lines—"le donne e' cavalier, li affani e li agi / che ne 'nvogliava amore e cortesia" (14.109–10)—evoke a sense of longing for a lost world. This allusion to an elegiac Dantesque sentiment at the start of an essentially comic poem reminds us of the serious concerns of patron and poet: the desire of the Estensi to equal their fictional ancestors of the lost chivalric past, and Ariosto's desire to equal his literary ancestors of a lost epic past. These consciously literary opening lines show how Ariosto reshapes poetic tradition.

The first two lines of the *Furioso* also allude to *Inferno* 5, the story of Paolo and Francesca, lovers condemned for their inordinate desire:

> Poscia ch'io ebbi 'l mio dottore udito
> nomar le donne antiche e'cavalieri
> pietà mi giunse, e fui quasi smarrito.
>
> [5.70–72: When I heard my teacher name the ladies and the knights of old, pity overcame me and I was as one bewildered.]

Dante's grave tone and compassion towards the lovers seem remote from Ariosto's ironic and parodic treatment of courtly love. But when we remember that Francesca describes herself and her lover as kissing, "quando leggemmo" (5.133), we understand that this allusion emphasizes the *Furioso*'s own literary mediation as well as the mediated

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come fonte linguistica e stilistica del *Furioso*," in *Studi su Dante e Ariosto* (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1969), 121–62; Carlo Ossola, "Dantismi metrici nel *Furioso*," in *Ludovico Ariosto: lingua, stile, e tradizione*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976), 65–94, esp. 68; Cesare Segre, "Un repertorio linguistica e stilistico dell'Ariosto: *la Commedia*," in *Esperienze ariostesche* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1966), 51–84.

desire of its characters. If Dante's lovers have read an Arthurian romance, Ariosto's have read their Catullus, Horace, and Petrarch, as well. If Paolo's and Francesca's object of desire is the subject of their reading, so, too, Orlando's object of desire is the idealized literary "donna" of Neoplatonic love poetry.

Amongst these echoes of Dante is the Virgilian resonance of "l'arme ... canto." The change of "antiqui" to "arme" makes the line, if less exactly a remembrance of the *Commedia*, a strong echo of *Aeneid* 1.1: "Arma virumque cano" [I sing of arms and the man]. There are both thematic and structural reasons for this change. "[A]rme" indicates that this work will not be a pure romance, and the formal arrangement of chiasmus creates a less colloquial and more elevated epic style. Perhaps most important of all is the way in which this Virgilian allusion is paralleled at the end of the poem by yet another parody of Virgil: the death of Rodomonte echoes Virgil's death of Turnus. The *Furioso* begins and ends with allusions to the *Aeneid*.

Ariosto's epic abounds in such parallelism. The poem's plot is structured through mirror episodes. This narrative parallelism occurs not just in random instances but in five symmetrical groups of cantos. A dividing canto separates each group of eight cantos from the others. At the center of each group of eight are two cantos containing major episodes. The narratives of these two cantos constitute a "central panel," to borrow a term from Brooks Otis' study of the *Metamorphoses*.[3] Each central panel is flanked by three cantos on each side containing episodes that mirror each other's action. Thus, Ariosto forms an ordered, cyclical, repetitive structure.

The most important panel, the madness of Orlando, occurs directly at the center of the poem, the twenty-third of its forty-six cantos.[4] This central panel is framed on either side by two sets of episodes that complement one another in content and that are equidistant from one another in the poem's structure. The story of Polinesso's betrayal of Dalinda (5) complements an account of Orlando's

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[3] Brooks Otis, "The Plan of Ovid's Epic," in *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1966), 45–90, esp. 83–87. For Otis, "panels" are the central sections containing epic material in his four divisions of the *Metamorphoses*.

[4] See Rajna, *Le fonti*, 393–94.

loyalty to his friend Brandimarte (42). The story of Astolfo's seduction by Alcina and Ruggiero's wandering into her garden (6) is juxtaposed to Ruggiero's baptism (41). The praise of Alfonso d'Este in Canto 15 parallels that for Ippolito in Canto 35; the praise of Charles V as "il più saggio imperatore e giusto / ... dopo Augusto" [24.7–8: the wisest and most just emperor ... since Augustus] is undermined by the equivocal praise of Augustus in Canto 35: "L'aver avuto in poesia buon gusto / la proscrizion iniqua gli perdona" [26.3–4: his good taste in poetry compensates for the evil of his proscriptions]. The mock epic descent of the angel Michele to find "Silenzio" and "Discordia" (14.76) is set against Astolfo's mock epic ascent to retrieve the "Senno d'Orlando" (34.83). Astolfo uses his magic horn first to defeat the monsters Caligorante and Orrilo (15) and later to defeat the harpies (33). The total scheme of the central panels is diagrammed in Figure 3.

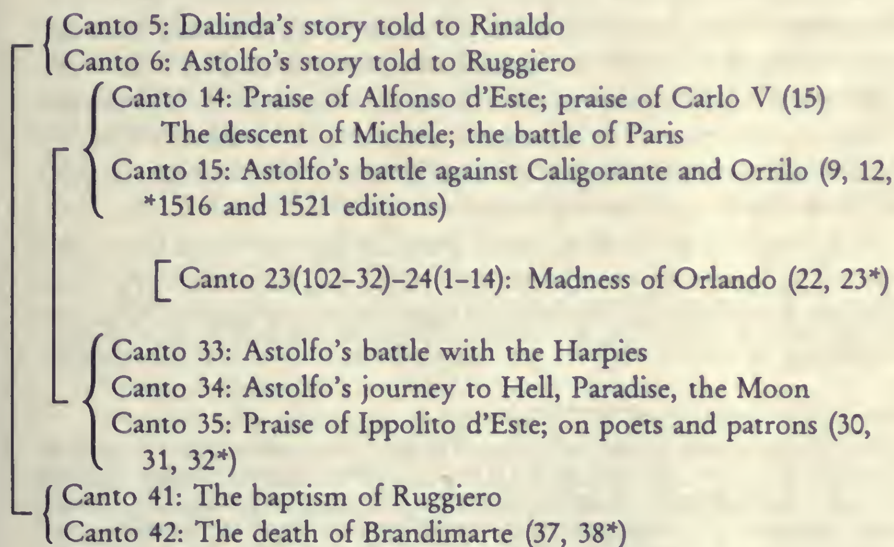


*Fig. 3. Diagram of central panels*

All these central cantos were included in all three editions, with only a few stanzas deleted from or added to each.[5] The addition of six cantos in the 1532 edition changes the placement of these central cantos rather than their content. In the 1532 edition, which reflects Ariosto's final revisions, each pair of central cantos occurs in the middle of its section of eight cantos.

The central episodes direct our attention to the main strands of literary genealogy in the poem. The first central episode, Astolfo's story of how he was seduced by Alcina, focuses our attention upon the tradition of romance, in both the generic and literary-historical sense of the term. In Canto 6, the literary genealogy can be traced back to the *Odyssey*, a text which Northrop Frye among others has seen as the generic origin of romance in the West. The story of Alcina's enchantment of Astolfo and her other lovers ultimately derives from the story of Circe's enchantment of Odysseus' men in *Odyssey* 10. For the mirror episode to Canto 6, the story of Dalinda's deception by her lover Polinesso in Canto 5, the main literary source is the fifteenth-century Catalan romance, *Tirant lo Blanch* of Joanot Martorell.[6] The first section of the poem (2–9) primarily narrates quests after unattainable desires, and the central panel (5 and 6) reveals the nature of this desire once its object is attained. Both Dalinda and Ruggiero are deceived by others, but the narrative reveals that Dalinda and Ruggiero deceive themselves through their enslavement to an idea of love which mystifies the ostensible object of desire.

In contrast to the first central panel, where stories of desire and seduction predominate, the second panel emphasizes the *Furioso*'s parodic relation to the tradition of martial epic: the siege of Paris, the catalogue of troops, and the descent of the angel Michele. The descent

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[5] The three editions may be compared in *Orlando Furioso secondo l'edizione del 1532 con le varianti delle edizioni del 1516 e del 1521*, ed. Santorre Debenedetti and Cesare Segre (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1960). The only substantial changes in the central cantos in the 1532 edition are 15.18–36, the prophecy of Charles V, and 33.1–59, 65–76, the prophecy of the French interventions in Italy.

[6] See Rajna, *Le fonti*, 149–53, where he compares Dalinda's story to that of Placerdemivida's staged scene in *Tirant lo Blanch*. For a discussion of the interplay of romance motifs in Canto 5 and how they are all put to the service of a complex treatment of the relation of art to deception, see Robert W. Hanning, "Sources of Illusion: Plot Elements and Their Thematic Uses in Ariosto's Ginevra Episode," *Forum Italicum* 5, no. 4 (1971): 514–35.

of Michele evokes the memory of Mercury's and Allecto's descents in the *Aeneid* and Iris' in the *Iliad*.[7] In the midst of this Virgilian epic background are the Casa del Sonno, like Ovid's domus Somni (*Metamorphoses* 11.593ff.), and la Fraude, similar to Dante's Geryon (*Inferno* 17).[8] The second section is framed by allusions to the *Metamorphoses* and to the *Aeneid*. Perseus' rescue of Andromeda in *Metamorphoses* 4 is the source for Ruggiero's rescue of Angelica (Cantos 10–11); and the night raid of Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid* 9 is the source for the night raid of Cloridano and Medoro (Canto 18).[9] Both traditions are combined in the second central panel.

Accompanying Canto 14 at the center of the second panel, Canto 15 also deals with feats of arms. Here in Astolfo's fight with the monster Orrilo, who comes from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Ariosto parodies the romance duel of individuals.[10] Not only does Michele's descent recall the *Aeneid*, but also the companion episode, Astolfo's defeat of Caligorante, recalls *Aeneid* 8, Hercules' defeat of Cacus.[11] As in Canto 14, prowess in arms is deflated; Astolfo stuns Caligorante with the sound of the magic horn and, thus, traps the giant in his own net. These adventures reflect on other encounters with monsters in this panel: the orca, or sea monster, who torments Olimpia (11) and Angelica (10), and the Orco, who keeps Norandino's wife prisoner (17).

Along with Ovidian and Virgilian material at the extremities of this panel, Ariosto weaves into the fabric of Cantos 15–17 three

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[7] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 206–7. See also Thomas Greene's discussion of Michael's descent in the context of a comparative study of this *topos* in epic, *The Descent from Heaven*, 112–34.

[8] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 208–9.

[9] For discussions of Ariosto's indebtedness to Virgil and Ovid in precisely these cantos, see, on Cantos 10–11: Daniel Javitch, "Rescuing Ovid from the Allegorizers," *Comparative Literature* 30, no. 2 (1978): 97–107; on Canto 18: Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando Furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1985): 215–39, and Barbara Pavlock, "Ariosto and Epic Roman Values," in *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1990). Interestingly enough, both Javitch and Pavlock discuss Cantos 10 and 18 in conjunction with one another. These are just two examples out of many which show how the critical tradition has implicitly noticed the parallelism of the *Furioso*'s narrative structure.

[10] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 225–26.

[11] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 206–7.

separate threads of story from the *Innamorato*: the story of Orrilo (*Inn.* 3.3/*Fur.* 15); the story of Norandino and Lucina (*Inn.* 3.3.27/ *Fur.* 17); the story of Orrigille (*Inn.* 1.29; 2.20/*Fur.* 15–17).[12] The burlesque manner in which Ariosto treats the matter of these stories from the *Innamorato* measures the distance between Ariosto's ironic parody of romance and Boiardo's charming celebration of it. The story of Lucina in the *Innamorato* tells of a maiden in distress who is rescued from the monster Orco and then safely restored to her father Tibiano's ship. Ariosto's story puts not only Lucina in the cave of the cyclopean Orco but also her husband Norandino. To make the comic effects of this even sharper, Ariosto gives Orco a wife, who tries to console Norandino by telling him that her husband never eats women. There are also further twists and turns on the story of the faithless Orrigille. Whereas Boiardo's Orrigille is simply cruel and false, and Orlando simply stupid for allowing her to trick him and steal his horse, Ariosto's Orrigille is clever at deception and her lover Grifone morally weak. Ariosto praises "la perfida Orrigille" in terms that recall the description of his own weaving of the *Furioso*'s plot: "e con tal modo sa tesser gl'inganni, / che men verace par Luca e Giovanni" [16.13.7–8: and in such a way she wove her wiles / that Luke and John would seem less truthful]. Ariosto criticizes Grifone, who believes Orrigille's story that her new lover is really her brother, much more sharply than Boiardo criticizes Orlando: "dal mal uso è vinta la ragione, / e pur l'arbitrio all'appetito cede" [16.4.5–6: By bad habit his reason was conquered / and his will gave way to his appetite]. Ariosto is turning these simple romance stories from Boiardo in new directions—towards heightened absurdity and towards greater moral complexity.

The third section of the poem focuses attention away from the war and on the paladins' individual quests and quarrels, which are revealed as motivated by a fanatical adherence to the code of chivalry (as in the case of Zerbino's defense of the wicked Gabrina), and by a passionate desire for trivial things (as in the Saracens' duels over horses, swords, and ensigns). Among these conflicts the greatest is experienced by Orlando, who goes mad when his belief in a meta-

[12] Rajna, *Le fonti*, 225–26.

physical vision of Angelica as virgin is contradicted by evidence of her sexual relation with Medoro. Orlando's madness is a larger-than-life version of all the lesser follies in this central group of cantos.

The furor of Orlando, which is at the center of the *Furioso*, has a literary genealogy which is at once hinted at and concealed by the title. While the title *Orlando Furioso* alludes to Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, it is to the *Hercules Oetaeus* that the description of Orlando's madness alludes.[13] More importantly, Orlando's going mad over Angelica's sex with and love for Medoro shows the breakdown of his perception of reality. Orlando's perception of the world through the discourse of Petrarchan love is revealed as a delusion. When Orlando recognizes that Angelica is not his beloved, and that he is not who he seemed to be (23.128), he discards his melancholic Petrarchan persona and takes on the role of mad Hercules.[14] Orlando undergoes a violent rage, which pits him against not only himself but also the natural world.

The similarity between the narrator's and Orlando's erotic suffering with which the poem begins (1.2.1–8) becomes a sympathetic response to Orlando's madness in the fourth section of the poem. Orlando's madness is not only reflected in the narrator's feigned lack of control, but also in the poet's deviation from the pattern of narrative organization, established in the first three sections. The fourth central episode, Astolfo's journey to hell, the earthly paradise, and the moon, does not occur at the arithmetical center of its section of eight cantos as the other central episodes do. Symmetry only returns when Orlando regains his wits.

Although not occurring at the exact spatial center of Cantos 29–36, Astolfo's journey, like the other central episodes, highlights the major themes of the section in which it occurs, marks a significant

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[13] See Rajna's gloss on the title, *Le fonti*, 59, and Saccone's discussion of the similarity between the title of Ariosto's poem and Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, *Il "sogetto,"* 203. As far as I know, no one has ever recognized the similarity between the *Furioso* and Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*.

[14] See Andrew Fichter's discussion of Orlando's relation to Petrarchan love lyric in *Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 77–81. For a discussion of how Orlando's love for Angelica parodies the love represented in Neoplatonic lyric poetry, see Alfredo Bonadeo, "Note sulla pazzia di Orlando," *Forum Italicum* 4, no. 1 (1970): 37–57.

turning point in the poem's action, and is a major literary parody. Astolfo's journey parodies in miniature the entire course of Dante's *Commedia*. In the dialogue between Astolfo and St. John the Evangelist, the poet overtly mentions other texts and the relation of literature to the truth. This section as a whole is concerned with the question of interpretation.

In the final section of the poem, the baptism of Ruggiero shares the central position along with the death and funeral of Brandimarte and Orlando's return to battle. Ruggiero's conversion, like the return of Orlando's wits at the outset of this section (39), alludes to the New Testament.[15] If Ruggiero's conversion is reminiscent of that of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, Orlando's cry upon returning to sanity, "Solvite me" [Free me], is reminiscent of both Silenus' cries to his captors (Virgil, *Eclog*. 6.24) and Christ's words upon the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11:44): "Solvite eum" [Unbind him].

Both the baptism of Ruggiero and Orlando's return to battle indicate each character's abandonment of an erring quest—Orlando's renunciation of the search for Angelica and Ruggiero's renunciation of support for Agramante and fickle wandering from Bradamante. Each character finally affirms his duty: Orlando to Charlemagne and Ruggiero to Bradamante.[16] Despite his difficulty in returning directly to Bradamante even after he has fulfilled his promise to her by becoming a Christian, Ruggiero does change at the end of the poem. Both his friendship for Leone and his final reunion with Bradamante and defeat of Rodomonte show Ruggiero's capacity for commitment and acceptance of his own mortality.

Brandimarte's death, not unlike the death of Patroklos in the *Iliad* and that of Pallas in the *Aeneid*, transforms Orlando into a friend and a comrade to his fellow men—a transformation more palpable than the return to his wits in Canto 39. The restoration of Orlando's wits

[15] See Barbara Reynolds' note on 41.53, in the index to her translation of the poem, *"Orlando Furioso": Part Two* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 728. See Fichter's discussion of Ruggiero's baptism in relation to the Pauline text, *Dynastic Epic*, 98–102.

[16] See Peter DeSa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986). Though sharing my view that Ruggiero's commitment to Bradamante is one of the chief themes of the poem, Wiggins finds Orlando's return to duty as shallow as his earlier quest for Angelica.

entails his fellow paladins' tying him up and Astolfo's applying the vaporous wits to his nose. At the same time, Orlando's recovery is not merely external. When in the midst of the battle he looks upon his friend Brandimarte lying dead on the ground, Orlando is described as recovering consciousness: "Il conte si risente" [41.102: The count recovered his senses].

Along with these correspondences between equidistant central cantos are those among the six cantos that mark beginnings and endings of the five sections of the poem. Cantos 1, 10, 19, 28, 37, and 46 are about the struggle between the sexes. These six cantos also relate to one another in such a way that the beginning canto is juxtaposed against the end one, and the middle cantos are juxtaposed against those equidistant from them. Again, a series of concentric circles is formed by this structure:

Canto 1: The search for Angelica
Canto 10: The abandonment of Olimpia; Ruggiero's infidelity
Canto 19: Angelica and Medoro; tale of the killer women
Canto 28: The innkeeper's tale of women's infidelity
Canto 37: Marganorre the woman hater
Canto 46: The marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante

Ariosto juxtaposes the dispersal of the first canto—the flight from Charlemagne and the unresolved pursuit of Angelica—against the closure of the last canto—the return to the court, the reunion of all the knights, and the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante. While Rinaldo and Ferraù fight over Angelica at the outset of the poem, at the close of the poem Leone relinquishes his claim to Bradamante and allows Ruggiero to marry her. Leone's pledge of friendship, "molto più che 'l mio bene, il tuo mi piace" [46.36.8: more pleasing to me than my own good is yours], replaces the narrator's ironic comment on the solidarity of Ferraù and Rinaldo, who both ride off together on the one horse after Angelica: "Oh gran bontà di cavallieri antiqui!" [1.22.1: Oh great goodness of the knights of old]. The ridiculous rivalries that characterize so much of the poem are superseded at its conclusion by the possibility of true friendship. The gravity of the final duel between Ruggiero and Rodomonte, in imitation of the combat between Aeneas and Turnus with which the *Aeneid* ends,

contrasts with the slapstick account of Bradamante's unseating Sacripante, who is so ashamed at being defeated by a woman that he needs Angelica's consolation.

The next pair of dividing cantos are about sexual infidelity. Men's infidelity in Canto 10 parallels women's infidelity in Canto 28, which the narrator recommends that ladies "skip" [28.2.1: Lasciate questo canto]. Bireno's abandonment of Olimpia (Canto 10) can be read against the cuckolding of Jocondo (28). If in Canto 10 the narrator warns ladies against the appetites of young men—"che presto nasce in loro e presto muore, / quasi un foco di paglia, ogni appetito" [7.3–4: every appetite is quickly born in them and quickly dies, like a blaze of straw]—in Canto 28, upon seeing the King's wife copulating with a hunchback dwarf, Jocondo cries out: "oh che appetito" (35.8). Ruggiero's clumsy and unsuccessful attempted sexual assault upon Angelica (11) is countered by the young peasant Fiammetta's clever and successful outwitting of her sexual masters, Jocondo and the King. As they lay asleep on either side of her, she and her young lover make love all night long (28).

While Cantos 10 and 28 chronicle the infidelity of both sexes (despite Logistilla's instruction of Ruggiero in virtue), Cantos 19 and 37 treat misanthropy and misogyny. The story of the women who resent men for having betrayed them (Canto 19) is paralleled by that of Marganorre, who blames women for the deaths of his two sons (Canto 37). Just as these women either kill or subject all men to slavery, so, too, Marganorre either sacrifices women or degrades and exiles them from his kingdom. Both cantos describe evil laws by which one sex oppresses another, and in both cantos those laws are overturned. Canto 37 was added to the 1532 edition in what I believe was a conscious attempt to provide criticism of misogyny to balance the criticism of misanthropy in Canto 19.

These episodes are central—central spatially in the poem as a formally ordered narrative, central thematically in the poem as an expression of ideas, and central literarily in the poem as a parody of many texts from diverse genres and traditions. To understand this, we must consider each within the context of the particular section of cantos in which it occurs. The complex yet clear system of mirror cantos within each panel frames each central section. A clear explication of the analogies in the plot that form symmetrical panels will

reveal that much of what upon a linear reading seems repetitive and random is parallel and ordered. At first the plot may seem repetitive because many of the characters are engaged in almost identical adventures, and random because their actions seem spontaneous and unpredictable, as do the narrator's seemingly arbitrary and telling interruptions of his stories. There is repetition but always with a purpose. Ariosto's Ovidian *sprezzatura* in concealing his art effects the apparent randomness.

CHAPTER FOUR

# Appearances and Judgments: Cantos 2–9

> Perturbant homines non res ipsae, sed rerum opiniones.
> [Men are disturbed not by things but by the views they take of things.][1]
> Non industria inquietos, sed insanos falsae rerum imagines agitant.
> [It is not activity that makes men restless but false conceptions of things render them mad.][2]

IN THE FIRST CANTO, THE NARRATOR INTRODUCES MANY of the main plot lines; in the final canto, he either repeats or reverses these plot lines. The story of the war between Charlemagne and Agramante (1.1) ends in the duel between Ruggiero and Rodomonte (46). The first half of the poem leads up to Orlando's madness, while the last half of the poem treats Astolfo's recapture (34) and restoration of Orlando's vaporous wits to his nose (39). The praise of Ippolito in the description of Ruggiero's and Bradamante's wedding pavilion (46) echoes the praise of the Estensi in the opening exordium (1.3–4). When Rinaldo drinks from the waters of Disdégno (42), he abandons his search for Angelica (1). In the first canto, Ariosto creates swift changes of scene and presents multiple simultaneous actions in order to set at least six different plots in motion. When Bradamante unhorses Sacripante, and Angelica escapes from him by riding off on the charger Baiardo (1.60–81), the apparent chaos comes to an abrupt

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[1] Epictetus, *Enchiridion* cap. 8, trans. Angelo Politiano, first printed in *Opera omnia Angeli Politiani* (Aldo Manuzio, 1498), revised by Vittorio Enzo Alfieri and Vittore Branca, reprinted in *Manuale de Epitteto con Pagine dello Stesso dalle Diatribe* (Verona, 1967), 167. For an even earlier (c. 1449), although less well-known, translation of Epictetus into Latin in manuscript form, see *Niccolo Perotti's Version of The Enchiridion of Epictetus*, ed. Revilo Pendleton Oliver (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1954).

[2] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 12.5, in *Moral Essays*, 2:265–66.

end. If Angelica eludes the paladins here, she finally ends her wandering by returning home [30.16.5: ritornare in sua contrada]. In a sense, by wandering out of the poem itself, she also eludes the narrator, who laments, "forse altri canterà con miglior plettro" [30.16.8: perhaps another will sing of her with a better plectrum].

While all these plots are set in motion in Canto 1, it is only in Canto 2 that the eight-canto pattern begins. Three pairs of cantos (2 and 9; 3 and 8; 4 and 7) frame the two central cantos (5 and 6). The plot is composed of four basic types of action: pursuit / wandering, deception / entrapment, escape / rescue, meeting / storytelling or prophecy.[3] Some parallel actions in the first section are charted in Figure 4.

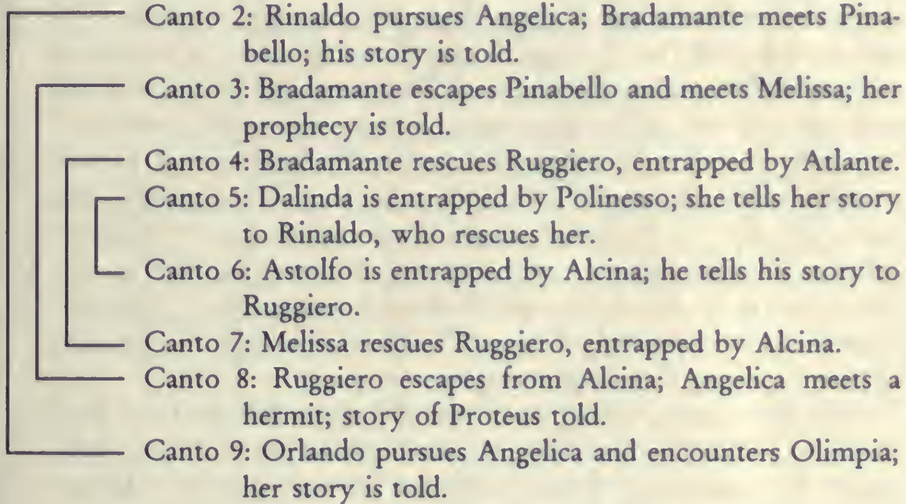


*Fig. 4. Parallel actions in section one*

More than one type of action exists in each canto, but parallels are still discernible. The ring composition of action focuses attention up-

[3] See Northrop Frye's division of romance narrative themes into those of "ascent" (which includes "escape, remembrance, or discovery of one's real identity, growing freedom, the breaking of enchantment") and of "descent" (which includes "imprisonment, sometimes an oracular cave, ... [being] trapped in labyrinths or prisons"), in *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), 129.

on the central cantos, whose themes and literary parodies crystallize and reflect upon those of the entire section.

This narrative order is neither obvious or rigid; the reader, whether aware of it or not, experiences its effects. The self-referential comments of the narrator at the outset of Canto 2 draw our attention to the author's writerly control over his plot as a tapestry: "Ma perché varie fila a varie tele / uopo mi son, che tutte ordire intendo..." [2.30.5–6: But because I have need of various warps and threads, all of which I intend to weave... ]. Repetitions in the plot create a symmetry of action. The reader, in turn, although unaware of these hidden symmetries, is aware of the abrupt changes of scene and story line that make this pattern possible.[4] This various and patterned plot encourages the reader to attend more to action than to character and also to be detached from any one story line. Changes of scene are so various and swift that the reader can glimpse moments in the stories of many different characters at once. The panoramic perspective that such a diverse and swiftly changing plot creates allows the reader to be detached, while the juxtaposition of absurdly incongruous literary sources evokes amusement. Since there is so much going on in this poem, the plot can be confusing, unless one understands the relations between disparate actions. An analysis of the many parallels in each pair of cantos in section one will illustrate how meaning is generated through the complex web of Ariosto's plot and through the unexpected mix of diverse literary genealogies.

The first cantos, 2 and 9, are linked by parallels between their exordia and their plots. Each of these cantos contains four basic actions: (1) a search for Angelica, (2) a sea journey, (3) a tale told by a distressed person, and (4) an escape from danger. Each canto features internal narration, and each internal story relates a similar action. At the end of Canto 2, a fifth action, which signals a major preoccupation of section one as a whole, foreshadows the last stanza of Canto 9: the deception of one character by another.

From the outset of Canto 9, its concern with the deceptive character of love recalls Canto 2. In the exordium to Canto 9, the narrator

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[4] For a lively and amusing discussion of the interrupted plot, see Daniel Javitch, "*Cantus Interruptus* in the *Orlando Furioso*," *MLN* 95, no. 1 (1980): 66–80.

generalizes about "Amore": "questo crudele e traditore Amore" (9.1.2). He bases this generalization on the case of Orlando: "Già savio ... per un vano amor poco del zio, / e di sé poco, e men cura di Dio" [9.1.5, 7–8: Once wise ... through a vain love he has little care for his uncle, himself, and even less for God].[5] In Canto 2, Amor is apostrophized as "Ingiustissimo ... perfido" (2.1.1, 3). The complaint is that Amor rarely makes our desires correspond (just as once Angelica loved Rinaldo and he hated her, now he loves her and she hates him). The tyranny of Love in both exordia makes these appropriate openings to the narratives which immediately follow them. Passion rules the characters' actions.

The narrator likens his own vulnerability to that of the poem's lovers:

> Gir non mi lasci al facil guado e chiaro,
> e nel più cieco e maggior fondo tiri:
> da chi disia il mio amor tu mi richiami,
> e chi m'ha in odio vuoi ch'adori ed ami.

[2.1.5–8: Not for me the crossing where the water is quiet and limpid: you needs must draw me in where it is deep and murky. You call me away from any who would crave my love, while she who hates me, she it is to whom you would have me give my heart.]

> Ma l'escuso io pur troppo, e mi rallegro
> nel mio difetto aver compagno tale;
> ch'anch'io sono al mio ben languido ed egro,
> sano e gagliardo a seguitare il male.

[9.2.1–4: I can forgive him, though, with all my heart. Indeed I am delighted to have such a partner in crime: for my efforts at self-improvement are something short of zealous, but when it comes to harmful pursuits I run with the foremost.]

Identifying with the characters, the narrator sympathizes with their failings. Seneca recommends a similar response to the failings of others:

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[5] This is also reminiscent of 1.2.1, 3–4: "Dirò d'Orlando ... / ... che per amor venne in furore e matto, / d'uom che sì saggio era stimato prima."

> Perhaps if you search carefully, you will find in your own bosom the vice of which you complain. It is unfair to be angry with a universal failing, foolish to be angry with your own—you must pardon if you would win pardon.[6]

Evoking this kind of Stoic detachment and tolerance, the *Furioso* encourages its readers to laugh at themselves as well as at the characters and the narrator.

The narrator's expression of his own subservience to love disguises the writer's control over all the characters' actions. Ariosto's strategy of dropping one narrative thread to pick up another seems to imitate the arbitrariness of desire.[7] An explanation of the ties between Cantos 2 and 9 uncovers the pattern behind this shifting from scene to scene. At the opening of Canto 2, the hermit's sprite misleads Rinaldo, who thinks he is following Angelica to Paris; at the opening of Canto 9, Orlando searches for Angelica. Rinaldo's ship wanders off course (2), and so does Orlando's (9). While Bradamante encounters a knight in distress (2), Orlando encounters a maiden in distress (9). Pinabello tells Bradamante how a knight on a winged horse stole his lady from him and imprisoned her (2). Olimpia tells Orlando how her beloved Bireno was taken from her and imprisoned by the wicked Cimosco (9). Each internal narration follows the same outline. Both Bradamante and Orlando vow to help their respective storytellers. Pinabello's deception of Bradamante parallels Bireno's deception of Olimpia, which the final stanza of Canto 9 hints at: "nuovi accidenti a nascere hanno / per disturbarle [le nozze]" [9.94.5–6: new difficulties are going to arise to spoil the wedding]. Parallels between Cantos 2 and 9 are outlined in Figure 5, on the page opposite.

If Cantos 2 and 9 begin and end with treachery—with the perversity of love or the betrayal of one character by another—Cantos 3 and 8 are even more preoccupied with deception. Both Cantos 3 and 8 begin with an escape—that of Bradamante from Pinabello (3) and that

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[6] Seneca, *De beneficiis* 7.28.3, in *Moral Essays*, 3:518: "Fortasse vitium, de quo quereris, si te diligenter excusseris, stulte tuo; ut absolvaris, ignosce."

[7] As Javitch puts it so well: "We realize, after being alienated often enough, that it makes no sense to get so worked up about what is, after all, nothing but the author's fictive construct manipulated at the author's will" ("*Cantus Interruptus*," 80).

| *Canto 2* | *Canto 9* |
|---|---|
| *Exordium*: Ingiustissimo Amor | traditore Amor |
| *Pursuit*: The search for Angelica: | |
| by Orlando | by Rinaldo |
| *Wandering*: Rinaldo's ship in storm | Orlando's ship blown off course |
| *Encounter and Story*: | |
| Pinabello to Bradamante | Olimpia to Orlando |
| *Entrapment*: Pinabello's lady imprisoned | Bireno imprisoned |
| *Pursuit*: Bradamante vows to help | Orlando helps Olimpia |
| *Deception*: Pinabello tricks Bradamante | Bireno deceives Olimpia |
| *Rescue / Escape*: Bradamante escapes Pinabello | Orlando frees Bireno |

*Fig. 5. Parallels between Cantos 2 and 9*

of Ruggiero from Alcina (8)—made possible by subterfuge. Both Ruggiero and Bradamante must dissimulate—either through magic or through wit—to survive. Both cantos treat magic and deception and their relation to art. Ruggiero uses the ring of Angelica to conceal himself: "Ruggiero ... dissimulando" (8.3.1). Bradamante protects herself from Brunello by concealing her identity from him: "La donna, già prevista ... / ... e simula ugualmente / e patria e stirpe e setta e nome e sesso" [3.76.5–7: The damsel, forewarned, dissimulated just as well in her account of her nation, family, religion, name and sex]. If Bradamante's lies protect her from Brunello's treacherous manipulation, Angelica's magic ring protects Ruggiero from Alcina's magic. Melissa tells Bradamante of the "annello / ... / di tal virtù, che chi nel dito ha quello, / contra il mal degl'incanti ha medicina" (3.69.1.5–6). Ruggiero escapes from Alcina with the aid of the same "annello": "Chi l'annello d'Angelica, o più tosto / chi avesse quel de la ragion, potria / veder a tutti il viso, che nascosto / da finzione e d'arte non saria" [8.2.1–4: Who had the ring of Angelica, or rather

who had that of reason, could see the whole face, which would not be hidden by invention or by art]. Questions arise in the interpretation of these lines. Does the ring stand for reason or possess it? Does reason or magic produce the truth? These questions need to be dealt with in relation to the role of "ragion" in the poem as a whole. The ring is seen as valuable in both passages quoted because it works against powers of deception—magic and art, both of which conceal the truth. Paradoxically, the ring, too, deceives others, since it makes the one who wears it invisible.[8]

Magic is represented not only as concealing but also as revealing the truth in these two cantos. Melissa uses her power to create prophetic history as well as to destroy falsehood. In Canto 3, she conjures up spirits who prophesy history; in Canto 8, she destroys Alcina's magic symbols and changes enchanted forms into true ones:

> imagini abbruciar, suggelli torre,
> e nodi e rombi e turbini disciorre.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> gli antiqui amanti ch'erano in gran torma
> conversi in fonti, in fere, in legni, in sassi
> fe' ritornar ne la lor prima forma.

[8.14.7–8; 15.2–4: figures to burn, seals to remove, knots, magic squares, and whorls to disarrange. / . . . the discarded lovers whom Alcina had turned—a great host of them—into wood or stone, into springs or wild beasts, she restored them all to their original form.]

Melissa undoes Alcina's magic metamorphoses of her prisoners and makes them return to their original human forms.

Cantos 3 and 8 implicate fiction in both lying and truth telling.

[8] See Mario Santoro's conclusion to his discussion of the exordia of the *Furioso*: "[T]hanks to the ring of Angelica man is conscious of his own destiny . . . of maintaining a rational rapport, however always difficult and risky, with reality (with external reality and with that much more insidious reality of the impulses and passions)" ["mercè 'l'anello di Angelica' l'uomo ha la possibilità di acquistare la coscienza del proprio destino . . . di mantenere un rapporto razionale, pur sempre difficile e rischioso, con la realtà (con la realtà esterna e con quella, molto più insidiosa, degli impulsi e delle passioni)"]. In *L'anello di Angelica* (Naples: Federico & Ardia, 1983), 43.

The exordia to these cantos deal with how art, magic, truth, and falsehood relate to each other. In the exordium to Canto 3 the narrator describes his task of praising the Estensi as one requiring poetic furor. His "furor" (3.1.5), unlike that of Orlando, he hopes will not cause him to err: "s'in me non erra / quel profetico lume che m'inspiri" [3.2.6–7: if I be not deceived in that prophetic light which inspires me]. If Melissa's account of Bradamante's destiny and that of her progeny makes the truth claims of epic, an episode from recent Estense history puts this prophetic truth in question. As Melissa finishes her praise of Ercole's children, Bradamante asks about two others who seem to avoid Ippolito and Alfonso. These two, only obliquely identified by a plea to Ariosto's patrons to forgive them, are Giulio and Ferrante, the bastard brothers who had conspired to wrest the throne from Alfonso and who had been brutally punished with maiming and imprisonment. Here deception takes the form of familial betrayal and political conspiracy. This allusion to the cruelty of Ariosto's patron calls upon the reader to criticize the appearance of unqualified praise of the Estense family elsewhere in Canto 3.

In Canto 8, deception is erotic. Seducers are called magicians; their magic is "simulazion," the art of feigning:

> Oh quante sono incantatrici, oh quanti
> incantator tra noi, che non si sanno!
> che con lor arti uomini e donne amanti
> di sé, cangiando i visi lor, fatto hanno.
> Non con spirti constretti tali incanti,
> né con osservazion di stelle fanno;
> ma con simulazion, menzogne e frodi
> legano i cor d'indissolubil nodi.

> [8.1.1–8: Sorcerers and sorceresses, we may not know it but you thrive among us! Artfully you disguise your faces and ensnare the hearts of the opposite sex. You work your magic neither by virtue of obedient sprites nor by conning the stars for signs: by trickery, lies, and dissimulation you bind the hearts of others with knots that cannot be untied.]

The diction here has connotations of art as well as necromancy and seduction. Magic "arti" not only stand for the wiles of seducers but also the craft of artists. "[C]angiando" suggests metamorphosis as well

as conjuration and fickleness. "Simulazion" not only connotes hypocrisy but also fiction. This representation of seduction as magic, in its capacity to lie and to conceal, reflects upon the similar capacity of art and, in particular, of fiction.

Along with this opposition between the capacity of fiction for truth and for falsehood, there are other oppositions—between a single and a multiple plot, between epic and romance. Canto 3 concerns the revelation by Melissa to Bradamante of the prophetic history of her progeny. This canto recalls the prophetic history of the Augustan line in *Aeneid* 6.[9] The central panel, where Ruggiero encounters Astolfo trapped in the form of a myrtle (6), just as Aeneas had encountered Polydorus (*Aeneid* 3), echoes the Virgilian imitation in Canto 3.[10] In Canto 8, the deception of myth and romance supplant the ostensible truth of history and epic. At the outset of Canto 8, Ruggiero has just escaped the deception of Alcina. Later on in the canto, Angelica, too, is deceived—in her case by a lustful hermit who conjures demons to lead her horse to a deserted place. Towards the end of the canto, Orlando is deceived by a dream which he uncritically believes: "Senza pensar che sian l'imagin false / quando per tema o per disio si sogna" [84.1–2: Without thinking that they are false images while he dreams of them through fear or desire]. Orlando's blind belief in the dream of Angelica, like his entire conception of Angelica, is a self-deception. Canto 8 takes place in the realm of romance. Almost all of the characters in this canto are possessed by some form of deception. Such variations on the theme of deception as mistaken identity, self-deception in love, and seduction by false appearance are *topoi* of romance. Romance motifs in Canto 8 reflect back upon Canto 5, just as epic conventions in Canto 3 look forward to Canto 6.

The single plot of Canto 3 is unusual. Ariosto abandons all plot lines to tell about Bradamante and her ancestors. Canto 8, however, is full of interruptions, which are actually continuations of plots begun in Canto 2 and interrupted by Canto 3. Rinaldo raises the troops which he had set off in search of in Canto 2; Angelica's story is resumed from Canto 2, where she was being chased by Rinaldo;

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[9] Rajna, *Le fonti,* 117.

[10] Rajna, *Le fonti,* 169–70. Rajna also mentions the analogy to *Inferno* 13.31, and the *Metamorphoses* 8.751.

Orlando, falsely reported as travelling to Paris with Angelica in Canto 2, dreams of her in Canto 8. While every action in Canto 3 interrupts, every action in Canto 8 completes or returns to a story begun in Canto 2.

