Abstract

Adaptations in Arcadia: *Orlando furioso* **on the Eighteenth-Century Operatic Stage**

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This dissertation explores operatic adaptations of *Orlando furioso* in the eighteenth century,

particularly as they relate to the Arcadian Academy. Whereas the seventeenth century witnessed only

a handful of *Furioso*-themed operas, the eighteenth century was a veritable geyser of operatic

Orlando; dozens of libretti were produced on the subject, leading to an eighteenth-century craze for

the crazed, staged Orlando. The most celebrated and most diffused operatic adaptations of the

Furioso were produced by members of the highly influential Arcadian Academy, an institution that

aimed to establish a literary (and therefore social, cultural, and political) reign of good taste and

reason throughout the European continent. This dissertation probes why and how Arcadians, self-

proclaimed harbingers of eighteenth-century reason, were so invested in the operatic depiction of a

Renaissance madman. I am interested not only in the intertextual threads of operatic Orlando—that

is, how librettists and composers translated sixteenth-century sensibilities to the eighteenth-century

stage—but also how these intertextual threads can be read for their broad cultural resonances.

Operatic Orlando, in his many permutations, is emblematic of the complexities and contradictions

espoused by the Arcadian Academy, and, as such, is crucial to the shaping of an eighteenth-century

ethos.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter explores the different ways in which Arcadians understood madness, in its myriad manifestations. Rather than focusing specifically on opera, I cast a wide net in my discussion in order to holistically approach Arcadian theories and practices: through an examination of early Arcadian writings I identify threads and currents that likely formed the text/texture for the operatic Orlando craze. Chapter 2 focuses more specifically on Arcadian opera, if such a concept truly existed: drawing from the works of scholars of music history such as those of Freeman, Strohm, and Smith, I explore the conventions of eighteenth-century opera and contextualize them within the frame of the Arcadian Academy and its reform culture. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 form the analytical body of the dissertation, as they each probe the conditions and textual questions of specific adaptations of the *Furioso*. I consider the libretti discussed in each of these chapters to be 'ur-adaptations,' in that they were each performed—and often modified— numerous times in diverse locales, serving as textual bases for many of the eighteenth-century *Furioso* adaptations. In these chapters I perform both historical analyses and close readings of texts, as well as musical analyses and examinations of related textual objects. Thus in Chapter 3 I read Grazio Braccioli's libretto *Orlando furioso* (1713) as well as his related libretto *Orlando finto pazzo* (1714), and explore the musical settings of composer Antonio Vivaldi as they were performed at the Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice; in Chapter 4 I turn to Rome, with Carlo Sigismondo Capece's libretto *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia* (1711), and follow the work to its London iteration *Orlando* (1733), which was set to music by George Frideric Handel; finally, in Chapter 5 I analyze Pietro Metastasio's serenata *L'Angelica* (1720) within the context of the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, and explore its resonances throughout Europe.

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INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the Settecento, *Orlando furioso*, operatically permutated, went viral.

Angelicas swooned, Alcinas thundered, Bradamantes lamented, and Orlando, in his many

faces and many mad variants, sang, danced, saved the day, and lost and regained his wits

countless times. Dozens of operatic adaptations of *Orlando furioso* emerged in Italy and

abroad, leading to repeat performances and revivals in later years.[1] This eighteenth-century

Furioso downpour came after a seventeenth-century *Furioso* drought: as Ellen Rosand

discusses, Ariosto's text was largely neglected as operatic material in the Seicento.[2] To be

sure, the *Furioso* was not the only sixteenth-century transplant that made its way into

eighteenth-century opera: Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* was also a popular operatic subject in

both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[3] Tasso's text could be channeled,

manipulated, transmuted for its love stories and magical elements and tales of heroism, as

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[1] For a comprehensive discussion of *Furioso* adaptations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Renate

[2] As Rosand discusses, only four operas based on *Orlando furioso* appeared on the Venetian stage between 1637 and 1700, out of the nearly four hundred operas performed there during those years. See Ellen Rosand, "Orlando in Seicento Venice: The Road Not Taken," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984).

[3] See again Buch, *Magic Flutes and Enchanted Forests*, Appendix C.

could Ariosto's—but the *Furioso* was inherently problematic for the eighteenth century in a way that the *Gerusalemme liberata* was not. The namesake of the *Furioso*, the mad Orlando, a Renaissance lunatic, a beastly brute, sits at the center of the sixteenth-century epic. Regardless of how literati and musicians of the eighteenth century dealt with the text—focusing on the love story between Angelica and Medoro, highlighting battle scenes, zooming in on the magical world of Alcina's island—Orlando simmered as a central problem, and one that could not be neglected. Orlando was a crux, a thorn in the side of the imminently reasonable, enlightened eighteenth century. Yet somehow, with adaptive finesse and translational dedication, opera librettists, composers, and producers brought the mad knight of the Renaissance to the enlightened stages of the Settecento. And audiences—from Venetian society to academic elites, from British theater-goers to the Holy Roman Emperor himself—absorbed the songs and sighs and exempla of the adapted, performed madman.

Of course, it wasn't always exactly the same madman. Ellen T. Harris provides a scheme for the typologies of the eighteenth-century operatic Orlando: as she notes, Orlando is sometimes depicted as a hero, sometimes as a satyr, and sometimes as a fool.[4] When he is a hero he is a truly enlightened hero: he battles moral and mortal foes, internalized and externalized, and emerges triumphant, perhaps even saving the day. As a satyr he is a grotesque figure, a monstrous menace that lurks at the fringes of narrative and destabilizes pastoral purity. And as a fool he is comedy incarnate, the buffoon who generates laughter with his mangled words or dance or animalistic behavior. These categories hold pretty well for the century because, as Harris discusses, they resonate with extant operatic modes—

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[4] See Ellen T. Harris, "Eighteenth-Century Orlando: Hero, Satyr, and Fool," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 105-128.

heroic, pastoral, and comic—that dominated the Settecento.[5] The main operas that inform

this dissertation—operas that I (oxymoronically) deem 'ur-adaptations'—can be read

through these categories: Grazio Braccioli's *Orlando furioso* (1713) provides an unequivocally

heroic depiction of the Renaissance hero; Carlo Sigismondo Capece's *Orlando* (1711) and

Pietro Metastasio's *Angelica* (1720) both explore Orlando as a satyr-like figure.

Orlando as fractured protagonist undoubtedly provides effective roots for operatic

typologies of the enlightened age—and yet these categories fail to explore the *why* of

Orlando's repeated presence onstage, and the modalities of his transposition from one

century to another, and the specificities of his adapted selfhood. They also fail to account for

who was adapting Orlando for the eighteenth century—the fact that the Roman Arcadian

Academy, an academy dedicated to the reign of reason, order, and good taste, served as the

most important and most prolific mechanism of the adapted Orlando.

Orlando, Intertextualized

Any discussion of *Orlando furioso* inevitably defers to questions of adaptation, and opera is, by

its very nature, an intertextual creation. The *Furioso* is a complex web of chivalric epic,

Boiardan narrative, classical tropes, philosophy, comedy, and contemporary politics; opera—

particularly opera of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—is a staging of music based

on a text that is most often an adaptation of some earlier text, often with allusions to

contemporary political climes or encomia or moral dicta. It stands to reason then that a

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[5] Harris notes that scholars have attempted to identify operatic categories outside of those that she delineates: Handel scholar Winton Dean, for example, identifies heroic, antiheroic, and magical categories. Yet Harris insists that only heroic, pastoral, and comic opera types can truly be distinguished from one another. See Harris, "Eighteenth-Century Orlando," 125 n4; Winton Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

dissertation on operatic Orlando would necessarily address intertextual readings, and mutated texts, and transformed textual objects. Yet the goal of this dissertation is not to point to the elaborate intertextual threads, documenting their origins, demarcating their permutations: Harris has already addressed this in a way with her Orlando categories. The goal, rather, is to scan these intertextual threads for their aesthetic, literary, musical, cultural, social, and political transformations—to recognize the mechanisms of metamorphosis from sixteenth-century text to eighteenth-century spectacle, and to delve into the specificities of these relationships. Ultimately, an exploration of Orlando intertextualized reveals a great deal about eighteenth-century culture in Italy and throughout the European continent, and, more specifically, about the function and influence of the Arcadian Academy.

I use the term *intertextual* with an eye toward Julia Kristeva's seminal essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel": Kristeva, putting Bakhtin's theory of the novel in dialogue with Saussurian structuralism, proposes that texts—literature but also author, culture, society, politics—are, in Bakhtinian terms, dialogic. This is to say that texts cannot be read as isolated, unmoving subjects, but must be understood as rooted in the dynamic and complex realities of social and political life. Kristeva writes:

> By introducing the status of the word as a minimal structural unit, Bakhtin situates the text within history and society, which are then seen as texts read by the writer, and into which he inserts himself by rewriting them. Diachrony is transformed into synchrony, and in light of this transformation, linear history appears as abstraction. The only way a writer can participate in history is by transgressing this abstraction through a process of reading-writing; that is, through the practice of a signifying structure in relation or opposition to another structure. History and morality are written and read

within the infrastructure of texts…each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read.[6]

I focus on Kristeva's notion of intertextuality rather than other theories of adaptation (by Roland Barthes or Gérard Genette, for example) because of Kristeva's particular attention to the political dimensions of text(s): I am primarily interested in the broad resonances of Orlando intertextualized, and how literati, composers, and audiences were themselves reading the *Furioso* and positioning themselves as eighteenth-century re-writers of the text's/texts' mad poetics. These questions, in their broad political resonances, will be particularly relevant to my exploration of the Arcadian Academy's textual/intertextual mechanisms.

Arcadia as Nation and Empire

Early Arcadians focused on the reinstatement of good taste (*buon gusto*), the reestablishment of reason, and the (re)elevation of Italian language and literature. Founded in Rome in 1690 at the home of the exiled Queen Christina of Sweden, the Arcadian Academy was conceived as a haven for like-minded literati who upheld the supremacy of Italian's classical heritage. Early Arcadians donned togas, fashioned themselves pastoral pseudonyms, and held meetings at which they recited poetry, listened to music, mused about the theory and practice of literary culture. They believed themselves to be the true descendants of ancient Rome, as evidenced by the discourse given by Pier Jacopo Martello (under the pastoral name Mirtilo Dianidio):

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[6] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 36-37.

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Imperciocchè, o siam noi figli delle Colonie Romane; ed eccoci derivanti dal Palatino, primo fra i colli, e dagli Arcadi nostri, e da Romolo quindi abitato; o fummo sudditi forestieri del Senato, e Popolo Romano; e siccome usava Roma accordare la propria Cittadinanza ancora a i popoli conquistati, essendo Romani per adozione, entriam con essi nelle pregrogative d'Arcadia per origine; e perchè non siamo o Americani, o Cinesi, o di coloro, se pur vi sono, della terra Australe, anche incognita, come se appartenemmo all'Impero Romano, possiamo noi ora dissimulare d'appartenere all'Arcadia?[7]

In the spirit of ancient Rome, Arcadians expanded their literary-aesthetic vision through the establishment of 'colonies' throughout Italy and, eventually, through much of the European continent. During a period of academic saturation—the proliferation of academies like the Incogniti in Venice and the scientific Lincei in Rome—the Arcadian Academy was singular in its breadth, spread wide with its colonial tentacles. It was through this colonial reach that the Academy established an aesthetic reign in Europe, spreading good taste throughout the land.

But the reestablishment of *buon gusto* was a vague goal at best, and the specifics of the Arcadian mission were seldom unified. Some Arcadians argued that Greek theater should be reinstated, in all its purity, while others opted for a more moderate compromise between ancient and modern practices; some focused on pastoral imitation of Petrarchan tropes, while others delved into the twists and turns of epic. Yet one point that they could essentially all agree about was that *buon gusto* was a reactionary term: it implied the negation, extirpation, extermination of the perceived *cattivo gusto* of the Baroque period. Arcadians were, for the most part, anti-Marino (and therefore anti-Marinist, anti-mannerist, anti-conceit), against the mixing of registers and genres, against spectacles that they perceived as flashy and perverse. In short, Arcadians were reacting against all the elements that typified

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[7] Giovan Mario Crescimbeni, ed., *Prose degli Arcadi II*, (Rome: Antonio de' Rossi, 1718), XII.

opera of the period; their legacy, as a result, is inextricably linked to the reform of baroque opera.