There is, however, one exception to this rule of narrative completion and return in Canto 8: the story of Proteus' anger at the King of Ebuda's murder of his daughter, pregnant after having been raped by the sea god. Ariosto juxtaposes the loss of progeny in Canto 8 to the prophecy of progeny in Canto 3. While in Canto 3 the progeny foretold are historical figures likened to the gods and heroes of myth—Afonso and Ippolito, for example, are "figli de Tindareo cigno" (3.50.4)—in Canto 8 Proteus and the loss of his progeny are mythic subjects presented as "l'antique istorie" [8.52.1: ancient histories]. The narrator, of course, is telling legendary history. The skeptical note that he concludes his tale with gives the impression—needless to say, with comic effect—that the story could be verifiable: "O vera o falsa che fosse la cosa di Proteo / (ch'io non so che me ne dica)" [8.58.1–2: whether this matter of Proteus is true or false (I do not know what to think)].[11] Although Canto 3 is presented as ostensibly true and the Proteus story as questionable, the similarities between this part of Canto 8 and the whole of Canto 3—that both interrupt the narrative line and both contain elements of myth and history—make the reader compare the true history of the Estensi to the mythic history of the Ebudans. Proteus exacts his vengeance on the Ebudans for the loss of his son and will only be appeased by the sacrifice of a beautiful maiden. Ariosto sets the fertility of Estense women against female sacrifice.

With Cantos 4 and 7, the structure of parallel images and actions, seen in Cantos 2 and 9, returns. Both cantos relate the confrontation of an Estense ancestor with a magician. Both cantos are set in enchanted places, Canto 4 in the *bella rocca* of Atlante and Canto 7 in the palazzo of Alcina. The setting for Canto 7 results from the action of Canto 4, since Atlante contrives that the *ippogrifo* carry Ruggiero

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[11] See Carne-Ross's comment: "The tone (and the story that follows of a distant island where girls are sacrificed to a sea monster) is pure fairy tale, even if it is introduced by the smiling scepticism of 'o vere o false' " ("The One and the Many" [1966], 218).

safely away from battle to Alcina's palace. In both enchanted places, lords and ladies engage in the pursuits of courtly leisure. Ruggiero, the protagonist in both cantos, is freed from the thrall of these pursuits, as he is freed from enchantment.

The differences between these two cantos express variations on the theme of erotic desire. Each canto portrays a different notion of desire and deception. Both exordia mention deception and suggest its relation to fiction. In Canto 4, deception is valued not only as necessary but also as beneficial. Such is the case with Bradamante's deception of Brunello at the end of Canto 3, upon which the narrator comments:

> Quantunque il simular sia le più volte
> ripreso, e dia di mala mente indici,
> si truova pur in molte cose e molte
> aver fatti evidenti benefici,
> e danni e biasmi e morti aver già tolte.
>
> [4.1.1–5: Deceit is normally held in low esteem, pointing as it does to an evil disposition; there are, nonetheless, countless instances when it has reaped obvious benefits and deflected all manner of harm and ill report and mortal perils.]

Bradamante's dissimulation is in reaction to Brunello: "Simula anch'ella; e così far conviene / con esso lui di finzioni padre" [4.3.1–2: She too dissimulated—perforce she had to with Brunello, the begetter of so many fictions]. The description of Brunello as "di finzione padre" allies deception with fiction. The *Orlando Furioso* is, after all, a "finzione," of which Ariosto is "padre." Ariosto undercuts the notion of fiction as true, but not the notion of fiction as verisimilar; for fiction, like a lie, simulates the truth. In the exordium to Canto 7, the narrator counters attacks against the veracity of his story.

> Chi va lontan de la sua patria, vede
> cose, da quel che già credea, lontane;
> che narrandole poi, non se gli crede,
> e stimato bugiardo ne rimane:
> che 'l sciocco vulgo non gli vuol dar fede,
> se non le vede e tocca chiare e piane.
> Per questo io so che l'inesperienza
> farà al mio canto dar poca credenza.

> [7.1.1–8: He who travels far afield beholds things which lie beyond the bounds of belief; and when he returns to tell of them, he is not believed, but is dismissed as a liar, for the ignorant throng will refuse to accept his word, but need must see with their own eyes, touch with their own hands. This being so, I realize that my words will gain scant credence where they outstrip the experience of my hearers.]

The narrator also praises his audience as more capable of recognizing the truth of his story, as more knowledgeable and experienced than the "vulgo sciocco e ignaro" (7.2.2): "A voi so ben che non parrà menzogna, / che 'l lume del discorso avete chiaro" [7.2.3–4: I know that you my sharp, clear-headed listeners will see the shining truth of my tale]. There is a double irony in this protest. That greater knowledge of the world or some kind of empirical proof would help the "sciocco vulgo" better judge the truth of the story is ridiculous. The absurdity of the narrator's defense only draws the audience's attention to the fictive character of the text; sorceresses, flying horses, and magic rings can hardly be called verisimilar. The portrayal of fiction as dissimulation conflicts with the narrator's protestations of the truth of his fiction.

The events of Cantos 4 and 7 complicate the view of art and deception in the exordium of each of these cantos. Bradamante knows that the images she will encounter in Atlante's fortress will be false, and she is prepared to defend herself against them (4). Ruggiero, too, is warned of Alcina's false nature, and yet he succumbs to her (7). The evaluation of art and deception in Canto 4 seems the antithesis of the view in Canto 7. Deception and art in Canto 4 resemble magic, which is externally powerful and vulnerable to physical force, whereas deception and art in Canto 7 resemble seduction, which, though motivated by physical attraction, is metaphysically powerful and vulnerable to reason rather than to force.[12]

A comparison of Atlante to Alcina and of his effect upon Ruggiero to hers illustrates the difference between these two versions of

[12] The notion of metaphysical, or mediated, desire is from René Girard, "Triangular Desire," in *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1965), 1–52.

desire and entrapment. Atlante is old, feeble, and sad; Alcina, young, sensuous, and happy. Atlante's power lies in his magic shield and book; Alcina's in her seductive appearance. Nowhere is necromancy mentioned in Canto 7 until after Melissa has "broken the spell" by placing the ring on Ruggiero's finger. But the real breaking of the spell, the transformation of Ruggiero from self-indulgence to self-disgust, only occurs when Melissa reminds Ruggiero of his duty to Estense progeny, his promise to Bradamante, and his manly role, which he had traded for women's clothes and decadent leisure. In other words, whereas Bradamante defeats Atlante by merely tying him up and Atlante frees his prisoners by merely breaking enchanted vases, Melissa has to defeat Alcina by reasoning with Ruggiero; he frees himself, in a sense, by seeing the error of his desire. Atlante desires Ruggiero, but Ruggiero desires Alcina. On the one hand, though Atlante claims that he magically grants every one of Ruggiero's desires (4.31, 32), the prisoner seems conscious neither of desire nor of entrapment. On the other hand, while Alcina controls the desires of all her captives (7.30), Ruggiero seems deeply involved in both his desire for and later revulsion at her. Atlante seeks to satisfy the object of his desire, Ruggiero, as well as the desires of all those knights and ladies who are there to amuse him (4.32). Ruggiero yearns to succumb to the will of his object, Alcina, as do all the other captives who obey her (7.30). The spells of Alcina represent the power of erotic seduction and so are much more difficult to defeat than those of Atlante. Because of the greater threat posed by Alcina, the sorceress Melissa, rather than Bradamante, must defeat Alcina's power over Ruggiero through reasoning with Ruggiero. The magic ring enables Ruggiero to see the truth about Alcina, but this occurs only after Melissa's appeal to his reason and duty.

The differences between Atlante's palace in Canto 4 and that in Canto 13 form part of the progression in the theme of mediated desire of which Canto 7 is also a part.[13] Atlante's second palace, unlike the

[13] Eugenio Donato argues that Girard's thesis does not apply to Ariosto's poem. In comparing Alcina's palace to Atlante's second palace, Donato dismisses the first palace of Atlante as "the palace of Alcina without Alcina." Donato claims that Ariosto "hardly mentions" the first palace. In fact, roughly the same number of stanzas are used to describe each of Atlante's palaces: the first in 4.29–32, 39; the

first, affects Bradamante (13.75–79), and is more powerful than the first because it creates deceptive images, as numerous as the prisoners' individual desires (13.50). The second palace must be destroyed by magic, which Astolfo learns from Logistilla's book (22.16), and not by brute force, as the first palace is, or by reason, as Alcina's is. In the second palace, Atlante, like a poet in his protean imagination, creates images of desire (metaphors) so ambiguous that the prisoners (readers) can assign whatever value they wish to them. The power to destroy Atlante's second palace comes from a book. The similarity in the content and in the position of Cantos 4, 13, and 22, all treating Atlante's palace, all penultimate to the central cantos of their respective panels (5, 14, 23), also suggests that Ariosto consciously ordered the development of the theme of desire. Ariosto effects a progression from Atlante's simple desire to keep and protect Ruggiero (4), to Ruggiero's more mediated desire to possess a seemingly beautiful image, which masks an ugly reality (7), to the most complicated desires of Ruggiero and his companions—each to pursue his own unattainable illusion (13).[14] The more mediated the desire, the less accessible the object is. The more intense and binding the desire, the more it distorts the truth.[15]

Cantos 5 and 6 are both about the deceptiveness of desire. Here,

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second in 13.49–53. See " 'Per Selve e Boscherecii Labirinti': Desire and Narrative Structure in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986), 33–62.

[14] While observing that Atlante's second palace is more complicated than his first one, Donato overlooks the parallelism between Cantos 4 and 7 and the structural similarity in the position of all three cantos dealing with Atlante (4, 13, and 22) (" 'Per Selve e Boscherecii Labirinti'," 61 n. 8).

[15] Ariosto's narrative does not disclose the truth about desire the way *Le Rouge et le noir* does. This false similarity is one which Donato rightly cautions us against. But see Carne-Ross's comparison of Olimpia to Mathilde: "For Olimpia, as for Mathilde in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, love is a 'sentiment héroique' to which everything must be sacrificed" ("The One and the Many" [1976], 151). Unlike Julien Sorel, the characters of the *Furioso* do not consciously realize the nature of their metaphysical desire, that they do not desire the objects they seek but only desire to be like their mediators, those knights of the chivalric romance seeking after women and arms. While Ariosto's characters do not consciously realize their self-deception, their actions realize or represent changes, transformations, from one model of behavior to another. The action itself, based on so many different literary models, reveals to the reader the mediated nature of the characters' desires.

Ariosto reworks his sources to draw together the themes and literary allusions of the panel as a whole. While Dalinda is deceived by Polinesso's false promises of love (5) and Astolfo is deceived by Alcina's magic (6), both "innamorati" describe their entrapment in similar terms. There are, however, subtle differences between the perspectives and the moral conclusions of these narrators, and not so subtle differences between their relations to their listeners. As a consequence, the responses of their listeners also differ: Rinaldo does rescue Ginevra at Dalinda's urging, but Ruggiero does not escape Alcina despite Astolfo's warning. An examination of how Ariosto reshapes a story from *Tirant lo Blanch* for Canto 5 and both *Aeneid* 3 and *Inferno* 13 for Canto 6 will show how romance is lent an epic capacity for truth and epic reduced to the courtly entertainment of romance.[16]

The details of Dalinda's and Astolfo's predicaments and the plots which brought them into such danger are very similar. Both first appear in a state of entrapment. At the outset of Canto 5, Dalinda has just been freed by Rinaldo from a band of men sent to kill her by her former lover Polinesso. In Canto 6, we first read of Astolfo, imprisoned in the form of a myrtle by the enchantress Alcina, who has just jilted him, as she has so many others. As Dalinda cries out in distress to Rinaldo, so does Astolfo to Ruggiero. Their state of distress in entrapment is emblematic of their entrapment in the deception of love. Both are the victims of deceitful seducers. Alcina is fickle in love; Polinesso only uses Dalinda to further his suit with her mistress, Ginevra. Polinesso directs the unsuspecting Dalinda in a plot to convince Ariodante that his lady Ginevra is unfaithful to him. At Polinesso's request, Dalinda dresses in Ginevra's clothes. When, disguised as Ginevra, Dalinda makes love to Polinesso, she does not realize that she is being watched by Ginevra's beloved and Polinesso's rival, Ariodante. Both Polinesso and Alcina involve their victims in a version of triangulated desire. Alcina does not want any one of her many lovers but rather the repeated thrill of each new seduction. For Polinesso, the pretense that Dalinda is Ginevra and the subsequent defeat of his rival, Ariodante, become a fulfillment of triangulated

[16] See William J. Kennedy, "Ariosto's Ironic Allegory," *MLN* 88, no. 1 (1973): 46. Kennedy notes that "literary allusiveness" is one of the ironic strategies in the Alcina episode.

desire; Dalinda is only a substitution for Ginevra, and both Dalinda and Ginevra only provide a way to outdo Ariodante. As Dalinda points out, Polinesso was pained by Ginevra's rebuff not so much because of "il suo amor" but because of "vedersi un altro preferito" [5.21.6: of seeing another preferred]. The ruse by which Polinesso convinces Dalinda to dress up as and imitate Ginevra reveals a psychological insight:

> E non lo bramo tanto per diletto,
> quanto perché vorrei *vincer la pruova*;
> e non possendo farlo con effetto,
> s'io lo fo imaginando, anco mi giuova.
>
> [5.24.1–4: What matters to me is not so much my craving itself so much as *the victory* of achieving what I crave; and though I cannot compass it in reality I would be assuaged if I could bring it off in make-believe (emphasis mine).]

Ironically, it is true that Polinesso only wants to "vincer la pruova"; he wants the conquest, not Ginevra. Dalinda is his unwitting instrument in his contest with Ariodante. Winning Ginevra has very little to do with his desire to defeat Ariodante and usurp his place. Polinesso cannot realize this desire in reality ("con effetto") and can only realize it by imagining ("imaginando")—indeed by deceiving himself ("me stesso ingannando") (25.7).

At first Dalinda's and Astolfo's reactions to their seductions and betrayals seem very similar. Both feel themselves to be the victims of external forces. In an apostrophe which echoes both the exordium to Canto 2—"ingiustissimo Amor"—and that to Canto 9—"questo crudele e traditore Amore"—Dalinda blames the god of love for her loving Polinesso: "Crudele Amore … / fe' d'ogni cavallier, d'ogni donzello / parermi il duca d'Albania più bello" [5.7.5, 7–8: Cruel Love made the duke of Albany seem more handsome than any knight or page]. Astolfo says that cruel fate—"il duro e fello destin" (6.35.1)—brought him to Alcina's castle. Both Dalinda and Astolfo describe how their senses were beguiled. Amore made Polinesso "seem" "più bello"; Astolfo is transfixed by Alcina's beauty: "né minor fiamma nel mio core accese / il veder lei sì bella e sì cortese" [6.46.7–8: nor did a lesser flame burn in my heart / seeing her so beautiful and so courtly]. In fact, Alcina so controls his senses that Astolfo remembers

nothing of his past life and can only contemplate her: "ogni pensiero, ogni mio bel disegno / in lei finia, né passava oltre il segno" [6.47.7–8: every thought, my every fine design ended in her nor did it ever pass beyond that limit]. Both Dalinda and Astolfo blame themselves for their downfalls, but their confessions differ. Although Astolfo admits "al fin me solo offesi" [6.33.8: yet at the end I proved my own undoing], he never understands how and why he went wrong, as Dalinda does: "Ben s'ode il ragionar, si vede il volto / ma dentro il petto mal giudicar possi" [5.8.3–4: to listen to his words and watch his face was easy enough, / but I could little judge what lay within his breast]. Dalinda now realizes that her judgment was bad, that while Polinesso seemed to love her, he concealed his motives.

In contrast to Dalinda, who realizes the disparity between appearance and reality, Astolfo continually relies upon appearance, even after he has been seduced by Alcina. When Astolfo describes his delight in Alcina, any evil she has done him is forgotten, as it is by Ruggiero when he meets her in Canto 7. Astolfo still values the very qualities which caused his downfall. Astolfo complains of Alcina, "Conobbi tardi il suo mobil ingegno" [6.50.1: I was late in discovering her changeable nature], which suggests that he realizes a difference between her appearance and her motives. Only a few stanzas later, however, he assumes that Ruggiero's "viso" and "ingegno" are one and the same:

> che forse, come è differente il viso,
> è differente ancor l'ingegno e l'arte.
> Tu saprai forse riparare al danno,
> quel che saputo mill'altri non hanno.

[6.53.5–8: perhaps as faces differ so do wit and skill, and you will devise some way to forestall the worst—some way which a thousand before you have not discovered.]

In other words, in his comparison of "il viso" and "l'ingegno," Astolfo shows that he still believes in appearance and has not learned to mistrust craft and artifice. Just as when he was contemplating Alcina ("ogni mio bel disegno / ... né passava oltre *il segno*" [6.47.5–8]), he still cannot go beyond the limit, "il segno," of sensual experience, or beyond the sign, "il segno," to the meaning of experience. For Dalinda, however, Polinesso's feigning and designs mark the

difference between appearance and moral intention:

> e cieca ne fui sì, ch'io non compresi
> ch'egli fingeva molto, e amava poco;
> ancor che li suo' inganni discoperti
> esser doveammi a mille segni certi.

[5.11.5–8: and so blinded was I that I little realized how much he feigned, how little he loved for all that his deceit should have been plain to me from a thousand obvious signs.]

Calling herself blind, she further admits that she should have been able to understand the "inganni" behind the "segni." The verb "vedere," so common in both cantos, takes on the meaning "to judge" for Dalinda, when at the end of her story she appeals to Rinaldo:

> e s'era debitor per tai rispetti
> d'avermi cara o no, tu 'l *vedi* aperto.
> Or senti il guidardon che io ricevetti,
> *vedi* la gran mercé del mio gran merto;
> *vedi* se deve, per amare assai,
> donna sperar d'essere amata mai. (emphasis mine)

[5.72.3–8: so you must see clearly enough whether he for his part owed it to me to cherish me. Now listen and I'll tell you what was my reward, what bountiful gift to requite my deserts. Judge whether a woman who has loved greatly can hope to be loved in return.]

While Dalinda exhorts Rinaldo to judge (*vedi*) the folly of her love and the injustice of Polinesso's exploitation of that love, Astolfo entices Ruggiero as much as, if not more than, he warns him:

> avrai d'Alcina scettro e signoria,
> e saria lieto sopra ogni mortale:
> ma certo sii di giunger tosto al passo
> d'entrar o in fiera o in fonte o in legno o in sasso.

[6.52.5–8: A scepter shall be yours from Alcina's hand and you shall reign, and you shall be the happiest of mortal men: but make no mistake—your time will soon come to be turned into a beast, a fountain, into wood or rock.]

If Dalinda's story spurs Rinaldo on to avenge the wrong done to her, Astolfo's story seems to incite Ruggiero's attraction to Alcina. In any case, Astolfo's story is a pattern for what will happen to Ruggiero in Canto 7, as Astolfo fatalistically realizes: "Io te n'ho dato volontieri aviso; / non ch'io mi creda che debbia giovarte" [6.53.1–2: I have gladly given you warning, not that I imagine it will be of any use to you].

As Ruggiero approaches Alcina's palace, his resolve is overcome by a series of beautiful images: the gleaming walls of Alcina's city, which seem to rise to the sky (6.59), the two ermine-clad damsels riding unicorns (6.69), the diamond columns (6.71), the garden, about which scantly clad "lascive donzelle" scamper (6.72.2). None of these pretty illusions passes, no action of Ruggiero's takes place without the critical commentary of the narrator. Ariosto also makes the narrator question his own perceptions. The walls look golden, but, "Alcun dal mio parer qui si dilunga, / e dice ch'ell'è alchimia: e forse ch'erra / ed anche forse meglio di me intende" [6.59.5–6: There are some who part company with my judgment here and maintain it is an effect of alchemy; they may know better than I, but then again they may be quite mistaken]. Ruggiero chooses the safer path ("quella più sicura"), which soon leads him to a nasty skirmish with contorted half-bestial creatures impelled by "furor" (6.60.5–8). And these creatures, ironically, Ruggiero might have conquered with the shield of Atlante had he not wanted to rely on "virtude" rather than "frodo" (6.67.8). Clearly, Ruggiero's virtue, or valor, is not strong enough, for he is taken in by the false appearance of the damsels. The narrator lets us know that Ruggiero lacks judgment by commenting on these false nubile nymphs, "che a l'uom guardando e contemplando intorno, / bisognerebbe aver occhio divino / per far di lor giudizio" [6.69.6–7: that a man looking at and contemplating all around / would have to have a divine eye / to judge them]. That the whole scene is a sham is again hinted at when the narrator, describing Ruggiero's wonder at the columns, equivocates: "O vero o falso ch'all'occhio risponda" [6.71.7: Whether they presented a true or a false image to the eye]. It is no wonder, then, that in Canto 7 Ruggiero judges Astolfo's story false and Alcina's appearance true:

> Quel che di lei già avea dal mirto inteso,
> com'è perfida e ria, poco gli giova;

ch'inganno o tradimento non gli è aviso
che possa star con sì soave riso.
Anzi pur creder vuol che da costei
fosse converso Astolfo in su l'arena
per li suoi portamenti ingrati e rei,
e sia degno di questa e di più pena:
e tutto quel ch'udito avea di lei,
stima esser falso.

[7.16.5–8; 17.1–6: Little did it profit him to have been warned by the myrtle of her evil, treacherous nature—it did not seem to him possible for deceit and perfidy to keep company in so charming a smile. / On the contrary, he preferred to believe that if she had changed Astolfo into a myrtle by the sandy shore, it was because he had treated her with stark ingratitude, and so deserved his fate and worse. Everything he had been told about her he dismissed as false.]

The difference between the stances of the two storytellers, Dalinda and Astolfo, is remarkable because it influences the outcome of the two plots and sets both cantos in opposition to their sources. While Canto 5 has greater depth and moral complexity than its source in the Catalan romance *Tirant lo Blanch*, Canto 6 lacks the gravity of its sources in *Aeneid* 3 and *Inferno* 13. The claim of truth has been associated with epic from Homer's all-knowing Muses on. Conversely, romance does not pretend to be true and so can tell fantastic and marvelous tales.[17] In the central panel of the first section, Ariosto reverses the effects of these genres.

There are two important differences between the masquerades in *Tirant* and those in the *Furioso*: (1) those of the former are engaged in for the pleasure of play, while those of the latter are engaged in because of a passion which has led to madness; (2) in the former there is no sense of responsibility for the consequences of these masquerades, whereas in the latter the folly and wrongness of these actions is

[17] Two excellent discussions of the distinctions between romance and epic are Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957; reprint, New York: Atheneum, 1970), 186–203 and 315–26, and the introduction to James C. Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976).

fully comprehended.[18] Dalinda takes part in her masquerade as the princess because she is madly in love with Polinesso, but in *Tirant* the princess Carmesina and her duenna Placerdemivida play their roles as lovers simply for the sake of diversion. Unlike Polinesso, and like Dalinda, Carmesina and Placerdemivida have no idea they are being watched by Tirant. These innocents are tricked into playing this scene of lovemaking by Reposada, a widow in love with Tirant. (As Rajna points out, Ariosto makes the villain a man rather than a woman.) The result of this playacting is that the poor gardener whom Placerdemivida was impersonating as she kissed Carmesina is murdered by Tirant in his jealous rage. None of this, however, is ever commented on, or judged, as Tirant persists in his love and he and Carmesina finally clear up the whole misunderstanding and live happily ever after. Dalinda, in contrast to all these carefree lovers, judges her actions to be the result of madness:

> . . . Io che divisa e sevra
> e lungi era da me, non posi mente
> che questo in che pregando egli persevra
> era una frauda pur troppo evidente.
>
> [5.26.1–4: I being quite divided and severed far from my self, did not observe that this repeated request of his was a most obvious fraud.]

The way she describes her madness—"lungi era *da* me"—is the opposite of Ariosto's characteristic way of expressing self-possession or sanity in the *Furioso*, "in se." Again, as in Cantos 3 and 8, 4 and 7, and Canto 6, the perception of the truth is an issue. In Canto 5, deception clouds the truth, but the deception comes neither from magic nor some external force, but from within. As Dalinda tells her story from the vantage point of reason in hindsight (another important difference from the Catalan narrative), she accepts the conse-

[18] Joanot Martorell, *Tirante el Blanco*, in *Libros caballerias espanoles*, ed. Felicidad Buendia (Madrid: Aquilar, 1960), 1060–1731, and *Tirant lo Blanch*, trans. David H. Rosenthal (New York: Schocken Books, 1984). For Rajna's discussion of this text in relation to the *Furioso*, see *Le fonti*, 128–31; for a critique of Rajna on Canto 5, see Paolo Valesio, "Settings of a Staged Scene," *Yale Italian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1980): 5–31.

quences of her actions: "e non m'accorsi prima de l'inganno, / che n'era già tutto accaduto il danno" [5.26.7–8: and I was not aware of his deception until the damage had already been done]. Ariosto contrasts Dalinda's awareness of Polinesso's fraud and her own irrational part in it with Astolfo's belief in appearances and tendency to value in Ruggiero what he valued in Alcina.

This lack of moral revelation in turn sets Ariosto's portrayal of Astolfo as the man imprisoned in the tree in opposition to both Virgil's Polydorus and Dante's Piero delle Vigne, who both teach their interlocutors, Aeneas and Dante. An examination of some linguistic echoes and similarities of plot amongst the three texts and how they are recontextualized by Ariosto tells a literary history which is also a history of ethics. Ariosto at once alludes to a Virgilian or a Dantesque scene and then defeats the expectations raised by those allusions only to show how different the virtues in his poem are from those in the epics of Virgil and Dante. Ariosto leads us into a Dantesque simile in an indirect way. Instead of Ruggiero's breaking the branch for some purpose, as Aeneas does—"ramis tegerem ut frondentibus aras" [*Aeneid* 3.25: so that I might cover or protect our altars with the leafy branches]—or at the bidding of Virgil, as Dante does—"disse 'l maestro: 'Se tu tronchi / qualche fraschetta d'una d'este piante / li pensier c'hai si faran tutti monchi'" [*Inferno* 13.28–30: the master said: "If you break off a little branch from one of these plants, the thoughts you have will all be cut short"]—the *ippogrifo*, frightened and trying to break free, accidentally tears at the tree to which he is tied: "e fa crollar sì il mirto ove è legato, / che de le frondi intorno il piè gli ingombra" [6.26.5–6: he so tore apart the myrtle to which he was tethered that he became ensnared in the branches strewn underfoot]. After this slapstick scene, the Dantesque simile, reminiscent of *Inferno* 13.40–45, seems incongruous:

> Come ceppo talor, che le medolle
> rare e vote abbia, e posto al fuoco sia,
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> dentro risuona e con strepito bolle
> tanto che quel furor truovi la via;
> così murmura e stride e si coruccia
> quel mirto offeso, e al fine apre la buccia.

> [6.27.1–2, 5–8: If a log with but a soft core of pith is placed in the fire, ... it sizzles noisily so long as the vapor forces a way out. Just so, the damaged myrtle moaned and hissed in vexation, and finally opened its mouth.]

As Astolfo asks Ruggiero to set free the *ippogrifo*, an echo of Dante and Virgil—"pio"—sounds amidst adjectives reminiscent of a description of Alcina ("sì bella e sì cortese" [6.46.8]): "Se tu sei cortese e pio, / come dimostri alla presenza bella" [6.28.3–4: If you are courteous and kind, as your fair looks suggest]. Virgil uses the word "pius" for Polydorus to describe the hands which Aeneas should spare profaning (*Aeneid* 3.42). The occurrence of "pius" in this context suggests the word's root meaning as "purified" or "sacred," as well as Aeneas' epithet, "dedicated" and "respectful." Piero delle Vigne, the suicide whose soul is enclosed in a tree, appeals to to Dante's "pietà": "Perché mi scerpi? / non hai tu spirto di pietade alcuno?" [13.35–36: Why do you tear me? have you no spirit of pity?]. "Pietade," as "pius" in the *Aeneid*, has a sacred connotation, but in the Christian context the primary meaning is "mercy." In *Furioso* 6, "pio" means "courteous" or "courtly."

Unlike Piero and Polydorus, who ask why they are being harmed by their interlocutors, Astolfo asks Ruggiero to stop hurting him. While Polydorus tells Aeneas that he was murdered by his treacherous Thracian hosts and Piero tells Dante how he killed himself, Astolfo tells Ruggiero that Alcina seduced him and left him for another lover. While all three are transformed into trees, Astolfo, unlike the other two, is still alive; he has not been transformed from life to death but only, by Alcina's "mobil ingegno," from imagining that he is loved to knowing that he is betrayed. Astolfo's fate, like that of Alcina's other lovers, is described in terms of Ovidian metamorphosis:

> e seppi poi, che tratti a simil porto
> avea mill'altri amanti, e tutti a torto.
>
> E perché essi non vadano pel mondo
> di lei narrando la vita lasciva,
> chi qua chi là, per lo terren fecondo
> li muta, altri in abete, altri in oliva,
> altri in palma, altri in cedro, altri secondo

> che vedi me su questa verde riva;
> altri in liquido fonte, alcuni in fiera,
> come più agrada a quella fata altiera.
>
> [6.50.7–8; 51.1–8): I later learnt that she had meted similar treatment to a thousand lovers before me, and always without cause. / And, to prevent their spreading about the world the story of her wanton ways, she transforms them, every one, planting them here and there in fertile soil, changing one into a fir tree, another into an olive, another into a palm or cedar, or into the guise in which you see me on this verdant bank; yet others the proud enchantress changes into liquid springs, or into beasts, just as it suits her.]

This catalogue of trees recalls many Ovidian transformations of humans into trees (Daphne, 1.548; Dryope, 9.33; Myrrha, 10.489; Cyparissus 10.107; among others). The mention of "altri in liquido fonte," in turn, brings to mind Arethusa and Byblis, both of whom suffered changes into water.[19] The Ovidian description is appropriate here, for this is a story of seduction, pleasure, betrayal, and punishment which calls to mind so many stories of desire sought after and thwarted, achieved and lost, in the *Metamorphoses*. So, Astolfo, in a way, is like an Ovidian lover presented with a Dantesque situation, the occasion not only to tell one's story but also to educate the listener morally. Ariosto comically confounds any expectation of such a Dantesque interchange. Astolfo's tale of courtly romance and fantasy is more a prelude to Ruggiero's own seduction by Alcina than a warning against it. Ariosto's tale reinterprets a textual genealogy. The texts Ariosto alludes to are transformed both by being juxtaposed with one another and by being placed within a different context.

This juxtaposition of literary traditions is contained within a narrative structure which draws our attention to the similarities between actions suggestive of different genres and literary traditions. The first central canto (5) contains a romance *topos*, Polinesso's deception of Dalinda, modelled on a romance source, *Tirant lo Blanch*. Motifs of romance frame the whole first panel; Cantos 2 and 9 both begin with the quest for Angelica. The end of Canto 9 even provides

[19] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.572ff.; 9.664ff.

a temporary sense of romance closure with the wedding of Olimpia, and Ariosto only interrupts this sense of closure at the beginning of Canto 10, with her betrayal by Bireno. That Canto 9 ends with a wedding is no accident. The last canto of every group of cantos each includes some mention of marriage: the marriage of Angelica and Medoro (19), Doralice's choice to marry Mandricardo (27), the story of Marfisa's and Ruggiero's parents' marriage (36), Leone's attempt to win the hand of Bradamante (45).

Ariosto plays the motifs of romance that frame the first section against epic *topoi*. In Canto 3, the poet introduces the epic mode of prophecy as moral exemplum and exhortation to action. He picks up the epic thread of Canto 3, with its allusion to *Aeneid* 6, again in Canto 6, with its allusions to both *Aeneid* 3 and *Inferno* 13. Ariosto sets the historical epic *topos* of dynastic prophecy (Canto 3) against the fantastic romance story of Proteus (Canto 8). Similarly opposed are the two central cantos: 6, with its epic sources, and 5, with its romance background.

There are, however, concerns that this central pair of cantos share. Most important among these common themes is the concern with the perception of the truth, what the Stoics would call the dialectic of appearance versus judgment. If the characters in the first section are deluded, it is because their emotions are given over to something like the "false images" which Seneca speaks of in *De tranquilitate animi*. In Cantos 4 and 7, the nature of desire in the palaces of Atlante and Alcina is a form of captivity. This preoccupation with the illusion of desire relates to the central panel, where Dalinda confesses the self-deception of her desire (5) and where Astolfo laments lost pleasure and beauty (6). If Dalinda, as she admits, is unable to judge Polinesso and assents to his false appearance, so, too, does Astolfo assent to Alcina's beautiful false appearances. The central panel refers to the themes and literary allusions in the three pairs of surrounding cantos. The set of concentric frames, formed by the action of these cantos, makes our attention converge upon the central panel.

CHAPTER FIVE

# *Excess and Restraint: Cantos 11–18*

> Nam qui appetitus longius evagantur et tamquam exsultantes sive cupiendo sive fugiendo non satis a ratione retinentur, ii sine dubio finem et modum transeunt.
> [For when appetites overstep their bounds and galloping away, so to speak, whether in desire or aversion, are not well held in hand by reason, they clearly overstep all measure.][1]
> mens ... descisat oportet a solito et efferatur et mordeat frenos et rectorem rapiat suum eoque ferat quo per se timuisset escendere.
> [(T)he mind ... must forsake the common track and be driven to frenzy and champ at the bit and run away with its rider and rush to a height that it would have feared to climb by itself.][2]

THE PLOT STRUCTURE OF SECTION TWO IS A VARIATION upon the pattern of actions set forth in section one. Four pairs of cantos in section one form the following pattern: *Pursuit* (2, Rinaldo pursues Angelica, and 9, Orlando pursues Angelica); *Escape* (3, Bradamante escapes from Pinabello, and 8, Ruggiero escapes from Alcina); *Rescue* (4, Bradamante rescues Atlante's prisoners, and 7, Melissa rescues Ruggiero); *Deception/Entrapment* (5, Dalinda is deceived by Polinesso, and 6, Astolfo is deceived by Alcina). These categories of action are common to both romance and epic plots. What makes these actions important for my structural analysis of the plot is the way in which their repetition creates a chiastic order, a dynamic series of shifting actions in which equidistant cantos contain parallel kinds of action. Figure 6 shows the chiastic pattern in section two.

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[1] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.29.102, trans. Walter Miller, (1947), LCL 104–5.
[2] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 17.10–12, in *Moral Essays*, 2:284.

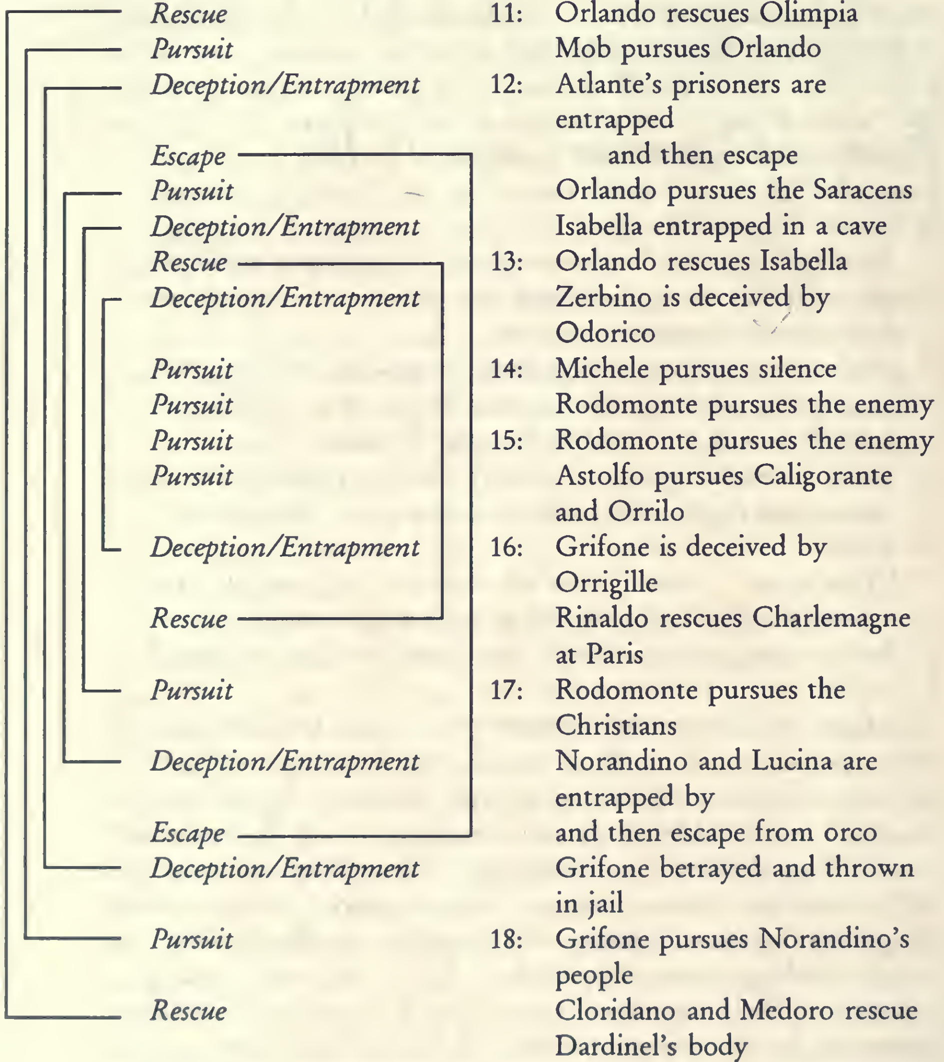


*Fig. 6. Parallel actions in section two*

In Cantos 11–18, at least two categories of action link each pair of cantos. In Canto 11, Orlando not only rescues Olimpia but is also pursued by a mob of people (6–53), and in Canto 18, there is not only the rescue of Dardinel's body by Cloridano and Medoro but also the pursuit of Norandino's people by Grifone (3–7). Cantos 12 and 17

include entrapment as well as escape; the paladins are entrapped in Atlante's palace (12.1–22), as are Lucina and Norandino in the orco's cave (17.25–62). Cantos 13 and 16 relate both deception and rescue. Canto 13 begins with Orlando's rescue of Isabella, and Canto 16 ends with Rinaldo's attempt to rescue his comrades at the battle of Paris. There are a few subtle differences between pairs of cantos. Unlike Orlando's rescue of Isabella (13), Rinaldo's and his troops' attempt to rescue Charlemagne is unsuccessful (16). The major part of Rodomonte's *aristeia* is covered in Canto 14 and treated only briefly in Canto 15. A closer analysis of the central cantos will present an even more detailed account of the parallels between them. Despite these few differences and further analogies to be accounted for later, Figure 7 represents the main outlines of ring composition.

Each section of linked cantos dramatizes a moral conflict that can be illuminated in relation to Stoic ethics. In section two, the central concern is with the relation between excess and restraint, sometimes expressed as the relation between appetite and will, or fury and reason. Ariosto explicitly articulates this theme in the exordia of Cantos 11–18. In Canto 11, an unruly horse amenable to control by the rein is contrasted with libidinous fury unamenable to the curb of reason:

> Quantunque debil freno a mezzo il corso
> animoso destrier spesso raccolga,
> raro è però che di ragione il morso
> libidinosa furia a dietro volga,
> quando il piacere ha in pronto.
>
> [11.1.1–5: Often a weak rein will gather in a lively charger from a full gallop; seldom, however, will the curb of reason turn back libidinous fury when its pleasure lies ready.]

This stanza introduces Ruggiero as he is tempted by the naked Angelica, whom he has just rescued from the orco. Ruggiero's clumsy and unsuccessful dash to remove his armor in order to assault Angelica suggests that Logistilla's counsel of reason in Canto 10 has had only a temporary effect on the paladin.[3]

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[3] For a sensible interpretation of Ruggiero's failed rape of Angelica, see Peter

In his article on the image of the horse in Italian chivalric epic, A. Bartlett Giamatti discussed the metaphors of the horse "sfrenato" and under the "freno" in relation to the portrayal of the self as either collected ("in se raccolto") or dispersed ("di se tolto").[4] In discussing what he called the dialectic of restraint versus release, he traced a genealogy for this image back to the myth of the soul as charioteer being led by two horses, one wanton and one obedient, in Plato's *Phaedrus*. The metaphor of the horse, reined in or let loose, as a representation of the dialectic of restraint versus release can also be found in Stoic texts. On the one hand, in *De officiis* (a text which as part of the humanist curriculum was widely read in the Italian Renaissance), Cicero expresses the need to restrain the "galloping" appetites:

> For when appetites overstep their bounds and galloping away, so to speak, whether in desire or aversion, are not well held in hand by reason, they clearly overstep all measure.[5]

From this perspective, release does not mean freedom but rather enslavement to acting out the passions. On the other hand, Seneca expresses the paradox of the necessity of release; it is needed in order to escape the restraint of the pedestrian crowd that would bar one from "divine inspiration":

> the lofty utterance that rises above the attempts of others is impossible unless the mind is excited. When it has scorned the vulgar and commonplace, and has soared far aloft inspired by divine inspiration, then alone it chants a strain too lofty for

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DeSa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry*, 12, 91–97. Wiggins comments on the difference between Ruggiero's attraction to Alcina and to Angelica: "Ruggiero may have learned something from Alcina and Logistilla after all. Alcina deserves credit for having taught Ruggiero that sexual gratification per se is more the reward of a game well played than the fulfillment of a cherished ideal" (90).