Still, the reestablishment of *buon gusto* spoke more to questions of national identity than to any specific literary medium: Arcadians in the early part of the eighteenth century were entrenched in the so-called Orsi-Bouhours polemic, an academic debate that essentially pitted French against Italian literary traditions. In 1687, three years before the official founding of the Arcadian Academy, the Jesuit priest Dominique Bouhours wrote his *Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit*, advocating for a transparent, linear literary language. This, for Bouhours and like-minded Frenchmen and Francophiles, meant that modern French should be the paradigm for all European literature. The work was translated into Italian in 1696 under the title *Il buon gusto ne' componimenti retorici*;[8] Italians—specifically Arcadians like Giovan Gioseffo Orsi, Eustachio Manfredi, Pier Jacopo Martello, and Ludovico Muratori— plunged into the debate. In opposition to Bouhours's exhortation in favor of French style, the Arcadians upheld the preponderance of the Italian legacy, in particular the *concetti* and lyricism of Petrarch and *petrarchisti*. The notion of *buon gusto* was thus not simply a reaction to perceived baroque excesses, but actually stood as an emblem of the Italian struggle for cultural relevance. As Vernon Hyde Minor succinctly puts it:

> One of the core issues in the quarrel of good taste and bad taste was, after all, national identity…By repudiating Bouhours and Boileau while making their own use of *buon gusto*, the Arcadians were also struggling with their Italian identity and their place within a largely heterogeneous group of scholars, gentlemen, ladies, Church officials, lawyers, teachers, reformers,

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[8] Minor notes that this is likely the first time the phrase *buon gusto* appeared in print, although Queen Christina had been an advocate for good taste already in Arcadian circles. See Vernon Hyde Minor, *Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 34.

librarians, poets—in short, intellectuals who were trying to organize and make sense of various strata of culture.[9]

Like all empires, however, Arcadia faltered. By the end of the eighteenth century, with the advent of the French Revolution and aesthetic shifts that pushed Europe toward new, Romantic sensibilities, the aesthetic thrust that embodied the Arcadian mission came to be seen as belonging to the *ancien régime*: critics toward the end of the eighteenth century launched attacks against the Arcadian ethos that, in many ways, resembled the very attacks that Arcadians had launched earlier in the century against the Baroque—attacks against the ornate and artificial. In Burt's words, late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century reformers like Christoph Willibald Gluck and Vittorio Alfieri "sought something natural and noble, something true to both human feelings and the genuine antique,"[10] in opposition to Arcadian literature (and especially Arcadian melodrama). This dissertation focuses on the height of Arcadian influence in the early part of the century, which, as I will discuss, necessarily coincided with the craze for the operatic Orlando.

A number of Italian scholars have addressed the broad cultural reverberations of the Arcadian Academy. Walter Binni, in his volume *L'Arcadia e il Metastasio*, traces an arc of Italian poetry in the Settecento, focusing specifically on Pietro Metastasio's role in the *epoca arcadico-razionalistica*. Binni writes, "L'animo melodrammatico arcadico trionfa nella poesia del Metastasio così come già nei modi della sua esperienza vitale e nella sua poetica esplicita ben si conferma una interpretazione personale delle condizioni spirituali dell'epoca arcadico-

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Burt, "Opera in Arcadia," 145.

razionalistica nel loro valore più medio e diffuso e nella loro tensione all'espressione poetica."[11] Giuseppe Toffanin's *L'Arcadia* provides an analysis of the conditions of the Arcadian birth, with a detailed discussion of the Orsi-Bouhours polemic. Maria Teresa Acquaro Graziosi broaches the history of the Arcadian Academy in her work *L'Arcadia: trecento anni di storia*. She begins with a general exploration of the political, social, and cultural elements that conditioned the growth of the Academy in Rome in late Seicento and early Settecento, paying particular attention to the role of papal authority. She subsequently covers the different periods of Arcadian history, from its founding at the home of Queen Christina of Sweden in the late seventeenth century until its resonances in the nineteenth century.

Camilla Guaita explores Arcadian theater in her volume *Per una nuova estetica del teatro: l'Arcadia di Gravina e Crescimbeni*. She addresses the different notions of theater associated with different Arcadian schools, namely the pastoral aesthetic of Giovan Mario Crescimbeni and the high tragic mode espoused by Gian Vincenzo Gravina. These two threads, as Guaita discusses, form the bifurcated aesthetic that characterized the growth of Arcadia. Amedeo Quondam and Rosalba Lo Bianco both explore the Gravinian branch of Arcadian aesthetic—Quondam in his *Cultura e ideologia di Gianvincenzo Gravina* and Lo Bianco in her *Gian Vincenzo Gravina e l'estetica del delirio*.

Today, particularly in Anglo-American circles, the Arcadian Academy is known almost exclusively for its role in opera reform. Nathaniel Burt, in his 1955 article "Opera in Arcadia," set the stage for this musicologically dominated Anglo-American exploration of the Arcadian Academy. His article addresses the question of Arcadian reform of the opera libretto in the early eighteenth century, with particular attention given to style and form. Burt

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[11] Walter Binni, *L'Arcadia e il Metastasio* (Florence: La nuova Italia, 1963), 253.

performs a comparative analysis of three libretti: Domenico David's *La Forza del Virtù*, Apollonio Apolloni's *La Dori* (1663), and Pietro Metastasio's *La Forza* (1726). From this analysis Burt concludes that Arcadian reform served to tighten, synthesize, even stifle operatic practices: "From wild implausibility and dramatic sequence careless to the point of the ridiculous," he writes, "we move to the tightly motivated, carefully consequential, well balanced edifice…In tone we go from a haphazard mixture of bawdiness and emotional wallowing to a moral atmosphere so rarefied as to be almost unbreathable."[12] Robert Freeman's volume *Opera Without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675–1725* (1981) delves further into Arcadian visions of opera reform, as he systematically addresses the theories of libretto reformers in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries; he also performs analyses of a number of libretti from various stages of reform, and compares musical settings written by composer Antoino Caldara.

Helen Baker, in her 1982 dissertation entitled "The Oratorios of Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739) as a Reflection of His Musical Thought and Milieu," shifts the focus from Arcadian libretto reform more toward a synthesis of Arcadian musical practices: she writes, "It is an over-simplification to regard the goal as solely one of rationalization of the libretto. Of equal importance to the theorists was the restoration of authentic expression to the music; the infusion, or rather re-infusion, of emotion into the recitative and a simplification of the aria in the interests of a direct affective impact comparable to that ascribed to the music of Greek drama."[13] Ayana Okeeva Smith, in her dissertation "Opera in Arcadia: Rome, Florence and Venice in the *Primo Settecento*" (2001), further develops this notion of

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[12] Nathaniel Burt, "Opera in Arcadia" *Musical Quarterly* 41 No. 2 (1955): 167.

[13] Helen Baker, "The Oratorios of Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739) as a Reflection of his Musical Thought and Milieu" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1982), 397, cit. Ayana Okeeva Smith, "Opera in Arcadia: Rome, Florence and Venice in the Primo Settecento" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2001), 20.

Arcadian music, focusing specifically on the works of three musicians who were active in

Arcadian circles: Antonio Caldara, George Frideric Handel, and Alessandro Scarlatti.

Stephanie Tcharos's more recent work *Opera's Orbit: Musical Drama and the Influence of Opera in*

Arcadian Rome (2011) explores the broad reach of opera in Arcadian circles and beyond,

paying particular attention to the influence of opera on other musical genres (the oratorio,

serenata, and cantata). The Arcadian-as-opera-reformer makes cameo appearances in

numerous other scholarly works, such as Reinhard Strohm's 1985 volume *Essays on Handel*

and Italian Opera, Strohm's 1997 book *Dramma per Musica*, and Michael Collins and Elise K.