[4] A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Sfrenatura: Restraint and Release in the *Orlando Furioso*," in *Ariosto 1974 in America: atti del Congresso ariostesco, dicembre 1974, Casa italiana della Columbia University*, ed. Aldo Scaglione (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1974), 31–39; "Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen: An Essay on the Chivalric Epics of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto," in *Italian Literature: Roots and Branches*, ed. Giose Rimanelli and Kenneth John Atchity (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), 265–307.

[5] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.29.102.

> mortal lips. So long as it is left to itself, it is impossible for it to reach any sublime and difficult height; it must forsake the common track and be driven to frenzy and champ at the bit and run away with its rider and rush to a height that it would have feared to climb by itself.[6]

Incorporating a Platonic skepticism about dogma and an affirmation of poetic furor, the Stoic Seneca views the opinion of the crowd as a negative limitation, restraining the individual from taking on challenges. And the greatest challenge for human beings, according to the *De tranquilitate animi*, is to achieve the freedom of self-containment. Even the phrase "in se," which Giamatti cites as evoking the integrated self in the *Furioso*, characterizes Seneca's discussion of self-containment:

> Most of all the mind must be withdrawn from external interests into itself [*in se*]. Let it have confidence in itself, rejoice in itself, let it admire its own things, let it retire as far as possible from the things of others and devote itself to itself.[7]

While this theme of restraint versus release pervades the entire poem, the language of section two focuses our attention on this theme in ways that echo its elaboration in Stoic moral philosophy. The moral concern with the relation between self-control and appetite translates into a poetic concern with the relation between order and chaos. The reflection of Stoic morals in Stoic physics is born out in the relation between theme and structure in this section. While the seemingly haphazard shifting from romance to epic narrative displays a delight in narrative digression, the central placement of the siege of Paris (14 and 15) surrounded by parallel epic and romance scenes reveals authorial order.

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[6] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 17.10–12: "non potest grande aliquid et super ceteros loqui nisi mota mens. Cum vulgaria et solita contempsit instinctuque sacro surrexit excelsior, tunc demum aliquid cecinit grandius ore mortali. Non potest sublime quicquam et in arduo positum contingere, quam diu apud se est; descisat oportet a solito et efferatur et mordeat frenos et rectorem rapiat suum eoque ferat quo per se timuisset escendere."

[7] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 14.2: "Utique animus ab omnibus externis in se revocandus est. Sibi confidat, se gaudeat, sua suspiciat, recedat quantum potest ab alienis et se sibi adplicet."

Cantos 11 and 18 both interpret this dialectic of restraint versus release as action versus caution, or recklessness versus consideration. The exordia to Cantos 11 and 18 both criticize the lack of restraint in the characters' actions. In the exordium to Canto 11, the narrator observes that the weak rein ("debil freno") restrains a spirited horse more often than reason can restrain ("raccolga") lust. Since lust is like a bear which cannot be distracted from honey he has sniffed, how can Ruggiero be expected to find a reason ("[q]ual ragion" [2.1]) to restrain him from the nude Angelica? In the exordium to Canto 18, the narrator compares the haste of King Norandino's judgment to the restraint of Ippolito d'Este's.[8] Ariosto's patron postpones judgment until both sides of a case are heard:

> e sempre, prima che dannar la gente,
> vederla in faccia, e udir la ragion ch'usa;
> differir anco e giorni e mesi ed anni,
> prima che giudicar negli altrui danni.
>
> [18.2.5–8: and always, before condemning a person, you would see him face to face and listen to the reasoning he uses; sooner than condemn others you would defer judgement for days, months, years.]

If he had imitated Ippolito, King Norandino would have deferred ("differir") judgment rather than hastily punished the innocent Grifone and so protected the people from the paladin's rageful and wild ("pien d'ira e bizzarro" [3.7]) rampage of revenge. Norandino, Grifone, and Ruggiero are all out of control. As Angelica becomes invisible by swallowing the magic ring, Ruggiero runs around in circles like a mad man: "S'aggirava a cerco come un matto" (11.7.2).

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[8] Barbara Reynolds, among others, argues that the praise of Ippolito d'Este is ironic (*Orlando Furioso*, 1:769). Given what we know of Ippolito's harsh judgments against his own brothers, Reynolds is no doubt correct (1:19). That these lines are ironic does not necessarily mean, however, that Ariosto did not value these qualities. As Greene suggests, Ariosto's *encomia*, such as that in 18.1–2, may be hortatory, "a vestige of the medieval conception of art as pedagogy" (*The Descent from Heaven*, 136). Also, as C. P. Brand remarks, "In many of these [encomiastic] passages Ariosto is consciously raising his tone above the pedestrian romance level" (*Ludovico Ariosto: A Preface to the "Orlando Furioso"* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1974], 114).

Just as Ruggiero is unable to restrain his lust (11), so Rodomonte is unable to restrain his jealousy (18). "La Gelosia" (28) enters the story in the dwarf's tale of how Doralice has been carried off by a knight. At this news of his lady's capture by another man, Rodomonte erupts in a rage, like a tigress who discovers her cubs have been taken from her:

> . . . avampa di tant'ira,
> a tanta rabbia, a tal furor s'estende,
> che né a monte né a rio né a notte mira;
> né lunga via, né grandine raffrena
> l'odio che dietro al predator la mena:
> così furendo il Saracin bizzarro.
>
> [18.35.4–8; 36.1: she will blaze up in such a passion, her anger will take her to such lengths that neither mountain nor river, neither night's darkness, nor hail-storm nor even distance can restrain the hatred which drives her pursuit of the predator. / So raging was the wild Saracen.]

The language of this simile, comparing Rodomonte to a tigress rampaging after the predator who has stolen her cubs—"furor," "raffrena," "furendo"—echoes that in the description of Ruggiero ("furia"; "raffrene" [11.1.4; 2.1–7]). More importantly, both descriptions—that of Rodomonte "così furendo," and that of Ruggiero "come un matto"—recall the initial description of Orlando: "che per amor venne in furore e matto" (1.2.3). All these lesser madnesses reflect the madness of Orlando. Like Orlando, who goes mad when he discovers Angelica loves another (23), Ruggiero goes crazy because he has lost Angelica, and Rodomonte because he has lost Doralice (18). Like Orlando, both knights are without horses. Unable to rein in his passions, Ruggiero is similarly unable to rein in his horse (11.13).

In contrast to Ruggiero's frenzied frustration and Rodomonte's furious jealousy is Orlando's self-containment as he attacks the orca (11.35). With complete *sangfroid*, Orlando confronts the Ebudans, who attack him in order to appease Proteus for the murder of the orca (11.49–51). As the orca sends up huge surging waves around him, Orlando is described collecting himself. Like Ruggiero "in se raccolto" in his final duel with Rodomonte, Orlando appears:

> ... in sé raccolto
> la mira altier, né cangia cor né volto.
> E come quel ch'avea il pensier ben fermo
> di quanto volea far, si mosse ratto.
>
> [11.35.7–8; 36.1–2: Orlando collected himself, his demeanor was lofty—never a change in his heart or face. / Fully determined on the course to take, he moved at once.]

This image of Orlando gathering up his strength, both mental and physical, within himself, and concentrating calmly on attacking the monster, evokes the Stoic response to difficulty, as described in Seneca's *De vita beata*:

> First of all, we must have a sound mind that is in possession of its sanity; second, it must be courageous and energetic, and, too, capable of the noblest fortitude, ready for every emergency.[9]

The soon-to-be furious Orlando is here self-contained, "in sé raccolto," and steadfast, "il pensier ben fermo," as Seneca counsels one who wants to live a life "in harmony with its own nature."[10] Whereas Ruggiero is in thrall to lust (11), and Rodomonte to jealousy (18), Orlando is in possession of himself. A Stoic paradox defines freedom as self-control:

> ... absolute liberty. You ask of what sort it is? It means not fearing either men or gods; it means not craving wickedness or excess; it means possessing supreme power over oneself.[11]

Whereas later, after going mad, Orlando will commit random acts of violence (29), here (11.54) he focuses his energy on protecting the woman he has rescued and remains unmoved by the general havoc that rages around him.

Orlando's combat against the Ebudans is the first of such conflicts

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[9] Seneca, *De vita beata* 3.3, in *Moral Essays*, 2: "quam si primum sana mens est in perpetua possessione sanitatis suae; deinde fortis ac vehemens, tunc pulcherrime patiens, apta temporibus."

[10] Seneca, *De vita beata* 3.3: "conveniens naturae suae."

[11] Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 75: "absoluta libertas. Quaeris quae sit ista? Non homines timere, non deos; nec turpia velle nec nimia; in se ipsum habere maximam potestatem."

in section two. In each instance a single warrior, brave and beleaguered, fights a large crowd, cowardly, and, in several cases, unjustified. The Ebudans are motivated by prejudice: "i quai da vana religion rimorsi, / così sant'opra riputar profana" [11.46.3–4: now these inclined to empty religion, deemed his good work to be profane]. Similarly the rabble ("turba" [17.134.6]), or the inert mob ("vulgo inerte" [18.4.7]), against whom Grifone defends himself, mistakes him for the villainous Martano. Again, the foolish rabble ("la sciocca turba" [18.121.5]) attacks Marfisa simply because of their unthinking impulse to revenge. All these crowds reflect an excessive version of the inability to discern appearance from reality, a theme which was treated as individual self-deception in Dalinda's and Astolfo's stories in section one (5 and 6). In section two, this moral defect is described as a result of the herd instinct. Seneca relates false conceptions to the sway of the crowd:

> For mad men ... are excited by the mere appearance of some object, the falsity of which is not apparent to the afflicted mind. In the same way every one of those who go forth to swell the throng [*turbam*] is led around the city by worthless and trivial reasons.[12]

It is for just such trivial and worthless reasons that Norandino's people attack Grifone. The crowd mistakes Grifone for the base coward Martano, who when he stole Grifone's armor left his own behind for Grifone to wear.

Quite different from the burlesque combats of Orlando, Grifone, and Marfisa is Rodomonte's single-handed attack on the Christian paladins and the crowds of Paris (18.8–37). The description of Rodomonte's fight is distinguished by a more elevated Latinate diction and Virgilian allusions. Rodomonte displays a violent wrath, "il furor" (18.11.3; 18.6), the term Virgil uses to describe the force impelling Turnus at the close of *Aeneid* 9. This Latin word for fury is also the etymology of Orlando's epithet "furioso." Two related questions emerge from Ariosto's depiction of Rodomonte's *furor* in battle

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[12] Seneca, *De tranquilitate animi* 12.5–6: "proritat illos alicuius rei species, cuius vanitatem capta mens non coarguit. Eodem modo unumquemque ex his, qui ad augendam turbam exeunt, inanes et leves causae per urbem circumducunt."

(11.25) alongside his *furor* in jealousy (34–37). First, how does Rodomonte's martial *furor* relate to his amorous *furor*? In turn, how do these relate to the central *furor* of the poem, that of Orlando?

The rageful Rodomonte's battle furor seems warranted in some measure. In battle he has to defend himself from a shower of missiles pelting down on him from the windows of the Parisians: "Da tetti e da finestre e più d'appresso / sopra gli piove un nembo d'arme e spesso" [15.7–8: From the roofs and windows and even closer by / a dense shower of missiles rained down upon him]. He is beleaguered, like Turnus, who fends off "tempestus telorum ac ferreus ... imber" [*Aeneid* 12.284: a storm of missiles and iron shower].[13] In retreat, Rodomonte shows courage and presence of mind:

> che non si può notar ch'abbia paura;
> ma tuttavolta col pensier discorre,
> dove sia per uscir via più sicura.
>
> [18.21.2–4: he showed not a trace of fear, though he was in fact privately searching for the safest route of escape.]

Not only brave and thoughtful, Rodomonte is even noble, as Ariosto compares him to a "generosa belva" [valiant beast] with a "cor gentile" [noble heart] in a simile modelled on *Aeneid* 9. 792–97:

> tal Rodomonte, in nessun atto vile,
> da strana circondato e fiera selva
> d'aste e di spade e di volanti dardi,
> si tira al fiume a passi lunghi e tardi.
>
> [18.22.4–8: Thus was Rodomonte—hemmed in by this weird, bristling forest of spears and swords and flying arrows, he did nothing to debase himself, but withdrew towards the river in long strides.]

Virgil's "turba ... cum telis ... infensis" [crowd with hostile spears (792–3)] Ariosto translates into "fiera selva / d'aste e di spade" [fierce forest of spears and swords]. As the "gran selva" (23.2.3) of Orlando's madness and of every knight errant's erring, the assault of the crowd

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[13] I cite throughout *The Aeneid of Virgil*, ed. R. D. Williams (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972) and the translation by Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1981).

is a form of error. Conversely, none of Rodomonte's actions is debased ("in nessun atto vile"). Just as Turnus, escaping death and returning to his men, leaps into the river at the end of *Aeneid* 9, so, too, does Rodomonte: "e de la ripa, per miglior consiglio, / si gittò all'acqua" [18.23.5–6: and from the bank he threw himself into the river, wiser counsel prevailing]. The phrase "per miglior consiglio" along with the first clause of this sentence suggests that the furious Rodomonte has both forethought and reason: "Ma la *ragione* al fin la rabbia vinse / di non far sì, ch'a Dio n'andasse il lezzo" [23.7–8: But reason mastered passion / bidding him refrain before God grew disgusted]. How hysterically funny it is when, after all this epic rhetoric, Rodomonte plops into the water buoyed by his armor—"Con tutte l'arme andò per mezzo l'acque, / come s'intorno avesse tante galle" (24.1–2)—a burlesque touch that recalls Ariosto's similar parody of the epic descent from heaven at the center of this section in Canto 14. Nevertheless, it appears that Rodomonte is more in possession of himself before Gelosia sends him into an even worse *furor* that leads him away from the battle in pursuit of Doralice (35–37). The disruption of erotic desire seems to be more powerfully felt than the violence of war by Rodomonte and Orlando alike.

At the same time, Rodomonte, like his literary ancestor Turnus, is more excessive in battle than Orlando. Whether combatting the orco (11) or the African paladins (12), or, later, after losing and regaining his wits, fighting the Saracens at the siege of Biserta (40.14–34), Orlando is self-contained in battle. Rodomonte's pride ("freme d'orgoglio" [11.5]) and bloodthirstiness ("di sanguigna sete" [11.6]) distinguish his martial furor from Orlando's. In effect, Orlando's fate is the opposite of Rodomonte's. While Orlando goes mad for love and is then cured, Rodomonte is furious at the outset (14.108) and becomes more and more bizarre as he suffers one rejection in love (by Doralice [27]) after another (by Isabella [29]). If Rodomonte's martial *furor* may seem more warranted than his amorous *furor*, both are akin to Orlando's destructive love madness. Unlike Orlando's madness, Rodomonte's is unrelieved and ultimately causes his defeat by Ruggiero (46).

The exordia to Cantos 12 and 17 further complicate the theme of excess versus restraint by presenting opposing responses to loss and disaster. At the opening of Canto 12, the rageful Cerere, searching for

her lost daughter, provides an analogy to Orlando's mad search for Angelica:

> Cerere ...
> fatto ch'ebbe alle guance, al petto, ai crini
> e agli occhi danno, al fin svelse duo pini.
> e nel fuoco gli accese di Vulcano,
> e diè lor non potere esse mai spenti;
> e portandosi questi uno per mano
> sul carro che tiravan dui serpenti.
>
> [12.1–2: When Ceres ... had done damage to her cheeks and eyes, her hair and breast, she uprooted two pines; / she lit them in Vulcan's fire, enduing them with a flame which could never be quenched; and taking one in each hand, she entered her chariot drawn by a pair of dragons.]

The example of Cerere's grief is turned to comic ends when the narrator literally compares her search to Orlando's: "Ma poi che 'l carro e i draghi non avea, / la gìa cercando al meglio che potea" [3.7–8: But since he did not have the chariot and the dragons, / he sought her as best he could]. The absurdity of the comparison tends to emphasize the difference between Cerere's grief at the loss of her daughter and Orlando's largely self-imposed tragedy. Unlike Boiardo's *Innamorato*, the *Furioso* provides no evidence outside of Orlando's obsessive fantasies and dreams that Angelica has any relationship with him whatsoever. Cerere's ravaging her cheeks, eyes, and hair and uprooting two pines foreshadows Orlando's reaction to Angelica's love for Medoro: "E poi si squarciò i panni ... / Quivi fe' ben de le sue prove eccelse, / ch'un alto pino al primo crollo svelse" [23.133.5; 134.7–8: Then he tore off his clothes ... / He now performed his great deeds, at one jerk he uprooted a tall pine].

In Canto 17, the theme of excess versus restraint is modulated into a political key, with the narrator's dispassionate comment on Rodomonte's cruelty and the savagely satiric analogies between the story and history:

> Il giusto Dio, quando i peccati nostri
> hanno di remission passato il segno,
> acciò che la giustizia sua dimostri

uguale alla pietà, spesso dà regno
a tiranni atrocissimi et a mostri,
e da lor forza e di mal fare ingegno.

[17.1.1–6: When our sins have passed the bounds of forgiveness, God, to show his justice equal to his mercy, often gives power to unspeakable tyrants, to utter monsters, and endows them with the compulsion and the cunning to work evil.]

At first Ariosto strives for the philosophical calm of theodicy. But as the examples of tyranny—beginning with "Mario e Silla ... / e duo Nerone e Caio" and ending with "Ezzelino da Romano," the tyrant who was the subject of the first modern imitation of Senecan tragedy by Albertino Mussato—come closer to sixteenth-century Italy, the tone becomes less detached:

Di questo abbiàn non pur al tempo antiquo,
ma ancora al nostro, chiaro esperimento,
quando a noi, greggi inutili e malnati,
ha dato per guardian lupi arrabiati:
a cui non par ch'abbi a bastar lor fame,
ch'abbi il lor ventre a capir tanta carne;
a chiaman lupi di più ingorde brame
da boschi oltramontani a divorarne.

[17.3.5–8; 4.1–4: Not only in ages past but in our own day we have clear evidence of this, when to guard us, unprofitable and ill-born flock, he has appointed vicious wolves for keepers: / men whose own hunger evidently is not enough, nor their maws capacious enough to stomach so much meat, but they must call in wolves with even greedier appetites from forests beyond the mountains to join the feast.]

By calling their mercenaries wolves and their aggression a hunger for flesh, Ariosto conveys outrage at the Italian lords and their foreign allies who were overrunning Italy in the early sixteenth-century. If there is a calm irony in the sentence which begins, "Or Dio consente che noi siàn puniti" [17.5.1: Now God permits us to be punished], there is also a certain urgency in the one which follows: "Tempo verrà ch'a depredar lor liti / andremo noi" [17.5.5–6: The time will come when we will go to ravage their shores]. This last line recalls

Machiavelli's impassioned plea for Italy to rise up in her ancient *virtú* to rid herself of foreign domination. At the close of *Il Principe*, Machiavelli quotes Petrarch's call for "virtú contro a furore."[14]

The principle of God's punishment for endless political error ("per li multiplicati ed infiniti / nostri nefandi" [5.3–40]), which is invoked to rationalize the excesses of actual recent battles, seems even more cruel and more cynical when applied to the story:

> Doveano allora aver gli eccessi loro
> di Dio turbata la serena fronte,
> che scórse ogni lor luogo il Turco e 'l Moro
> con stupri, uccision, rapine ed onte.
>
> [17.6.104: Their excesses must have vexed the serene face of God, for the Turk and Moor had overrun all their lands, with rape, murder, pillage and outrage.]

That God should cause the Christians to be raped and murdered for their "excesses" is the absurdly logical corollary to the favorable intervention of God in response to Charlemagne's prayer (14). In this apparent criticism of excess, Ariosto in fact satirizes the naiveté of such a belief in an evenly balanced economy of sin and punishment. In attempting to understand the reason behind tyranny and bloodshed, the narrator spouts these crudely moralistic platitudes. The chief excess is the folly of this simpleminded point of view. Ariosto is pointing to the excess in battle on both sides. To attribute such excess to the punishing will of God is at once an evasion of human responsibility and the imputation of human error to the divine will. To be resigned to the existence of evil and to accept the excesses of fortune as a Stoic would is a far cry from blaming all this on God. Ariosto's satire seems rather to mock the implicit rationalization of our own excess and to insist upon such a distinction as that made by the Stoic

[14] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe e Discorsi*, 72, where he uses the image of "lupi"; and 105, where he quotes Petrarch's canzone *Italia mia*:

> Virtú contro a furore
> prenderà l'arme; e fia el combatter corto;
> ché l'antico valore
> nelli italici cor non è ancor morto.

Cleanthes: "Nothing occurs apart from you, O God, . . . except what bad men do in their folly."[15]

In the context of Canto 17, the *furor* of Rodomonte stands out as the chief "punishment" for the Christian side. Rodomonte's fight with the crowds of Paris (17.9–16) is the double of Orlando's fight with Manilardo's and Alzirdo's men (12.66–85). While the opposition between Orlando's self-containment and Rodomonte's madness set up in Cantos 11 and 18 is maintained here in Cantos 12 and 17, the two heroes are similar in at least one important respect. Both Orlando and Rodomonte, like Grifone and Marfisa (18), are pitted against mobs—"la vil turba" (12.78.6), "le turbe" (17.10.3). Even Charlemagne speaks to this crowd attacking Rodomonte in disparaging terms for fleeing the assault of one man: "Dove fuggite, turba spaventata? . . . Che città, che refugio più vi resta, / quando si perda sì vilmente questa?" [17. 7.5–8: Where are you fleeing, scared crowd? / . . . What city is left to you after you have so cravenly deserted this one?]. Both Rodomonte and Orlando appear before these crowds in images of light. Rodomonte stands shining ("lucente" [17.11.1]); Orlando reveals his shining sword ("quella fulminea spada" [12.79.1]). The singular warrior is distinguished from the crowd.

While the battle scenes just described converge upon (look forward to and reflect back upon) the descent of Michele and Rodomonte's *aristeia*, the major parodies of martial epic at the center of section two (14), the palace of Atlante (12.14–34) and the cave of the Orco (17.26–69), develop the theme of restraint versus excess in romance adventure stories that frame the fantastic exploits of Astolfo in the second central canto (15). The motives of prisoners and captives in Canto 12 contrast with those in Canto 17. On the one hand, Atlante wants to protect Ruggiero from death in battle, and so carries him off along with anyone who might kill him. On the other hand, the Orco simply wants to devour Norandino. The differences between the prisoners' desires focus our attention more directly on the central theme of this section. The free choice and constancy of Norandino's captivity contrast with Orlando's enslavement to desire and aimless

[15] Cleanthes' "Hymn to the Sun" (*S.V.F.* 1.537, 11) as translated by A. A. Long in *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 181.

wandering. Norandino chooses his captivity in order to free his wife Lucina. Faithful love for her conquers his fear of the Orco and gives him the courage to enter the monster's herd of goats, disguised as Odysseus and his men were: "ma poté la pietà più che 'l timore" [17.48.5: faithfulness got the better of fear]. Ariosto praises Norandino's constancy when, after his plan to disguise Lucina as one of the goats fails, he refuses to leave her: "e sempre più costante si ritruova" [17.62.4: his constancy grew only firmer]. Orlando, too, is motivated by love, but he expresses it as an obsessive rage, all directed towards a false image of Angelica. When he sees the image of Angelica, he is possessed by a rage no less than that of Rodomonte: "spinto da l'ira e da la furia rea" [12.6.5: driven by anger and evil fury]. Running "di qua ... di là" (9.3) and "di su di giù" (10.5), Orlando encounters "Ferraù, Brandimarte e il re Gradasso, / re Sacripante et altri cavallieri ... né men facean di lui vani sentieri" [12.11.3–6: pursuing a quest as fruitless as his own]. When they are all freed from enchantment by Angelica's putting the ring on her finger, they still search for her: "di su di giù, dentro e di fuor" [29.3: up and down, outside and inside]. Ariosto's favorite phrase to describe such chaos, "di su di giù," portrays the knights as confused as ever. Once Atlante's spell is conquered, Angelica's disappearance outside the palace reduces them to a pursuit as pointless as the one into which they had been led by Atlas' charms: "Volgon per bosco or quinci or quindi in fretta / quelli scherniti la stupida faccia" [12.36.1–2: The hasty knights turned to peer foolishly here and there into the woods]. Each of these paladins wants whatever the others want. Like the mobs who attack Grifone, Marfisa, and Rodomonte, these knights are motivated by "following the herd," which Seneca cautions against ("ne ... sequamur antecedentium gregem"):

> Yet nothing involves us in greater trouble than the fact that we adapt ourselves to rumor in the belief that the best things are those that have met with great approval,—the fact that having so many to follow, we live not after the rule of reason, but of imitation.[16]

[16] Seneca, *De vita beata* 1.3: "Atqui nulla res nos maioribus malis implicat, quam quod ad rumorem componimur, optima rati ea, quae magno adsensu recepta

The extent to which these characters are motivated not by a desire for the object but by the desire to imitate other desiring subjects is made even clearer when Ferraù and Orlando drop their search for Angelica to vie for Orlando's helmet (40–45). Whether the object of desire is Angelica or the helmet seems immaterial; it is the rivalry between contestants that counts. The mercurial metaphysical desire, which motivates these contests, and which survives disenchantment and freedom from entrapment, sharply contrasts with the constancy of Norandino's pietà.

Ariosto pits faithfulness against betrayal in the next pair of cantos (13 and 16) with Isabella's story (begun at the end of 12) and the continuation of Grifone's (picked up at the end of 17). Wandering off the beaten track into a cave, Orlando encounters a maiden who has suffered at the hands of someone "scortese, inguisto, barbaro et atroce" [12.93.6: unkind, unjust, barbarous, and cruel]. Like Isabella, who is held captive in a cave, Grifone has been betrayed and imprisoned. As a result of Martano's and Orrigille's false accusations to King Norandino against him, Grifone is ambushed and thrown into prison (17.128). Grifone only realizes that he has been betrayed when he awakes to hear that his arms have been stolen by his lady Orrigille. She has run off with Martano, who had been pretending to be her brother. Grifone's and Isabella's predicaments suggest the irrationality and disloyalty inspired by "Amor," issues that are explicitly explored in this pair of cantos—in the narrator's comments on how Grifone desires a woman who despises him (Canto 16) and in Isabella's comments on why Odorico, her lover Zerbino's trusted friend, betrayed him (Canto 13).

What was presented as the losing struggle of man's "ragione" and with his "libidinosa furia" in Canto 11 becomes that between "arbitrio" (will) and "appetito" (appetite) in Canto 16. The introduction to the story of Grifone's attachment to the beautiful but deceitful Orrigille interprets his predicament in the language of Stoic moral philosophy:

> In questo caso è il giovene Grifone,

---

sunt, quodque exempla nobis multa sunt, nec ad rationem sed ad similitudinem vivimus."

> che non si può emendare, e il suo error vede,
> vede quanto vilmente il suo cor pone
> in Orrigille iniqua e senza fede;
> pur dal mal uso è vinta la ragione,
> e pur l'arbitrio all'appetito cede:
> perfida sia quantunque, ingrata e ria
> sforzato è di cercar dove ella sia.
>
> [16.4.1–8: Such is the case of young Grifone: he sees his error but cannot mend it; he sees how abject is his love of Orrigille, a despicable, faithless woman; but reason is conquered by evil habit; will has yielded place to appetite. However fickle, thankless, and mean she is, he is forced to seek her company.]

Unlike the self-deceived Dalinda (5) and Ruggiero (6) who were mesmerized by their intense desire for a false image, Grifone sees the error of his love for Orrigille ("il suo error vede"). If there is no way that reason ("ragione") can restrain ("raffrene") Ruggiero (11) from the naked Angelica, Grifone's reason ("ragione") is conquered by the bad habit ("mal uso") of lusting after Orrigille. The irony of all this is that while he is forced by his appetite to follow her everywhere, apparently this appetite is never sated. Although Orrigille encourages Grifone with talk of her yearning ("bramando" [12.8]) for him, she travels with another lover, whom she claims is her brother. It is as though his appetite is indeed a masochistic desire to be mistreated.

This opposition between appetite and reason, used to moralize the story of Grifone, is a fundamental concept in Cicero's ethics. In *De officiis*, Cicero makes the following distinction:

> Now we find that the essential activity of the spirit is two-fold: one force is appetite [*in appetitu*] ... which impels a man this way and that [*huc et illuc*]; the other is reason [*in ratione*] which teaches and explains what should be done and what should be left undone. The result is that reason commands, appetite obeys.[17]

[17] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.28.101: "Duplex est enim animorum atque natura; una pars in appetitu posita est ... quae hominem huc et illuc rapit, altera in ratione, quae docet et explanat, quid faciendum fugiendumque sit. Ita fit ut ratio praesit, appetitus obtemperet."

The genealogy of the motif of the quest theme, "di qua, di là," describing ladies' and paladins' wandering "here and there," may be traced to Cicero's "huc et illuc." It is just such an aimless quest on which Grifone embarks. Impelled by appetite, this way and that, he allows himself to be manipulated by Orrigille. The Stoic confidence in the power of reason is made fun of here. By Stoic standards Grifone's soul is a moral world turned upside down. His appetite commands and reason obeys.

The opposition between "appetito" and "ragione" in Canto 16 is replaced by that between "Amor" and "ogni nostro disegno razionale" in its companion canto, 13. While Grifone's bad habit is love for a disloyal woman of evil nature ("disleale e di sì rea natura" [15.101.5]), "Amor" itself is portrayed as "disleale" in Canto 13. Odorico, the most faithful and the closest of all the friends of Zerbino ("pel più fedele e pel più amico" [13.12.6]) attempts to seduce his friend's beloved Isabella. In telling her story to Orlando, Isabella blames "il crudo tiranno Amor," for Odorico's lust and betrayal. She sees his lust as the enemy of reason:

> Quivi il crudo tiranno Amor, che sempre
> d'ogni promessa sua fu disleale,
> e sempre guarda come involva e stempre
> ogni nostro disegno razionale,
> mutò con triste e disoneste tempre
> mio conforto in dolor, mio bene in male;
> che quell'amico, in chi Zerbin si crede,
> di desire arse, ed agghiacciò di fede.

> [13.20.1–8: But now Love, the cruel tyrant whose promises never were to be trusted, and who always makes a point of frustrating and aborting any reasonable plans we might make, treacherously turned my comfort to anguish, my good into harm: the friend in whom Zerbino trusted grew warm in lust, cold in duty.]

While Grifone's free will ("arbitrio") gives way to appetite ("appetito"), Odorico's desire burns and loyalty grows cold.

While the beginnings of Cantos 13 and 16 both deal with judgment versus appetite and lust versus loyalty, there are important differences between the two treatments of this theme. Though both

Grifone and Odorico are governed by lust, one is manipulated and the other is a manipulator. According to Isabella, "Amor" destroys "ogni disegno razionale" [every rational design]; and, yet, it does not destroy every design for Odorico, who "disegnò quivi senza più dimora / condurre a fin l'ingordo suo appetito" [13.21.5, 6: schemed to drive his ravenous lust to its conclusions]. Unable to think, or to design, Grifone is manipulated by Orrigille's designs:

> E seguitò la donna fraudolente,
> di cui l'opere fur più che di volpe,
> la sua querela così astutamente,
> che riversò in Grifon tutte le colpe.
>
> [16.13.1–4: The fraudulent lady, whose work was slyer than a fox's, carried on her argument so astutely that she turned the tables on Grifone.]

An even more important issue in Cantos 13 and 16 is the contrast between the faith and chastity of Isabella and the erring desire and willingly self-deceived appetite of Grifone. While Odorico cannot change Isabella's fidelity to Zerbino, Grifone abases himself before Orrigille. When she tells him that the man she is travelling with is her brother, Grifone not only believes her but fawns all over the fellow: "e come fosse suo cognato vero, / d'accarezzar non cessa il cavalliero" [16.14.7–8: and as if he were his own true brother-in-law, he did not cease embracing the knight]. Grifone allows himself to believe outrageous lies, but at the same time he is a prey to the courtly art of deception at which Origille and her lover excel: "e copria l'uno e l'altro il suo difetto, / con danno altrui, sotto cortese aspetto" [16.6.6–8: both treacherous and untrustworthy; and they both disguised their faults—to the cost of others—behind a courtly appearance].

The topic of the relation of appearance ("aspetto") to appetite and judgment is also treated in Cantos 13 and 16. On the one hand, the exordium to Canto 16 warns of the disjunction between appearance and reality which overthrows Grifone's reason:

> Pianger de' quel che già sia fatto servo
> di duo vaghi occhi e d'una bella treccia,
> sotto cui si nasconda un cor protervo,
> che poco puro abbia con molta feccia.

> [16.3.1–4: Let him weep who has enslaved himself to a pair of alluring eyes, a pretty head of hair, and beneath is hidden a callous heart, which has little pure and much dross.]

On the other hand, Isabella's beauty, unlike Orrigille's, shines through "gli occhi di lacrime pregni" [eyes full of tears], which are clear signs of a "cor dolente" [12.91.7–8: a sorrowing heart]. Isabella's features tell only of authentic emotion. In the story of Zerbino and Isabella, judgment is unproblematic; things are what they seem. Just as Isabella is beautiful and good, so her Zerbino "di bellezza e di valore / ... era eminente" [13.8.1–2: was eminent in beauty and in valor].

The correspondence between beauty and virtue links the prophecy of Bradamante's female descendants (13.57–74) to the story of Isabella. This fictional paragon of virtue has the same name as the first lady in the catalogue of Estense female ancestors, youngest sister of his patron Ippolito, and one of the first audiences for Ariosto's informal reading of his epic. Melissa does not know whether to praise her beauty or her virtue more:

> ch'io non so ben se più legggiadra e bella
> mi debba dire, o più saggia e pudica,
> liberale e magnanima Isabella.
>
> [13.59.3–5: I know not which to put first, her beauty and grace or her sagacity and virtue, liberal and magnanimous Isabella.]

The Estense ladies are exemplars of virtue:

> che men degne non son ne lor gonne,
> ch'in arme i cavallier, di sommi pregi,
> di pietà, di gran cor, di gran prudenza,
> di somma e incomparabil continenza.
>
> [13.57.5–8: for all their feminine attire, they no less than the knights in their armor, shall be endowed with eminent virtues—mercy, courage, prudence, matchless continence.]

This comparison between ladies and knights prepares us for the juxtaposition between the virtue of Bradamante's female descendants in Canto 13 and the vices of knights at the siege of Paris in Canto 16. In Canto 16, virtue is absent from the depictions of battle—both from

Rodomonte's attack and from the Christian paladins' defense. Rodomonte is the antithesis of virtue because he strikes down women and old people: "né quivi il Saracin fa maggior pruova / di gran valor, che di gran crudeltade; / che non discerne sesso, ordine, etade" [16.25.6–8: He gave greater proof of cruelty than valor; since he did not distinguish sex, rank or age]. Although Rinaldo exhorts his men to aid one another (38.3–4), when the fighting actually begins, all is confusion: "Di qua di là la gente d'arme ingrossa" [58.3–4: Now here now there armed men clustered]. The narrator criticizes the Christians just as much as he does the pagans; he compares the Christians' violence outside the walls with Rodomonte's rampage within them:

> Mentre di fuor con sì crudel battaglia,
> odio, rabbia, furor l'un l'altro offende,
> Rodomonte in Parigi il popul taglia,
> le belle case e i sacri templi accende.
>
> [16.85.1–4: While outside the walls cruel battle was raging as Hatred, Wrath, and Violence assailed each other, within Paris, Rodomonte was slaughtering the citizens and setting fire to churches and fair houses.]

It is the vices which fight the cruel battle, not the virtues—not the "faith," "courage," "prudence," "continence" (13.57.7–8)—for which Bradamante's female progeny are praised. This contrast is between the ideal and the real, between encomium and battle scene. The encomium of the Estense women presents the world as Bradamante is attempting to make it; the battle presents the world as chaos. Canto 16, which began as the story of an erring knight, ends with the story of a battle, which is error itself. Canto 13, which began with the story of a virtuous maiden, ends with a prophecy of virtuous maidens to descend from Bradamante. At the very end of Canto 13, the heroine, warned by Melissa of Atlante's powers, is nevertheless caught up in his spell, in the "commune errore" (13.79.2). Bradamante, too, pursues the enchanted quest, "di su e di giù, dentro e di fuore" (13.79.4).

The exordia to the cantos of the central panel (14 and 15) also discuss excess versus restraint in battle. The infinite deaths ("morti . . . infiniti") of the Saracens' triumphs and of Alfonso d'Este's defeat of Ravenna make these bloody victories ("vittorie così sanguinose") which give little cause for celebration (14.1.3; 2.1). The narrator

praises Alfonso's protection of his men at the battle of Polesella and condemns Rodomonte's recklessness and lack of care for his men at the battle of Paris: "gli è ver che la vittoria sanguinosa / spesso far suole il capitan men degno" [15.1.3–4: it is true that too much bloodshed may ruin the victorious captain's reputation]. At the center of the second section, Rodomonte rages against his own men as well as against the enemy. On either side of Rodomonte's Turnus-like *aristeia* are the Archangel Michele's (14.68–97) and Astolfo's (15.10–87) fantastic journeys. Michele's descent from heaven and Astolfo's battle against the monsters are both broadly humorous send-ups of epic. Surrounding these mock epic scenes are two love stories located at the very edges of the central panel. One relates the harmonious union of Doralice and Mandricardo (14.10–64), the other the disloyalty of Orrigille towards Grifone (15.100–105). The structure of action and of generic literary models is chiastic. Generically, the narrative moves from romance to epic and back to romance. Figure 7 provides a detailed outline of the analogies between the plots of these two cantos.

| | |
|---|---|
| 14.10–64 | Love triangle of romance: Mandricardo runs off with Doralice, the betrothed of Rodomonte. |
| 14.68–97 | Fantastic journey: Michele searches for Discord and Silence. |
| 14.107–34 | Epic battle: Rodomonte charges against Paris. |
| 15.1–9 | Epic battle: Rodomonte fights at the walls of Paris. |
| 15.10–87 | Fantastic journey: Astolfo traps Caligorante in his net and subdues Orrilo. |
| 15.100–05 | Love triangle of romance: Orrigille, unfaithful to Grifone, runs off with another. |

*Fig. 7. Analogies between Cantos 14 and 15*

The central section begins and ends with a love triangle that plays a role in the development of the theme of excess. The story of Mandricardo's love for Doralice has a harmonious ending ("ben d'accordo" [14.63.5]), while Orrigille's betrayal of Grifone creates an unresolved and humiliating ending for his story. If Mandricardo finds temporary calm, Grifone finds excessive self-deception and victimiza-

tion. While Mandricardo's and Rodomonte's rivalry is picked up again as a major plot line in the center and last half of section three (24–27), Grifone's betrayal by Orrigille and Martano forms the chief plot line of the last half of section two (16–18). Both stories have their roots in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*. Boiardo's last view of Grifone shows him worrying greatly over Orrigille, who has taken a fever (*Inn.* 2.20.7). Boiardo mentions Doralice on several occasions as Rodomonte's lady (2.7.28; 14.20; 15.36). These plots continued from the *Innamorato* are part of the tradition of romance.

Closer to the central scene of Rodomonte's rage, Michele's and Astolfo's journeys, both self-contained interludes, are created by a pastiche of Virgil and Ovid. Both stories take a basic part of their plots from Virgil: for Michele's descent, the descent of Allecto to Amata (*Aeneid* 7.339–405) and to Turnus (7.406–74) is a possible analogue; for Astolfo's defeat of Caligorante, Hercules' defeat of Cacus (8.184–279) is a model. It is tempting to single out Allecto's descent as the most likely analogue for Michele's, not only because Allecto's descent, unlike Mercury's in Book 4 or Iris' in Book 9, is specifically meant to spread discord in battle as Michele's is, but also because both Allecto's descent and Hercules' defeat of Cacus are dominated by the force of *furor*. Allecto infuses Amata and Turnus with *furor*; Hercules' *furor* breaks out against the *furor* of Cacus. Strangely enough, however, *furor*, so frequently portrayed in the characters' excesses in section two, is noticeably absent from Michele and Astolfo. This contrast with the rest of section two as well as with the *Aeneid* contributes to the broadly parodic tenor of both Michele's descent and Astolfo's exploits. The epic model for Michele, Allecto flies immediately to Latinus' court and, having stirred Amata to frenzy, flies directly from there to incite Turnus:

> Postquam visa satis primos acuisse furores
> consiliumque omnemque domum vertisse Latini,
> protinus hinc fuscis tristis dea tollitur alis
> audacis Rutuli ad muros quam dicitur urbem
> Acrisionaeis Danae fundasse colonis
> praecipiti delata Noto. locus Ardea quondam
> dictus avis, et nunc magnum manet Ardea nomen,
> sed fortuna fuit.

[7.406–13: When to the Fury's mind the first mad fit / Had been whipped up enough—seeing Latinus' / Counsel subverted and his home undone— / Allecto rose up on her somber wings / And flew straight to the bold Rutulian's walls, / The city which they say Danae founded / With her Acrisian colonists, blown there by gale winds from the south. Ardea once / Our early fathers called the place, and still the great name stands, / though Ardea's fortune waned.]

The swiftness of Allecto's flight ("protinus" [directly]), the specific location to which it aims ("urbem / Acrisionaeis Danae fundasse colonis / ... Ardea" [the city which they say Danae founded with her Acrasian colonists / ... Ardea]), the gloom which surrounds it ("fuscis / ... alis" [somber wings]) make it quite different from Michele's, with its lack of direction and airy serenity. Michele has to think about where he's going before he sets off:

> Seco pensa tra via, dove si cale
> il celeste corrier per fallir meno
> a trovar quel nimico di parole,
> a cui la prima commission far vuole.

[14.78.5–8: As he went he thought where best to put down if he was to find that enemy of words to whom he meant to address his first commission.]

There is nothing menacing about any of this; the angel pondering his destination while turning in the air is very silly. His whole search is haphazard. It is the difference between the model and the imitation which creates the humor.

If the effect of Michele's descent is anything but grave and Virgilian, so much less so is Astolfo's fight with Caligorante. The description of Caligorante's lair (15.49–50) is much like Cacus' (*Aeneid* 8.190–97). No light enters either house; on the walls of both are hung the human victims of each monster. Cacus' lair is in the mountains, a detail which is echoed in a simile describing Caligorante, "Qual ne le alpine ville" [50.1: As in Alpine houses]. But the similarity ends there. Cacus' and Hercules' rage against one another in a fearsome encounter, impelled by fury: "at furiis Caci mens effera" [8.205: but Cacus' mind aroused to fury]; "hic vero Alcidae furiis exarserat atro / felle

dolor" [219–20: this truly set Hercules ablaze with fierce bile of anger]; "ecce furens animis ... Tirynthius" [228: this Hercules of Tiryns in his fury]. No sooner does Astolfo rein in his horse, than he blows his magic horn, which causes Caligorante to trip and be caught up in his own net (53–54). Astolfo's restraint separates him from the Stoic hero Hercules of *Aeneid* 8. Astolfo's exploits (like Orlando's in 23) imitate those of Hercules, but Astolfo lacks the *furor*, afflicting both the Stoic exemplar of virtue and the mad paladin.

While Ariosto models both Michele's descent and Astolfo's adventures after the *Aeneid*, he also weaves in literary allusions to Ovid, Statius, Boiardo, and even to Dante. The origin of Caligorante's net (56) is reminiscent of the description of Vulcan's net (*Metamorphoses* 4). The Casa del Sonno (14.92) recalls Ovid's *domus Somni* (11.593–615). The allegorical figures who reside in Sleep's house, l'Ozio, l'Oblio, il Silenzio, la Pigrizia (14.93–94), come out of Statius' *atria Somni*, "Quies ... Oblivio ... Otia ... Silentia" (*Thebaid* 10.84–91). The description of Fraud (14.87.3) resembles that of Dante's Geryon (*Inferno* 17.11–12). Finally, the hilarious story of Aquilante and Grifone unsuccessfully lopping off the limbs of Orrilo was first related by Boiardo and then continued by Ariosto (15.63–90).[18] All these different modes of discourse—the allegory of Statius, the moralized mythology of Dante, the naturalalistic description of Ovid, and the fantasy of Boiardo—in concert seem particularly incongruous and, hence, particularly parodic. Both episodes, the descent of Michele and the exploits of Astolfo, are so multiply allusive that they do not finally resemble any one literary ancestor more than another. For the Herculean labor of defeating the giant Caligorante (after Virgil) to be accomplished by way of Vulcan's net (after Ovid) creates a ludicrous and slapstick view of an action, which in its Virgilian context is furious and heroic. The net itself, which in its Ovidian context is the means for Vulcan's revenge on the wife who betrayed him, here becomes like the dynamite which blows up in the face of a cartoon character, a deadly weapon which seems merely the prop of a farcical demise. All this is brought about by the magic horn of medieval

[18] For a comparison of Ariosto's and Boiardo's portrayal of Orrilo, see Luciano Serra, "Dal Boiardo all'Ariosto, grottesco e diroccamento: Orrilo," *Bollettino storico reggiano* 7, no. 24 (1974): 55–63.

romance. Similarly, Michele's descent, because followed by the search for Silenzio and Discordia that leads to the discovery of the seven deadly sins in the monastery, is a strange hybrid of an epic convention and a digression into anticlerical satire, which is an amusing and anticlimactic foil for the epic purpose of the mission.

When we turn to the central scene of this panel, we see subject matter much more martial than that of the surrounding digressions, but no less parodic. At the end of Canto 14 and the beginning of Canto 15, the *aristeia* of Rodomonte partially resembles that of Turnus in *Aeneid* 9 and that of Rodomonte in the *Orlando Innamorato* 3.8. The significant difference between Rodomonte and his literary ancestors links his portrayal with Ariosto's own furious Orlando. The choice of Virgil and Boiardo as sources relates the episode to the allusions to these authors throughout this section. This episode is only loosely based on its literary sources, and these allusions have a comic effect.

All three contexts—*Aeneid* 9, *Innamorato* 3.8, and *Furioso* 14—present a siege upon the walls of a fortress. Ariosto's Rodomonte resembles Virgil's Turnus much more than he does Boiardo's Rodomonte.[19] Both Ariosto's Rodomonte and Virgil's Turnus slay many single-handedly and rage about the battle in a fury. Whereas in Boiardo's battle scenes at Paris, Rodomonte always follows Orlando (*Inn.* 3.8.50), in Ariosto's battle, Rodomonte follows the entire Christian army. He cuts down one warrior after another (14.121–23), just as Turnus does (*Aeneid* 9.696–704). Like Turnus, driven by "furor ... caedisque insana cupido" [9.761–62: furor and an insane desire for slaughter], Rodomonte is "indomito, superbo e furibondo" [14.119.2: dauntless, proud, and rabid]. Just as Turnus boils with rage [798: "mens exaestuat ira"], so Rodomonte is "pien d'ira e di sdegno" [108.7: full of anger and disdain].

Beyond this similar rage and violence, Rodomonte in Canto 14 has little in common with Turnus of *Aeneid* 9, but much with the portrayal of excess in section two and with the ultimate example of excess in the poem, Orlando. The description of Rodomonte as one

[19] Peter Wiggins compares the general greater complexity of Ariosto's portrayal of Rodomonte to Boiardo's portrayal of the character (*Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry*, 41–48).

against many in the battle of Paris reminds us of those other pictures of strong-minded individuals braving the herd—Grifone against Norandino's people (18), Marfisa against the same lot (18), and Orlando against the Ebudans (11). Whereas in section two Orlando is self-contained, at the center of section three, the center of the entire poem, he abandons himself to self-destruction and complete violence against all—even against Angelica. Rodomonte in Canto 14 is similarly self-destructive and indiscriminately violent. While Turnus is finally hesitant and moves back from the onslaught (*Aeneid* 9.797–98), Rodomonte throws himself headlong into battle. His clumsy plunge into the moat is the opposite of Turnus' desperate and yet necessary plunge into the river. While Turnus is rushed to his comrades washed free of blood by the river (*Aeneid* 9.814–86), Rodomonte rushes into battle mud-stained and soaked by his fall into the moat (14.120).

Rodomonte's utter lack of concern for his companions makes him the most striking example of utterly senseless excess in section two. Not only does he rebuke his men, but he splits the skulls and pierces the breasts of those who lag behind (14.128). Finally, he drives his troops into the fosse, over which he leaps to safety and in which they are all devoured by fire (15.3). At the outset of Canto 15, Ippolito d'Este's protection of his men at the battle of Polesella is contrasted with Rodomonte's destruction of his. He is called "causa del mal loro" [15.4.7: cause of their evil]. When Rodomonte hears a thousand of his men cry out from the burning trench, he curses at heaven (15.5.8).

As huge as the loss of men is ("[u]ndicimila ed otto" [4.1]) and as excessive as Rodomonte is ("troppo in suo danno audace" [3.1]), this scene taken as a whole distances the reader from the pain of the battle. One of the ways that Ariosto makes the reader detached is through burlesque humor. The mad leap which Rodomonte takes over the fosse conveys all the brutal folly and senselessly carefree violence, not only of the battle of Paris but of this whole section:

> Mentre lo stuol de' barbari si cala,
> anzi trabocca al periglioso fondo,
> ed indi cerca per diversa scala
> di salir sopra l'argine secondo;
> il re di Sarza (come avesse un'ala

> per ciascun de' suoi membri) levò il pondo
> di sì gran corpo e con tant'arme indosso,
> e netto si lanciò di là dal fosso.
>
> [14.129.1–8: While the barbarian horde was climbing down, or rather being sent crashing down, into the perilous trench from the floor of which they tried a different way of scaling the inner rampart, Rodomonte as though he had a wing attached to each limb, lifted his ponderous frame and cleared the trench at one leap—and he was in full armor.]

Rodomonte's own men are no more than a horde ("lo stuol") to him as he bashes them down into the trench. He is like a cartoon figure who performs every violent and fantastic feat the draftsman can draw:

> Poco era men di trenta piedi, o tanto,
> ed egli il passò destro come un veltro,
> e fece nel cader strepito, quanto
> avesse avuto sotto i piedi feltro.
>
> [14.130.1–4: It was a good thirty feet across, and he cleared it as deftly as a greyhound, hitting the ground as soundlessly as though he had felt under his feet.]

That Rodomonte, weighed down with his full armor, should make a leap of thirty feet so deftly and noiselessly seems simply another one of Ariosto's jokes. The description is painted in broadly exaggerated humorous strokes.

The oxymora that describe the shrieks of the poor people who perish in the battle of Paris—"[a]spro concento, orribile armonia ... istranamente concordar" [134.1, 5: bitter harmony, horrible harmony, strangely harmonizing]—are reminiscent of the cosmic harmonizing of good and evil in the Stoic Cleanthes' "Hymn to the Sun": "you know how to ... harmonize what is dissonant." At the end of Canto 14, the conflagration threatens apocalyptic destruction. Rodomonte, however ridiculous, is held responsible for much of this destruction, and yet other characters, Christian knights as well as Saracens, have brought on this excess of violence throughout section two. Here the violence is of cosmic proportions, as the flames from the battle are said to reach so high that they dry out the moon [133.3–4: "tanto ascende in alto, ch'alla luna / può d'appresso asciugar l'umido seno"] and blot

out the sun [133.6: "che 'l sole adombra"]. The fires blazing and the cries rising from the trench can only be seen as "strangely harmonizing" from the detached perspective that sees the larger sweep of action in the poem. Ariosto juxtaposes Michele's descent to earth and the soldiers' descent into the trench with Astolfo's ascent to the moon (34), from which perspective the earth and all its folly is diminished.

CHAPTER SIX

# *Wisdom and Madness: Cantos 20–27*

ὅτι πᾶς ἄφρων μαίνεται.
[All save the wise are mad.]
Omnem stultum insanire.
[Every foolish man is mad.][1]

> Quid tollit iram sapientis? Turba peccantium. Intellegit quam et iniquum sit et periculosum irasci publico vitio.
> [What keeps the wise man from anger? The great mass of sinners. He understands both how unjust and how dangerous it is to grow angry at universal vice.][2]

IN SECTION THREE AS IN THE FIRST TWO SECTIONS, Ariosto places the major literary parody—in this case, Orlando's madness (23–24)—at the center of the eight canto series and surrounds this with symmetry of action. Those categories of action, which we had begun to expect in each pair of cantos in the first two sections—pursuit, escape, rescue, entrapment—are all found here. And, as in the first two sections, the parallels between these actions in cantos equidsitant from another create a pattern of ring composition. The outline in Figure 8 on the next page accounts for the parallel actions in each pair of cantos in section three.

Cantos 20 and 27 are both concerned with entrapment and escape. In Canto 20, Astolfo and his companions are entrapped by and escape from the Amazonian women. In Canto 27, Carlomagno and his troops are trapped within Paris by the blockade of the Saracen knights. The escape of Astolo and friends from the land of warrior

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[1] Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 4, in Cicero *De oratore in Two Volumes together with De fato, Paradoxa stoicorum, De partitione oratoria*, trans. H. Rackham, LCL (1942).

[2] Seneca, *De ira* 2.10.4, in *Moral Essays* 1.

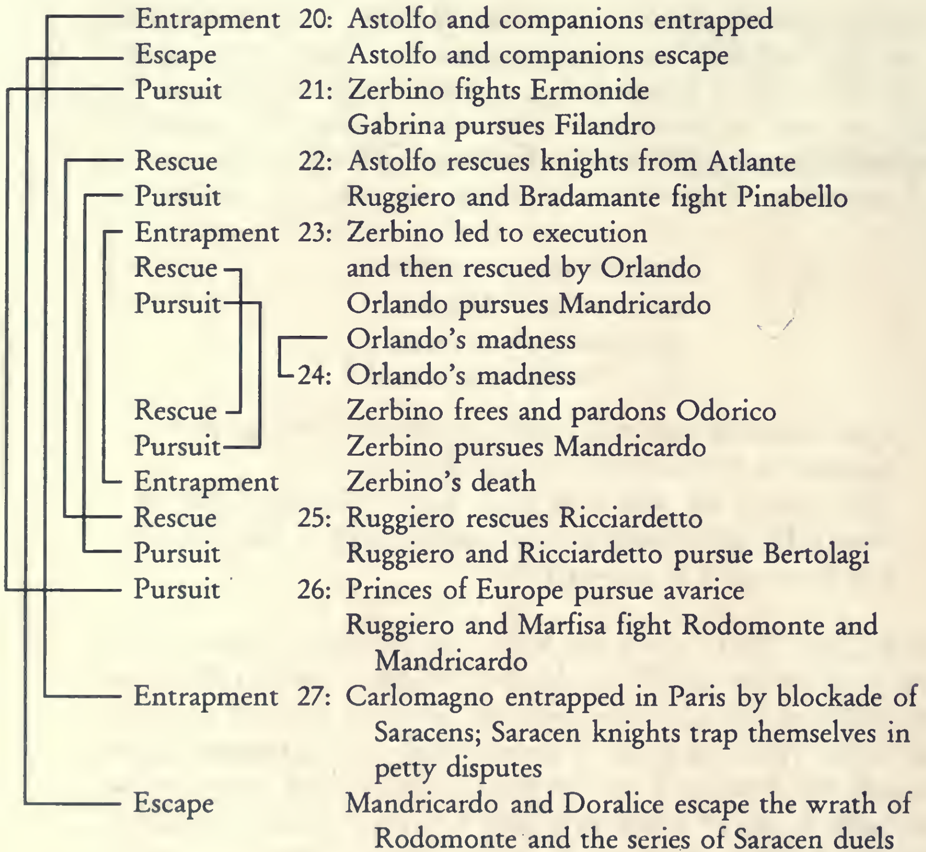


*Fig. 8. Parallel actions in section three*

women is set against Mandricardo's and Doralice's escape from the vengeful Rodomonte, who is restrained by the judgment and rule of Agramante, who allows Doralice to choose the man she wants. There is no escape for Rodomonte, who, defeated, rides off shouting complaints against the female sex. Cantos 21 and 26 concentrate on pursuit: in Canto 21, Gabrina pursues Filandro, and Zerbino fights Ermonide. In Canto 26, the princes of Europe pursue the beast of avarice, and Ruggiero and Marfisa take on Rodomonte and Mandricardo. Cantos 22 and 25 are stories of rescue: Canto 22, Astolfo's rescue of those still trapped in Atlante's palace; Canto 25, Ruggiero's

rescue of Ricciardetto. Each of these cantos (22 and 25) is concluded by another story of pursuit. In Cantos 23 and 24, these actions frame the madness of Orlando. Leading up to Orlando's madness in Canto 23 are Zerbino's entrapment, his rescue by Orlando, and Orlando's pursuit of Mandricardo. Leading away from Orlando's madness in Canto 24 are Zerbino's pardon and release of the traitor Odorico, Zerbino's pursuit of Mandricardo, Zerbino's death (the ultimate entrapment). Spanning from the end of Canto 23 to Canto 39, Orlando's madness begins at the exact center of the poem. Orlando's aggressive, madcap frenzy is in a sense an escape from his conventional role as suffering, melancholic, Petrarchan lover. On the one hand, Orlando does escape into madness from the entrapment of his idealized version of reality. On the other hand, Orlando's madness is another kind of entrapment; he is in thrall to his own rage, which issues into a mad rampage against himself, everyone whom he encounters, and the natural world.

The central theme in the third section of the poem springs from the explosion of Orlando's *furor* when he discovers that Angelica has made love with Medoro. In representing Orlando's *furor*, the poem is concerned not with making a moral judgment about Angelica's actions but with making fun of Orlando's outrageous reaction to them. He breaks out into a rage, the epic proportions of which—destroying streams, forests, innocent woodcutters, flocks of sheep, and entire villages—are designed to make us laugh. It has often been assumed that Orlando's *furor* is caused by unrequited love and unfulfilled sexual desire. But whom or what does Orlando desire? Angelica? The clash of his idealized image of Angelica with empirical evidence to the contrary causes Orlando's madness. Orlando does not so much want to consummate his desire as to keep it forever fixed on the perfection of his angelic lady: "il fior ch'in ciel potea pormi fra i dei, / il fior ch'intatto io mi venia serbando" [8.77.5–6: the flower which can lift me into the sky among the gods / the flower which I preserved intact]. Orlando's madness is not the mere jealousy of a Rodomonte (which we saw in section two) but an earth-shattering destruction of the world as he believed it to be. Not only Orlando's conception of Angelica but even his own identity collapses in the face of all the evidence that Angelica has made love with Medoro: the names "Angelica and Medoro" carved on trees, Medoro's frankly sexual poem,

the herdsman's account of how Angelica healed Medoro and fell in love with him, the bracelet that Orlando had once given to Angelica as love token now given by her to the woodcutter as payment for the lovers' lodging, and the *coup de grâce*, Orlando's realization that he is lying on the very bed where Angelica and Medoro made love. His role as chivalric lover is destroyed by the discovery of an Angelica other than the one he imagined and idealized. Meanwhile, the reader sees how baseless Orlando's original view of Angelica is and how ridiculous his reaction to the loss of that view is. Orlando's madness is not only the madness of the rest of the characters in the poem writ large, it is the occasion for the narrator to comment on and for the audience to understand their own complicity in Orlando's error. The dialectic of section three is between madness—the madness that Orlando experiences in his anger at the world for not conforming to his ideal of perfection—and wisdom—the wisdom that the narrator is trying to evoke from the reader in representing this madness: to view human error—including our own—as folly. The way in which the characters fail to live up to each other's expectations of them, and the very delusion of these expectations, as in Orlando's Neoplatonic love for an angelic lady, are all shown to be different versions of the same error. Ariosto expresses these ironic moral contradictions, between what the characters believe and what they experience, in literary terms—in the differences between his sources and his parody of them. The narrator's unexamined approval of chivalric epic, courtly love lyric, and romance *topoi* and the values associated with them encourages us to criticize these conventions and to enjoy their parody. All these ideals lead to irrationality when too rigidly clung to.

The extremities of section three—Cantos 20 and 27—display examples of irrational custom motivated by revenge. The regime of martial women over male slaves (20) represents a new status quo, a revenge by the Cretan women on all men.[3] The external narration of how Guidone and Marfisa and friends escape from the warlike women and the internal narration by Guidone of how Elbanio escapes the

[3] Rajna catalogues the various versions of the story of the Lemnian women on which Canto 20 may be based, including Dante, *Inferno* 18.90, Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 2.220, Statius, *Thebaid* 5.147, Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.609 (*Le fonti*, 254–55).

"altare alla Vendetta" [20.35.6: altar to Vengeance] both show how cruel custom and law can be foiled by affection. The law of the island requires every foreign male to slay ten men in battle and satisfy ten women in bed. Guidone explains the origin of this custom. Before the current custom there was an even worse law. All males were condemned to death—not just foreigners but even natives, whose mothers were required to kill or sell all but one son (33). This infanticide is a kind of *contrapasso* for the original cruelty that set the whole story in motion. The Cretan women who founded the female warrior state were abandoned by Greek lovers who, as bastards, were themselves abandoned by their mothers when their husbands returned home from the Trojan war. If once the Greek women were forced to abandon their children, now the Cretan women kill their male offspring and any male strangers. Guidone tells how one such stranger, Elbanio, fell in love with the queen's daughter, Alessandra, whom he begs to save him. Elbanio's words express the perversity of the martial women's ethos: "quando fuor d'ogni ragion qui sono / privi d'umanitade i cori umani" [41.1–2: when human hearts are against all reason and deprived of humanity]. Alessandra pleads with her mother Orontea that Elbanio be spared if he can defeat ten adversaries. Against her subjects' opposition, Orontea prevails upon the council to grant her daughter's wish, provided that Elbanio also satisfy ten women in bed. The "iniqua legge" is only changed to "il costume empio" (20.60.1) because of Alessandra's love for Elbanio and Orontea's love for her daughter. Similarly, in the external narration, only love saves the prisoners. Through the "perfetto amor" of Aleria, Guidone's beloved, Astolfo, Marfisa, and their companions escape.

But lest these stories in Canto 20 seem like a paean to the conventional ethos of courtly love, rather than to the mutual affection of the lovers, Ariosto parodies the pettiness of courtly love and chivalric combat in the companion canto, 27. The bravery of the Saracens against the enemy in the opening stanzas of Canto 27 is replaced by quarrels amongst friends, stirred up by Discordia. The first champion to lose interest in the battle and insist it be stopped until she completes a duel (41), Marfisa gives the lie to the narrator's contention that women make better decisions on impulse (27.1). Directly following Marfisa's outburst, Rodomonte flares up in a rage to fight his rival Mandricardo for Doralice's hand (42). But Mandricardo wants first to

contest Ruggiero's right to the white-winged eagle emblem (43). In this chain reaction of contentious multiple rivalry, Gradasso, uninvolved up to this point, now notices Orlando's sword Durindana and claims it as his by virtue of his struggle to achieve it (57). When Gradasso suggests that Mandricardo follow the "old tradition" of winning his sword before battle, Rodomonte is incensed and refuses to postpone his duel with Mandricardo, who had won first place by a draw of lots (45–46). Then all the paladins fight over the order of combat. They have forgotten their original reasons for fighting—clearly mere pretexts—and are more than ever full of boastfulness and self-dramatizing rage. Mandricardo now vies with no less than three opponents. Laying into Gradasso with his fist, Mandricardo loses his sword. He challenges not only Ruggiero and Rodomonte but also "Africa e Spagna e tutto l'uman seme" [65.3: Africa and Spain and the whole human race].

The parody of both courtly love and chivalry in the burlesque duels of Canto 27 reflects upon and contrasts with the madness of Orlando. Just as Orlando's brutal treatment of his horse and destruction of all around him constitute the inversion of knightly valor and of courtly love service, so, too, do Mandricardo's fisticuffs and the champions' squabble over the order of combat. The dramatic confusion of these petty quarrels—over a sword, a horse, an emblem, a woman—reveals the metaphysical confusion involved in the knights' investing these objects with value. Rodomonte's claim to Doralice's hand seems to mean no more to Mandricardo than Gradasso's claim to the sword Durindana; the duel Mandricardo starts is for Ruggiero's emblem. Unlike Orlando, for whom the absolute object—his idealized image of Angelica—is more important than all else, these knights invest all their energies in rivalry and care little about the objects for which they fight. Ariosto underscores the senselessness of this rivalry when Doralice, no longer merely the prize for a duel, is asked to choose between Rodomonte and Mandricardo. It is not Doralice who matters to the men in the proposed duel so much as their rivalry.

In the melee of rival claims in Canto 27, one begins to confuse one champion with another and to forget the reason for each duel. In fact, in the context of these multiple duels, each case of outrage becomes equally ridiculous, as all these objects are revealed as trivial possessions, invested with a value which distorts their real worth. The

paladins' shared values become the occasion for anger, even madness. The feuds of Canto 27 illustrate well the trivial causes of anger and the contradiction inherent in rivalry over shared values. Both of these points play a large part in Seneca's analysis of anger:

> Believe me, these things which incense us not a little are little things, like the trifles that drive children to quarrels and blows. Not one of them, though we take them so tragically, is a serious matter, not one is important. From this, I say, from the fact that you attach great value to petty things, come your anger and your madness [*ira et insania*].... The desire for the same thing, which ought to have been a bond of love, becomes the source of discord and hatred. A narrow path drives passers-by to blows; on a wide and open road even a multitude will not jostle. Because the things you strive for are trifles, and yet cannot be given to one without robbing another, they provoke those desiring the same things to struggle and strife.[4]

Seneca gives a psychological and ethical interpretation of anger, which, from the description of its outward manifestation to the diagnosis of its source, discursively approximates what Ariosto dramatically portrays in Canto 27. Seneca's detachment in commenting on the triviality of those arguments that we tend to take so seriously corresponds to our own reaction to the earnestness with which the paladins regard their contests. Mandricardo, for instance, perceives his rageful posture as defiantly heroic, as his threat to the others suggests: "'Se l'uno e l'altro di voi fosse Marte / ... / non saria l'un né l'altro atto a vietarme / la buona spada o quelle nobili arme'" [27.62.5, 7–8: "If each one of you were Mars ... you'd neither keep me from possessing the good sword or the noble arms"]. To the reader, however, he seems pathetically bombastic. The disparity between the intensity of emo-

[4] Seneca, *De ira* 3.34.1–3: "Crede mihi, levia sunt propter quae non leviter excandescimus, qualia quae pueros in rixam et iurgium concitant. Nihil ex is, quae tam tristes agimus, serium est, nihil magnum. Inde, inquam, vobis ira et insania est quod exigua magno aestimatis.... Quod vinculum amoris esse debebat, seditionis atque odi causa est, idem velle. Iter angustum rixas transeuntium concitat, diffusa et late patens via ne populos quidem collidit. Ista quae appetitis, quia exigua sunt nec possunt ad alterum nisi alteri erepta transferri, eadem affectantibus pugnas et iurgia excitant."

tion invested in these duels and the worth of their objects forces the reader to Seneca's conclusion. The common desire for these objects has nothing to do with the "bonds of love" because they can be possessed by one or robbed by another. The paladins' quarrels are humorous because observed from the perspective of a detached moralist. In fact, the more seriously they take these issues, the more ridiculous they are made to seem to us. Seneca calls such overvaluation of trivial things madness (*insania*). How ironic then is the reply of Gradasso, "[b]ramoso di vendetta" [64.5: craving for vengeance], to Mandricardo, "di così folle audacia e così insana / colto improviso" [63.6: in such foolish and insane recklessness / caught off guard]: "'Lascia la cura a me ... / ch'io guarisca costui de la pazzia'" [66.1–2: Leave the cure to me ... I'll cure him of his madness]. This same irony obtains where Orlando's mad *furor* is concerned: a tragedy for him, to us a comedy. There is also a resonance of *De ira*, as I will show, in the depiction of Orlando's madness.

Seneca's definition of anger, the desire to exact punishment or to take revenge [1.3.2: "cupiditatem esse poenae exigendae"] is viewed from two different perspectives in Cantos 20 and 27.[5] If the warlike women's brutal law illustrates how cruel and spiteful those who have suffered can be once they attain power, the paladins' petty squabbles show how ridiculous are those enraged over trivialities. Orlando's *furor*, though primarily comic, like the paladins' anger, shares the excess and perversity of the warrior women's rage. Orlando's murder of bystanders and torture of Angelica's horse, though parodic, are as rageful as the Amazons' customary sacrifices and trials. Both Orlando's rampage and the women's murder of their own sons are gratuitous, without any other cause than a mad obsession, just as the Saracen warriors' duels are. If Elbanio's and Alessandra's love for each other thwarts the women's desire for revenge, so, too, does Doralice's free choice of the Tartar suspend Rodomonte's and Mandricardo's rivalry. Each female protagonist overturns a custom based on revenge. Alessandra, as one of the dominating warrior women, is not supposed to look upon a man as anything but a slave or a regrettable biological

[5] Seneca, *De ira*, in *Moral Essays* 1:112. Seneca's definition of anger, drawn from Posidonius, has been preserved by Lactantius: "ira est cupiditas ulciscendae iniuriae" (*De ira dei* 17).

necessity. Doralice, as an object of courtly love, would be expected to prefer Rodomonte over Mandricardo, because Rodomonte had taken revenge on more men "in giostre, in tornamenti, in guerra" [106.2: in jousts, in tournaments, in wars]. Orlando's experience, too, goes against his conventional role, but in his case this plunges him into an indiscriminate revenge against the entire world. His pose as Petrarchan lover depends upon his distance from the real Angelica. Once he discovers that Angelica is not the unattainable lady of courtly love lyric, his self-definition as subjective and suffering respondent to that image is also destroyed. Like Rodomonte, who "di ragion passava il segno" [27.125.3: exceeded the bounds of reason], Orlando goes mad.

But there are several important differences between these two, which explain, at least in part, why Orlando's madness is at the center of the poem. Rodomonte blames all women for his suffering, just as the warrior women blame all men for theirs (27.117.5–7). Orlando, however, does not blame the opposite sex but unleashes his fury initially upon himself and then on all around him—from horse and oxen (24.7), to an innocent woodcutter (29.55), to his allies the Numidians (39.64). Orlando's violent madness is not spurred on by a desire for revenge against the group who represents the one who has hurt him, as Rodomonte's and the warrior women's is. Orlando's anger is total; he unleashes it against the whole world—including himself—for not being what he believed it to be. Unlike Rodomonte, Orlando's torment is not caused by mere jealousy. In fact, Orlando at first tries to ward off grief by imagining that someone has fabricated all the clues of Angelica's and Medoro's love just in order to make him feel jealous (23.114). It is the revelation of Angelica as flesh and blood woman rather than jealousy, however, that makes Orlando go berserk. He goes mad at the moment that he jumps up in revulsion from the bed upon which Angelica and Medoro have lain. He has lost Angelica as the inviolate metaphor of his imagination.

Sharing a common structure which results in a common effect, the next pair of cantos, 21 and 26, participate in the larger critique of courtly and chivalric values in this section. At the beginning of each canto, the narrator praises a virtue, the value of which is then questioned by the events of each canto. In Canto 21, Fidelity appears like an allegorical figure from the *Roman de la Rose*:

> Né dagli antiqui par che si dipinga
> la santa Fé vestita in altro modo,
> che d'un vel bianco che la cuopra tutta:
> ch'un sol punto, un sol neo la può far brutta.
>
> [21.1.5–8: Nor does it seems that in olden times men had another way of portraying holy Fidelity than clad from head to foot in a white veil which one spot, one blemish could mar.]

At first the narrator seems to invoke the authority of this figure. Upon reading the canto, one can see that if in olden times there was no other way of depicting "la santa Fé," Ariosto has found quite another way. The external narration of how Zerbino adheres to his pledge to defend the wicked Gabrina and the internal narration of how Filandro unstintingly protects the good name of his lord at the expense of their lives both prove the disastrous effects of absolute, unquestioning fidelity. In the exordium to Canto 26 Bradamante is praised for being like ladies of old "che la virtù, non le ricchezze, amaro" [1.2: who prized virtue above riches]. She loves not wealth and power "ma la virtù, ma l'animo prestante, / ma l'alta gentilezza di Ruggiero" [2.3–4: but the *virtù*, the eminent courage, and noble courtesy of Ruggiero]. Whether or not Ruggiero lives up to her expectations and whether or not these qualities Bradamante so admires are directed towards the best ends are questions posed in the last third of the canto.

Following each exordium, both cantos have three parts: a story within a story framed by an episode on either side. The initial encounters in each canto are the duel between Ermonide and Zerbino, who defends Gabrina as he had pledged to (21.3–13), and the pursuit of Bertolagi by Ruggiero and Marfisa (25.77–26.3–29). In each canto the internal narration reflects on the main narrative. Ermonide's story of how Gabrina destroyed her husband Argeo's trust in his best friend Filandro, whom she tricked into slaying Argeo and then poisoned (21.13–66), reflects on how Zerbino allows himself to be manipulated by her. The allegory of the beast depicted on Merlin's fountain, explained by Malagigi as prophecy of European princes battling avarice (26.29–53), is an ironic comment on the paladins' own petty battles. The final encounter in each canto shows that the internal audience has not understood the story within the story. Zerbino apologizes to the storyteller

Ermonide (who has just told of how Gabrina contrived the death of his brother Filandro) but persists in defending her (21.67–72). Ruggiero and Marfisa engage in petty feuds, displaying a greed for horses, emblems, and swords that betrays how little they have learned little from Malagigi's prophecy of the need to combat avarice (26.54–137).

If in both cases the moral of the internal narrative is not comprehended by the audience within the poem, their lack of comprehension impresses that moral all the more forcefully on us as readers. As Ermonide points out at the beginning of his story, Argeo went too far in his love for Gabrina:

> Nomossi Argeo colui di ch'io favello,
> di questa iniqua femina consorte,
> la quale egli amò sì, che passò il segno
> ch'a un uom si convenia, come lui, degno.
>
> [21.14.5–8: The one of whom I tell was named Argeo, consort of this evil woman, whom he loved so much that he overstepped the bounds that become a man as worthy as he.]

After hearing how Gabrina planned the murders of both her husband Argeo and his best friend Filandro, Zerbino should realize that fealty to such a woman goes "beyond the bounds that become a man as worthy as he." Beyond showing that Gabrina is a scheming murderess, the story also demonstrates that Filandro's insistence on preserving his friend Argeo's marriage and good name prevents Filandro from telling the truth about Gabrina, from preserving his friendship with Argeo, and ultimately from saving Argeo's life. Because Filandro does not protest Gabrina's coercion to either sleep with her or suffer disgrace, he suffers the loss of Argeo's trust and is imprisoned because of her false accusation. Once manipulated by Gabrina, Filandro is then manipulated again. By appealing to Filandro's concern for Argeo's honor, Gabrina makes Filandro agree to defend her from Morando by whom, she claims, she had been threatened into promising herself. Argeo meanwhile pretends to be away because he mistakenly believes that he will catch Morando raiding the castle. When Argeo returns home under the darkness of night, Filandro, believing he is protecting his friend's honor, kills him. Finally, Filandro undermines his own credibility by submitting to Gabrina after having been twice deceived by her. If his unintentional murder of Argeo were to

become known, he then feared a "fine infame e sozzo" [21.54.2: an infamous and sordid end]. Ironically, in seeking protection from Gabrina and submitting to her lust, this is the very sort of death he receives. Again he is undone by his own faithfulness. Restrained from slaying her by a solemn oath, he lives a loathsome life which is only ended when Gabrina's lust turns to hatred and she poisons him.[6] Instead of realizing Filandro's folly in submitting to Gabrina—first in the name of protecting his friend's honor, and then of maintaining his pledge to her—Zerbino insists on the precedence of knightly practice and protests that if he had not defended Gabrina his promise would have been rendered meaningless:

> Zerbin col cavallier fece sua scusa,
> che gl'increscea d'averli fatto offesa;
> ma, come pur tra cavallieri s'usa,
> colei che venia seco avea difesa:
> ch'altrimente sua fé saria confusa.
>
> [21.68.1–8: Zerbin apologized to the knight and expressed his grief at having done him injury; but he had defended the woman he was escorting as knightly practice demanded—otherwise his pledge would have been meaningless, for when he had assumed charge of her he had promised to do his utmost to protect her from any who would molest her.]

Zerbino not only refuses to admit that his defense of Gabrina is wrong, but, more importantly, he refuses to see the demands of knightly practice as meaningless. Instead of realizing how confused and self-destructive his promise to protect this evil woman is, he defends the strict execution of this pledge as a defense of the institution of chivalry and of his own faithfulness as a knight. Unlike Orlando, who goes mad from the realization that Angelica is not his lady and he is not who he thought he was, Zerbino, like Filandro, maintains a kind of conventional sanity, not based on truth or dignity but

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[6] For a more detailed discussion of this very complex aspect of the Gabrina episode, see Franco Masciandaro, "Folly in the *Orlando Furioso*," *Forum Italicum* 14 (Spring 1980): 57–77. Masciandaro demonstrates Filandro's complicity in his own deception and the extent to which Ariosto wants to show the dangers of single-minded idealism.

on conforming to custom. "Fé" in this context becomes empty convention—and, worse than that, injustice—rather than good faith.

The internal narration of Canto 26 is not more understood by its audience than that of Canto 21 is by Zerbino. After hearing Malagigi's interpretation of the marble carvings on Merlin's fountain as the European princes hunting the beast of avarice, Ruggiero is immediately distracted by his own possessiveness. When Bradamante's servant mentions that Frontino has been stolen by Rodomonte, Ruggiero sets off to take vengeance on him only to find that the usually hot-tempered Saracen refuses to duel until Agramante turns back Charlemagne's men. Rodomonte, who earlier vowed to combat Ruggiero for Frontino (23.36), here restrains himself and tries to restrain Ruggiero, but to no avail. Ruggiero takes the theft as a personal insult and is unmoved by Rodomonte's appeal to the bond between lord and knight:

> Narra a Ruggier perché pugna rifiuti;
> ed anco il priega che l'impresa aiuti:
> che facendol, farà quel che far deve
> il suo signore un cavallier fedele.
>
> [26.95.8; 96.1–2: He (Rodomonte) told Ruggiero why he was refusing battle, and besought him to lend a hand in their enterprise. / This way, he explained, he would be doing what a knight loyal to his sovereign ought to do.]

According to the hierarchy of chivalric values, duty to one's lord comes before personal honor, which in this canto comes to resemble petty avarice. Ruggiero by the close of the canto duels also with Mandricardo over the eagle emblem. Mandricardo's double breach of his promise (he has also been fighting with Marfisa) so incenses Rodomonte that he, too, finally breaks his resolve. In all this chaos Ruggiero is ostensibly the exemplar of chivalry. He fights to achieve "vendetta" for "biasmo e disonor" [65.6, 8: vengeance ... blame and dishonor]. In his joust with Mandricardo, Ruggiero follows proper chivalric etiquette:

> Il buon Ruggier, che di sua cortesia
> non può non sempre ricordarsi, quando
> vide il Pagan ch'avea tratta la spada,

> lasciò cader la lancia ne la strada.
>
> [26.105.5–8: Good Ruggiero, who could never forget the laws of chivalry, seeing that the pagan had drawn his sword, dropped his lance on the road.]

The "cortesia" and sense of "onor" in these petty disputes over mere objects—even if they are Ruggiero's—in the midst of a battle threatening his lord Agramante hardly measure up to the "virtù" and "l'animo prestante" which the narrator told us made Bradamante love Ruggiero. If Zerbino clings to his promise to defend Gabrina, despite its destructive consequences, Ruggiero is ready to break his promise to defend Agramante in order to fight a duel.

Nevertheless, it is the mutual love of Bradamante and Ruggiero in Canto 22 against which we can measure the distortion of Orlando's one-sided passion for the metaphorical Angelica (23) and of Ricciardetto's cynical lust for and enjoyment of the deluded Fiordispina (25). This contrast seems to be the focus of Cantos 22 and 25. The rescues which occur at the opening of each canto—Astolfo's rescue of the paladins from Atlante's palace (22.14–23) and Ruggiero's rescue of Ricciardetto from a burning stake (25.8–18)—both result in a revelation of identity which further develops the dialectic of folly and wisdom. When Astolfo, following the instructions of Logistilla's magic book, destroys Atlante's palace by smashing the images under the rock, those illusions that the magician had used to conceal Bradamante and Ruggiero from one another disappear. The lovers look at one another and, for the first time in the poem, embrace:

> Ruggier riguarda Bradamante, et ella
> riguarda lui con alta maraviglia,
> che tanti dì l'abbia offuscato quella
> illusion sì l'animo e le ciglia.
> Ruggiero abbraccia la sua donna bella,
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> Tornaro ad iterar gli abbracciamenti
> mille fiate, et a tenersi stretti
> i duo felici amanti, e sì contenti,
> ch'a pena i gaudii lor capiano i petti.
>
> [22.32–33: Ruggiero looked at Bradamante and she at him with profound wonder, for their minds and vision had been

clouded for so many days by that illusion. Ruggiero embraced his fair one.... / A thousand times the two happy lovers renewed their embraces and hugged each other; they were so content that their breasts could scarcely contain their joy.]