Kirk's edited volume *Opera and Vivaldi* (1984).

Some Opera Terms

Opera terminology was by no means solidified during the time of Arcadian reform; however,

as this dissertation focuses primarily on literature, I will clarify some opera terms that will

serve a critical function in my discussion. Firstly, a distinction must be made between serious

and comic opera: the terms *dramma per musica* and *opera seria* refer to opera with serious

subject matter and lofty characters (heroic opera, for example, as outlined by Harris); *opera*

buffa, in contrast, refers to comic opera that centers on the daily lives of base or common

characters.[14]

The conventions of *drammi per musica* emerged toward the end of the seventeenth

century and solidified throughout much of the eighteenth century.[15] Based on Italian notions

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[14] On the development of *opera buffa* in Naples, see Mariateresa Colotti, ed., *L'opera buffa napoletata*, 3 Volumes (Rome: Benincasa, 1999).

[15] Kimbell discusses the fact that not all opera fell into the patterns of reform and *dramma per musica*. See David R.B. Kimbell, *Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 197ff.

of reform as well as French practices from the *tragédies* of Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine, the eighteenth-century *dramma per musica* followed a number of conventions, as outlined by Strohm:

> The primary matter of the *dramma per musica* was the poem. It consisted of *versi sciolti* (heptasyllables and hendecasyllables in free succession) for the recitatives, and of lyrical verse in many different metres for the arias (also called *arietta* or *canzonette*). A *dramma per musica* usually had three Acts (five Acts indicated a more classicist or French-influenced variant), each with up to twenty 'scenes' which were defined by the entrance of new characters. Usually, two or more different stage-sets were shown in each Act. The five to eight characters of a drama (Metastasio mostly had six) appeared on stage in a well-planned succession aimed at continuity: leaving the stage empty within an Act or unit was avoided (*liason des scenes*). This principle was related to the ideal of verisimilitude, as interruptions in the sequence of events were deemed to be improbable.[16]

As Strohm indicates, *drammi per musica* consisted of alternating freer verse (in the form of recitative) and strophic text (in the form of aria, arietta, canzonetta, etc.). Through the period of opera reform in the early part of the eighteenth century, arias became increasingly standardized in structure: particularly popular was the *da capo* form, which consists of two strophic sections, the first of which is repeated (hence an ABA structure). Each strophe, particularly in Metastasio and Zeno's libretti, contained between three and six lines, and whatever the rhythmic and metric scheme of the strophes, the final line usually ended with an accented syllable, and the last lines of the strophes rhymed.[17] This convention of the *da*

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[16] Reinhard Strohm, *Dramma per musica: Italian opera seria of the eighteenth century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 12. On the tensions between Italian opera and French classical tragedy—particularly the role of Corneille's *parties intégrantes* in the economy of early eighteenth-century libretti—see Melania Bucciarelli, *Italian Opera and European Theater, 1680–1720: Plots, Performers, Dramaturgies* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 5ff.

[17] See Don Michael Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003 [1986]), 54; James Webster, "Arias as Drama," in *Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, ed. Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Pozonetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 34-35.

capo aria became so commonplace that it was even subject to parody. Benedetto Marcello, in

his 1720 satirical piece *Il teatro alla moda*, derides the stereotypical virtuosic musician's

performance of a *da capo* aria:

> Farà l'Azzione a capriccio, imperciocché, non dovendo il VIRTUOSO
> moderno intender punto il sentimento delle parole, non deve formalizzarsi
> veruna attitudine o movimento, ed entrerà sempre per la parte ch'entra la
> prima Donna o verso il Palchetto de' Musici.
>
> Tornando da capo, cambierà tutta l'Aria a suo modo, e, quantunque il
> cambiamento non abbia punto che fare col Basso o con li violini e convenga
> alterare il tempo, ciò non importa, perché già (come si è detto di sopra) il
> Compositor della Musica è rassegnato.[18]

Baroque Opera Conventions

Opera is, in essence, baroque in origin: most scholars place the birth of opera around

the year 1600, with the flowering of certain conventions of music and poetry that took root

in the late sixteenth-century Florentine academic setting of the *Camerata de' Bardi*.[19] Much like

later Arcadian reformers, members of the *Camerata* sought to restore theater to the dignity

and affective potential of ancient Greek drama: they believed primarily in a reduction

number of sung voices and a movement toward monody—toward a single sung line that

could most effectively move the affections.[20] This focus on monody led to the development

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[18] Benedetto Marcello, *Il teatro alla moda* (Florence: Guglielmo Piatti, 1841), 17. Emphasis mine.

[19] On the *Camerata* and monody, see George Buelow, *History of Baroque Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), Ch. 2; see also Tim Carter, "The search for musical meaning," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Wendy Heller, *Music in the Baroque* (New York: Norton, 2014), 24ff.

[20] The *Camerata*'s understanding of Greek music stemmed primarily from the work of Florentine historian Girolamo Mei, who annotated, translated, and studied ancient Greek texts. On Mei's theories, see Buelow, *History of Baroque Music*, 30-31. On his mentorship of the *Camerata*, see Claude V. Palisca, "Girolamo Mei: Mentor to the Florentine Camerata," *The Musical Quarterly* 40 No. 1 (1954), 1-20. On monody in early opera as a verisimilar representation of speech, see Carter, *Cambridge History*, 190ff.

of *stile recitativo*, a form of declamatory song that was originally employed to express affective complexity and to enhance the text with music rather than obscuring it.[21] Early Florentine operas, produced and staged in private circles and courts, drew from pastoral scenes and texts such Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[22]

Early opera expanded in Rome, broaching different subjects such as historical drama and chivalric epic, and generally developed into a more lavish, more spectacular art form. Buelow summarizes the Roman changes in opera in the following ways: operas generally took on a three-act division with prologue; as women were not allowed on stage, soprano roles were sung by castrati; chorus became a crucial part of operas; recitative was punctuated by lyrical, strophic *ariosi*; solo songs, duos, and trios increased in number and frequency, and were written to strophic texts; operas began to include more and longer instrumental passages, including accompaniment for dance; elaborate stage machinery was used to create visual effects.[23] Generally speaking, Roman opera included more strophic song, more choruses, and less of the "Greek" monody of its Florentine ancestor, and featured dances, *intermezzi*, comic characters, lavish costumes, and stage machines.