Exchanging glances, Ruggiero and Bradamante share "alta maraviglia," and then they embrace and hold one another. They have become a single subject, "i duo felici amanti." Their love is physically immediate and mutual, full of wonder and pleasure in their awareness of one another.

In contrast to this freedom from illusion, Ricciardetto's affair with Fiordispina is precisely founded upon illusion. When Ruggiero rescues Ricciardetto, he is revealed to be not only Bradamante's twin brother but also Fiordispina's deceiver. We first hear of Fiordispina and Ricciardetto in Canto 22, where a grieving lady tells how they have been imprisoned for their secret affair. She pleads with Ruggiero and Bradamante to rescue Ricciardetto, who had disguised himself as a woman by day to conceal his affair with Fiordispina, and who, now found out, is about to be burned at the stake (22.37–41). Although we are told that Bradamante is very disturbed by the story, her reaction is not explained until Canto 25, when Ricciardetto recounts how, by playing the role of a transsexual Bradamante, he seduced Fiordispina. Earlier frustrated by her love for the female warrior Bradamante, whom Fiordispina had taken for a man, she is only too happy to believe Ricciardetto's story that he is Bradamante, now transformed into the male sex by a nymph, whom he had saved from being eaten by a fawn. As hilarious as Ricciardetto's story is, as a consequence of it, Fiordispina, however willing, is deceitfully seduced. When Ricciardetto's and Fiordispina's secret is discovered, she, too, is imprisoned. More to the point, after Ricciardetto is rescued, he forgets Fiordispina, who presumably remains in the dungeon cell, where she is when we last hear of her (22.40). Ricciardetto's lack of concern for his lover confirms the impression that their feelings are not mutual. For him their affair is at best an amusement, whereas for her it is the culmination of her intense attraction to and love for Bradamante that survives the knowledge that Bradamante is a woman and, as they both believe, cannot love Fiordispina in return. Ricciardetto tells how the possibility of a female loving a female is dismissed by Fiordispina: "Né tra gli

uomini mai né tra l'armento, / che femina ami femina ho trovato" [35.5–6: Neither amongst men nor amongst beasts have I found a woman who loved a woman]. Her desire is described as the "ultimo esempio" [most extreme example] of "error" (36.3, 4) and as "quel nodo, che fece ... Natura" [37.6: this knot, that Nature makes]. Bradamante also tries to persuade her to give up her "folle e van disio" [38.7: foolish and vain desire].

Ricciardetto's initial comment on contemplating the seduction of Fiordispina after hearing of how she had fallen in love with his sister Bradamante is most telling: "A succeder saran facil le frodi" [25.50.5: A little deception would procure an easy success]. Ricciardetto's deception is a further turn on the masquerade of sexuality that has already deceived Fiordispina. If first she believed that Bradamante was a man, now she believes Ricciardetto is a woman transformed into the male sex. If Bradamante's masquerade was her knightly attire, Ricciardetto's masquerade is the story of how his sexual identity was transformed—"in maschio di femina" [64.8: into male from female]. Ricciardetto's story, from Fiordispina's falling in love with Bradamante to his miraculous sex change, shows that this lad is an avid reader of Ovid. He takes elements of his story from *Metamorphoses* 9.666–797, where the young girl Iphis, raised as a boy by her mother, who wanted to save the child from death at her husband's hands, is actually changed into a man. There are crucial differences: Ricciardetto, unlike Iphis, is not a woman; Fiordispina, who like Iphis falls in love with another woman, is not transformed into a man; while Iphis and Ianthe are to be married, Ricciardetto is out for an easy seduction.

After he has related how he told Fiordispina the fantastic story of his sexual transformation, his description of the action that followed is deeply ironic: "e feci ch'ella istessa / trovò con man la veritade espressa" [25.65.7–8: and led her hand to find the explicit truth]. He calls his penis a sign of "the truth," when in fact it marks his deception. Far from representing "veritade espressa" [explicit—direct, simple, and revealing—truth], Ricciardetto's penis has been represented as the result of magic in a story, which is fictional rather than verifiable, complex rather than simple, and concealing rather than revealing Ricciardetto's identity. If Orlando turns Angelica into a metaphor for virginity, "il fior ch'intatto io mi venia serbando" [8.77.6: the flower which I preserved intact]. Ricciardetto turns his sexuality into a false

synecdoche for the truth. Rather than revealing that his body is that of a man named Ricciardetto, his penis stands for the body of Bradamante magically made male in a story of sexual transformation. His penis has the status of a fetish.

Fiordispina is portrayed as merely an object for sexual conquest to Ricciardetto and even to herself. He describes their lovemaking in martial metaphors:

> Io senza scale in su la rocca salto
> e lo stendardo piantovi di botto,
> e la nimica mia mi caccio sotto.
>
> [25.68.5–8: I, without a ladder, leapt onto the battlements and planted my standard there at one jab, and thrust my enemy beneath me.]

While Ricciardetto's attitude towards Fiordispina is as conventional and literary a stance of lover to object as Orlando's, Ricciardetto, unlike Orlando, never discovers the limitations of his view. Nor does Fiordispina ever discover her self-deception. While she recognizes her love for Bradamante as "più folle" than that of Pasiphae (25.36.8), Fiordispina engages in even greater folly by believing Ricciardetto. She wants to be deceived: " 'Fa, Dio (disse ella), se son sogni questi, / ch'io dorma sempre, e mai più non mi desti' " [25.67.7–8: O God if these are dreams (she cried) let me sleep forever and never more awake]. In a sense, she never does awake from her dream since she never learns of Ricciardetto's scheme.

Unlike Orlando's dream of Angelica, Fiordispina's dream of a male Bradamante is one of physical consummation. Orlando wants to preserve Angelica as a pure image and an image of purity. When he sees her name coupled with Medoro's on the trees, it is the closest Orlando has ever come to contact with Angelica. Before this, she appears to Orlando as an image of enchantment and dreams. (Unlike the *Innamorato*, the *Furioso* rarely presents Orlando and Angelica together [12.38, 29.49].) The revelation of her as Medoro's lover in Canto 23 forces Orlando ultimately to awaken from his dream.

Bradamante and Ruggiero, who accept the limitations of marriage and baptism (22.34–36), relate to one another in a more mutual and immediate way than either Orlando does to Angelica through Neoplatonism or Ricciardetto does to Fiordispina through sexual masquer-

ade. Everything about Fiordispina's affair with Ricciardetto is a sham. Fiordispina may think Ricciardetto is a transsexual and the woman she dresses him as (54), and the men at her court may treat him as a feminine sexual object, as they look at him "con lascivo guardo" [56.8: with lascivious gaze], but knowing he is a man, we laugh at their foolishness. This is what makes the story funny. "Amor" for Ricciardetto is merely a way of allegorizing the lust which drives him to find a means for its end: "Amore ... mostra insieme i modi / che da la donna avrei quel ch'io chiedea" [25.50.1, 3–4: Love ... showed me the way to have what I sought from this lady].

Fiordispina's obsession with consummation makes her blind to the quality of Ricciardetto's love, more concerned with her own sexual experience than with the object of love. She laments to Bradamante:

> D'ogn'altro amore, o scelerato o santo,
> il disiato fin sperar potrei;
> saprei partir la rosa da le spine;
> solo il mio desiderio è senza fine!
>
> [25.34.5–8: Were it a question of any other love, evil or virtuous, I could hope for a desired end; I would know how to take the rose from the thorns; only my desire is without end.]

To express her desire to lose her virginity, Fiordispina uses the same stock metaphor Sacripante uses to describe Angelica's virginity, the rose he wants to be the first to cull (1.42). Punning on her own name—"la rosa da le spine" / Fior-di-spina [flower-of-thorn], she turns her own sexuality into the object of desire. The image of "culling flowers" [22.32.7–8: "i primi fiori / cogliendo] also describes Ruggiero's first kissing Bradamante, but these flowers come from "their mutual blissful loves" [32.8: dei suoi beati amori]. In assenting to Ricciardetto's fantastic story, Fiordispina achieves "il disiato fin," rather than the love of Bradamante.

While Ricciardetto is an unrepentant manipulator of illusion, both Astolfo and Ruggiero in Canto 22 act against magic or illusion. Although Astolfo uses his knowledge of magic to defeat Atlante's magic, the destruction of the palace results in the disappearance of the prisoners' illusions. Unlike Astolfo, who harms no one by blowing his

magic horn, Ruggiero accidentally casts down two knights with his magic shield in fighting the contest of one against four. Ruggiero believes the shield threatens his knightly valor and is so ashamed of the ill-gotten victory that he throws the shield to the bottom of the lake (22.90–92). Lacking Ruggiero's conscience, Ricciardetto revels in his power to produce the illusion that he is Bradamante, despite his near death and Fiordispina's imprisonment. At first it might seem that Ricciardetto's manipulation of illusion is the perfect foil for Orlando's self-victimization by illusion. But there is nothing more behind Ricciardetto's role-playing than a clever and successful lust, which relies on the deception of another. Ricciardetto's vision of the world is narrow: the satisfaction of his own desire at the expense of others; manipulating people as mere instruments rather than treating them as ends in themselves. The manipulative Ricciardetto is the subject of a funny little dirty story rather than the great tragic comedy that Orlando undergoes. The story is tragic, because of Orlando's loss of his whole imaginative world, and comic for its humorous effects and happy ending. Orlando is a character of greater range and depth of experience than Ricciardetto; for Orlando overcomes his self-deceived role as Petrarchan lover and goes on to experience not only madness but also, once he has returned to sanity, friendship and loyalty.

The chief illusion Ariosto creates in Cantos 22 and 25 is simultaneity of action. This effect is achieved in part by the beginning and interruption of the story of Ruggiero's quest to rescue Ricciardetto in Canto 22 and the resumption and completion of that story in Canto 25. The intervening action appears to occur at the same time. Even more striking is Ariosto's technique of introducing a scene before the events leading up to it have been narrated. This gives the impression that the author can see all these events he is narrating at once, in a spatial layout rather than a linear sequence. Two examples of this occur at the outset of Canto 22. We are told how Zerbino finds a dead knight (3–4), but this knight, who we later learn is Pinabello, is not killed by Bradamante until stanza 97 of the same canto. We are also told that Astolfo finds a knight to care for Rabicano (22.30), but this knight, who we later learn is Bradamante, only encounters Astolfo when she has just slain Pinabello (22.71). Ariosto hints at the spatial conception of the plot in the narrator's comment as he turns from the exordium of Canto 22 to the story: "Ma tornando al lavor che vario

ordisco" [3.5: But turning to the work which I weave variously]. This and other references to his storytelling as weaving and as painting (33.3–4) enhance our awareness of the plot as a visual image that can be read from left to right or from right to left, in which all action can be seen as part of a symmetrical composition.

At the center of section three, Cantos 23 and 24, there are examples of all four basic types of action, except for escape. If there is an escape in this central episode, it is not the physical liberation from enchantment (as in Cantos 8 and 12) or from a villain or monster (as in Cantos 3 and 17) that we have come to expect. There are, nevertheless, parallel actions of entrapment, rescue, and pursuit in Cantos 23 and 24. Anselmo imprisons Zerbino, falsely accused by Gabrina of Pinabello's death (23.51). Just when Isabella is telling Zerbino how his friend Odorico had abducted and tried to overpower her, he appears before them, now captured by Almonio and Corebo (24.15ff). No sooner is Zerbino captured than Orlando rescues him (23.57–63). Odorico is freed by Zerbino, who pardons him but gives him the penance of defending Gabrina (24.38–40). Ariosto playfully calls upon the authority of a nameless author to relate how "il disleale" [44.5: the disloyal one] and "la vecchia maledetta" [44.6: the cursed old woman] ultimately get their just deserts; Odorico hangs Gabrina and a year later is himself hanged by Almonio (45). The loyal Zerbino's end comes as the consequence of a duel. Just as Mandricardo first pursues a duel with Orlando over the sword Durindana (23.81–95), so, too, after Orlando has abandoned his arms in madness, Mandricardo pursues the same contest with and mortally wounds Zerbino (24.58–82). Zerbino's end (24.75–90) is the first extended narration of death in the poem. Along with Orlando's madness, Zerbino's death marks a turning point towards the end of the poem, the fifth and final section of which is particularly concerned with death and conversion.[7] Orlando's madness can be viewed in a sense as an escape from

[7] For a discussion of how Orlando's madness is structurally central to the *Furioso* see Giuseppina Romagnoli Robuschi, "Lettura del Canto XXIII dell'*Orlando Furioso*," in *Studi sull'Ariosto*, presentazione di Enzo Noè Girardi (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1977), 131–46. For an insightful contrasting view of how the "true center of the poem is Isabella, at the moment of her conversion," see Mario A. Di Cesare, "Isabella and Her Hermit: Stillness at the Center of the *Orlando Furioso*," *Mediaevalia* 6 (1980): 311–32, esp. 321–25.

his own version of the suffering lover in the Neoplatonic lyric tradition, in that his madness leads to a conversion to sanity.

In the exordium to Canto 24, "amor" is equated with "insania": "che non è in somma amor, se non insania / a giudizio de' savi universale" [24.1.3–4: what in short is love, if not insanity, according to the universal judgment of wisemen]. Though the narrator suggests by this that Orlando's madness is due to love, his rampage at the end of Canto 23 shows that his dominant emotion is now anger. In fact, Ariosto's statement about the madness of love resembles Seneca's comment on anger: "Wise men, therefore, have claimed that anger is temporary madness."[8] At the outset of Canto 23, Bradamante recognizes the "ira" that caused her to forget Ruggiero and to pursue a fight to the death with Pinabello as insanity:

> Spesso di cor profondo ella sospira,
> di pentimento e di dolor compunta,
> ch'abbia in lei, più ch'amor, potuto l'ira.
> "L'ira (dicea) m'ha dal mio amor disgiunta:
> almen ci avessi io posta alcuna mira,
> poi ch'avea pur la mala impresa assunta,
> di saper ritornar donde io veniva;
> che ben fui d'occhi e di memoria priva."

[23.7.4–8: Often she heaved great sighs of sorrow and repentance that Wrath had overcome Love within her. "Wrath," she grieved, "has sundered me from my beloved; would that I had taken a little care, when I embarked upon this wretched venture, to see I knew how to return the way I'd come; where were my eyes and memory."]

The narrator's cliché about the madness of love comes just after Canto 23, where we have seen Bradamante's reflections on how her anger has overcome love, as well as Orlando's eruption into anger over love lost. All this complicates the narrator's moralizing about "amor," which cannot conceal that Orlando is no longer *innamorato* but *furioso*.

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[8] Seneca, *De ira* 1.1.2: "Quidam itaque e sapientibus viris iram dixerunt brevem insaniam."

The description of Orlando's *pazzia* corresponds in many of its details to the symptomology of anger outlined in the third book of Seneca's *De ira*. First, there is Orlando's initial resistance to believing that Angelica meant to indicate a real man when she inscribed her name with Medoro's on the trees. Ariosto compares Orlando in his stubborn disbelief to a bird becoming more and more stuck in birdlime as it attempts to free itself:

> Ma sempre più raccende a più rinuova,
> quanto spenger più cerca, il rio sospetto:
> come l'incauto augel che si ritrova
> in ragna o in visco aver dato di petto,
> quanto più batte l'ale e più si prova
> di disbrigar, più vi si lega stretto.

[23.105.1–6: But the more he tried to smother his dark suspicions the more they flared up with new vigour; he was like an unwary bird caught in a web or in birdlime—the more he beats his wings and tries to free himself, the worse ensnared he becomes.]

In *De ira*, Seneca, too, likens man's inability to accept misfortune and submit to fate to the bird ensnaring himself further and further in his struggle to break free of the lime:

> so birds by trying in their alarm to get free from birdlime, smear all their plumage with it.... The only relief for great misfortunes is to bear them and to submit to their coercion.[9]

Seneca's description of the madness of anger bears further resemblance to Orlando's rage at his misfortune. Just as Seneca's angry man utters "roaring sighs" [1.1.4: gemitus mugitusque], so, Orlando's sighs will not cease (23.127). Just as the body of the irate man is "excited and performs great angry threats" [1.1.4: totum concitum corpus magnasque irae minas agens], so, Orlando tears off his clothes and uproots trees [134.7].[10] As Seneca points out, anger abducts the mind

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[9] Seneca, *De ira* 3.16.1: "sic aves viscum, dum trepidantes excutiunt, plumis omnibus inlinunt.... Unum est levamentam malorum ingentium, pati et necessitatibus suis obsequi."

[10] Rajna notes that the prose *Tristan* (ed. V. Loseth) and other variations of the

and incites the man without restraint to wreck destruction not on the object of his anger but on all he meets (3.1.3–5). In just this way Orlando's wits are literally abducted; he, too, attacks whatever and whomever he encounters—from trees (23.134–36) to innocent shepherds (24.5–6) and woodcutters (29.52–56). Seneca's perception that "wrath steals upon those who are enlightened and otherwise sane" [3.4.5: iracundiam etiam eruditus hominibus et in alia sanis inrepere] is an apt description of Orlando, "sì saggio era stimato prima" [1.2.4: so wise was he previously esteemed]. The notion of a wise Orlando, especially because of the way this character had already been parodied by Boiardo, is laughable; the intertext from Seneca makes it even more laughable. At the same time, however, Orlando's madness is also more awesome in its outrageous expression and more worthy of compassion than many of the other characters' petty and more conventional kinds of insanity. Cicero explains that the Stoics call the very extremity of the wiseman's madness *furor* rather than *insania*:

> frenzy [*furorem*], however, they regarded as blindness of the mind in all relations. And though this seems to be worse than unsoundness of mind [*insania*], nevertheless there is this to be noted, that frenzy [*furor*] can come upon the wise man, unsoundness of mind [*insania*] cannot.[11]

This "blindness of the mind in all relations" is echoed in the outbreak of Orlando's rageful *furor*: "In tanta rabbia, in tanto furor venne, /

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Tristan story, such as the *Tavola Ritonda* and the *Tristano Riccardiano* as well as Chrétien's *Yvain, Chevalier au Lion*, contain such elements of the characterization of Orlando's madness as tearing off clothes and eating raw meat (*Le fonti*, 395–98). In these instances, however, the knight's madness is a result of guilt and sorrow for not having lived up to a pledge made to the beloved (as in *Yvain*), pain brought on by an absence from the beloved (as in the prose *Tristan*), or jealousy brought on by rivalry (as in the *Tavola Ritonda*). The knight is in all these cases passionately—both sexually and emotionally—involved with the lady. Although Orlando may be called jealous, he is not exactly like Tristan, who is bound in love to Iseult for life and who resumes his love affair with her after the madness (which in some versions is feigned). Orlando's *furor* includes jealousy but is finally a far more profound disappointment.

[11] Cicero, *Tusculanarum disputationum* 3.5.11: "furorem autem esse rati sunt mentis ad omnia caecitatem. Quod cum maius esse videtur quam insania, tamen eius modi est, ut furor in sapientem cadere possit, non possit insania." The translation is from Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King, LCL (1927), 239.

che rimase offuscato in ogni senso" [134.1–2: He went into such rage, into such *furor* that he was left darkened in every sense].

Seneca's analysis of anger as it relates to love and error informs an understanding of Orlando's madness: not only why it is at the center of the poem and how it relates to the other characters' lesser madnesses, but also how the reader's response to this madness becomes a central subject of the poem. In book 2 of *De ira*, Seneca explains why anger leads to violence and why it causes men to become estranged from their friends:

> For the fact is that the greatest of all evils, the vice that surpasses all others, has laid hold upon them. Other ills come gradually, but the power of this is sudden and complete. In short, it brings into subjection all other passions. It conquers the most ardent love.[12]

Orlando's *furor* occurs at the center of the poem because, as this "sudden and complete" passion dominates all other passions, Orlando's *furor* comprehends all the lesser madnesses of the other characters. The exordium to Canto 24 indicates the common madness of all loves: "Varii gli effetti son, ma la pazzia / è tutt'una" [2.1–2: Various are the effects, but the madness is all one and the same]. If it is not clear at the outset of Canto 24 that Orlando's *furor* has conquered the delusion of his love for Angelica, it is glaringly so in Canto 29, where Orlando pursues Angelica and kills her horse. What Orlando's *furor* shares with the other characters' loves, hatreds, and fears is that all are a form of error—the Stoic moral term which underlies Ariosto's palimpsest of Horace's simile:

> . . . velut silvis, ubi passim
> palantis error certo de tramite pellit,
> ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit, unus utrique
> error, sed variis illudit partibus.[13]

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[12] Seneca, *De ira* 2.36: "Maximum enim illos malum cepit et omnia exsuperans vitia. Alia paulatim intrant, repentina et universa vis huius est. Omnis denique alios affectus sibi subicit. Amorem ardentissimum vincit."

[13] Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, LCL (1926).

[*Satires* 2.3.48–51: Just as in a forest, where some error drives men to wander to and fro from the proper path, and this one goes off to the left and that one to the right: both are under the same error, but are led astray in different ways.]

> Varii gli effetti son, ma la pazzia
> è tutt'una però, che li fa uscire.
> Gli è come una gran selva, ove la via
> convien a forza, a chi vi va, fallire:
> chi su, chi giù, chi qua, chi là travia.

[24.2.1–5: Various are the effects, but the madness which promotes them is all one and the same. It is like a great forest where the way must fail those who go there: one down, one up, one here, one there leads astray.]

While "error" has become "pazzia," the metaphor of wandering in a wood reminds us of all those erring quests of the *Furioso* in which "errare" is the action symbolic of "errore."[14] Horace's satire springs from the Stoic paradox, "πᾶς ἄφρων μαίνεται" [All save the wise are mad]. If, as the Stoics maintained, the ideal of the wise man is well nigh unattainable, then paradoxically that means we are all mad. All of the characters of the *Furioso* share in Orlando's madness because they share in the folly of being human.

Despite the narrator's concluding couplet, which castigates those who grow old in love—"a chi in amor s'invecchia, oltr'ogni pena, / si convengono i ceppi e la catena" [2.7–8: whoever grows old in love deserves the bonds and the chain]—we are meant primarily to laugh at Orlando's error, rather than to lament or despise it. In fact, Ariosto's satire, in contradistinction to the often passionate and opinionated view of the narrator, who himself is often portrayed in error, aims at the effect of dispassionate indulgence. This same attitude Seneca advises us to assume towards humanity, with its "errorum amor":

That you may not be angry with individuals, you must forgive mankind at large, you must grant indulgence to the human race. If you are angry with the young and old because they sin,

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[14] See Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 24–25, and Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many" (1966), 198–200.

> be angry with babes as well; they are destined to sin. But who is angry with children who are still too young to have the power of discrimination? Yet to be a human being is an even greater and truer excuse for error than to be a child.[15]

Seneca's argument against anger at human frailty is based on the acceptance of error as a universal human condition:

> What then keeps the wise man from anger? The great mass of sinners. He understands both how unjust and how dangerous it is to grow angry at universal vice.[16]

At the same time the wise man observes the "great mass of sinners" with detachment, he also recognizes that no one is free from error. It is just this detachment and indulgence with which Ariosto portrays and through which we see the errors, of one sort or another, which we share in common with his fictional characters.

Orlando's *furor*, as well as conforming to the "blindness of mind in all relations" that can beset the Stoic wise man, also follows the pattern of the great Stoic exemplar of virtue, Hercules. The literary genealogy of Orlando's madness is at once hinted at and concealed by the title of the poem.[17] Like Hercules, Orlando is overcome by *furor*, but not a *furor* that so much resembles that of the *Hercules Furens*, to which the title *Furioso* alludes, as that of the *Hercules Oetaeus*. Hercules has two madnesses. In the *Furens* he kills his wife and children while he believes that he is avenging Thebes; in the *Oetaeus* he is plagued by the poisoning blood of Nessus, which Dejanira sends him in the belief that it is a love potion. Both Seneca's tragedies represent Hercules' madness as a war with the self, and his suffering issuing in triumph over madness. These tragic parallels to Orlando's comic loss

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[15] Seneca, *De ira* 2.10.2: "Ne singulis irascaris, universis ignoscendum est, generi humano venia tribuenda est. Si irasceris iuvenibus senibusque, quod peccant, irascere et infantibus: peccaturi sunt. Numquis irascitur pueris, quorum aetas nondum novit rerum discrimina? Maior est excusatio et iustior hominem esse quam puerum."

[16] Seneca, *De ira* 2.10.4: "Quid tollit iram sapientis? Turba peccantium. Intellegit quam et iniquum sit et periculosum irasci publico vitio."

[17] See Rajna's gloss on the title (*Le fonti*, 67) and Saccone's discussion of the similarity between the title of Ariosto's poem and Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (*Il "sogetto"*, 203). As far as I know, there are no detailed discussions of the relation between the *Furioso* and the *Hercules Oetaeus*.

restoration of his wits make Seneca's portrayals of Hercules even more apt for parody than the love madness of medieval romance that springs from longing for or jealousy of the beloved.[18] The association of madness with love in the *Oetaeus* makes it closer than the *Furens* to the *Furioso*. Quoting Seneca, Norman Pratt called the *Oetaeus* "a poetic recognition that 'anger is born as much from love as from hate.'"[19] Furthermore, Orlando's actions resemble those in the *Hercules Oetaeus*. As in the *Oetaeus*, where trees are uprooted for the hero's funeral pyre, "flectit hic pinum ferox ... raptura flammas pinus et robur tenax et brevior ilex silva" [1620, 1639–41: one fiercely felled a pine tree ... a pine and a tenacious oak and a shorter ilex having been carried off into the flames],[20] Orlando uproots trees:

> Quivi fe' ben de le sue prove eccelse,
> ch'un alto pino al primo crollo svelse:
> ............................
> e fe' il simil di querce e d'olmi vecchi
> di faggi e d'orni e d'illici e d'abeti.
>
> [23.134.7–8; 135.3–4: He now well performed some outstanding deeds, at one jerk he uprooted a tall pine ... and did the same to oaks and ancient elms, to beech and ashes and illexes and firs.]

And just as Hercules rips off the poisoned shirt, so, too, Orlando tears off his clothes (23.133).

Not brought on by physical pain as Hercules' madness is, Orlando's frenzy arises from the discovery that Angelica is Medoro's lover, not the idealized metaphysical figure of whom he had dreamed. The patterning of Orlando's *pazzia* on Hercules' *furor* makes Orlando more than a literal-minded version of the suffering Petrarch of the *Rime*. Even though Orlando goes mad in a Petrarchan setting, the "[l]iete piante, verdi erbe, limpide acque" [happy plants, verdant grass,

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[18] For a discussion of the relation between Orlando's madness and that of the knights of medieval romance, see Daniela Delcorno Branca, *L'Ariosto e la tradizione del romanzo medievale* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1973), 94, as well as Rajna, *Le fonti*, 395–98.

[19] Norman Pratt, *Senecan Drama* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1983), 122, where he quotes Seneca, *Ep.* 18.15.

[20] Seneca, *Tragedies*, vol. 2, trans. Frank Justus Miller, LCL (1917).

limpid waters] (23.108.1) of Medoro's poem, and even though Orlando undergoes paradoxical Petrarchan suffering—"Amor, con che miracolo lo fai, / che 'n fuoco il tenghi, e nol consumi mai?" [Love, with what miracle do you hold my heart in the fire and not consume it?] (127.7–8)—the outrageousness of his deeds makes Orlando exceed Petrarchan convention.[21] Orlando's experience actually inverts the whole Petrarchan progression of love from sexual yearning to spiritual contemplation.[22] Orlando is transformed from a contemplative lover who dreams of Angelica as a version of the metaphysical Laura into a comic Stoic hero, who, like Hercules, overcomes pain by inflicting more of it on himself, and who achieves sanity by first going violently mad. While the persona of Petrarch's *Rime* can be read as attempting to transcend (successfully or, more likely, unsuccessfully) his problematic sexuality with the recognition of Laura's spirituality as he contemplates her death, Orlando descends into a recognition of Angelica's sexual reality and is forced to cast off his idealized view of her.[23] If Petrarch can endlessly transform Laura into metaphor, Orlando can no longer transform Angelica into metaphor when he encounters evidence of her as a flesh and blood desiring and acting person. Ariosto's narrative frees the *donna angelicata* from her status as object in Petrarchan love lyric and makes her the subject of her own story.

Orlando's idealism, full of noble fantasy and self-delusion, has been constructed from a reading of Petrarch. This parody of Petrarch culminates in the destruction of Orlando's idealism. When Orlando dreams of his flower Angelica blasted by the storm, a voice calling from the pages of the *Rime* announces Angelica's death to him: "Non sperar più gioirne in terra mai" [8.83.6: Do not ever hope to have joy

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[21] See Marina Beer, *Romanzi di cavalleria, Il "Furioso" e il romanzo italiano del primo Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1987), 35–50, on the relation between the *Rime* and Orlando's dream.

[22] See Alfredo Bonadeo, "Note sulla Pazzia di Orlando," *Forum Italicum* 4 (Spring 1970): 39–57. He argues that the love of Orlando for Angelica, while analogous to that of Neoplatonic love lyric, finally repudiates the traditional positions of that tradition. For a discussion of Orlando's relation to Petrarchan love lyric, see Andrew Fichter, *Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 77–81.

[23] On the breakdown of Orlando's vacuous idealism in the face of corporeal reality, see Rocco Montano, *Follia e saggezza nel "Furioso" e nell' "Elogio" di Erasmo* (Naples: Ediz. Humanitas, 1942), 69.

of her on earth], or, as Laura would say, "Non sperar di vedermi in terra mai" [*Rime* 250: Do not ever hope to see me on this earth]. The announcement of Laura's death is parodied by the foreshadowing of two symbolic deaths: the death of Orlando's idealized Angelica, and the death of his self-conception as protector of this ideal. Orlando cries out, " 'Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso: / quel ch'era Orlando è morto et è sottera; / la sua donna ingratissima l'ha ucciso' " [128.1–2: "I am not, I am not that which I appear to be in my face, the one who was Orlando is dead and buried; his most ungrateful lady has killed him"]. While here Orlando might at first seem merely jealous, notice that he does not express rivalry towards Medoro or a desire to pursue Angelica. There is no need to protect his ideal any longer; she was not grateful for the protection. This death of an ideal, however, is the beginning of a new role for Orlando—a hilarious role as grotesque berserker, but also, with the similarly slapstick recovery of his wits, a heroic role as warrior and friend. To assent to this interpretation one has to read to the end of the poem—beyond this pivotal scene of madness and beyond the fourth section of the poem, where Orlando persists in his excessive rampage. In the final section of the poem Orlando will regain his wits, fight by the side of his companion Brandimarte, and suffer over his death.

CHAPTER SEVEN

# *The Literal and the Polysemous: Cantos 29–36*

> ... some placed truth and falsity in the thing signified, others in the sound, others in the motion of the intellect. The champions of the first opinion were the Stoics who said that "Three things are linked together, the thing signified and the thing signifying and the thing existing"; and of these the thing signifying is the sound ... and the thing signified is the actual thing indicated thereby, and which we apprehend as existing in dependence on our intellect ... and the thing existing is the external real object.[1]

SECTION FOUR HAS MANY FEATURES WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT from earlier sections of the poem—concern with a particular theme, achieving its most memorable expression in a central parodic episode, and variations on the simple actions of rescue, entrapment, pursuit, and escape. There is, however, a major difference: the narrative structure in which the plots of equidistant cantos are mirrored in one another is thrown off balance. Though the section ends with closure, the revelation of Ruggiero's and Marfisa's common descent and of their parents' marriage (36), the structure of section four lacks spatial symmetry. Cantos 34–35, the central parodic episodes, do not occur at the exact center of the section, nor do the surrounding cantos form a series of perfectly symmetrical narrative frames around the central episodes. This asymmetrical structure reflects the narrator's oft-mentioned distraction, which he likens to the madness of Orlando. Look-

[1] Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* 2.11–12: ἦν δὲ καὶ ἄλλη τις παρὰ τούτοις διάστασις, καθ' ἣν οἱ μὲν περὶ τῷ σημαινομένῳ τὸ ἀληθές τε καὶ ψεῦδος ὑπεστήσαντο, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ φωνῇ, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ κινήσει τῆς διανοίας. καὶ δὴ τῆς μὲν πρώτης δόξης προεστήκασιν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς, τρία φάμενοι συζυγεῖν ἀλλήλοις, τό τε σημαινόμενον καὶ τὸ σημαῖνον καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ὧν σημαῖνον μὲν εἶναι τὴν φωνήν, ... σημαινόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῆς δηλούμενον καὶ οὗ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένου διανοίᾳ, ... τυγχάνον δὲ τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον.

ing at the overall structure of section four, we can see how Orlando's madness disrupts the otherwise symmetrical pattern, as in the diagram in Figure 9 (on the next page), where lines connecting cantos stand for the beginning and the close of a story line.

From the start of section four, the symmetry we would expect between the first and last cantos of the section is thrown off by the introduction of Orlando's joust with the also mad Rodomonte (29.39–49), Orlando's continued rampage of the countryside, his encounter with Angelica, and abuse of her horse (29.50–30.17). For example, Isabella's entrapment at the hands of Rodomonte in Canto 29 is not paralleled by action in the canto equidistant from it (36) but by Brandimarte's entrapment by Rodomonte in Canto 31. There is also action in section four for which there are no parallels. Isabella protects her virginity by inducing Rodomonte to behead her in an attempt to test the magic potion she claimed would make him invincible; her death, which stands out in this section, continues the movement of the entire poem towards closure—death, repentance, return home—begun in section three with the death of Zerbino. Another action with no exact parallel is the duel in which Ruggiero slays Mandricardo (30). After Isabella's and Mandricardo's deaths and after the interruption of Orlando's madness (29–30), there are parallels within the plot of section four. First of all, there is a parallel between the interrupted duel of Guidone and Rinaldo followed by the revelation of their kinship (31) and the interrupted duel of Marfisa and Bradamante followed by the revelation of Marfisa's and Ruggiero's kinship (36). Both of these revelations of kinship (Guidone to Rinaldo, 31.27–36; Marfisa to Ruggiero, 36.58–84) put an end to falsely conceived enmity and thus allow the paladins to escape from the duels in which they have been engaged. Another important escape that occurs in this section is that of Angelica from Orlando (29 and 30). After escape in Cantos 31 and 36, comes pursuit in Cantos 32–33 and 35. Bradamante's pursuit and defeat of three kings suing for the hand of the queen of Iceland (32.70–77; 33.59–71) is mirrored by Bradamante's pursuit and victory over three Saracen paladins in Agramante's camp (35.52–80). In Cantos 32 and 35, Bradamante is again the central protagonist. Just as Bradamante rescues Ullania from being sent out into the cold by the unjust law of Tristano's castle (32), so, too, Bradamante rescues Brandimarte from Rodomonte (35). Along with

29 (a) Isabella, entrapped by Rodomonte, tricks him into slaying her; he builds a tomb for her.
(b) Rodomonte fights Orlando on the bridge to Isabella's tomb.
(c) Orlando attacks two woodcutters, meets Angelica, and abuses her horse; Angelica escapes from Orlando.

30 (a) Orlando kills a shepherd, steals his horse, kills many, burns houses, and swims to Africa.
(b) Ruggiero duels with and slays Mandricardo.
(c) Bradamante worries Ruggiero may be unfaithful.

31 (a) Guidone and Rinaldo fight; their duel is interrupted and their kinship is revealed.
(b) Brandimarte duels with Rodomonte at Isabella's tomb and is imprisoned by him.
(c) Rinaldo and Gradasso duel.

32 (a) Bradamante worries Ruggiero may be unfaithful.
(b) Bradamante defeats three kings.
(c) Bradamante hears story of Tristano and argues with her host on behalf of Ullania.

33 (a) Bradamante defeats three kings.
(b) Rinaldo and Gradasso's duel is interrupted.
(c) Astolfo arrives at Senapo's court and defeats the Harpies.

34 (a) Astolfo visits Hell and speaks with Lydia.
(b) Astolfo visits the Earthly Paradise, where he samples some fruit and meets St. John.
(c) Astolfo visits the moon, where everything lost on earth is; he rescues Orlando's wits.

35 (a) St. John explains the allegory of the birds.
(b) Bradamante duels with and defeats Rodomonte, in order to rescue Brandimarte.
(c) Bradamante defeats three saracens.

36 (a) Marfisa and Bradamante fight; their duel is interrupted.
(b) Marfisa's and Ruggiero's kinship is revealed.
(c) Ruggiero's fidelity is proved.

*Fig. 9. Parallel actions in section four*

all these parallels between cantos equidistant from one another is the displacement of the major literary parody of this section. Also delayed by Orlando's madness is Astolfo's rescue of Senapo from the Harpies and of Orlando's wits from the moon, which occurs in the second half rather than the middle of the section.

Orlando's madness is reflected not only in the narrative confusion but also in the narrator's disturbed state of mind. The first mention of this similarity is oblique. The narrator conveys the extent of Orlando's follies by claiming that he would be crazy if he promised to relate them one by one: "Pazzia sarà, se le pazzie d'Orlando / prometto raccontarvi ad una ad una" (29.50.1–2). Ironically, this is just what happens; for, by the end of Canto 29, the narrator becomes so engrossed in telling Orlando's mad deeds that he indulges in a little madness of his own. When Angelica escapes from Orlando by swallowing the magic ring, the narrator curses all women:

> Né questa sola, ma fosser pur state
> in man d'Orlando quante oggi ne sono;
> ch'ad ogni modo sono ingrate,
> né si trova tra loro oncia di buono.
>
> [29.74.1–4: Would that not she alone but as many of them as there are today had fallen into Orlando's hands: they are ungrateful in every way, nor is there to be found amongst them an ounce of good.]

The narrator adopts the misogyny for which he had admonished Rodomonte at the outset of this canto. It is only in the exordium to Canto 30 that the narrator apologizes for and explains his violent reaction:

> Voi scusarete, che per frenesia,
> vinto da l'aspra passion, vaneggio.
> Date la colpa alla nimica mia,
> che mi fa star, ch'io non potrei star peggio,
> e mi fa dir quel di ch'io son poi gramo:
> sallo Idio, s'ella ha il torto; essa, s'io l'amo.
>
> [30.3.3–8: You must excuse me if, overwhelmed as I am by a strong passion, I babble deliriously. Blame it on my enemy—a lady who has reduced me to the most abject condition, mak-

> ing me say things I regret. That she's at fault, God knows: that I love her, she knows.]

He, too, has suffered in love as Orlando has, and, as a result, he complains: "Non men son fuor di me, che fosse Orlando; / e non son men di lui di scusa degno" [4.1–2: I am no less divorced from myself than was Orlando. I have no worse an excuse than he does].

Later, the narrator has more to apologize for. At the start of Canto 32, he collects his thoughts by summarizing a few of the plots that are set in juxtaposition to one another—as if they were occurring simultaneously—in the fourth section. The narrator confesses that he had quite forgotten to tell us about Bradamante, but now he remembers:

> Soviemmi che cantar io vi dovea
> già lo promisi, e poi m'uscì di mente
> d'una sospizion che fatto avea
> la bella donna di Ruggier dolente.
>
> [32.1.1–4: I remember that I was to relate to you a suspicion (I did promise but then it slipped my mind) which had embittered fair Bradamante against Ruggiero.]

The narrator's confusion adumbrates Ariosto's fictional portrayal of himself as one who suffers from love.

Contrasting with this motif of the narrator's apparent lack of control over the multiple plot as a reflection of Orlando's madness is a more craftsmanlike analogy for the author's relation to his story.

> Non però udiste antiqui, né novelli
> vedeste mai dipingere il futuro:
> e pur si sono istorie anco trovate,
> che son dipinte inanzi che sian state.
>
> [33.3.5–8: But you never heard of the ancients painting the future—nor did you see this in any contemporary work. And yet scenes have been discovered that were depicted before they actually took place.]

This description of the historically prophetic paintings in Tristano's castle not only serves to draw attention to the prophetic role of the epic poet as *vates* but also to suggest the author's foreknowledge of

narrative events. By employing the trope of *ut pictura poesis*, common enough in the *Furioso*, Ariosto implies a spatial conception of the plot that allows him to see the full course of events before they have taken place. This visual conception of the simultaneity of narrative time is revealed to the reader every time Ariosto begins to narrate an event which does not actually take place until much later in the poem. A fine example of this is when Fiordiligi is said to have met a knight, "che sopravesta avea ricca et ornata, / a tronchi di cipressi ricamata" [31.78.7–8: who had a rich and ornate cloak, embroidered with cypress trunks]. This, of course, is Bradamante, but she does not meet with Fiordiligi until Canto 35, after the adventure in Tristano's castle (32).