Opera in Venice, heavily influenced by *commedia dell'arte* conventions as well as by both Roman and Florentine traditions, evolved into a complex enterprise that employed the participation of librettists, composers, singers, impresarios, stage designers, patrons, and perhaps most importantly, audiences. Public tastes and styles played a large role in steering

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[21] See Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 707. On the development of *stile recitativo*, see Renato Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," in *The History of Italian Opera*, Vol. VI: *Opera in Theory and Practice, Image and Myth*, ed. L. Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, trans. Kenneth Chalmers and Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[22] Scholars generally agree that Ottavio Rinuccini's text *Dafne* (1597), with music by Jacopo Peri, was the first opera.

[23] Buelow, *History of Baroque Music*, 39.

opera aesthetics and conventions: by the middle of the seventeenth century, Venetian taste

for the baroque had led to the production and staging of operas that featured complex plots

with large numbers of characters, eccentric characterizations, and even obscenities.

Audiences expected elaborate spectacles with all of the techniques and artistic flourishes

available at the time. Those involved in the production of Venetian opera were therefore

invested in the satisfaction of public tastes and the tastes of the money-granting patrons

perhaps even more so than in theoretical goals of moving the affections or instilling

audiences with strong moral values.[24] The seventeenth-century Venetian librettist wrote his

texts not as autonomous poetic works, but rather as words destined for musical and

theatrical setting.[25]

 While commercial concerns undoubtedly influenced opera production in Seicento

Venice, theoretical questions of Aristotelian unities and verisimilitude figured prominently in

many works. Crucial to the exigencies of Seicento theatrical verisimilitude was the issue of

characterization, particularly in relation to song and speech—that is, which characters could

sing what, when, and how.[26] Librettists and composers generally gave more arias and

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[24] Robert Freeman, *Opera without Drama: Currents of Change in Italian Opera, 1675–1725, and the Roles Played Therein by Zeno, Caldara, and Others* (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1981), 2; See also Ellen Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Creation of a Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 66ff; Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Ch. 11; and Reinhard Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi* (Florence: Olschki, 2008), 29ff.

[25] While the text remained the point of departure for operatic works, composers, actors, impresarios, and others involved in operatic productions often manipulated the libretti in order satisfy their different exigencies. An extreme example of this is the composer Claudio Monteverdi's restructuring of Giacomo Badoaro's libretto *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1640-1641) according to his compositional needs; this example is extreme because of Monteverdi's privileged position as one of the most prolific composers of the time and as one invested in the text as the base for music, in accordance with musical *seconda prattica*. See Ellen Rosand, *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 151ff; Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 250ff. On Monteverdi and *seconda prattica*, see Massimo Michele Ossi, *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi's Seconda Prattica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

strophic song to common, comic characters, while they limited arias in noble or tragic

characters; nonetheless, such notions of class-driven verisimilitude inevitably gave way to

audience appetites, and even the noblest characters were given the occasional strophic aria.[27]

Madness in Seicento Opera

Madness, genuine or feigned, stands as the principal theme in a number of Seicento

operas, including *La finta pazza Licori*, *La finta pazza Deidamia*, and *Il pazzo politico*, and

episodes of madness appear in *Didone*, *La ninfa avara*, *Giasone*, *Egisto*, *Le fortune di Rodope e*

Damira, *Pompeo magno*, and others. As opera librettists, composers, and producers attempted

to adhere to tenets of verisimilitude while tending to audience delight, they turned to tropes

of madness from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition,[28] as well as from literary depictions of

madness: whereas Seicento aesthetics required careful and limited placement of arias and

song, staged madmen and madwomen could sing, dance, and behave in any number of

[26] On arias in relation to Seicento verisimilitude, see Carter, *Cambridge History*, 268-269. See also Susan McClary, *Desire and Pleasure in Seventeenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[27] Librettist Francesco Sbarra invokes Aristotle in his defense of his use of song for noble personages in his 1651 opera *Alessandro vincitor di se stesso*: "Sò che l'Ariette cantata da Alessandro, & Aristotile, si stimeanno contro il decoro di Personaggi si grandi; ma sò ancora, ch'è improprio il recitarsi in Musica, non imitandosi in questa maniera il discorso naturale, e togliendosi l'anima al componimento Drammatico, che non deve esser altro, che un'imitatione dell'attioni humane, e pur questo difetto non solo è tolerato dal Secolo corrente, ma ricevuto con applauso; questa specie di Poesia hoggi non hà altro fine che il dilettare, onde conviene accommodarsi all'uso de i Tempi…" See Weiss, "Teorie drammatiche e 'infranciosamento," in *Antonio Vivaldi: Teatro Musicale, Cultura e Società*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1982), 275-276. On the question of popular Seicento tastes and verisimilitude, see Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 40ff.

[28] On the relationship between operatic madness and *commedia dell'arte*, see Maria Paola Borsetta, "Teatro dell'arte e teatro d'opera nella prima metà del seicento" (Tesi di laurea, Univeristy of Bologna, 1986); Bucciarelli, *Italian Opera and European Theater*, 33ff; Paolo Fabbri, "Alle origini di un 'topos' operistico: la scena di follia," in *L'opera tra Venezia e Parigi*, ed. Maria Teresa Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1988); Ellen Rosand, "Operatic Madness: A Challenge to Convention," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Sher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 255. On madness in *commedia dell'arte*, see Cesare Molinari, *La commedia dell'arte* (Milan: Mondadori, 1985), 121. On more general links between opera and *commedia dell'arte*, see Nino Pirrotta, "Commedia dell'arte and Opera," *Musical Quarterly* 41 No. 3 (1955), 305-324.

strange and inappropriate ways, in line with the assumed and expected behavior of madmen and madwomen in the realm of the real. Scenes of temporary madness in any given opera allowed for a wide range of expressive theatrical possibilities, without altogether demolishing the verisimilitude required of the work as a whole.

Ellen Rosand proposes that operatic madness, like many operatic phenomena, began with the composer Claudio Monteverdi.[29] Toward the end of the 1620s, Monteverdi worked together with Venetian librettist Giulio Strozzi on the opera *La finta pazza Licori*, a story of a woman who cross-dresses and feigns madness in order to gain the affections of her beloved; while the work was aborted before ever appearing on the stage, it still set precedents for conventions of madness in later operatic works. Monteverdi elucidated his ideas on the opera's mad scenes in a series of letters to Strozzi in 1627,[30] and paid particular attention to the formal characteristics of Licori's performed mental state. In one of the letters he envisions her feigned madness as a collection of micro-expressions, based entirely on individual words:

> perchè la immitatione di tal finta pazzia dovendo aver la consideratione solo che nel presente e non nel passato e nel futuro, per conseguenza la mia imitation dovendo aver il suo appoggiamento sopra alla parola et non sopra al senso della clausula, quando dunque parlerà di guerra bisognerà inmitar di guerra, quando di pace pace, quando di morte di morte, et va seguitando, et perchè le transformationi si faranno in brevissimo spatio, et le immitationi; chi dunque averà da dire tal principalissima parte che move al riso e alla compassione, sarà necessario che tal Donna lassi da parte ogni altra

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[29] Rosand *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 347; Rosand, "Operatic Madness," 243.

[30] On Monteverdi's epistolary exchange with Strozzi, see Fabbri, "Alle origini di un 'topos';" Paolo Fabbri, *Monteverdi* (Turin: EDT/Musica, 1985), 262ff; Gary Tomlinson, "Twice Bitten, Thrice Shy: Monteverdi's 'finta' Finta pazza" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 36 No. 2 (1983), 303-311; Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 347ff; Rosand, "Operatic Madness," 243ff.

Immitatione che la presentanea che gli somministrerà la parola che haverà da dire.[31]

Madness is expressed through formal fragmentation in Monteverdi's configuration, both in terms of lexical juxtapositions and as microcosms of affection. This schizophrenic characterization invested mad scenes with vast musical possibilities, as composers could depict individual words through quickly changing musical tropes. If a mad character mentioned the word *guerra*, for example, the composer could isolate the word musically with a theme that audiences would have associated with war, such as trumpet imitations.[32] Monteverdi's idea of madness expressed through formal fragmentation persisted in other operatic works, following the model of *La finta pazza Licori*. Rosand names an aria in one of Monteverdi's later operas, the comic character Iro's aria "O dolor, o martir che l'alma attrista" in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, as the ultimate expression of Monteverdi's vision of staged madness.[33] Although not explicitly a mad scene, the structure of the aria and the erratic music cast Iro as a madman plunging toward his death, as he obsessively repeats words and phrases, such as *l'ho distrutta*, which he utters eleven times over the course of the aria, and *mai*, which he sings seven times.[34] Monteverdi's conception of micro-madness yielded in the later part of the Seicento to other formal expressions of madness. Librettists and composers came to focus more on gesture, juxtaposition of word and music, and

[31] Claudio Monteverdi, *Lettere*, ed. Domenico de' Paoli (Rome: De Santis, 1973), 244.

[32] Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 350.

[33] Ibid, 356ff; Rosand, "Operatic Madness," 255ff. For a detailed reading of Iro and his mad aria, see Ellen Rosand, "Iro and the Interpretation of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria.*" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 7 No. 2 (1989), 141-164.

[34] Rosand *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 357. For the full text of the aria, see Claudio Monteverdi, *Tutte le opere*, ed. G. Francesco Malipiero, 17 Volumes (Asolo: 1926–1946; Venice 1966), Vol. 12, 170-176.

inappropriate kinds of song, rather than on individual words.[35] Still, certain tropes persisted:

operatic madmen and madwomen still sang of and enacted war, laughter, hellish imagery,

dance, and other tropes that Monteverdi had codified with his early ideas on staged madness.

And madness continued to flood baroque stages with strangeness, conflict, and unreason—it

continued to probe the dimensions of staged selfhood through textual and musical

conventions and anti-conventions.

Can Orlando Park and Bark?[36]

Despite the baroque precedents for operatic madness, Orlando's particular form of

psychosis was (and continues to be) inherently problematic for staged/sung media. To begin

with, the stage is necessarily a hermetically sealed space; Orlando, in Ariosto's depiction,

rages throughout the world, boundless in his movements. Canto XXIV of the *Furioso* depicts

a scene of pastoral terror: in response to the villagers' attempt to subdue him, Orlando

begins a senseless killing-spree, massacring twenty shepherds. Ariosto highlights Orlando's

boundlessness with hyperbolic language: "Fece morir diece persone e diece," he writes, "che

senza ordine alcun gli andarano in mano."[37] Wandering throughout France, he rests with

beasts and assaults man. His destructive wandering continues in Canto XXIX, as he

encounters and wrestles with Rodomonte: using his superhuman force, Orlando drags

Rodomonte down into a river. Orlando, naked and able to swim like a fish, leaves the

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[35] See Rosand "Operatic Madness," 265.

[36] The term 'park and bark', according to urbandictionary.com, refers to "performers who plant themselves in one spot and sing instead of moving around on stage." http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=park%20and%20bark&utm_source=search-action, accessed February 3, 2017.

[37] Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milan: Mondadori, 1976), XXIV, 10.

Saracen to flounder with his heavy armor in the water. In octave 51 Ariosto zooms in on

Orlando's movement, describing his crossing of the Pyrenees into Spain: "Trascorso avea

molto paese il conte, / come dal grave suo furor fu spinto; / et al fin capitò sopra quel

monte / per cui dal Franco è il Tarracon distinto."[38] In a later episode in the same canto,

Orlando, having ridden Angelica's mare to death, inexplicably binds her to his leg and drags

her behind him, pushing westward. In Canto XXX, Orlando, now in Spain, steals another

horse and rides towards the Strait of Gibraltar. Attempting to board a ship to cross the strait,

he jumps in the water, once again dragging a horse behind him; the horse, as Angelica's mare

in the previous episode, dies a victim of Orlando's fury. Orlando himself nearly drowns in

his efforts to cross the strait, but Fortune, being the guardian of madmen, deposits him on

the African shore, allowing him to push east. Not even the most grandiose theater could

house such encyclopedic, boundless movements.

Yet the transposition and translation of Orlando's madness from text to stage is not

merely a matter of movement. Musical theater by definition necessitates sung drama, and

Ariosto's Orlando, in his animalistic fury, is practically wordless.[39] At the onset of his fury in

Canto XXIII of Ariosto's *Furioso* Orlando expresses himself through wordless utterances:

"con gridi et urli apre le porte al duolo. / Di pianger mai, mai di gridar non resta."[40] In the

same canto, in a foreshadowing of his fully-realized madness, he begins uprooting trees in

the pastoral landscape; the shepherds, on hearing the *fracasso*, abandon their flocks to

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[38] Ibid, XXIX, 51.

[39] On wordlessness as a manifestation of Orlando's madness, see James V. Mirollo, "On the significant acoustics of Ariosto's noisy poem," *Modern Language Notes* 103 (1988), 100; Renzo Negri, *Interpretazione dell'*Orlando furioso (Milan: Marzorati, 1971), 83-84; Paolo Valesio, "The Language of Madness in the Renaissance," *Yearbook of Italian Studies* I (1971), 204ff.