Just when it seems that the division between the confused narrator and the controlling author is so obvious, Ariosto again takes on the persona of the distracted lover and likens himself to Orlando in Canto 35. The first two stanzas of Canto 35 bring out two disparate aspects of Ariosto's portrayal of the narrator. On the one hand, the rhetorical question and the stock Petrarchan metaphors of the opening stanza place the narrator clearly within a Neoplatonic lyric tradition.

> Chi salirà per me, madonna, in cielo
> a riportarne il mio perduto ingegno?
> che, poi ch'uscì da' bei vostri occhi il telo
> che 'l cor mi fisse, ognior perdendo vegno.
> ......................
> ch'io dubito, se più si va sciemando,
> di venir tal, qual ho descritto Orlando.

> [35.1: Who will ascend to heaven, mistress mine, to fetch me back my lost wits? They have been ebbing away ever since my heart was transfixed by the arrow shot from your beautiful eyes.... I fear becoming such as I have described Orlando, if (my wits) are depleted any further.]

On the other hand, the frank sensuality of the second stanza distances the narrator from Orlando's metaphysical gaze, the destruction of which has brought on madness. One has the impression that Ariosto is speaking in a voice closer to his own as he plays with the convention of love madness:

> Per riaver l'ingegno mio m'è aviso
> che non bisogna che per l'aria io poggi

> nel cerchio de la luna o in paradiso;
> che 'l mio non credo che tanto alto alloggi.
> Ne' bei vostri occhi e nel sereno viso,
> nel sen d'avorio e alabastrini poggi
> se ne va errando; et io con queste labbia
> lo corrò, se vi par ch'io lo riabbia.

> [35.2.1–8: I do not imagine, however, that there is any need for me to take flight through the air to the orb of the moon or into paradise in order to recover my wits. I don't believe they inhabit those heights. Their haunts are your beautiful eyes, your radiant face, your ivory breasts, those alabastrine hillocks; and I shall sip them up with my lips if that proves the way to recover them.]

Ariosto makes us believe that he is adopting the persona of an incompetent narrator and then contradicts that impression with moments of candor and insight. Though actually the instable fictional device of the author, the narrator is at times presented in such a way that we are tempted to interpret him as a literally autobiographical representation of the author. The narrator's distraction represents the confusion between literature and life at the heart of Orlando's madness and the exploration of the limits of interpretation in section four.

If Orlando's madness disrupts both narrative patterns and the narrator's detached persona as storyteller, it also, along with Rodomonte's lesser madness, symbolically represents one side of the central dialectical theme of section four: the contrast between literal and polysemous interpretation. Ariosto contrasts Orlando's and Rodomonte's misinterpretations of the relation between language and the world with Bradamante's rational critical interpretation of the law and St. John's excursus on the relation between literature and history. The action of section four enacts such philosophical problems as how language relates to the world, how language can be both misinterpreted and variously interpreted, and what limits determine the capacity of language to convey truth.

The terms literal and polysemous are defined by Dante in the letter to Can Grande della Scala, which explains how the *Commedia* is to be read:

> To explain what we have to say, it must be known that the

> sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous, that is to say, 'of more sense than one'; for it is one sense we get through the letter, and another which we get through what is signified through the letter; and the first is called literal, but the second allegorical or moral or anagogical.[2]

Dante distinguishes between two different types of interpretation—one, the literal, which is historically referential, as is proven by his example of the narration of Exodus in Scripture: "if we inspect the letter alone the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is presented to us"[3]; the other, the polysemous, includes the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses along with the literal. In the *Convivio*, Dante defines the relationship between the literal and the allegorical in two ways, according to the theologians, as he does in the letter to Can Grande, and to the poets:

> One is called the literal [and this is that which does not extend beyond the letter itself; the other is called allegorical] and this is that which hides under the cloak, or disguise, of these fables, and is a truth concealed under a beautiful lie.... Truly the Theologians construe this sense differently than the poets.[4]

According to the allegory of the poets, the literal sense acts as a metaphor—not literally or historically true in itself—but containing a truth beneath its lying surface. In contrast, according to the allegory of the theologians, the literal sense is historically true. According to

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[2] *Epistola* 10.7. The translation is my modified version of Philip H. Wicksteed's, in *A Translation of the Latin Works of Dante*, The Temple Classics (1904; reprint, 1929, London: J. M. Dent & Sons), 347; the Latin text is printed in *Le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, ed. E. Moore (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1924), 415: "Ad evidentiam itaque dicendorum, sciendum est quod istius operis non est simplex sensus, immo dici potest *polysemos*, hoc est plurium sensuum; nam primus sensus est qui habetur per literam, alius est qui habetur per significata per literam. Et primus dicitur literalis, secundus vero allegoricus, sive moralis, sive anagogicus."

[3] *Epistola* 10.7, in *Le Opere di Dante Alighieri*, 416: "Nam si ad literam solam inspiciemus, significatur nobis exitus filorum Israel de Aegypto tempore Moysi."

[4] *Il Convivio* 2, cap.1, in *Le Opere di Dante Aligheri*, 252: "L'uno si chiama *litterale* [e questo è quello che non si stende più oltre che la lettera propria; l'altro si chiama *allegorico*,] e questo è quello che si nasconde sotto il manto di queste favole, ed è una verità ascosa sotto bella menzogna.... Veramente il Teologi questo senso prendono altrimenti che li poeti." The translation is mine.

Dante, in interpretation—either theological or poetical—the literal sense must come first because it is the one "in whose meaning the other meanings are included."[5] It is no accident that the very Dantesque concern with the literal and the polysemous achieves its most complex and sustained development in Cantos 34–35 in Astolfo's journey to Hell and voyage to the moon, a parody of Dante's *Commedia*. Dante's comments on interpretation are particularly relevant to the central episode of section four where St. John discourses to Astolfo about how to interpret the lunar landscape, the allegory of poetic fame, and the relationship between patronage and both political and literary history. Indeed, Ariosto's comic parody of Dante's *Commedia* also parodies and brings to the surface the contradictions between these two methods of interpretation—between the allegory of the poets and that of the theologians.

However much Ariosto sends up Dante's conception of allegory in section four, the concept of language upon which both the parodied text and the parody rely is the same. According to Dante's concept of polysemous allegory, there is a series of interrelations amongst a text and its allegorical and literal meanings. It is just this series of interrelations amongst a word and its meanings that Foucault, in his discussion of the pre-seventeenth-century sign system in the West, calls "the similitudes."[6] In other words, the allegorical sense presupposes the Stoic tripartite model of the sign, outlined by the skeptic Sextus Empiricus, in which there is not only the signifier and the signified, but "the thing signified and the thing signifying and the thing existing."[7] For the Stoics the signifier itself has a concrete material status as a sound

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[5] *Il Convivio* 2, cap. 1, 252: "lo litterale . . . siccome quello nella cui sentenza gli altri sono inchiusi, e senza lo quale sarebbe *impossibile* e *irrazionale* intendere agli altri."

[6] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 17–25.

[7] Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* 2.11–12. See Andreas Graeser, "The Stoic Theory of Meaning," in *The Stoics*, ed. John M. Rist (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1978), 77–100: "It is this semantic triad, as reported by the skeptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus . . . which has been considered in terms of reference to modern theories such as the ones proposed by G. Frege ('sign'–'sense'–'reference') and R. Carnap ('designator'–'intension'–'extension')" (78). See also Umberto Eco, "The Sign Revisited," trans. Lucia Re, Chapter 1 of *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 29–33.

which is uttered: "the thing signifying is the sound." The sound, or word, is linked with extensive reality: "and the thing existing is the external real object." Most important of all, the signified is not something that exists in a one-to-one correspondence of sameness with the arbitrary signifier, but the signified is meaning, which depends on the rational capacity of the audience to make the connection between the signifying and the existing thing, to decipher the similitudes: "the thing signified is the actual thing indicated thereby, and which we apprehend as existing in dependence on our intellect." The Greek verb used in Sextus' definition, "σημαίνειν [*semainein:* to signify]," as Andreas Graeser points out, "never means 'denote' but 'connote' and thus invokes the notion of what appears to be a fundamentally nonreferential or rather intentional theory of meaning. Thus making the traditional and fairly general term σημαίνειν [*semainein*] designate a relation that holds *between* the sign and its sense."[8]

The post-seventeenth-century concept of the sign, which reduces it to a mere matter of denotation, could not have been conceived by Dante, but if we were to translate it into his vocabulary it would be as if the literal sense could be detached from the other senses of a text and made its only sense. For the sign in the post-Renaissance world, as explained by Foucault, "what has become important is no longer resemblances but identities and differences."[9] There is no longer room for allegory, the etymology of which Dante had traced to *alienum*, the "other" senses of language contained in the similitudes: "As for similitude it is now a spent force, outside the realm of knowledge. It is merely empiricism."[10]

While Ariosto criticizes the limits of Dante's theological allegory, he also is able to imagine the madness of a solely literal or empirically referential interpretation of language. In fact, Ariosto's own famous irony is itself akin to the otherness of allegory. Many authors from late antiquity to the Renaissance defined irony in such a way that the definition could also stand for allegory.[11] Both share an opposition

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[8] Andreas Graeser, "The Stoic Theory of Meaning," 82 (emphasis mine).

[9] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 50.

[10] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 67.

[11] See Dilwyn Knox's discussion in *Ironia, Medieval and Renaissance Ideas of Irony* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 32.

to the notion that the literal sense in and of itself could contain the full meaning of a text; both go beyond the literal level of meaning. Definitions for both allegory and irony also express a sense of otherness. As William Kennedy has pointed out, both allegory and irony are "forms of what Isidore of Seville called *alieniloquium*, 'other-speech'" since each says one thing and means another.[12] As Dilwyn Knox notes in his study of medieval and Renaissance concepts of irony, "the long established classification of irony as a species of *allegoria* ('allegory.') was based on the element of opacity (*obscuritas*) shared by *ironia* and *allegoria*."[13] Indeed, this obscurity was often used to conceal a common intent of irony, which was to express praise overtly while actually intending to express mockery. Again, as Isidore writes: "irony occurs when we praise that which we want to blame."[14] This covert element in irony is well in evidence in section four in Ariosto's panegyrics.

Section four deals with the theme of the tensions between literal and polysemous interpretation in several different ways. First, there are examples of misinterpretation: Rodomonte's and Orlando's mad misconstruction of the relation between language and the world. These negative examples are set against the positive example of Bradamante, who is able to interpret flexibly and to challenge the law through rational argument. Finally, Astolfo's voyage to the moon explores the relation between the text and the world: through parodic allegory, irony as mock praise, and the construction of irony through subject, context, and tone.

Ariosto parodies the folly of literal-mindedness—its limitations in both life and literature—throughout the depiction of Orlando's mad descent into the material. As in section three, where Orlando discovered that the woman he believed was his metaphysical *donna angelicata* is the physical lover of Medoro, in section four Orlando's madness marks a break from and send-up of the Neoplatonic conventions

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[12] William J. Kennedy, "Ariosto's Ironic Allegory," *MLN* 88, no. 1 (1973): 45, where he cites Isidore's definition for allegory ("aliud enim sonat et aliud intelligitur") and for irony ("sententia per pronunciationem contrarium habens intellectum"). See *Etymologiae* (Venice, 1483), 1.36.viiir.

[13] Knox, *Ironia*, 44.

[14] Knox, *Ironia*, 47–55.

through which he had once perceived the world. The destruction of his spiritual love for and worship of the lady recalls his daydream, where he worried that her virginity would be "colto e *guasto*" [8.77.8: taken and spoiled]: "D'averla amata e riverita molto / ogni ricordo era in lui *guasto* e rotto" [29.61.5–6: Every memory of having loved and worshipped her was spoiled and broken in him]. The parody of Neoplatonism here takes the form of a literal enactment of the metaphors of lyric love poetry. When Orlando encounters Angelica for the first time in the poem, his once-spiritual desire for her becomes mere gluttony:

> Come di lei s'accorse Orlando stolto,
> per ritenerla si levò di botto:
> così gli piacque il delicato volto,
> così ne venne immantinente giotto.
>
> [29.61.1–4: As foolish Orlando became aware of her, he rose suddenly to overtake her: her dainty face so pleased him that suddenly he became gluttonous for it.]

His literal acting out of the hunt of love reduces this stock Petrarchan metaphor to a dog's running to ground of the quarry: "Gli corre dietro, e tien quella maniera / che terria il cane a seguitar la fera" [61.7–8: He runs right after her and takes on the manner in which a dog runs to ground to follow the game]. Later, Orlando substitutes an actual leap into the saddle and wild gallop on Angelica's horse for the metaphor of sex as a ride on horseback, which has been played upon throughout the poem, from Ruggiero's inability to reign in the steed of lust to the senile hermit's inability to get his lop-eared nag to trot. When Angelica is thrown out of her saddle upon swallowing the magic ring, Orlando seizes and rides her horse with "quella festa ... / ch'un altro avrebbe fatto una donzella" [68.1–2: such enjoyment as another man would a maiden]. The terms of the simile reverse our expectations; rather than riding a woman as a man rides a horse, Orlando rides a horse as a man would ride a woman. These metaphorical erotic meanings translated into actual deeds give us a comic version of the sign turned inside out.

Through Rodomonte's defense of the bridge over the moat to the tomb of Isabella, Ariosto makes fun of the disjunction between Rodomonte's actions and his construction of what they signify.

Rodomonte exhibits a spiritual-mindedness that misconstrues existing things rather than a literal-mindedness that misconstrues metaphor. Rodomonte sets up a tomb for Isabella as a penance for accidentally slaying her and hopes that by frequently falling into the surrounding moat in duelling with knights who dare cross the bridge that he will somehow cleanse himself of guilt: "come l'acqua, non men ch 'l vino, estingua / l'error che fa pel vino o mano o lingua" [29.37: as if water, no less than wine, would extinguish the error that his hand or tongue committed]. Rodomonte's repeated parodic baptisms occur as the result of duels which, by their sheer clumsiness and mad slapstick, show Rodomonte's *pazzia* to be second only to Orlando's. The motive for these duels—other than falling into the cleansing waters of the moat—is not at all apparent. Significantly, the first of Rodomonte's duels is with Orlando, who, stark naked, jumps right over the barrier and dashes across the bridge. At first Rodomonte, taking Orlando for a peasant, wants to disqualify him from the duel. When they are forced to fight, however, Orlando's insouciance at being thrown into the river and eluding his opponent contrasts with Rodomonte's misplaced pride and anger, "pieno di sdegno e di superbia e d'ira" [29.45.8: full of disdain and pride and anger]. If Orlando is blissfully senseless, Rodomonte is burdened by his chivalric duty, which, nevertheless, does not seem to bear any relation to his desire for expiation of guilt. As Rajna notes, the motives of his literary predecessors, who defended their bridges in order to prove their valor and to do the will of the lady, are not those of Rodomonte. With Isabella dead, there is no one to protect and no one whom he can either impress or please. Rodomonte's challenge to Brandimarte indicates that rather than effecting any kind of penance or reparation for the wrong he has done, the mad paladin in effect simply wants to repeat his act of murder by killing every knight he encounters:

> Con voce qual conviene al suo furore
> il Saracino a Brandimarte grida:
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> scendi e spogliati l'arme, e fanne onore
> al gran sepolcro, inanzi ch'io t'uccida,
> e che vittima all'ombre tu sia offerto.

[31.66.1–2, 5–7: With a voice which suited his furor the Saracen cried out to Brandimarte: descend and lay down your arms, and lay them down in honor to the great tomb with them, before I kill you and offer you as a victim to the shades.]

Ironically, Rodomonte takes part in a series of pointless duels that simply repeat the sad process by which Isabella was bereft of her lover, Zerbino. What he intends as his spiritual repentance and noble duty appears to be nothing other than physical aggression and mad bombast. Rodomonte wants things to bear a significance that only judgment—a faculty he is sorely lacking in—can supply.

Orlando's mad rampage and Rodomonte's senseless protection of Isabella's tomb by combat help build the critique of interpretation in section four. Orlando and Rodomonte overemphasize one-third of the sign system (Orlando the signifier, Rodomonte the thing signified) that underlies allegory, irony, and the figural sense of poetic language. The once-poetic dreamer Orlando's actions rest on an empiricist equivalence between words and things to the exclusion of the similitudes or meanings that link them, or, as the Stoics would say, between "the thing signifying" and "the thing existing" to the exclusion of the "thing signified." Orlando's actions are empty of meaning. Rodomonte's furor, however, manifests itself in a different kind of perceptual confusion. The ever-proud and violent Rodomonte's newfound conscience seeks to invest his actions with an allegorical meaning that they cannot bear; in his case, the words he uses to explain his actions to himself and the meanings of these words bear no resemblance to what he is actually doing; or, as the Stoics would say, "the thing signifying" and the "signified" obscure his understanding of "things in the world."[15] The comedy here rests in Rodomonte's actions taking on meaning that they cannot bear.

Unlike Rodomonte and Orlando, Bradamante is able to negotiate the relations amongst words, meanings, and things in the world. Despite her worries over Ruggiero and unfounded jealousy of Marfisa, Bradamante stands out in section four as the character with the best judgment. At the castle of Tristano, the female warrior not only

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[15] Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians* 2.11–12.

demonstrates her *virtù* in arms but also in rational argument. According to the law of the castle, a knight must defeat three champions in order to win lodging there. Bradamante successfully overthrows three knights, but when she enters the castle and reveals that she is a woman, she then also wins a beauty contest. When she learns that as a result of her victory, another maiden will be forced to spend the night outdoors, Bradamante challenges the decision. First, she argues that in her opinion any judgment that does not take into account the arguments of the party concerned is unjust:

> "A me non par che ben deciso,
> né che ben giusto alcun giudicio cada,
> ove prima non s'oda quanto nieghi
> la parte o affermi, e sue ragioni alleghi."
>
> [32.101.5–8: "To me it does not seem that it is well decided, nor that any judgment is handed down justly, unless first is heard how much the party concerned affirms or denies, and the reasons she adduces."]

In other words, first one must attend to the context to which the law is being applied. Or, in Sextus Empiricus' terms, Bradamante believes that the judgment must correspond with "things existing," the context of the real world, not just the abstraction of the law. Furthermore, Bradamante continues her defense of the lady's case by excluding irrelevant evidence: because she did not originally win her right to stay at the castle as a woman, she does not want to gain any advantage from being a woman: "non venni come donna qui, né voglio / che sian di donna ora i progressi miei" [102.3–4: I did not come here as a woman, nor do I now want my advantages to be those of a woman]. Her language is significantly that of a legal defense, "Io ch'a difender questa causa" [102.1: I who defend this case, or law-suit]. Her own sense of justice disdains not only any unfair advantage to herself but also unfair harm to the lady if it is established that Bradamante is a woman (102.5–8). Beyond this, Bradamante attacks the inconsistency of the judgment itself. It is not a logical decision because it is not in accord with the intent of the law: "La legge vostra vuol che ne sian spinte / donne da donne, e non da guerrier vinte" [103.7–8: Your law wants ladies to be pitted against ladies and not to be conquered by warriors]. Bradamante contends that it is unfair to submit her to the

beauty contest because it presupposes that if she were to lose she would be thrown outside regardless of the fact that she had won the contest of arms: "Perder per men beltà giusto non parmi / quel c'ho acquistato per virtù con l'armi" [104.7–8: To lose through beauty what I have acquired through *virtù* does not seem just to me]. Bradamante also points out the inequity of the contest itself:

> Per questo, che contesa diseguale
> è tra me e questa donna, vo' inferire
> che, contendendo di beltà, può assai
> perdere, e meco guadagnar non mai.
>
> [105.5–8: From this you will infer that the contest between myself and the lady is unequal since competing in beauty she can lose much and she cannot ever prevail over me.]

Bradamante argues that the lady could suffer badly from losing the beauty contest, but she could never defeat Bradamante in a contest of arms. As a logical consequence of the contest's inequity, Bradamante concludes, the decision which results from it must also be unjust: "E se guadagni e perdite non sono / in tutto pari, ingiusto è ogni partito" [106.1–2: If there is not an equal chance to win or lose, then any decision must be unjust]. By persuading the host to allow the other maiden to stay, Bradamante overturns the letter of the law. Her mind is more nimble than that of the simple-minded host, and her insight and logic in interpreting the law shows how unjust its literal meaning is. Bradamante's challenge of custom at Tristano's palace proves that the law is not necessarily just and that judgment—both about the law's logical consistency and the morality of its application to the context—needs to be exercised to arrive at a just interpretation. At the close of her speech, Bradamante backs up the truth of her interpretation against those who would oppose it: " 'che 'l mio sia vero, e falso il suo parere' " [32.106.8: that mine is true and his is false]. Bradamante's argument locates truth or falsehood in "giudizio" [106.6: judgment], albeit backed by Bradamante's force, not in words (the letter of the law) or in things (the fact that Bradamante is a woman), but in meaning ("what is signified ... which we apprehend as existing in dependence on our intellect").

Bradamante's mercy, her rejection of the literal interpretation of the law, her rational logic in arguing the case, and her firm sense of

justice grounded in judgment, all these make Bradamante's defense of the lady an example of Stoic interpretation. On the level of logic, Bradamante's defense of and approach to truth provides a positive example against which we can judge the shortcomings of Orlando's resort to words emptied of meaning and Rodomonte's appeal to symbolic action devoid of rational judgment.

Bradamante's judgment is motivated not just by logic, however, but also by mercy and justice. The ethical dimension of her interpretation is well explained in this passage from Seneca's *De clementia*:

> Mercy has freedom [*liberum arbitrium*] in decision; it sentences not by the letter of the law [*sub formula*], but in accordance with what is fair and good [*sed ex aequo et bono*]. . . . It does none of these things as if it were doing less than is just, but as the most just thing were that which it has resolved upon.[16]

Bradamante makes a "free decision" (*liberum arbitrium*) of what is true; she grasps the meaning of the law, not its mere letter.[17] Her rational and responsible interpretation of the law can also provide a correction to the flawed modes of literary interpretation presented in the voyage to the moon.

Astolfo's Dantesque journey through Hell, the Earthly Paradise, and the moon comically parodies Dante's journey in the *Commedia* by emptying Astolfo's actions of theological allegorical meaning and also emphasizing their status as literary fiction rather than literal truth. Astolfo's journey begins entirely by chance. He encounters Senapo, or Preteianni, who asks him to rid his hall of Harpies (33.103–117). Astolfo then banishes the Harpies to Hell, a heroic feat, which he comically accomplishes with his magic horn. Unlike Dante's pilgrim, Astolfo, motivated by mere curiosity, enters into Hell as though it were someplace he had read about rather than the landscape

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[16] Seneca, *De clementia* 2.7.3, in *Moral Essays* 1, trans. John W. Basore, LCL (1928; reprint, 1970): "Clementia liberum arbitrium habet; non sub formula, sed ex aequo et bono iudicat. . . . Nihil ex his facit, tamquam iusto minus fecerit, sed tamquam id, quod constituit, iustissimum sit."

[17] On the role of the will, judgment, and mercy in the Stoics' interpretation and for a comparison of their concept of legal interpretation with Aristotle's, see Kathy Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotleian Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 96–104.

of his own soul, and about which he has the self-satisfied pleasure of recognition, rather than any fear:

> L'orecchie attente allo spiraglio tenne,
> e l'aria ne sentì percossa e rotta
> da pianti e d'urli e da lamento eterno:
> segno evidente quivi esser lo 'nferno.
> Astolfo si pensò d'entrarvi dentro,
> e veder quei c'hanno perduto il giorno,
> e penetrar la terra fin al centro,
> e le bolgie infernal cercare intorno.

> [34.4–5: He listened carefully at the entrance and heard the air rent with shrieks and reverberating with sobs and endless waiting—a clear sign that this must be hell. / He decided to go in and look at those who have lost the light of day, and penetrate to the heart of the place and inspect the ravines of hell.]

The language here—"lamento eterno," "lo 'nferno," "quei c'hanno perduto il giorno," "le bolgie infernal"—is clearly lifted from Dante, but the context in which this language occurs and the sense in which it is taken are completely different. Astolfo is completely unaffected by what he hears. His decision to encounter the damned is motivated merely by curiosity. There is no pathos here whatsoever. He suffers the assault of no beasts representing sin who block his entrance. There is no Virgil sent by Beatrice to guide him. The paladin simply decides to enter in a matter-of-fact way, as if the terrors of Hell were no different from the monster Orrilo or the robber Caligorante—mere physical obstructions that can be confounded by the blast of his horn:

> "Di che debbo temer (dicea) s'io v'entro,
> che mi posso aiutar sempre col corno?
> Farò fuggir Plutone e Satanasso,
> e 'l can trifauce leverò dal passo."

> [34.5: "What should I fear if I enter" (he said) "since I can always use my horn to help me? I shall take Pluto and Satan and the three-headed dog out of the way."]

Not only is this complete lack of moral dimension at the outset of the journey incongruous but so is the sentimental and bourgeois moral of the tale which follows. Lydia's story and its moral bear some

resemblance to one of Boccaccio's tales, while the context for the telling is made to seem like one of Dante's dialogues with the souls in hell. From the spirit's first pained cry to Astolfo's offer to bring the news of her to the world above, from the shade's response to this offer to her reticence to speak, the scene is thoroughly Dantesque in its trappings (34.9–10). When it comes to the story itself, however, Lydia, who recalls Dante's Francesca, seems at first to contradict the point of *Inferno* 5. Whereas Dante's story tells of the endless suffering of Francesca and Paolo because of their adulterous love, inspired by their reading of Guinevere and Lancelot, Ariosto's story tells of Lydia's suffering because of her refusal to love Alceste. The model for this eternal punishment for ingratitude towards a lover comes from the *Decameron*.[18] In Boccaccio's tale the young Nastagio degli Onesti, frustrated in love, encounters a phantom knight who stabs his unyielding beloved in the back and removes her heart. Nastagio learns this ritual is carried out every Friday for eternity. In order to win over his own lady, Nastagio brings her to view the violent scene; when she sees the horrible act and is told the story behind it, she then consents to marry Nastagio.

When we consider that the *Furioso* celebrates the union of Bradamante and Ruggiero in a marriage of mutual love, then it is not so surprising that in the Hell of this moral universe, at least as it is presented to be perceived by the morally obtuse and literal-minded Astolfo, unrequited love and the refusal of marriage should be transgressions. The reader of the *Furioso*, unlike Astolfo, knows that Lydia's refusal is no more a sin than Angelica's evasion of her suitors are. If we have learned anything from Orlando's loss of his wits and from Dalinda's deception by Polinesso, it should be that such lovers as Alceste, who accepts Lydia's cruel manipulation, repeated lies, and excuses, collude in their own deceptions. Lydia is not being punished for deceit but, as she says, "per esser stata al fido amante mio, / mentre io vissi, spiacevole ed ingrata" [34.11.5–6: for having been cruel and ungrateful to my faithful lover]. It is no accident that the narrator in an earlier fit of rage had blamed not only Angelica but all women for being "ingrate" (29.74.3). This is a sin which could only

[18] On *Decameron* 5.8 and Lydia's story, see Rajna, *Le fonti*, 538–42.

be punished by the literary god of love, ironically, the very ideal Paolo and Francesca are punished eternally for worshipping. Dante's lovers suffer for placing the mediated desire for the love of Guinevere and Lancelot above the desire for God.[19] The story of Lydia's refusal to love Alceste playfully undermines the ethic of *Inferno* 5.

Lydia's story not only parodies Dante but reflects ironically on Boccaccio. Ariosto's tale no more endorses the Boccaccian moral than Orlando's madness endorses the narrator's curses upon Angelica. The humor of the story derives from the creation of bathos in a parody of the sublime. It is not just that Lydia's story makes fun of Canto 5, but that the narrator's moral is absurd, rendered as if from the point of view of Orlando's own disappointment in love. Alceste's suicide in reaction to Lydia's rejection of him is another version of Orlando's madness.

By producing a ridiculous version of *Inferno* 5—evoking none of the beauty, seductiveness, or compassion with which Dante's text moves the reader—Ariosto seeks to poke fun at Dante's fiction that the *Commedia* is literally true. The story can be retold, reshaped, and reinterpreted, and, most importantly, its effects can be made completely different. It does not have the status of a sacred text; it can be stripped of its allegorical significance. This does not mean that the story has no meaning. Obliquely, it represents yet another variation on the irrationality of love. This recasting of a well-known text focuses attention on the thoroughly fictional nature of the *Furioso*. In this parody of *Inferno*, Ariosto is already building the impression that it is preposterous to seek for truth in fiction on the literal level of meaning. The reader can no more take Lydia's moral at face value than he can the ostensibly historical status of the *Commedia* that Dante claims in the letter to Can Grande. Dante's claim for the application of the four-fold allegory of the theologians, a method of interpretation developed for biblical exegesis, to his *Commedia*, and the resulting implication that his text has the status of Scripture, is

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[19] For the issue of literary mediation in relation to Canto 5 and the larger question of the relation between the *Commedia* and the allegory of the theologians, see John Freccero, "Medusa: The Letter and the Spirit," *Yearbook of Italian Studies* (1972): 1–18, esp. 14–18.

implicitly challenged by Ariosto's parody.[20] Ariosto separates his poem from such theological truth-claims.

Astolfo's moral obtuseness and the further parody of Dante's epic are also found in the visit to the Earthly Paradise. There is no reparation for sin, as in the *Purgatorio*. Astolfo bathes, not for purification, as Dante does in Lethe, but rather to cleanse himself of the soot from Hell. After swiftly riding up to the summit of the mountain, Astolfo meets St. John, who does not draw Astolfo's attention to the eucharistic vision, to which Beatrice draws Dante, but rather enjoins him to break his fast and restore his strength by eating. These details indicate the literal-minded level on which Astolfo's actions take place. His actions are simply physical and devoid of theological significance. The parody of Dante's pilgrim is made even more outrageous by Astolfo's observation when he eats the fruit of the Earthly Paradise:

> De' frutti a lui del paradiso diero,
> di tal sapor, ch'a suo giudicio, sanza
> scusa non sono i duo primi parenti,
> se per quei fur sì poco ubbidienti.

> [34.60.5–8: They (the saints) gave Astolfo some of the fruits of paradise; in view of their flavour he was inclined to think that Man's first parents might well have been excused if on account of this they were so little obedient.]

The blithe Astolfo functions only on the sensual plane of existence. Again the parody is not without meaning; as in all parody, there is a double edge to Astolfo's comment. On the one hand, it mocks the disobedience of Adam and Eve and their need for forgiveness. On the other hand, it celebrates the attractiveness of error and our need to be indulgent towards it.

After this feast, when St. John explains to Astolfo both the reason for Orlando's madness (God's punishment for his desertion of the Christian army in its hour of need) and for the present journey (to retrieve the knight's lost wits), Astolfo registers no reaction; he reacts only to sensual experience. Rather than the exemplar of Neoplatonic

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[20] For the application of the four-fold allegory of the theologians to the *Commedia*, see Dante, *Epistola* 10.7.

divine love, as at least one critic has claimed, Astolfo is the perfectly adjusted, unreflective *homme moyen sensuel*, who can act without reflection because of his lack of any conflict with the material world.[21] He asks St. John to tell him what all the strange objects on the moon are, but this seems only a rhetorical device to initiate St. John's exegesis, since Astolfo shows no shock or amusement. St. John's explanations seem rather for the reader's benefit than for that of the adaptable but obtuse Astolfo.

The moon is the realm of otherness—"[a]ltri fiumi, altri laghi, altre campagne / sono là su, che non son qui tra noi" [72.1–2: other rivers, other lakes, other fields are up there, which are not among us]. The narrator presents the moon as the perfect negative of the earth: "ciò che si perde qui, là si raguna" [73.8: what is lost here, is brought together there]. St. John explains that the only thing not on the moon is madness: "sol la pazzia non v'è poca né assai; / che sta qua giù, né se ne parte mai" [81.7–8: only madness is there not little nor much of here; it remains down there, nor does it ever leaves us]. These lines are a variation on the exordium to Canto 24, where madness is described as the universal human condition: "Varii gli effetti son, ma la pazzia / è tutt'una" [Various are the effects but the madness is all one]. Indeed, the "lacrime e i sospiri degli amanti" [75.1: cries and sighs of lovers] on the moon echo Orlando's distress: "sparge un fiume di lacrime sul petto: / sospira e geme" [122.4–5: a river of tears flows down his breast: / he sighs and weeps].

The otherness of the moon takes the form of a metaphorical landscape that reveals earthly madness as the overvaluation of all those ephemeral objects, institutions, speeches, texts, relationships, and customs, which are only empty and foolish trifles on the moon.[22]

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[21] For the view that Astolfo, Ruggiero, and Orlando respectively represent the divine, social, and bestial loves of Neoplatonism, see Peter V. Marinelli, *Ariosto and Boiardo*, 110–11.

[22] A useful discussion of the humanistic conception of folly in Erasmus and Ariosto is Carlo Ossola, "Métaphore et Inventaire de la Folie," in *Folie et déraison à la Renaissance*, Travaux de l'Institut pour l'étude de la Renaissance et de l'Humanisme, 5 (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1976), 171–96. For the relation between Astolfo's voyage to the moon and the *Intercoenales* of Leon Battista Alberti, see C[esarani], R[emo], "Annunzi," *Giornale Storica della letteratura italiana* 141, fasc. 435 (1964): 649–70, and Cesare Segre, "Leon Battista Alberti e Ludovico Ariosto," in *Esperienze ariostesche*, 85–95.

Through St. John's decoding of the lunar landscape, Ariosto demonstrates that things taken at face value, or by their deceptively simple referential meaning on earth, have another meaning on the moon. For example, Astolfo is told that the "tumide vesiche" [tumid bladders] are "le corone antiche ... e de' Persi e de' Greci, che già furo / incliti" [76.5–8: the ancient crowns ... of the Persians and Greeks which were once illustrious]. Power and fame do not remain constant but over time decay and become so much waste. The desire for power manifests itself in "[a]mi d'oro e d'argento" [golden and silver hooks] which are "doni / che si fan con speranza di mercede / ai re, agli avari principi, ai patroni" [77.2–4: gifts which are made with the hope of payment from kings, greedy princes, patrons]. These metaphors show the desire to manipulate and control the powerful receiver—the intention behind the gifts. Things which on earth might seem to have one literal or historical reference on the moon become metaphors, the connotations of which expose hidden meanings. In this way Ariosto challenges Dante's allegory of the theologians, where the literal is the historically referential sense through which we arrive at the allegorical, and endorses Dante's allegory of the poets, where the literal conceals the truth "under a beautiful lie."[23]

While Ariosto's lunar metaphors are not so beautiful, they are indeed "lies" in the sense that the reader is not supposed to accept the scene as anything but an alternate literary world within the alternate world of the poem. What the lunar metaphors offer us are not so much "lies" which are a reflection of the lies in the world of power as figures which cannot be literally but only metaphorically true. Simply because the poem exposes the lies of such other texts as "trattati" [treaties] and "il dono ... che Constantino al buon Silvestro fece" [79.3; 80.7–8: the donation which Constantine made to good Sylvester] does not mean that Ariosto's own text is a lie. Ariosto demystifies courtiers' flattery and verses praising patrons:

> Vede in ghirlande ascosi lacci; e chiede,
> ed ode che son tutte adulazioni.
> Di cicale scoppiate imagine hanno
> versi ch'in laude dei signor si fanno.

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[23] See *Il Convivio* 2, cap. 1.

> [34.77.5–8: He sees in garlands hidden nooses; and asks, and hears that are all flattery. Verses made in praise of patrons have the image of exploded crickets.]

The lunar allegory, by making fun of the poet's praise of his patron, prepares us for how to understand Ariosto's own praise of Ippolito and San Giovanni's more general comments on literary interpretation and its relation to the system of patronage in Canto 35.

After inhaling his own wits and taking the phial containing Orlando's, Astolfo is then brought to the palace where the Fates spin out men's lives. The most glorious of the skeins, a jewel-like thread, attracts Astolfo's attention at the opening of Canto 35, and he learns from San Giovanni that it is the life of Ippolito d'Este. Given the portrayal of the adulatory verses of poets to their patrons as "cicale scoppiate" [burst crickets], we should be on our guard against taking this encomium to Ippolito too literally. In addition to their context in the corrosive lunar satire, these lines also call for nonliteral interpretation because they are an imitation of Seneca's praise of Nero in the *Apocolocyntosis*, a similarly exaggerated lauding of a patron. The *Apocolocyntosis*, or "How Claudius Was Apotheosized as a Pumpkin," relates the mock apotheosis of the Emperor Claudius, who had just been succeeded by Nero.[24] In *Furioso* 35.3, Ippolito's life is foretold in a golden skein, just as in *Apocolocyntosis* 4 the fates spin a golden fleece that prophesies the new golden age of Nero. In order to understand St. John's comments about the relation between poetry and patronage which follow in Canto 35, it will be necessary to examine Ariosto's own encomium to his patron in relation to its literary model.

Seneca's Menippean satire, like all satires, alludes to historical persons and events. This means that our judgment of both the crimes imputed to Claudius and the virtues attributed to Nero has to take into account the view of these figures from outside sources. It is far from clear that the humor of the *Apocolocyntosis* is entirely at Claudius' expense because of what we know of his and Nero's reigns from the most reliable historian of the period, Tacitus, and, more impor-

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[24] See Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis, or the Pumpkinification of Claudius*, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1973). The Latin text is Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, ed. Allan Perley Ball (1902; reprint, New York: Garland, 1978).

tantly, because of what we know of the literary precedent for satiric praise.[25] For instance, in *Apocolocyntosis* 11, Claudius is accused of murdering Lucius Junius Silanus, while, in *Annales* 13.1, we learn that Claudius' wife Agrippina was responsible for Silanus' death as well as his brother's. In fact, the account of Claudius in Tacitus shows him to be a ruler whose weakness allowed his wife to gain an increasingly more active and brutal role in his reign, until she finally had him murdered. When it comes to Seneca's praise of Nero, some have interpreted this as the tutor's attempt to instruct his pupil.[26] Literary and historical evidence produces a very different interpretation. Seneca's fulsome praise of Claudius, written shortly before the satire in a speech that Tacitus reports made the audience laugh, and Lucan's "palpably ironic" invocation to Nero in *De bello civili* 33–66, which is often mentioned as analogous to Seneca's praise of Nero, both suggest that Seneca's praise of Nero is another example of such irony, rather than "a monument of literary error and untruth," as Quint has claimed.[27]

Our judgment of how to interpret what Ariosto says about Ippolito at the opening of Canto 35 must recognize that both this passage and its literary model, *Apocolocyntosis*, participate in the medieval and Renaissance tradition of irony as excessive praise. In his informative study of this topic, Dilwyn Knox cites numerous examples of authors from antiquity to the Renaissance who give "flattery" (or cognates) as a gloss for *ironia*.[28] Even more relevant to an understanding of Ariosto's encomium is that it conforms to one of the most well-known examples of such mock praise, Lucan's panegyric to Nero at the opening of the *Pharsalia*, or *De bello civili*, which is itself an important analogy for the *Apocolocyntosis*, the source of Ariosto's panegyric.

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[25] Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Michael Grant (1956; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 255–95.

[26] H. MacL. Currie, "The Purpose of the *Apocolocyntosis*," *Antiquité Classique* 31 (1962): 91–97. Currie gives an overview of the varieties of interpretation of the *Apocolocyntosis*, in which the praise of Nero is a controversial issue.

[27] See Currie, "The Purpose of the *Apocolocyntosis*," 93, for Lucan's praise of Nero as ironic. Quint seems unaware of this interpretation of Lucan's praise of Nero and ignores the possibility of reading *Apocolocyntosis* 4 and *Furioso* 35.3–9 in any other way than literally (*Origin and Originality*, 89–90).

[28] Knox, *Ironia*, 47–49.

Medieval and Renaissance commentaries on Lucan's *Pharsalia* point out that Lucan's irony was well hidden "because he did not dare to vilify [Nero] openly" and "so that it could be construed by Nero as flattery or by more perceptive readers as *ironia*."[29] Similarly, Ariosto's excessive praise of Ippolito is meant at once to be pleasing to the patron and ironic to an audience of the author's friends. An educated Renaissance reader would know how to spot such hidden irony on the basis of "gesture, intonation, or context" as well as "the speaker's character, or the subject matter."[30]

While gesture and intonation cannot be so easily judged from a written text, the context, the author's character, and the subject matter can. Just as Seneca's adulation of Nero has to be measured against what we know of him from outside sources, so, too, does Ariosto's praise of Ippolito. We need to know what Ariosto's audience would have known about both Ippolito and Ariosto's opinion of him. Important evidence exists in the author's own *Satira* 1, in which he expresses his preference for free poverty over servitude to the Cardinal.[31] The translator of the *Satire* has called the portrait of Ippolito in the first satire "withering condemnation."[32] It is unlikely that Ariosto intended an audience of those who had read his *Satire*, which circulated in manuscript during his lifetime, to accept a literal interpretation of Ippolito as "un spirto sì degno" [a spirit so worthy] (8.4), when in *Satira* 1, Ariosto describes giving his patron verses to read as sending them "al Culiseo per lo sugello" [1.96: to the asshole

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[29] See Knox, *Ironia*, 49, where he cites the following commentaries on Lucan: *Pharsalia* with the commentary of G. Sulpizio and that ascribed to Ognibene da Lonigo (Venice: Per S. Bevilaqua, 1493), a4r; Anselmus Laudensis (s.XII) [*Glossiae super Lucanum*]: Berlin (West) Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Lat., 1r; *Pharsalia . . . cum commentariis J. Sulpitii . . . P. Badii . . . J. Badii* etc. (Paris: Ascensio & J. Parvo, 1514), 3ra. Knox also cites Erasmus on Lucan and on extravagant praise as "akin to *ironia*" (*Ironia*, 50; Erasmus, *Opus epistolarum*, ed. P. S. Allen, 12 vols. [Oxford, 1906–08], 1:316, 399–400).

[30] Knox, *Ironia*, 55, citing Jean Buridan, *Questiones super x. libros Aristotelis ad Nicomachum*, 110ra (Paris: Impressore W. Hopyl, 1489), and the Latin playwright Georgius Macropedius, *Epistolica* (Antwerp: J. Hillenium, 1543), H6v.

[31] See *Satire* 1.160–68 in the bilingual edition of *The Satires of Ludovico Ariosto*, trans. Peter DeSa Wiggins (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1976), 14.

[32] See Wiggins' introduction of his translation of *The Satires of Ludovico Ariosto*, xxii.

for its seal].[33] Accounts by both Guicciardini and Ariosto of the cruelty, petty jealousy, and decadence of Ippolito (such as the time he had his bastard brother blinded because of sexual rivalry) cause me to doubt that Ariosto wanted his audience to believe the prophecy of a "fortunata etade" [35.5.3: fortunate age] under Ippolito any more than Seneca meant his audience to believe Nero could usher in a golden age. A closer look at the text itself shows that Ariosto lifts words and phrases from Petrarch's *Rime* but then places them in a context where they are supposed to have the opposite meaning from the one that was originally intended. While Petrarch describes Laura's physical beauty, "A pie' de' colli ove la bella vesta / prese de le terrene membra pria" [8.1–2: At the foot of the hills where she first put on the lovely garment of her earthly members], Ariosto describes Ippolito's supposed spiritual beauty: "Né sì leggiadra né sì bella veste / unque ebbe altr'ama in quel terrestre regno" [34.8.1–2: No soul in the realm of earth was ever clothed in such grace and beauty].[34] When we consider the well-known licentiousness of Ippolito, the allusion to Petrarch undoes the ostensible praise of Ippolito's saintliness by infecting it with the suggestion of Ippolito's own delight in "terrene membra."[35] The alternative ironic reading of such praise comprehends the meaning of the encomium in relation to both literary and political history, as well as to the ironic context of the poem itself.

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[33] See Wiggins' note on the text, xxxvii–xxxviii, where he cites at least three manuscript copies, not including those to the addressees, and the fact that the *editio princeps* underwent fifteen reprints by the year 1550.

[34] For accounts of the decadence of Alfonso d'Este and the cruelty of Ippolito, as in the revenge he took out of petty jealousy on his bastard brother Giulio, see Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. Costantino Panigada (Bari: G. Laterza, 1929), 2:28, 165, and Ariosto, *Lettere*, ed. Antonio Capelli (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1887), cxxvi. The process by which I have determined that this encomium is ironic is that outlined in Wayne C. Booth's *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1974), here summarized by Joseph A. Dane: "This irony is less a fact of the text than a process that occurs between the text and a reader—a process Booth reconstructs as consisting of four steps: the rejection of a perceived literal meaning by the reader, the testing of alternative interpretations, the reader's decision about the author's knowledge or beliefs ... and the reader's choice of 'a new meaning or cluster of meanings with which he can rest secure'" ("The Defense of the Incompetent Reader," *Comparative Literature* 38 [1986]: 62–63).

[35] See Edmund G. Gardner, *The King of Court Poets* (1906; reprint, New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1968), 47–49.

Just following this encomium, the dialogue between St. John and Astolfo is concerned with the relation of the literal meaning of a text to the truth. St. John's explanation of what the old man's dropping the nameplates in the river Lethe means demonstrates the necessity for interpretation, which we have seen throughout the metaphorical lunar landscape. Here, as elsewhere on the moon, the key for decoding these striking images is provided within the text. Astolfo wants to know "i gran misteri e gl'incogniti sensi" [35.176: the great mysteries and hidden meanings] behind the scene of the old man discarding nameplates—some of which crows and vultures briefly carry and then drop, and others of which swans rescue to a place sacred to immortality where a nymph sets the names around a statue on a pillar for all time. St. John explains that the vultures and crows are sycophants and that the swans are poets making their lords immortal through verse.

Given Ariosto's scathing portrayal of sycophants in Canto 34 and his own exaggeratedly laudatory and ironic encomium at the opening of Canto 35, we should certainly be suspicious of the praise of these swans who represent poetry as the immortalization of the patron. Or, to put it another way, we should be suspicious of Ariosto's endorsing the notion of poetry as a monument to power. If we are to take St. John at his word, these rare swanlike poets are indifferent to truth, and, so, are willing to immortalize powerful patrons whether good or bad merely for the sake of preferment:

> Oltre che del sepolcro uscirian vivi,
> ancor ch'avesser tutti i rei costumi,
> pur che sapesson farsi amica Cirra,
> più grato adore avrian che nardo o mirra.
>
> Non sì pietoso Enea, né forte Achille
> fu, come è fama, né sì fiero Ettore;
> e ne son stati e mille a mille e mille
> che lor si puon con verità anteporre:
> ma i donati palazzi e le gran ville
> dai descendenti lor, gli ha fatto porre
> in questi senza fin sublimi onori
> da l'onorate man degli scrittori.

[35.24–25: They (patrons) would otherwise emerge living from the grave even if their lives had been a disgrace: had they only

known how to cultivate the friendship of Poetry, they would give off a fragrance better than spikenard or myrrh. / Not so devoted was Aeneas nor Achilles so strong nor Hector so fierce as is their reputation; and there have existed thousands and thousands of men who could with truth take a place before them: but the gifts of palaces and great villas of their descendants to poets have made them confer on these patrons sublime honors without end from the honored hands of these writers.]

Some critics have interpreted this passage as revealing the error of all literature, its tendency to lie, largely because it is dependent upon power and is thus contingent upon something other than the writer's and the reader's imaginations.[36] The full meaning of Ariosto's allegory, however, is only completed by the absurdly logical conclusion of St. John's exegesis, which lays bare the confusion of categories, the error, not in all literature, but in all overly literal interpretations.

In order to understand how to interpret St. John's comments, we need to examine their context within the poem and the subject matter to which they refer. If what St. John says is literally true—that "Aeneas was not so pious, nor Achilles so strong"—it would logically follow that patrons merely pay poets to laud their ancestors and that the virtues associated with these ancestors are fully dependent on this payment. This reasoning, however, is specious; it confuses historical and fictional truth. If the confusion between history and literature is not apparent in the above stanza, it is in the following, when we realize that St. John has been discussing characters of poetic creation as if they were historical figures:

> Non fu sì santo né benigno Augusto
> come la tuba di Virgilio suona.
> L'aver avuto in poesia buon gusto
> la proscrizion iniqua gli perdona.

[35.26.1–4: Not so holy or benign was Augustus as the trumpet of Virgil plays. Having had good taste in poetry pardons him for his unjust proscription.]

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[36] Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 38, 48, and Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 89–90.

Whereas we have only fictional information about Aeneas and Hector, we can judge Virgil's portrayal of Augustus against other sources. The very mention of "la proscrizion iniqua" indicates Augustus' existence outside Virgil's text. The idea that Augustus' unjust laws could be compensated for by his patronage of poetry is ludicrous. According to St. John's argument, the patronage of poets should have secured Augustus' good name for all time. By simply mentioning Augustus' injustice St. John disproves that it is truly compensated for by the emperor's good taste in poetry. St. John's discourse persuades us of the opposite of what it literally means. This is in keeping with the ironic nature of the entire episode, which presents us with literal meanings that we must reject either because their absurd exaggeration conflicts with what we know of the author's views or their illogic creates inconsistencies within the meaning of the poem.

The most striking example of this illogic in the service of satire comes in the following stanzas:

> Omero Agemennòn vittorioso,
> e fe' i Troian parer vili ed inerti;
> e che Penelopea fida al suo sposo
> dai Prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti.
> E se tu vuoi che 'l ver non ti sia ascoso,
> tutta al contrario l'istoria converti:
> che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice,
> e che Penelopea fu meretrice.
> Da l'altra parte odi che fama lascia
> Elissa, ch'ebbe il cor tanto pudico;
> che riputata viene una bagascia,
> solo perché Maron non le fu amico.

[35.27–28: Homer made Agamemnon appear the victor and the Trojans vile and sluggish; and that Penelope was faithful to her husband and had suffered thousands of outrages from her suitors. And if you want to know the truth, convert the meaning of the story to the contrary: that the Greeks were defeated and Troy victorious and that Penelope was a whore. / On the other hand, listen to the reputation left to Dido, who had a heart so pure; who came to be reputed a harlot, only because Virgil was not her friend.]

In the first stanza we are told that to know the truth about the Homeric epics we should interpret the opposite of the story, "tutta al contrario l'istoria converti." This "radically subversive" reading of Homer only serves to demonstrate the error of such readings. First of all, the Trojans of the *Iliad* are not "vili ed enerti." In part, Ariosto has set up misreadings of these texts as straw men to be cut down by the choplogic of this simpleminded debunking, which has nothing behind it save the mere assertion that poetry is subservient to power. If this were true, one would have to admit that all fiction is a betrayal of truth, nothing but manipulative propaganda. Ironically, in order to understand what is meant by St. John's lecture, we need to "tutta al contrario l'istoria converti" [turn the story all to the contrary]—an apt paraphrase of Renaissance definitions of irony—to uncover the hidden meaning behind the irony.

The example of Dido, in particular, disproves the condition on which St. John's argument rests. Far from representing Dido, the obstacle to empire, as "una bagascia," Virgil, like so many later authors who imitated him, portrays her sympathetically.[37] St. John's ridiculous argument only emphasizes that purely literary characters live only in fiction. Of course Virgil was not Dido's friend; she is rather a creation of his imagination. Ariosto was certainly aware and at pains to make us aware of the artificiality, the imaginative nature of his poetic creations. Instead of indicating the error of all literature, the voyage to the moon indicates the error of overly literal interpretation, and of inaccurate readings.

Among such overly literal ways of interpreting is not only this imperviousness to irony but also the theological model in which Dante had proposed his own text be read as having the same literal truth claims as Scripture. The separation of Ariosto's poem from the theological is nowhere clearer than in his portrayal of the evangelist as merely another writer and Christ as his patron:

> ch'al vostro mondo fui scrittore anch'io.
> E sopra tutti altri io feci acquisto
> che non mi può levar tempo né morte:

[37] For the bearing upon this passage of the literary tradition which praised Dido for her chastity, see my discussion in Chapter 1.

> e ben convenne al mio lodato Cristo
> rendermi guidardon di sì gran sorte.
>
> [35.28–29: in our world I was a writer, too. / And above all others I acquired something which neither time nor death can take from me: it was convenient to the Christ whom I praised to give me the reward of such great fortune.]

This comparison serves to underscore the difference between St. John and other writers, who could never obtain the reward from their patrons that he has from Christ. To obtain a reward "che non ... può levar tempo né morte" a secular writer would have to be independent of his patron, free in such a way that only an intellect that neither worships power nor depends upon the exploitation of others for its freedom can be. That this comparison of the evangelist and Jesus Christ to the writer and patron literally suggests that the gospel is compromised by patronage is unlikely.[38] San Giovanni's "saggio riso" [wise smile] tips us off to the irony of his discourse.[39] This ironic comparison does, however, emphasize that the conditions under which the secular author writes are different from those of the biblical author. While Ariosto's lunar satire shows that he can be critical of power, it also proves that that criticism must be humorous and oblique because of the author's dependence upon the patron for his livelihood.

By creating a thoroughly metaphorical representation of the world and a ironic critique of patronage and literature, Ariosto mocks Dante's fiction of the literal truth of his text and yet affirms the polysemous nature of secular literature. The demonstration in St. John's exegesis of how metaphor contains meaning can be seen as analogous to Dante's allegory of the poets, which allows for two levels

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[38] Compare the views of Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 90: "Ariosto dismisses the Logos with a joke, wittily reducing the status of the scriptural Word to the level of the words of his poem"; and Durling, *The Figure of the Poet*, 149: "For to suppose that Ariosto meant that he was lying about his patrons is tantamount to thinking he meant to suggest that the Evangelist lied about Christ."

[39] See Knox, *Ironia*, 61, for examples of authors who cite a smile, or laugh, as a gesture which betokens irony, amongst them Giovanni Britannico, *Commentarii in Persium* (Brixiae: Per G. & P. Tarvisinum, 1481), b3r; Georgius Trapezuntius, *Rhetoricum libri quinque* (Venice: Vindelinus de Spira, 1472), 111r; Guillaume Fichet, *Rhetorica* (Paris: U. Gering, M Crantz, M. Friburger, 1471), 173v.

of meaning, the literal and the allegorical, the truth of which the literal conceals. St. John's discourse on literature and power indicates how interpretation can be falsified by false or confused criteria. This critique of interpretation is effected through a rhetorical mode akin to allegory, irony. By virtue of its pointing to nonliteral meanings, irony, like allegory, cries out for interpretation. Ariosto's parody of biblical allegory with poetic metaphor and of pseudohistorically revisionist literalism with skeptical irony engages us in a complex critique of meaning in both literature and the world. Ariosto affirms the capacity of literary language, which both represents and creates a fiction about the world, for ambiguity and truth.

CHAPTER EIGHT

# *Errare and Tornare:* Cantos 38–45

> et globosus est fabricatus ... idque ita [deus] tornavit,
> ut nihil effici possit rotundius.[1]
>
> [and the world is made spherical ... and God has rounded it off so that nothing can be completed which is rounder.]

> Necque enim dici potest in ulla rerum institutione non esse aliquid extremum atque perfectum. Ut enim in vite ut in pecude nisi quae vis obstitit videmus naturam suo quodam itinere ad ultimum pervenire, atque ut pictura et fabrica ceteraeque artes habent quendam absoluti operis effectum, sic in omni nautra ac multo etiam magis necesse est absolvi aliquid ac perfici.[2]
>
> [It is undeniable that every arrangement of things is something complete and perfect. As in vines or in cattle we see that, unless obstructed by some force, nature progresses on a certain path of her own to her goal of full development, and as in painting, architecture, and the other arts and crafts there is an ideal of perfect workmanship, even so and far more in the world of nature as a whole there must be a process towards completeness and perfection.]

THE FIFTH SECTION COMPLETES THE POEM WITH A RETURN to the narrative symmetry of the first three sections. Whereas Orlando's madness and the narrator's reflection of it had thrown the four-part sequence of mirrored actions off balance in section four, in section five, the restoration of Orlando's wits brings the return to the symmetrical narrative pattern. Cantos 38 and 45 both contain the action of rescue: Astolfo has rescued Orlando's wits and now restores the

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[1] Cicero, *Opera cum indicibus et variis lectionibus*, vol. 3, *Philosophicorum fragmenta, Timaeus seu De universitate* 6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1783), 416.

[2] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.13.35.

sight of Senapo, who becomes an ally of the Christians (38); Ruggiero is rescued from imprisonment by Leone, who becomes his good friend (45). Entrapment / deception takes the form of Melissa's enchantment of Agramante, which makes him foolishly disrupt the duel which could have ended the war (39), and of Bradamante's parents' confinement of their knight errant daughter, who wants to marry Ruggiero against their wishes, in the castle of Roccaforte (44). Two different kinds of quests are narrated in the next pair of cantos, as Brandimarte pursues the Saracens in a heroic combat of one against many (40), and Rinaldo hears a story about Anselmo, who pursues the knowledge of his wife Argia's fidelity (43). At the center of the fifth section, Ruggiero escapes death by drowning and accepts baptism, while Orlando finally gives concrete evidence of his escape from madness, as he defends his companions, grieves over the death of his friend, but does not give way to hatred.

The actions that create this return to formal order express the tension between completion and digression that characterizes the entire poem, but no part of it more so than its ending. Two verbs convey the connotations of this tension: *tornare* ("to return," "to recover"—with its etymology in the Latin *tornare*, "to round off") and *errare* ("to wander," "to be mistaken"). In the exordium to Canto 46 it is in terms of the opposition between *errare* and *tornare* that the narrator speaks of his fear of not finishing the poem but endlessly wandering:

> Or, se mi mostra la mia carta il vero,
> non è lontano a discoprirsi il porto;
> sì che nel lito i voti scioglier spero
> a chi nel mar per tanta via m'ha scorto;
> ove, o di non tornar col legno intero,
> o d'errar sempre, ebbi già il viso smorto.
> Ma mi par di veder, ma veggo certo,
> veggo la terra, e veggo il lito aperto.

[46.1: Now, if my map shows me the true, the harbour will soon be in sight and I may hope to fulfill my promises ashore to one who has accompanied me at sea on such a long voyage; oh how I just had a deadly pale face worrying whether I would return with the entire boat or wander always. But it

seems to me I see, but I see for certain, I see the land, and I see the open shore.]

Through the *topos* of a sea voyage, Ariosto suggests the correlation between his completion of the poem and his characters' completions of their quests. Just as the narrator hopes "i voti sciogler" [to fulfill his promises] to his friend (the beloved lady he has so often mentioned) ashore, and Ariosto hopes to fulfill his to his readers, so, too, the characters at the conclusion of the poem are engaged in the fulfillment of their promises to one another. The narrator will find his way to the end of the poem, called a voyage over the sea ("nel mar per tanta via"), by way of a map ("carta"), which stands for the author's plan of narrative action. The charted journey is a metaphor for the author's writing of the poem, the audience's reading of it, and the characters acting out its plot. If we consider that the Latin etymology of *tornare* is a verb taken from the craft of pottery—"to turn or finish on the potter's wheel"—and the use of this Latin *tornare* to describe both God's crafting the universe (as in Cicero's *De universitate* 6, "idque ita [deus] tornavit") and the poet's crafting a line of verse (as in Horace's *Ars poetica* 441, "et male tornatos incudi reddere versus" [return the ill-turned verses to the anvil]), then the analogy between the completion of the poem and the perfection of the cosmos is even stronger.[3]

*Tornare* describes both the paladins' return to court and how the author rounds off the poem; *errare* describes both the wandering of Rinaldo in the wood of Ardennes and the delaying of the poem's end by the tale of the cup, which he stops to hear. While the narrator's "carta" [map] leads him through the seas of narrative digression to the harbor of ending, the characters, too, imitate morally what their creator strives towards poetically. Just as the author's digressions can only be called such because they deviate from the impulse of the story to proceed and conclude, so the characters' erring quests cannot be seen as such without a point of departure and return. We would not be aware of their weakness and instability were there not a strength and stability towards which they could be seen to strive.

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[3] Cicero, *Timaeus seu De universitate*, in *Opera*, 3:416; Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars poetica*, 486, 487.

*Tornare* also stands for Orlando's recovery of his wits and Ruggiero's conversion (as the etymology of "convertirsi" shows us, a turning of the self). These returns prepare each hero for the recovery of an earlier ethos, a return to friendship over courtly love, to loyalty over passion, which, as the poem has shown, so readily turns to jealousy or hatred. *Errare*, on the contrary, comprehends not only Orlando's madness and Ruggiero's indecision but also the error in Rinaldo's shallow return to his former self. He replaces his "love" for Angelica with his former hatred of her. The return of Rinaldo's freedom, superficially similar to Orlando's recovery of his wits and Ruggiero's conversion, is in fact quite different. Rinaldo continues to err after he drinks from the "fontana di disamore" (42.61). He does not replace his erring quest with a greater good as Orlando and Ruggiero do.

Ariosto's comic ending celebrates both the friendships of so many characters for one another—Orlando and Brandimarte, Ruggiero and Leone, Marfisa and Ruggiero—and the marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero. For this celebration of commitment to ring true, the last fifth of the poem has to withstand two types of charges that have been brought against it: (1) that it is out of keeping with the rest of the poem—either in theme or structure; (2) that it is not immune from the corrosive irony that pervades so much of the poem—particularly the voyage to the moon.[4] Both objections depend upon a misreading of the conclusion as a trite happy ending; the second also privileges one episode over the whole poem. At the center of the fifth section of the *Furioso* the deaths of Agramante and Brandimarte (41 and 42) and the prophecy of Ruggiero's death (41) look forward to Rodomonte's death in the last stanza of the poem. The sense of harmony and release in Brandimarte's death echoes that in Isabella's. In honor of Isabella's death (and all women—including Ariosto's patron's sister, Isabella) God transforms nature: "e fe' sereno intorno / l'aria, e tranquillo il mar più che mai fusse" [29.30.1–2: and made the air more serene and the sea more tranquil that it had ever been]. Similarly, Brandimarte's

[4] For the first view, see Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many" (1976), who finds the " 'epic' conclusion ... quite hollow" (208); and Robert Griffin, *Ludovico Ariosto* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), 147–48. For the second, see Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 48–49, and Quint, *Origin and Originality*, 89–90.

death evokes harmony: "E voci e suoni d'angeli concordi / tosto in aria s'udir" [42.14.5–6: And the voices and harmonious sounds of angels could be heard in the air].

Orlando's return to sanity is a return to the trials and risks of a world in which we are all destined to die. When away from the battle, the mad Orlando is not safe but destructive, not heroic but indiscriminately violent; he lives as if he could never die. Ruggiero's fate, too, shows that his commitment to life, his love and loyalty to Bradamante, is attended by the knowledge of his death. Just as Ruggiero and Bradamante are celebrating the last day of their wedding feast, Rodomonte bursts in on the scene to provoke a struggle. In this final duel Ruggiero proves his skill, bravery, and self-possession in fighting Rodomonte, whose dramatic death, modelled on that of Turnus at the close of the *Aeneid*, ends the *Furioso*.

The distinction that Vicki Hearne makes between "false romance" and "the great literature of the heroic" helps to explain why Ariosto's ending survives the charge of disingenuousness:

> In false romances, that oppose the quest and the hearth, safety and the heroic, safety becomes in this way "degeneration," but the great literature of the heroic tells us that the quest and the hearth are the same or at least that they must be mated if life is to be fecund of meaning.[5]

The union of the return to the hearth and the necessity of the heroic in the *Furioso*, as in the *Odyssey*, lifts the poem's ending above the simpleminded "happily ever after perspective" of false romance. The conclusion of the *Furioso* presents not merely a wedding, but a wedding interrupted by a duel which is fought to the death. This suggests that the celebrations in life—of marriage, of peace, of friendship—never mark a point of arrival but are part of a constant struggle to fight for them. Ariosto's ending presents a paradoxical view of life, complex enough to escape the irony Ariosto levels throughout the poem at our platitudes, pieties, and self-deluded passions.

The plot of section five expresses the dialectic of *tornare* [return-

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[5] Vicki Hearne, "Reflections: Questions About Language, Part I," *The New Yorker*, 18 Aug. 1986, 52.

ing] and *errare* [wandering] in a chiastic pattern, which compliments the return of narrative order. This pattern is formed by the antithesis between actions that tend towards *tornare* or closure—towards bringing the poem to an end, the war to victory, the paladins to court, Bradamante and Ruggiero to marriage—and actions that tend towards *errare* or the frustration of closure. Within each canto every action that tends towards completion of the plot is juxtaposed with one that interrupts it. Figure 10 provides a diagram of this pattern in Cantos 38–45.

Canto 38 is characterized mainly by closure but also by its frustration. Marfisa and Bradamante return to Carlo's court, where Marfisa is baptized (7–23). Astolfo returns from the moon (27), and King Agramante holds a council which proposes a duel to decide the outcome of the war (62). Ruggiero, who has returned to Agramante rather than to Carlo, and Bradamante are both distressed over the upcoming duel (70–73). Melissa comforts Bradamante and promises to upset the duel (73). The canto ends with the action suspended and the conclusion of the duel deferred.

The final canto of section five reverses this pattern. The action of Canto 45 does more to complicate than to conclude the plot. The penultimate canto of the poem opens with Ruggiero imprisoned by Ungiardo and tortured by Leone's aunt Teodora (5–21). Another duel is proposed—this one between Bradamante and her suitors to decide whom she will marry (22–25). As Bradamante laments Ruggiero's absence, Leone rescues Ruggiero from prison. Ruggiero's pledge to his rescuer requires Ruggiero to fight Bradamante on Leone's behalf (26–61). Ruggiero defends himself against Bradamante without wounding her (64–82). Distressed at this outcome, which means that Leone has the right to marry her, Ruggiero wanders into a dark forest, "fra scuri boschi, in luoghi strani e inculti" [45.91.4: amongst dark woods, in strange and hidden places]—the archetypal location of the erring quest, the location of adventures with damsels (5) and giants (15), of digressive tales (42), and of love-longing and madness (23). The inevitable (because of what we know of Leone's admiration for Ruggiero) turn in the plot comes in the final canto (46) where the wood becomes a place of resolution. Leone finds Ruggiero, gives up his claim to Bradamante, and frees Ruggiero from his pledge so that he may marry the woman he has won through his own prowess and devotion. While

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Ruggiero returns, Marfisa is baptized; |
| | *Tornare*: | Astolfo restores Senapo's sight. |
| 38 | | Duel proposed between Rinaldo and Ruggiero; |
| | *Errare*: | Melissa promises to disrupt duel. |
| | *Errare*: | Melissa, disguised as Rodomonte, tricks Agramante into disrupting duel. |
| 39 | | Astolfo turns leaves into ships. |
| | *Tornare*: | Orlando is cured of madness; |
| | | Astolfo's fleet catches Agramante off guard. |
| | | Brandimarte pursues the Saracens; |
| | *Tornare*: | duel of Orlando and Gradasso is proposed. |
| 40 | | Ruggiero breaks his promise to himself and |
| | *Errare*: | Bradamante: he follows Agramante even after he has interrupted the duel: |
| | | Ruggiero fights Dudone, Bradamante's kin. |
| 41 | *Errare*: | Ruggiero is shipwrecked. |
| | | Orlando arms his men for battle. |
| | *Tornare*: | Ruggiero returns to his promise to Bradamante and is baptized. |
| | | Three Christians fight three Saracens. |
| 42 | *Tornare*: | Brandimarte dies; Orlando slays Agramante and Gradasso; he is purged of malice. |
| | *Errare*: | Rinaldo, cured of love, wanders off out of a desire for adventure. |
| 43 | | Two tales of husbands who pursue knowledge |
| | *Errare*: | of their wives' infidelity. |
| | | Brandimarte is buried; Rinaldo returns. |
| | *Tornare*: | Christians are reunited; Sobrino is baptized. |
| 44 | | Astolfo disenchants leaves and boulders |
| | *Tornare*: | and releases *ippogrifo*. Carlomagno grants Bradamante's request that she marry only a man who can defeat her in trial by combat. |
| | *Errare*: | Bradamante's parents imprison her. |
| | | Ruggiero wanders off to slay Leone. |
| 45 | | Ruggiero is rescued from prison and |
| | *Errare*: | must duel with Bradamante for Leone. |
| | | Ruggiero wanders into woods. |
| | | Marfisa objects to Leone's marriage to Bradamante |
| | *Tornare*: | and demands a duel between Ruggiero and Leone. |

*Fig. 10. Narrative patterns of section five*

most of Canto 45 presents obstacles to the conclusion of the story, Marfisa's proposal of a duel between Ruggiero and Leone, which impels Leone to search out Ruggiero, provides the impetus for these obstacles to be overcome.

The next paired cantos, 39 and 44, also oppose one another in their general plot outlines. Canto 39 begins with two variations on the *errare* motif: Melissa disguises herself as Rodomonte to convince Agramante to interrupt the duel of Ruggiero and Rinaldo (4–11); Astolfo magically transforms leaves into ships (25–29). This canto concludes with two stories that tend towards closure: Orlando's wits are restored (33–65); and Dudone's fleet (Astolfo's enchanted leaves) engages in a battle with Agramante, which seems destined to bring the war to a close (66–86).

The scheme of *errare-tornare* is reversed in Canto 39's companion canto (44), where scenes of reconciliation, disenchantment, and return are followed by scenes of conflict, entrapment, and wandering. The first third of Canto 44 takes us towards closure: Rinaldo and Ruggiero pledge friendship (6–11); Astolfo disenchants ships and horses, and releases the *ippogrifo* (20–25); and the paladins return to court. The last two-thirds of the canto take us further and further from resolution: Bradamante's parents judge Ruggiero an unsuitable husband and then imprison her at Roccaforte (36–72); Ruggiero rides off to slay Leone, the suitor preferred by Bradamante's parents (77–104). As the canto closes, Ruggiero is in a strange town where a Romanian knight recognizes him as the victorious knight of the unicorn and hurries to inform his lord Ungiardo of the presence of this daunting enemy.

In cantos 40 and 43, the martial and epic subject matter of the former canto contrasts with the romance material of the latter. Canto 40 relates the storming of Biserta, including Orlando's plan of attack, and Brandimarte's *aristeia* (9–35). Then Gradasso suggests combat at Lipadusa, and Orlando accepts the challenge (49–60). Framing these two scenes are two naval battles: the first in which Astolfo routs Agramante (5–9) and the second in which Ruggiero frees the Saracen captives and fights Dudone (61–82). Whereas Ruggiero's allegiance to Agramante had earlier been justified by the narrator (38), now doubts are raised about Ruggiero's continuing to fight on the side of the Saracen king. Ruggiero now breaks his pledge to fight for Carlo if Agramante proves to be a truce breaker (64–68). Here duty becomes error.

While these duels and the larger battle rage on in Canto 40, Rinaldo, though supposedly in great haste to return to his fellow warrior Orlando's side, has the leisure to listen to stories (43.6–144). The two told in Canto 43 are concerned with the theme of marital infidelity. Rinaldo not only wanders from the direct route to the battlefield but also errs in his judgment of the moral of each tale.[6] Following these digressions comes Brandimarte's funeral, for which Rinaldo arrives just in time, and the death of Fiordiligi (145–85). The paladins, looking for a cure for Oliviero, visit a hermit (188–92). There on the deserted rock, Oliviero is healed, and Sobrino, too, is cured and baptized (193–94). Sobered by the death of Brandimarte, Orlando and his companions are united with Ruggiero (195–99). With the Saracen's conversion and the death of Agramante, nothing can prevent their return to Carlo and Ruggiero's marriage to Bradamante.

As in earlier sections, Ariosto creates the impressions that the actions in section five are taking place simultaneously. In Canto 41, when Ruggiero and the freed prisoners are shipwrecked, their ship winds up in Africa where, as we have already been told, Orlando has sighted it (40.60). Hence, we are given the impression that Ruggiero's shipwreck (41.4–23) takes place at the same time as the storming of Bizerta (40.9–60), and his conversion (41.46–67) at the same time as the battle of the three Christian and three Saracen warriors (40.68–102). By this same narrative device, Ariosto also makes Rinaldo's trial in the forest of Ardennes and his entertainment by storytellers simultaneous with the battle of three against three. Just after Brandimarte's death, Orlando is said to have spied a light craft approaching (42.23). Not until 43.151 do we discover that this is Rinaldo, whose cure from "love" of Angelica and whose penchant for tales of adventure are related alongside the epic events of the central episode. Rinaldo's circuitous journey home shows us that *tornare* can involve *errare*.

Conversely, Ruggiero's erring shipwreck leads to his conversion. The central panel, containing both Ruggiero's conversion and Orlan-

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[6] Wiggins notes this in *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry*, 32–35. See two contrasting interpretations of Rinaldo's judgment: as "aurea mediocritas," in Stewart A. Baker and A. Bartlett Giamatti, eds., *Orlando Furioso* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1968), xxxviii, and as "il consenso universale," in Mario Santoro, *Letture Ariostesche* (Naples: Liguori, 1973), 132.

do's change through Brandimarte's death, is flanked on either side by stories of wandering. After the battle with Dudone, Ruggiero's ship is suddenly battered by a storm (41.4–22). He jumps overboard into the ship's boat, but as this boat with all the other passengers sinks, Ruggiero starts swimming in the direction of the barren rock (21–22). This uncertain beginning to Canto 41, with Ruggiero at the mercy of the elements, is paralleled by the erring journey of Rinaldo at the close of Canto 42. Though on his way to aid Orlando, Rinaldo takes up a new path with a knight he has just met because "di veder e d'udire ebbe / sempre aventure un desiderio innato" [42.72.5–6: he always had an innate desire to see and hear adventures].

The to-and-fro action of section five not only creates this symmetrical narrative pattern but also expresses philosophical content. The changes which Ruggiero and Orlando undergo in Cantos 41 and 42 affirm the virtue of human commitment in the face of the instability of fortune. Belief in the value of some pledge of faith—friendship, marriage, duty to fellow soldier—underpins every genuine return in section five. All of these returns reflect the concerns of the central panel: the conversion of Ruggiero and the purgation of Orlando.

Ruggiero's conversion signifies the fulfillment of his promise to Bradamante and the consequent acceptance of his fate. Tossing amidst the waves, Ruggiero fears the storm is Christ's vengeance, and once landing safely ashore, he is admonished by the hermit for not having heeded Christ before. The hermit's quoting God's words to Saul from the Acts of the Apostles is appropriate because they evoke the suddenness of Paul's conversion: "'Saulo, Saulo, / gridò, perché persegui la mia fede?'" [41.53.1–2: "Saul, Saul (he cried) why do you persecute my faith?"]. The difference in Ruggiero's case is that he has already promised Bradamante that he would become a Christian, and now at the moment of death, he vows to keep this promise if God will save his life:

> Gli ritornano a mente le promesse
> che tante volte alla sua donna fece;
> quel che giurato avea quando si messe
> contra Rinaldo, e nulla satisfece.
> A Dio, ch'ivi punir non lo volesse,
> pentito disse quattro volto e diece;

e fece voto di core e di fede
d'esser cristian, se ponea in terra il piede:

e mai più non pigliar spada né lancia
contra ai fedeli in aiuto de' Mori;
ma che ritorneria subito in Francia,
e a Carlo renderia debiti onori;
né Bradamante più terrebbe a ciancia,
e verria a fine onesto dei suo' amori.
Miracol fu, che sentì al fin del voto
crescersi forza e agevolarsi il nuoto.

[41.48–49: He recalled the promises that he had made so many times to his lady; and the oath he had sworn when he set himself against Rinaldo, and none did he fulfill. Penitently he asked God four times and ten that he not punish him now; and made a vow to become a Christian of heart and of faith, if he set foot on land: / and never more to take up sword and lance against the faithful in aid of the Moors; but that he would return immediately to France, and to Carlo render due honors; and would no longer dally with Bradamante, and would arrive at the honorable consummation of his love. By a miracle as he made his vow he felt himself increase in strength and swam more easily.]

Ruggiero's conversion begins and ends, not with the thought of God, but with the memory of a vow to Bradamante. His spiritual return is first to "le promesse / che tante volte alla sua donna fece." The memory of these promises now prompt him to vow to become not just a Christian in name, but "di core e di fede," and to swear fealty to Carlo Magno. The thought of fulfilling his promise to Bradamante by marrying her gives him the physical strength to survive. His faith, his obligations to the emperor and the faithful are all motivated by Ruggiero's love for Bradamante and his desire to stay alive.[7]

For the first time in the poem, Ruggiero is told of his son Ruggiero (63–64) and how he will found the house of Este (65–66). And

[7] See, however, the well-articulated argument of Fichter in *Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance*, 83–102, that Ruggiero's conversion represents "the superseding of reason by grace" (98).

along with the promise of future greatness comes the burden of present responsibility, which earlier in the poem is mainly shouldered by Bradamante. It is Bradamante, after all, who is sent to rescue Ruggiero from Atlante (4), who defeats the traitor Pinabello (22), and frees Rodomonte's captives (35). Unlike Bradamante's quests, Ruggiero's adventures are more often than not distractions from duty—as are his erotically motivated rescue of Angelica (10) and his petty duels over emblems and horses (26, 27, 30). Ruggiero's and Bradamante's joint overthrow of Marganorre the misogynist (37) looks forward to the joint obligations of marriage that Ruggiero is finally able to fulfill. After his conversion Ruggiero learns that he will die at the hands of the Maganzesi for his slaying of Bertolagi and Bradamante's slaying of Pinabello (41.61). Ruggiero is also told that his death in turn will be avenged by Bradamante, his sister Marfisa, and his son Ruggiero. This sense of mutual obligation foreshadows the conclusion of the poem, where Bradamante is willing to take up the battle against Rodomonte and Ruggiero accepts and carries out the challenge without complaint. Just after vowing his loyalty to Bradamante, Ruggiero becomes resigned to fate: "Ma pur col core indomito, e constante / di partir quanto è in ciel di lui prescritto" [52.1–2: But still with indomitable heart, and ready to endure whatever had been prescribed for him in heaven]. Similarly, in his final battle with Rodomonte, Ruggiero shows his newfound inner strength, the ability to endure physical danger and pain:

> Ruggier sta in sé raccolto, e mette in opra
> senno e valor, per rimaner di sopra.
>
> [46.133.7–8: Ruggiero remained possessed within himself, and put to work his wit and valor to remain on top.]

Both goals of Ruggiero's conversion—his equal responsibility to Bradamante and his resignation to fate—are virtues of Stoic ethics. Ariosto's portrayal of women as the equal of men has been attributed to his affirmation of the "progressive spirit ... identified ... as feminine."[8] Another interpretation counters this view with the notion

[8] See Lillian Robinson, "Monstrous Regiment: The Lady Knight in Sixteenth-Century Epic" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 1974), 126.

that Ariosto argues for a "transcendence of stereotypes based on gender."[9] The notion of the equality of the sexes, and specifically of their equal capability for virtue, and of their equality in marriage, can be found in the ancient Stoics' belief that all humans are by nature equal in their common possession of reason.[10] Among the Roman Stoics, Seneca, in particular, attacks the double standard and argues for the equal obligations of husband and wife:

> Every obligation that involves two people makes an equal demand upon both.... [I]t is true that a husband has certain duties, yet those of a wife are not less great. In the exchange of obligations each in turn renders to the other the service that he requires, and they desire that the same rule of action should apply to both, but this rule, as Hecaton says, is a difficult matter; for it is hard to attain to virtue, even to approach virtue; for there must be not merely achievement, but achievement through reason.[11]

The common standard of moral action for man and woman is the virtuous, or honorable (*honestum*). It is just this goal of what is *honestum* to which Ruggiero commits himself when he vows to achieve "a fin honesto" in his love for Bradamante. Elsewhere, Seneca speaks of the ability of women to attain all the virtues:

> But who has asserted that nature has dealt grudgingly with

[9] See Wiggins' discussion, "Fables of Gender," in *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry*, 163–64, where he mentions Ariosto's familiarity with Mario Equicola's *De mulieribus*. See also Conor Fahy, "Three Early Renaissance Treatises on Women: 'De laudibus mulierum' by Bartolomeo Gogio; 'De mulieribus' by Mario Equicola; 'Defensio mulierum' by Agostino Strozzi," *Italian Studies* 11 (1956): 30–55. Most of these treatises argue either the superiority or inferiority of women; unlike the *Furioso*, Equicola's text is not particularly concerned with marriage.

[10] See *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* 3.215, 314, 317, 319, 333, 339. Indeed, the Stoics stand out amongst the schools of ancient philosophy for their egalitarianism. See Anna Lydia Motto, "Seneca on Women's Liberation," *The Classical World* 65, no. 5 (1972): 155–57, and the qualifications of C. E. Manning, "Seneca and the Stoics on the Equality of the Sexes," *Mnemosyne* 26 (1973): 170–77.