[40] Ariosto, *OF* XXIV, 124.

discover the source of the noise. Ariosto picks up the narrative thread of the disturbed

shepherds in Canto XXIV: "Già potreste sentir come ribombe / l'alto rumor ne le

propinque ville / d'urli, e di corni, rusticane trombe, / e piú spesso che d'altro, il suon di

squille."[41] Although Orlando, in his madness, both produces and provokes sound, he rarely

expresses himself through speech; in the few instances in which he does engage in verbal

expression he is either ignored or entirely misunderstood.[42] After passing nearly six cantos in

wordless chaos, Orlando employs speech to prod Angelica's dying horse, although the horse

does not understand him and is physically incapable of obeying his command. The verse

itself is indicative of the powerlessness of Orlando's voice: "dicea Orlando: - Camina!- e

dicea invano."[43] His imperative, *Camina*, is framed by a repetition of *dicea*, as well as an

imperfect internal rhyme between *Orlando* and *invano*; Orlando's own name, one of the most

basic elements of interpersonal communication, is crafted as a syntactic parallel to

impotence. In Canto XXX he attempts not only speech but bartering: in a monologue

addressed to a shepherd he offers Angelica's dead horse as payment for the shepherd's live

one, noting that aside from being dead, Angelica's horse has no defects. Concluding with an

attempt at formulaic speech, Orlando states, "smontate in cortesia, perché mi piace."[44] The

shepherd responds with laughter, and as he turns away, Orlando adds, "Io voglio il tuo

cavallo: olà, non odi?" A fight ensues, and as Orlando's attempt at formulaic, verbal human

interaction fails, he resorts to his usual mode of expression: homicide. In a final verbal effort

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[41] Ibid, XXIV, 8.

[42] As Mazzotta notes, this wordless depiction of madness departs from modalities of madness found in
Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* and Seneca's *Hercules furens*: both Erasmus and Seneca envision a discursive form of
madness, in which madness remains within the delineations of language. See Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Power and
Play in the *Orlando Furioso*," in *The Play of the Self*, ed. Ronald Bogue and Mihai I. Spariosu (Albany: State
University of New York Press, 1994), 193-194.

[43] Ariosto, *OF* XXIX, 70.

[44] Ibid, XXX, 6.

in Canto XXX, he screams, "Aspetta!" after the ship crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, and again Ariosto emphasizes the inutility of Orlando's exclamation: "Ma bene invano e i gridi e gli urli getta; / che volentier tal merce non si carca."[45]

Thus the question of Orlando intertextualized becomes one not only of temporal (and therefore political, social, and cultural) specificity, but also one that probes the very nature of language in its dialogic—or perhaps silent—resonances. Madness, crafted in the operatic worlds of the Arcadian Academy and its colonial tentacles, speaks to crises of language as text, language as space, and language as time. It is through these dialogic interstices that the adaptations of Orlando in eighteenth-century opera resonated throughout an enlightened or nearly enlightened Europe.

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[45] Ibid, XXX, 11. On this passage see Valesio, "The Language of Madness," 206; 232ff.

CHAPTER 1

A Raging Canon: Arcadia Reads Madness

In his *Madness and Civilization*, Michel Foucault posits that during the age of reason, the insane, who had once been stitched tightly into the fabric of society, were relegated to confinement: in an age of enlightened truth, the mad could live only at the fringes, removed from the realm of productivity and reason. Foucault argues that Cartesian doubt was the philosophical fulfillment of this relegation of the mad: "Descartes closes his eyes," he writes, "and plugs up his ears the better to see the true brightness of essential daylight: thus he is secured against the dazzlement of the madman who, opening his eyes, sees only night, and not seeing at all, believes he sees when he imagines."[46] Foucault also points to the incompatibility of the madman and the enlightened classical hero:

> We understand that the tragic hero—in contrast to the baroque character of the preceding period—can never be mad; and that conversely madness cannot bear within itself those values of tragedy, which we have known since Nietzsche and Artaud. In the classical period, the man of tragedy and the man of madness confront each other, without a possible dialogue, without a common language; for the former can utter only the decisive words of being, uniting in a flash the truth of light and the depth of darkness; the latter endlessly drones out the indifferent murmur which cancels out both the day's chatter and the lying dark.[47]

Yet if an oppositional relationship existed between madness and reason in Descartes' France, such a relationship did not necessarily hold its form in other lands. In the Roman grove of

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[46] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 108.

[47] Ibid, 111.

the Arcadian Academy, madness and reason floated together in a murky pastoral pool. Although a number of early Arcadian theorists were Cartesian by training, their investment in French philosophy did not serve to unequivocally pull apart their understanding of madness and reason: to the contrary, Arcadian madness still existed within reason, next to reason, around reason. And Orlando, a popular protagonist of the Arcadian stage, acted as both madman and tragic hero: in Arcadia, unlike in Foucault's vision of the French stage, madness and tragedy could confront one another, could engage in dialogue, could find a common language.

Early Arcadian theorists and shepherd-poets grappled with the dynamics of reason and its counterparts—*furore, follia, mania,* and *delirio.* Through their treatises and writings the Arcadians delved into figurations and refigurations of poetic inspiration, amatory melancholy-madness, drunkenness, fantasy, and social madness. The *querelle* between ancients and moderns furnished Arcadians with a stage on which they could juxtapose the madness of the ancient poets with the divine reason of the moderns, or, conversely, exalt the wisdom of the ancients while denigrating the madness of contemporary aesthetic excesses. Early Arcadians read and interpreted canonical discourses on madness that fell firmly outside the perimeter of eighteenth-century reason and scientific thought: they debated ancient depictions of Greek theatrical madmen, divinely inspired Platonic madmen, Aristotelian *melancholikoi,* Stoic *insania publica,* as well as modern depictions of Cartesian corporeal madness, lovesickness, and the ills of baroque aesthetics. How could Arcadians harmonize the Ciceronian affirmation of divine poetic fury with the enlightened reign of divine

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reason?[48] How could the bestiality of the Cartesian madman be understood in relation to the inspiration of the ancient poets?

This chapter investigates the role of madness in Arcadia, and explores the different modes and manifestations of madness in the works of Arcadian theorists. Their depictions of madness and madmen slip from the public to private spheres, from somatic concerns to questions of the soul, from aesthetics to politics. In probing the early Arcadians' varied visions of madness, we find a polyphonic tapestry of mad voices, in their harmonies and dissonances.

The chapter will broadly outline the life and works of early eighteenth-century theorists Gian Vincenzo Gravina, Ludovico Muratori, Giambattista Vico, Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni, and Apostolo Zeno, and will explore a selection of their writings within the context of earlier theories on madness.[49] As Arcadian theorists were primarily invested in the aesthetic, moral, and cultural elevation of poetry, the chapter will focus on their extensive engagement with notions of poetic fury; it will also broach questions of amatory madness, medical madness, theological madness, and various forms of social madness. These varying visions of Arcadian madness will serve as a platform for understanding the problems and specificities of the mad Orlando on the Arcadian stage.

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[48] Cicero, *De divinatione* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014), 1.37.88; Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta* 18, in *Speeches* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[49] This is by no means a comprehensive list of the Arcadian theorists and their works: I restrict this chapter to those who were most invested in questions of madness and the role of reason in the Settecento ethos.