[11] Seneca, *De beneficiis* 2.17.1–2, in *Moral Essays*, 3: "Quodcumque ex duobus constat officium, tantumdem ab utroque exigit ... sunt aliquae partes mariti, sed non minores uxoris. Invicem ista, quantum exigunt, praestant et parem desiderant regulam quae, ut ait Hecaton, difficilis est; omne enim honestum in arduo est, etiam quod vicinum honesto est; non enim tantum fieri debet, sed ratione fieri."

> women's natures and has narrowly restricted their virtues? Believe me, they have just as much force, just as much capacity, if they like, for virtuous action; they are just as able to endure suffering from toil when they are accustomed to it.[12]

After maintaining women's capacity to endure mental and physical hardships, Seneca cites examples: the virtuous Lucretia (mentioned in *Furioso* 29.28 and 42.83) and the early Roman heroine Cloelia, whose signal courage (*insigneum audaciam*) caused the Romans to erect a statue of her on horseback, which Seneca claims served as a taunt to young men who were carried about on cushioned seats (*Ad Marciam* 16.2). Cloelia is not unlike the brave and virtuous Bradamante, who sets the standard for heroism that Ruggiero must meet.

Ruggiero's new willingness to face death and his responsibilities also distinguishes his conversion as Stoic. It is an act of will, the vow to fulfill his promise to Bradamante, that gives Ruggiero the strength to endure the shipwreck. Even when Ruggiero lands safely ashore, he fears that he will meet his death on the barren rock, but he sets out to climb it: "col cor indomito, e costante / di partir quanto è in ciel di lui prescritto" [41.52.1–2: still, with indomitable heart and ready to endure whatever Heaven sent him]. Seneca uses the same images that Ariosto uses in the account of Ruggiero's conversion—being tossed about at sea and struggling to climb rigorous heights—to convey the Stoic heroic stance towards life:

> And yet life, Lucilius, is really a battle. For this reason those who are tossed about at sea, who proceed uphill and downhill over toilsome crags and heights, who go on campaigns that bring the greatest danger, are heroes and front rank fighters.[13]

This same letter expresses the characteristically Stoic acceptance of fate by free will:

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[12] Seneca, *De consolatione ad Marciam* 16.1, in *Moral Essays*, 2: "Quis autem dixit naturam maligne cum mulierum ingeniis egisse et virtutes illarum in artum retraxisse? Par illis, mihi crede, vigor, par ad honesta, libeat, facultas est; dolorem laboremque ex aequo, si consuevere, patiuntur."

[13] Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 96.5: "Atqui vivere, Lucili, militare est. Itaque hi, qui iactantur et per operosa atque ardua sursum ac deorsum eunt et expeditiones periculosissimas obeunt, fortes viri sunt primoresque castrorum."

> when everything seems to go hard and uphill, I have trained myself not merely to obey God, but to agree with His decisions. I follow him because my soul wills it, not because I must.[14]

After his conversion, Ruggiero continues to be impassive in the face of difficulty and determined despite suffering. These qualities are brought out by his friendship with Leone, which first obliges Ruggiero to fight Bradamante on Leone's behalf and then impels Ruggiero to take his own life rather than betray a promise to a friend. Once Leone has rescued Ruggiero from prison, and, thus, saved his life, Ruggiero pledges to sacrifice his life for Leone in return. Learning of the edict that calls for Bradamante's future husband to defeat her in arms, Leone, still unaware of Ruggiero's identity, asks him to fight this duel on his behalf. Ruggiero's response shows the Stoic constancy and lack of complaint:

> l'obligo grande che Ruggier gli avea,
> da mai non ne dovere essere isciolto:
> sì che quantunque duro gli parea,
> e non possibil quasi; pur con volto,
> più che con cor giocondo, gli rispose
> ch'era per far per lui tutte le cose.
>
> [45.56: the great debt that Ruggiero owed him, a debt from which he would never feel discharged. Therefore, however hard, however close to impossible it seemed to him, nonetheless, with a smile on his face if not in his heart, he replied that he would do it.]

Having maintained his own against Bradamante, and, so, won her for Leone, Ruggiero resolves to die rather than live without her or break faith with Leone (46.37–38). Although reduced to tears by his suffering, Ruggiero is unwilling to alter his purpose, until released from his promise by Leone (46.42). This struggle within Ruggiero between his love for Bradamante and his duty to Leone is portrayed as a sharp

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[14] Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 96.2: "in omnibus, quae adversa videntur et dura, sic formatus sum: non pareo deo, sed adsentior. Ex animo illum, non quia necesse est, sequor."

interior crisis, not unlike those conflicts undergone by Aeneas, whose Stoic "magnitudo animi" confronts his suffering "humanitas."[15] As in the case of Aeneas, the Stoic ethic accounts for only a part of the portrayal of Ruggiero's character. However, unlike Aeneas, who is still conflicted at the end of the *Aeneid* about whether to kill or spare Turnus, Ruggiero seems to resolve all hesitation. (But then Rodomonte in his fury lacks Turnus' eloquence and tragic appeal to "humanitas.")

The change that Orlando undergoes in Canto 42, the companion story to Ruggiero's conversion, shares its preoccupation with the return to duty, the loyalty of friendship, and the resignation to fate. Orlando's *aristeia*, or prowess in battle, is prepared for by the return of his wits (39), his acceptance of a duel with Gradasso (40), and his fighting by the side of his friend Brandimarte (41). Just as Ruggiero's conversion is described as the change from wandering (as in his wayward voyage—"per diverse mare / scorsero errando ove caccioli il vento" [41.16: through different seas they wandered where the wind chased them]) to return (as in remembering his promise to Bradamante—"Gli ritornano a mente le promesse" [41.48: the promises returned to his mind]), so, too, is the return of Orlando's wits set forth in terms of the opposition between *errare/errore* and *tornare*. After Astolfo applies the wits to Orlando's nose, his return to sanity is marked by his return to rational and ordered speech:

> che ritornò la mente al primier uso;
> e ne' suoi bei discorsi l'intelletto
> rivenne, più che mai lucido e netto.
>
> [39.57.6–8: he recovered his mind in its first condition; and his intellect returned in his beautiful speech, more polished and lucid than ever.]

Orlando, "d'errar tratto" [58.7: having been treated for his erring], cries out, "Solvite me" [60.3: Free me or Unbind me], as the chorus cries out for Hercules to be cured, "solvite tantis animum monstris" [*Hercules Furens* 1063: free his soul from such monstrous ills]. Released

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[15] Viktor Pöschl, *The Art of Virgil: Image and Symbol in the "Aeneid,"* trans. Gerda Seligson (1962; reprint, Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1970), 57.

from his fetters, Orlando is consoled for "quel passato errore" [his former error] (60.8) that he now so regrets, just as Hercules laments his "error ingens" [*Hercules Furens* 1238: enormous error].

The return of Orlando's wits, like Ruggiero's conversion, contains parodic resonances of Virgil and of the Bible. While Ruggiero's shipwreck conjures up Aeneas' shipwreck in *Aeneid* 1, so Orlando's words, "Solvite me," are those of Silenus in Virgil's *Eclogue* 6. As Ruggiero's conversion echoes Paul's in the Acts of the Apostles, so Orlando's unbinding echoes that of Lazarus, of whom Jesus says, "solvite eum" [unbind him] in John 11:44.

The return of Orlando's wits is not only parodic but also broadly humorous—with Orlando's inhalation of his wits—a grotesque version of the vaporous *pneuma* of the Stoics—inhaled through his nose. The comedy of the scene, however, does not undercut its serious consequences any more than the comedy of Orlando's madness invalidates it as a criticism of courtly love. While Orlando's madness, however, is consistently parodic and humorous, what occurs after the return of Orlando's wits depends on a modulation in tone, a turn towards epic gravity, in order to affirm friendship, duty, and resignation to fate. In Ruggiero's case, this epic gravity is most fully achieved in his duel with Rodomonte. For Orlando, such gravity is only reached through the death of Brandimarte.

If Orlando's return to sanity seems too sudden and too parodic and his acceptance of a duel with Gradasso, influenced as it is by his desire to regain his sword Durindana, seems too selfish to signify a genuine affirmation of duty, Orlando's revenge, sorrow, and final purgation of enmity in response to Brandimarte's death mark the true turning point in the story of Orlando.[16] The revenge that Orlando takes upon Agramante and Gradasso for the death of Brandimarte is implicitly likened to Achilles' revenge for the death of Patroklos (42.2); for Achilles' wrath is likened to that of Alfonso's troops when they saw him fall at Bastia (42.3), and this fury is in turn likened to Orlando's anger (42.6). While Orlando, like Achilles, first grieves and

[16] For an opposing view, see Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry*, 136: "The sanity Orlando regains at Astolfo's hands amounts to nothing more than the return of his old delusion." Wiggins, however, does not take into account *Furioso* 42.1–19.

rages and takes vengeance for the death of his companion, he finally transcends these emotions through his confrontation with death.

Just as Ruggiero converts at the moment when mortality impinges upon him, so, too, does Orlando. Brandimarte's death, like the death of Isabella (29.26–30), testifies to the faithfulness of his life and the serenity of his departure. Brandimarte's death is likened to a ship's sailing into harbor, which in the final section is the dominant image for return:

> Padre del ciel, dà fra gli eletti tuoi
> spiriti luogo al martir tuo fedele,
> che giunto al fin de' tempestosi suoi
> viaggi, in porto ormai lega le vele.

[41.100.1–4: Father of Heaven, make place amongst your chosen spirits for your faithful martyr, who has reached the end of his stormy travels, now furls his sails in harbor.]

Both Isabella, who commits suicide to protect her chastity, and Brandimarte, who dies in battle out of allegiance to his friend, achieve a kind of apotheosis through death.[17]

Once Orlando has taken vengeance on Agramante and Gradasso for Brandimarte's death, Orlando overcomes his enmity. First, his reaction to the defeat of Agramante and Gradasso is impassive: "Di tal vittoria non troppo gioioso . . . / . . . De la vittoria poco rallegrosse" [42.12.1, 18 1: He was not too joyful about such a victory . . . / . . . little joy did he have of his victory]. Not only does Orlando not exalt in his victory, but he is also purged of malice, when he aids the bleeding Sobrino, whom he had earlier wounded:

> Lo fece tor, che tutto era sanguigno,
> il conte, e medicar discretamente;
> e confortollo con parlar benigno,
> come se stato gli fosse parente;
> che dopo il fatto nulla di maligno
> in sé tenea, ma tutto era clemente.

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[17] See Colish, *The Stoic Traditions from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 49: "But Seneca sometimes describes it [death] as a good, calling it, without much originality, a haven of refuge and a harbor in a stormy sea. In some circumstances, according to Seneca, death may be preferable to life, if life means the loss of liberty, chastity, or good conscience."

[42.19.1–6: The count had him removed, since he was all bloody, and sought medical care for him; and comforted him with kind words, as if he were his kinsman; so that after it had been done he held nothing of malice within himself, but was all clemency.]

It is the conscious confrontation with mortality that works this change in Orlando and which calls for the grave tone of his funeral oration, where he addresses Brandimarte: "'O forte, o caro, o mio fedel compagno'" [43.170.1: Dear, loyal comrade, Brandimart the strong]. Orlando acknowledges his grief and pays tribute to his friend's martial prowess, upon whom all the paladins had relied. The knight who had once gone mad through his obsession with a false image of a woman and of himself now shows that he can now understand the thoughts and feelings of others. The following stanzas, addressed to Brandimarte, show a progression of concern with the self, his fellow paladins, and with Brandimarte's beloved Fiordiligi. Orlando witnesses his own responsibility for Brandimarte's death before her:

> Tu guadagnato, e perdita ho fatto io;
> sol tu all'acquisto, io non son solo al danno.
> Partecipe fatto è del dolor mio
> l'Italia, il regno franco e l'alemanno.
> Oh quanto, quanto il mio signore e zio,
> oh quanto, i paladin da doler s'hannno!
> quanto l'Imperio e la cristiana Chiesa,
> che perduto han la sua maggior difesa!
>
> Oh quanto si torrà per la tua morte
> di terrore a' nimici e di spavento!
> Oh quanto Pagania sarà più forte!
> quanto animo n'avrà, quanto ardimento!
> Oh come star ne dee la tua consorte!
> Sin qui ne veggo il pianto, e 'l grido sento.
> So che m'accusa, e forse odio mi porta,
> che per me teco ogni sua speme è morta.

[43.172–173: Yours is the gain, mine is the loss; you are alone in your gain, I not alone in my loss; Italy and the French and

> German kingdom share in my sorrow. Oh, how much grief my liege and uncle has, oh how much grief the paladins! how much grief the Empire and the christian Church, who have lost their greatest defense! / Oh how greatly shall your enemies' terror be allayed by your death! How much shall the pagan world be strengthened, how greatly shall its courage its morale be enhanced! Oh, how must it be for your lady! Even here I can see her weeping, hear her cry. I know that she blames me, and perhaps she hates me, since on my account all her hope is dead.]

The rhetorical formality and the public and communal perspective of this funeral oration distinguish it as weightier in tone and content than any previous speech of Orlando. The repetition of "Oh quanto" recalls Aeneas' funeral oration for Pallas: "hei mihi, quantum / praesidium, Ausonia, et quantum tu perdis Iule!" [11.57–58: how great a defense, Ausonia, and how great a defense you have lost, Iulus!]. The modulation from "O quanto" to "Oh come" draws our attention to Fiordiligi, whose sorrow is given the final and most important place in this catalogue of grieving survivors. Orlando's most affecting lines describe her grief with the recognition that it was through him—"che per me"—out of allegiance to him, that Brandimarte died.

Though deluded or raving throughout most of the poem, Orlando does achieve his measure of greatness through his response to the death of Brandimarte. His kindness to Sobrino, his new sense of public responsibility, and his awareness of mortality all contribute to a return to a Stoic ethos in the final section. This description of the great man from Seneca's *Epistula* 120 characterizes his resignation to duty and fate, to which Ruggiero and Orlando both seem to strive:

> and he has turned towards himself the thoughts of all men, because he was gentle and calm and equally compliant with the orders of man and God.... But this heart is never more divine than when it reflects upon its mortality and understands that man was born for the purpose of fulfilling his life.[18]

[18] Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 120.13–14: "advertitque in se omnium animos, cum esset placidus et lenis, humanis divinisque rebus pariter aequus.... Quod numquam magis divinum est, quam ubi mortalitatem suam cogitat et scit in hoc natum hominem, ut vita defungeretur."

Both Orlando and Ruggiero show their conversion to virtue through friendship. Following the funeral of Brandimarte, Orlando and the other Christian paladins, including the converted Sobrino, are united with Ruggiero on the barren rock. Here they pledge their friendship to one another (44.1–9). The scene recalls Brandimarte's friendship with Orlando and looks forward to Ruggiero's friendship with Leone. We are reminded of Brandimarte's faithfulness to Orlando unto death in the narrator's description of the "nodo forte / ad amor vero" [44.4.2–3: strong bond to true love] that binds the knights together: "Fu questo poi di tal perseveranza, / che non si sciolse mai fin alla morte" [44.4.5–6: It was of such perseverance that it could not be loosened even at death]. Also, the paladins' attitude towards one another—their honesty, in particular—foreshadows Ruggiero's revelation of his true self to Leone. The hermit finds the men to be "tutti amabili e cortesi" [44.5.1: all friendly and courteous], just as Leone later is overwhelmed by Ruggiero's selflessness "[b]en sì gran cortesia" [46.38.7: such great kindness], when he pledges, "molto più che 'l mio bene, il tuo mi piace" [46.36.8: more than my own good, I desire yours]. Just as Leone and Ruggiero, at first pitted against one another as enemies, ultimately resolve their differences out of mutual regard, so, too, do the knights here united in friendship.

> Di quanto s'eran per adietro offesi
> ogni memoria fu tra loro estinta;
> e se d'un ventre fossero e d'un seme,
> non si potriano amar più tutti insieme.
>
> [44.5.5–8: They totally forgot every injury they had ever inflicted upon each other; had they all been sprung from the same seed and the same womb they could not have loved each other more mutually.]

These descriptions of friendship have their analogues in Cicero's *De amicitia*, a text on the Stoic concept of friendship. Cicero stresses how friendship is based on faithfulness, amiability, honesty, and loyalty—such virtues as Ariosto's *cavalieri* embody in Canto 44.[19] Cicero's

[19] See Cicero, *De senectute, De amicitia, De divinatione*, trans. William Armistead Falconer, LCL (1979), for comments on faithfulness, amiability, honesty, loyalty, and lack of suspicion and hypocrisy (*De amicitia* 18.65–66).

definition of friendship calls for harmony (*consensio*) in all things that characterizes the paladins' mutual consensus through baptism, allegiance to Carlo, and the pledge to defend the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante (44.10–11):

> Friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual good will and affection [*benevolentia et caritate*].[20]

There is also a striking similarity between the language of *De amicitia* and the *Furioso*. The affections that the Stoics believe are virtuous because in harmony with reason are part of the description of the paladins' fellowship. The hermit is pleased by the sight of "questa / benivolenza" (9.3–4). The narrator points out that courts and palaces lack "la caritade" that binds these knights together:

> Spesso in poveri alberghi e in picciol tetti,
> ne le calamitadi e nei disagi,
> meglio s'aggiungon d'amicizia i petti,
> che fra ricchezze invidiose ed agi
> de le piene d'insidie e di sospetti
> corti regali e splendidi palagi,
> ove la caritade è in tutto estina,
> né si vede amicizia, se non finta.
>
> Quindi avvien che tra principi e signori
> patti e convenzion son sì frali.
> Fan lega oggi re, papi e imperatori;
> doman saran nimici capitali:
> perché, qual l'apparenze esteriori,
> non hanno i cor, non han gli animi tali;
> che non mirando al torto più ch'al dritto,
> attendon solamente al lor profitto.
>
> [44.1–2: The bond of friendship tends to be better secured in the homes of the poor, and where there is misfortune and hardship, than it is amidst invidious wealth and luxury of

[20] Cicero, *De amicitia* 6.20: "Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio."

> royal courts and splendid palaces full of snares and mistrust, where charity is extinct and friendship not to be found other than counterfeit. / This explains why pacts and agreements among princes and rulers are so fragile. Kings, popes, and emperors make alliances today: tomorrow they will be mortal enemies because their outward semblance is not in keeping with their hearts—heedless of right and wrong they pursue their own advantage.]

Ariosto's castigation of the powerful for their irresponsible and dishonest pursuit of selfish advantage, which makes them incapable of friendship, parallels Cicero's diatribe against tyrants:[21]

> who is there that would be willing to have a superabundance of all objects of desire and to live in the utmost fullness of wealth and what wealth can bring, on condition of neither loving any one nor being loved by anyone? This, indeed, is the life of tyrants, in which there is no good faith, no affection, no confidence in goodly feeling, perpetual suspicion and anxiety, and no room for friendship; for who can love either whom he fears, or him by whom he thinks that he is feared?[22]

Both Ariosto and Cicero argue that power and wealth make the trust and affection necessary for friendship impossible.

These stanzas on friendship at the opening of Canto 44 comment not only on the faithfulness that expresses the *tornare* theme but also on the overvaluation of wealth and position that are the focus of the

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[21] Also see these later passages: 44.36–38, 46, 52, 57–58, and 45.109, 111, which Giuseppe Dalla Palma calls "una serie di spunti polemici verso quell'Autorità [che ostacola il valore come motivo che apre all'amore] ... e verso un 'vulgo' che non esclude 'papi' 're' e 'imperator' (44.48–51)" ("Dal Secondo al terzo *Furioso*: mutamenti di struttura e moventi ideologici," in *Ariosto: lingua, stile e tradizione*, ed. Cesare Segre [Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976], 102). In general, Dalla Palma sees additions to the third edition as expressing a critique of authority and an appreciation of individual virtue against arbitrary authority.

[22] *De amicitia* 15.52–53: "qui velit at neque diligat quemquam nec ipse ab ullo diligatur, circumfluere omnibus copiis atque in omnium rerum abundantia vivere? Haec enim est tyrannorum vita nimirum, in qua nulla fides, nulla caritas, nulla stabilis benivolentiae potest esse fiducia, omne semper suspecta atque sollicita, nullus locus amicitiae. Quis enim auteum diligat quem metuat, aut eum a quo se metui putet?"

critique of moral error in the final section of the poem. Craving riches and being supine before manipulation by others are the greatest obstacles to fidelity in two digressive stories told to Rinaldo. In the first story, Rinaldo is told of a Mantuan knight who becomes uncertain about his wife's fidelity when a sorceress, attempting to seduce him, encourages him to test his wife. Though her fidelity is proved when the magic cup spills no wine on her husband's chest, he allows himself to be manipulated by the sorceress even further by subjecting his wife to yet another test. The sorceress suggests that he impersonate a handsome and powerful young knight (whose advances his wife had formerly rebuffed) and tempt her with jewels. To his dismay he discovers that his wife is indeed greedy enough to betray him. Rinaldo finds a moral for the story. In his cynical view, the husband was wrong to tempt his wife, because there is no faith that can overcome greed: "Non sai tu, contra l'oro, che né i marmi / ne 'l durissimo acciar sta alla contesa?" [49.3–4: Do you not realize that neither marble nor the hardest steel will stand up to gold?]. That Rinaldo has just viewed the marble paragons of virtue, statues of Bradamante's descendants, in the Mantuan knight's gallery (42.79–96) makes the story and the moral Rinaldo draws from it incredibly provocative.

The next story is even more labyrinthine and the further depravity of its characters an apparently stronger proof of Rinaldo's jaded complacency. The boatman tells Rinaldo of a young knight, Adonio, who has been using up all his wealth to win the favor of a fair lady, Argia, married to the judge, Anselmo, who suffers from the same curiosity as the husband of the previous tale. Anselmo searches for certainty of his wife's chastity by consulting an astrologer who tells him she will betray her husband for riches. While Anselmo is away, the young Adonio returns to the beautiful wife of Anselmo with a magic dog given him by a sorceress. She succumbs to Adonio to win the dog, who can produce any object on command. When her husband discovers her infidelity and tries to slay her, she escapes, having been warned by the dog. The story reaches its conclusion when Anselmo arrives at a beautiful palace. In front of the palace stands an Ethiopian with an ugly face ("un così sozzo e dispiacevol viso"), with the features of Aesop, who was known for his deformity ("di fattezze, qual si pinge Esopo"), greasy and dirty ("bisunto e sporco") and dressed like a beggar ("abito mendico") (135.4–5, 7). This fellow offers

Anselmo the entire palace if he will allow himself to be sodomized. Anselmo agrees, and at the moment he submits to sodomy, his wife, hiding nearby, sees him "nel suo error caduto" [140.2: caught in his error]. Rather than seek vengeance on him, Argia strikes a bargain. If she can forgive her husband his error, he should pardon hers. So they make peace and live happily ever after "ogni error vada in oblio" [143.2: every error forgotten]. Even this crazy story ends with a return: "'Così a pace e concordia ritornaro'" [143.7: "So to peace and harmony they returned"].

Rather than destroying Bradamante's or her descendants' virtue, these stories of corruption and Rinaldo's response to them make that virtue more meaningful—in a world where so many betray their integrity for wealth as the protagonists of these tales do, and so many accept these betrayals as the status quo as Rinaldo does. Bradamante and Ruggiero exist side by side with Rinaldo; the story of the lovers' fidelity is in the same poetic and moral world as the tales of the Mantuan knight and the boatman. The poem both affirms the lovers' faithfulness and denies that it is easy to achieve or even to believe. The poem also affirms Rinaldo's cynicism about human corruption—this is the way people act and talk—but at the same time criticizes his cynicism as dishonest and self-deceived. (It is all the more remarkable for this reason that some critics privilege Rinaldo's view.)[23] The married man Rinaldo has recently been cured of his adulterous love for Angelica, and he is engaged in pronouncing the most banal of pseudomorals upon both men and women. Rinaldo himself refuses the test of the cup because "'Mia donna è donna, ed ogni donna e molle'" [43.6.5: "My wife is a woman and every woman is pliant"]. But both stories prove not that women are "molle" or easily seduced but rather, like men, are greedy. His comment on how gold is stronger than any virtue is no improvement on his earlier proverb, since it leaves out of account that these stories are not just about greed for gold or riches but greed as a motive for sexual abasement. His comment on how men should not be curious and leave well enough alone—"'Ben sarebbe folle / chi quel che non vorria trovar, cercasse'"

[23] See Baker and Giamatti in the introduction to their edition to the poem, xxxviii, and Mario Santoro, *Letture Ariostesche*, 132.

[6.3–4: "He would be an utter fool who sought for what he had no wish to find"]—leaves out of account the Mantuan knight's allowing himself to be manipulated by the sorceress and Anselmo's willingness (contrary to his apparent inclinations) to be sodomized by a repulsive-looking person for wealth. Neither story is about the physical or aesthetic enjoyment of sex but about sex as the manipulation of others for power and wealth. Rinaldo's supposedly worldly wisdom does not comprehend the meaning of these stories or his own situation.

If we thought that these stories were digressions from the main theme of section five, Ariosto assures us that they are not. In the exordium to Canto 43, after inveighing against "Avarizia," the narrator insists:

> Non è senza cagion s'io me ne doglio;
> intendami chi può, che m'intend'io.
> Né però di proposito mi toglio,
> né la materia del mio canto oblio;
> ma non più a quel c'ho detto, adattar voglio,
> ch'a quel ch'io v'ho da dire, il parlar mio.
>
> [43.5.1–6: If I lay a complaint against Greed it is not without reason—let those who can understand be as clear as me about this. I am not digressing or forgetting the theme of my song, but my words are to be applied no less to what I am about to say than to what I have already said.]

Bradamante's parents prefer the powerful son of the emperor of the Eastern empire over Ruggiero as a husband for their daughter, and their preference displays the same moral error of the worship of wealth at the expense of all else. Just as the stories told to Rinaldo both delay the conclusion of the poem and reveal the characters' moral obtuseness, so, too, does the thwarting of Bradamante's marriage by her parents. Ariosto harps back to earlier themes in his criticism of Bradamante's parents:

> Ma il volgo, nel cui arbitrio son gli onori,
> che, come pare a lui, li leva e dona
> (né dal nome del volgo voglio fuori,
> eccetto l'uom prudente, trar persona;
> che né papi né re né imperatori

non ne tra' scetrro, mitra né corona;
ma la prudenza, ma il giudizio buono,
grazie che dal ciel date a pochi sono);

questo volgo (per dir quel ch'io vo' dire)
ch'altro non riverisce che richezza,
né vede cosa al mondo, che più ammire,
e senza, nulla cura e nulla apprezza,
sia quanto voglia la beltà, l'ardire,
la possanza del corpo, la destrezza,
la virtù, il senno, la bontà; e più in questo
di ch'ora vi ragiono, che nel resto.

[44.50–51: But the vulgar, in whose will are the honors, which, as it seems right to them, they take back and give, nor from the name of the vulgar do I want to save anyone out, except the wise man; since neither popes nor kings nor emperors are not rescued by scepter, miter nor crown; but only prudence and good judgment, graces which are given from heaven to but a few; / The vulgar, to say what I want to say, reverence nothing other than wealth, nor do they see anything on the earth that they admire more, and those without it, they ignore and despise, however much beauty, courage, physical strength, agility, virtue, wit, and goodness they possess; and more in this circumstance which I am now discussing than in any other.]

The narrator's disdain for the vulgar throng who value money above all else recalls his exasperation at those mindless throngs in section two, but here it is made clear that the powerful, out of their very need to maintain their position, are most driven by the herd instinct to value power alone. From section three comes the notion that all save the wise are mad, but here the greatest madness is not love for a beautiful false image but the adoration of all-too-real power. Finally, from section four comes the insistence on "prudenza" (wisdom) and "giudizio" (judgment) as the only guards against vulgarity and the adoration of power. What now of the critics' claims that Ariosto's poem is a monument to literary error and untruth—to the slavish dependence of the writer upon power—or a circumvention of meaning—an endless wandering that cannot affirm anything? If the philo-

logical evidence of the Renaissance concept of excessive praise as derision, which I cited in my explanation of the voyage to the moon, was not enough to demonstrate the limitations of these interpretations, this passage from Canto 44 alone argues against them. If my reading of the *Furioso* has shown anything, it is that the poem affirms a great deal—both error and virtue; both illusions and disillusions; both the need to exceed boundaries and the need for boundaries to exist; both madness and reason; both the literal-mindedness and moral obtuseness to misinterpret allegory and irony and the wisdom and judgment to interpret allegory and irony; both wandering and return.

CHAPTER NINE

# *Conclusion: The Poetic Image*

The operative mode of poetic thought is imagining, and imagination consists, essentially, of the ability to place contrary or divergent realities in relationship. All poetic forms and all linguistic features have one thing in common: they seek and often find hidden resemblances. In the most extreme cases they unite opposites. Comparisons, analogies, metaphors, metonymies and other devices of poetry—all tend to produce images in which this and that, the one and the other, the one and the many are joined. The poetic process conceives of language as an animated universe traversed by a dual current of attraction and repulsion. In language, the unions and the divisions, the love affairs and the separations of stars, cells, atoms and men are reproduced. Each poem, whatever its subject and form and the ideas that shape it, is first and foremost a miniature animated cosmos. "The poem unites the ten thousand things that make up the universe," as the ancient Chinese put it.[1]

If having fixed the original form in our mind's eye, we ask ourselves how that form comes alive and fills with life, we discover a new dynamic and vital category, a new property of the universe: reverberation *(retenir)*. It is as though a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves, repeatedly echoing against the sides of this vase, filled it with their sonority. Or again it is as though the sound of a hunting horn, reverberating through its echo made the tiniest leaf ... shudder in a common movement and transformed the whole forest, filling its limits, into a vibrating sonorous world.... In fact, our examples, because

[1] Octavio Paz, "Poetry and the Free Market," *New York Times Book Review*, 8 Dec. 1991, 38.

> they fill up with sound, form a sort of self-enclosed whole, a microcosm.[2]
>
> Even at the level of the isolated poetic image, if only in the progression of expression constituted by the verse, the phenomenological reverberation can appear.[3]

THIS VAST CIRCULAR AND DYNAMIC MOVEMENT THAT I HAVE been describing in my analysis of the spatial arrangement of the poem's plot also has its traces on the microcosmic level, in the isolated poetic image. The reverberation of the one and the many which Carne-Ross observed in the repeated phrase "di qua di là di su di giù" I traced through the mirrored actions and contrary motions of the plot's sequences of chiasmus. And I attempted to explain the relation between the symbolic action of the poem and Stoic discussions of perception, moral choice, madness, and interpretation. I likened the sense of completion in the poem to the Stoic view of harmony in the natural world.

Ottavio Paz's description of how poetry holds contradictory meanings in tension applies well to Ariosto's development of dialectical themes in the *Orlando Furioso*. When, in the first section of the poem, Ariosto places appearances in relation to judgment, it is not a matter of one term consistently dominating the other, but of the play back and forth between seeing and being deceived, between misconstruing and understanding, a process most fully represented in Dalinda's story of her complicity in Polinesso's deception of her (5), and in Ruggiero's misreading of Astolfo's story (6). Similarly, in section two, it is not a matter of excess *or* restraint, but of how, paradoxically, restraint creates a greater freedom (as in Orlando's self-possessed concentration in rescuing Isabella [13]) and how excess is a kind of enslavement (as in Rodomonte's uncontrollable drive to destroy even his own troops in his battle furor [14]). I would also contend that Orlando's madness, which occurs at the exact center of the poem (23–24), leads him to wisdom by disrupting his beautiful but deluded imaginative world. In section four, Ariosto engages questions of

[2] Eugene Minkowski, *Vers une Cosmologie*, Chapter 9, as quoted in Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), xii.

[3] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxiii.

hermeneutics by dramatizing different kinds of interpretation in the characters' actions: Orlando is a literal reader, Rodomonte an overdetermined reader, and Bradamante a judicious reader, who takes into account the contingencies of the context. In terms of the Stoic theory of the sign, Orlando places meaning in words as literal things, Rodomonte places meaning in words as overdetermined signifiers, and Bradamante places meaning in the relation between things and what they signify. Finally, the language and action of the last section of the poem is most directly concerned with the dialectic between *errare* as wandering, moral erring, and narrative lack of closure, and *tornare as* returning home, fulfilling promises, and narrative closure. According to Paz, poetry allows opposites to be "joined."

I also believe that this juxtaposition of themes in tension is adumbrated on the level of narrative action. In Paz's terms, it is the "hidden resemblances" of parallel forms of action in relation to one another that I seek to bring to the surface in my structural analysis of the plot. The ordered series of five sections of eight cantos each in which equidistant cantos are juxtaposed with one another invites the reader to contemplate the relation between disparate actions within sections (e.g., the relation between Dalinda's deception in love and Astolfo's [5 and 6]) and between the central cantos of roughly equidistant sections (e.g., the balance between Michele's descent to earth [14] and Astolfo's ascent to the moon [34]). Through this sort of ring composition the poem "place[s] contrary or divergent realities in relationship."

I have attempted to demonstrate how the poem is "a miniature animated cosmos." Such words that appear in tension with one another in the *Furioso* as "furor" and "ragione" are just a small part of a complex sensual process in which, as Paz says, "the poem conceives of language as an animated universe traversed by a dual current of attraction and repulsion." The poem is like an animal, as Orazio Ariosto claimed in his sixteenth-century commentary on the *Furioso*. This evocation of the poem as a body or organism suggests that the poem's aesthetic is informed by a Stoic physics, similar to that underlying Leonardo's concepts of the body in motion describing a circle, and of nature as a constantly changing and yet ordering force. I approach these early modern conceptions of nature from a distance, from a narrow academic world in which "nature"—not only human

nature but even the nature of the physical world—is often ideologically suspect, and from a larger material world in which nature is daily diminished by technology. In terms of ethics, the notion that the poem joins opposites (the themes juxtaposed against one another) also relates to Pomponazzi's conception of the harmonization of good and evil, the "aspro concento" [bitter harmony] of the cataclysmic destruction of battle in Canto 14.

This harmony need not be viewed as ahistorical. Machiavelli's cosmological thinking about history is not static, any more than the cosmic harmony of the poem is. The repetition and change in the narrative order of the poem dramatically enact *ricorso*. By renovating narrative ring composition, by engaging in Stoic moral questions, and even on the linguistic level by infusing the poem's language with a Latinate register, Ariosto makes the *Furioso* itself a *ricorso*. As I have tried to show in my discussions of the poet's relation to his patrons, Ariosto was critical of the Este's deployment of power, of the manipulation and lies of the court by both courtiers and princes, and of the greed of the Renaissance aristocratic despots. At the very moment Ariosto praises Ippolito, he refers back to Seneca's ironic praise of Nero. In this imitation of Seneca, Ariosto, I believe, implicitly mocks Ippolito (a vain patron who could misread the mockery) and admits Ippolito's power over him (hence the need for the covert criticism). At the same time, Ariosto refers back to the relation between the poet and patron of his model, Seneca and Nero, and thus views despotic power as ultimately transitory, as something that will be swept away in the cycle of dynamic historical change.

Looking back upon my reading of the poem, I want to turn to some of the isolated poetic images that express this sense of the poem as a cosmos and the sense of its action as a rounded whole. Along with my analysis of the *Furioso*'s complex plot and symbolic action in relation to a genealogy of Stoicism, the very visual images of the poem reverberate with circularity and completion and suggest contradictory meanings held in tension throughout the poem as whole.

## L'annello

One of the most striking images of circularity, and one which only disappears from the poem when Angelica does for the last time, is "l'annello d'Angelica" [the ring of Angelica], which allows the

bearer to disappear. Just as it helped her to escape from Ruggiero's sexual assault on her at the beginning of Canto 11, so it also aids her escape from the mad Orlando in Canto 29. Earlier, in Canto 7, Melissa puts this same ring on Ruggiero to disclose what Alcina's magic seduction has hidden from him:

> ma l'annel venne a interpretar le carte,
> che già molti anni avean celato il vero.
>
> [7.74: But the ring came to interpret the cards which had already for many years hidden the truth.]

The ring both conceals and reveals. It is both a magic object and the bearer of reason:

> Chi l'annello d'Angelica, o più tosto
> chi avesse quel de la ragion, potria
> veder a tutti il viso, che nascosto
> da finzione e d'arte non saria.
>
> [8.2: Who has the ring of Angelica, or rather who has that of reason, could see in all the face, which would not be hidden by fiction and artifice.]

As the bearer of reason ("ragion") and the ability to interpret ("interpretar") enchantments and fictions, the ring allows the one who wears it to see through deception.

## Il Cerchio

The image of the circle first appears in the cave of Merlino. The sorceress Melissa draws a circle around Bradamante's body that traces the extension of her limbs on the ground, a Leonardian study of human proportions for a magic purpose. As Bradamante watches in silence, the spirits of her descendants appear before her but cannot enter the sacred circle (3.22.2: "Il sacro cerchio"). Not only is the circle associated with historical prophecy, but it also lights San Michele's flight in search of Silenzio and Discordia: "Gli gira intorno un aureo cerchio, quale / veggian di notte lampeggiar baleno" [14.78.3: He was surrounded by a golden halo, which seen at night flashed lightning]. As in the juxtaposition between the mystery of the sacred circle and the comedy of Michele's very practical halo, a circle also marks Ruggiero as the center of attention as he learns how to fly the magic *ippogrifo*

(10.90.8) and describes the comedy of his sexual frustration as Ruggiero spins around looking for Angelica, who has escaped with the aid of the ring: "s' aggirava a cerco come un matto" [11.7.2: he turned around in a circle like a madman].

## Ruote and Ruota di Fortuna

Wheels describe the circular motion of another, even madder man—Orlando, at the moment when he lies upon the bed where his beloved Angelica and her lover Medoro have lain. Orlando makes circles one inside another as he strokes the bed—for the first time recognizing the physical reality of what has happened and where he is: "sospira e geme, e va con spesse ruote / di qua di là tutto cercando il letto" [23.122: he sighs and groans and makes dense wheels here and there circling the whole bed]. The wheel is also the Wheel of Fortune, which stands for the instability of earthly life:

> Quanto più su l'instabil ruota vedi
> di Fortuna ire in alto il miser uomo,
> tanto più tosto hai da vedergli i piedi
> ove ora ha il capo, e far cadendo il tomo.
> ....................
> Così all'incontro, quanto più depresso,
> quanto è più l'uom di questa ruota al fondo,
> tanto a quel punto più si trova appresso,
> ch'a salir, se de' girarsi in tondo.
>
> [45.1.1–4, 2.1–4: The higher you see a poor devil rise on Fortune's wheel, the sooner you will see him plunge down, head over heels.... On the other hand, the lower a man has dropped on the Wheel, the closer he is to the point of rising if the Wheel keeps turning.]

The image strikes us because it resembles an image in Ariosto's *Satira* 3.229, and because it describes so well the ever-changing action of the poem and the mutability of the characters' lives. Ariosto used this image no less than five more times in the poem; see 10.14.5–6; 14.1.2; 33.42.5–6; 40.65.6–8; 44.61.4; 45.1. The revolution of the wheel describes the change from Orlando's ideal vision to his immersion into the real. The turn of the wheel also evokes the fantastical flight of a winged magical horse in Pinabello's account of Atlante fighting

the knights in his enchanted castle: "[g]irando va con spaziose rote" [2.53: he goes turning in spacious wheels].

## Un Tondo

The *ippogrifo*'s sweeping flight is described as "a great round," when it descends upon Alcina's island: "dopo un girarsi di gran tondo" [6.20.5: after turning in a great round]. A "tondo" can also be a round painting, and it is just that sense of the word that comes to mind in the description of the eight marble statues of virtuous women that Rinaldo sees in the Mantuan knight's gallery. The statues form a circle around a fountain: "Fanno le statue in mezzo un luogo tondo" [42.96.1–2: the statues delimit a round place in the center]. Here the "tondo" is the space of art, virtue, beauty: the ideal. "Tondo" also describes the natural world and the technological world of man. Describing the course of the seas around the globe and prophecying to Astolfo the exploration of the "new world," Logistilla explains how men followed the course of the sun:

> e del sole imitando il camin tondo
> ritrovar nuove terre e nuovo mondo.
>
> [15.22.7–8: imitating the course of the sun they rediscovered new lands and a new world.]

The moon seems like "un picciol tondo" (34.71.3) from the perspective of the earth, but once Astolfo has passed through the "sfera ... del fuoco" [70.1: sphere of fire] he sees that the moon is actually equal to "questo globo" [this globe]. This play with perspective lays the way for the vision of this world from the moon, which renders in derisive miniature the images of power and wealth so esteemed on earth. The little round of the moon contains a landscape of metaphors. Ariosto anatomizes the world of poetry as not a slavish replica of this world but a revelatory parody of the world in all its limitations—a comic and Stoic cosmos.

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