Gravina

A jurist and classicizing man of letters, Gian Vincenzo Gravina (1664–1718) was firmly dedicated to a mode of poetic reform that would affect not only the aesthetic realm, but also transform the social terrain. He was opposed to what he perceived as the aesthetic excesses of the Baroque period, and advocated for a return to a classical model of poetry that expressed true passions, rather than empty aesthetic tropes. A native Calabrian, Gravina received his early education from Gregorio Caloprese, a classical scholar and Cartesian thinker, and then moved to Naples for his studies in jurisprudence.[50] As a founding member of the Arcadian Academy, Gravina wrote laws for the group based on the Roman Twelve Tables; due to friction with Crescimbeni, however, he initiated a schism in 1711, pulling his followers away from Crescimbeni and the toga-clad shepherds, and eventually founding the competing Accademia dei Quirini.[51] Gravina also discovered and adopted the young Pietro Trapassi, the future master librettist Metastasio; he provided the boy with a classical

[50] See Louis Berthé De Besaucèle, *Les cartésiens d'Italie* (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1920), 37ff; 210ff.

[51] Crescimbeni catalogued the two-year period of schism in his *Storia dell'Accademia degli Arcadi*: "[…] disunitisi alcuni di essi dal rimanente corpo, non solamente fecero scisma, ma si avanzarono, quantunque non eccedenti il numero di venti, a prendere di costituire l'intera Arcadia, e che tutta l'autorità appo loro risedesse. Questa controversia durò lungo tempo, e fu molto strepitosa nella corte di Roma." See Giovan Mario Cresimbeni, *Storia dell'Accademia degli Arcadi* (London: T. Becket Pall-Mall, 1804), 69-70. Gravina had a different understanding of this small group of defectors, stating that they were "la [parte] più sana" that "l'intero corpo d'Arcadia rappresenta, perché sola gode il favor delle leggi, alle quali la maggior parte ha contravenuto e per confession loro medesima contraviene" (Gian Vincenzo Gravina, *Della divisione d'Arcadia*, in *Scritti critici e teorici*, ed. Amedeo Quondam (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1973), 484). See Camilla Guaita, *Per una nuova estetica del teatro: l'Arcadia di Gravina e Crescimbeni* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2009), 25-31; Amedeo Quondam, *Cultura e ideologia di Gianvicenzo Gravina* (Milan: Mursia, 1968), 275ff; John George Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1923), 31-33. As Franchi notes, the schism in Arcadia also hinged on the Academy's relationship to the Pope and the Austrian Empire: "Nell'Arcadia della tradizione, rimasta unita in gran maggioranza intorno a Crescimbeni, prevaleva l'orientamento 'filopontificio,' e ciò sia per convinzione personale sia per omaggio a una istituzione che tanto doveva a papa Albani; invece nell' 'Arcadia nova' degli scismatici non si può non vedere il colore anticuriale d'una cultura amante delle 'civili libertà,' colore suggerito non solo dal loro capo ideale, Gian Vincenzo Gravina, rappresentante dei moderni indirizzi giuridici e politici sviluppatisi nel Regno di Napoli, ma anche in modo inequivocabile dal mecenate chiamato a presiedere il neonato consesso, il principe Livio Odeschalchi, quanto dire il più fedele seguace che Casa d'Austria avesse in Roma" (Saverio Franchi, "Patroni, Politica, Impresari: le vicende storico-artistiche dei teatri romani e quelle della giovinezza di Metastasio fino alla partenza per Vienna," in *Metastasio da Roma all'Europa* (Rome: Collana della Fondazione Marco Besso, 1998), 10).

education and invested him with a classicizing style that would remain a strong element of Metastasio's poetic production throughout his career.

The writings of Plato exerted substantial influence on much of Gravina's works, as did those of Bacon, Grotius, and Descartes.[52] Gravina's varying literary and critical output evidenced his investment in both literary and social concerns: his first text, the dialogue *L'Hydra mistica* (1691), attacks moral corruption, particularly in relation to Jesuit practices; his 1696 treatise *Delle antiche favole* presents poetry as a salutary science of the imagination; his three-volume *Origines iuris civilis* (1713) catalogues legal history.

His 1708 treatise *Della ragion poetica* expands on his ideas from *Delle antiche favole*: influenced by a Cartesian pursuit of truth, Gravina explicates what he understands as the reason and idea behind poetry.[53] Just as any other science, he claims that poetry functions within its own scientific reason, independent of the bonds of false Aristotelian rules; as Robertson notes, Gravina's idea of poetry resonates with Girolamo Fracastoro's claim that poetry should express the universal.[54] Gravina explores primarily three poetic genres: epic, dramatic, and lyric, tracing their histories through ancient and modern writers. In his *Della tragedia* (1715) he continues to engage with the universal of poetry, while discussing the social value of tragic theater. He vehemently criticizes contemporary playwrights, and insists that whichever topic and characters are chosen for a tragic composition, they must resonate with contemporary audiences on a universal level. While he praises ancient tragedy, he resists the efforts of contemporary authors to write perfect Aristotelian tragedies.

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[52] See Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 30; Giuseppe Toffanin, *L'Arcadia* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1958), 63ff.

[53] The first book of *Della ragion poetica* is in fact a reproduction of *Delle antiche favole*.

[54] Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 36ff. See also Francesco Foffano, *Ricerche letterarie* (Livorno: Tip. di F. Giusti, 1897), 227-229.

While discussing the usefulness of poetry in his *Della ragion poetica*, Gravina postulates that poetry is "una maga, ma salutare, ed un delirio che sgombra le pazzie."[55] Poetry is at once a rationalizing force that clears away madness, and an embodiment of the irrational; Gravina utilizes terminology in his description of poetry (*maga*) that roots him within the tradition of Marsilio Ficino's theories of the occult, while arguing for the enlightening power of poetry itself. He qualifies this statement by explaining that poetry is often occult in its symbolism, leading astray the minds of the vulgar herd:

> È ben noto quel che gli antichi favoleggiarono d'Anfione e d'Orfeo, dei quali si legge che l'uno col suono della lira trasse le pietre e l'altro le bestie; dalle quali favole si raccoglie che i sommi poeti con la dolcezza del canto poteron piegare il rozzo genio degli uomini e ridurli alla vita civile. Ma questi son rami e non radici, e fa d'uopo cavar più a fondo per rinvenirle ed aprire per entro le antiche favole un occulto sentiero onde si possa conoscere il frutto di tali incantesimi e 'l fine al quale furono indirizzati. Nelle menti volgari, che sono quasi d'ogni parte involte tra le caligini della fantasia, è chiusa l'entrata agli eccitamenti del vero e delle cognizioni universali...onde bisogna vestirle d'abito materiale e convertirle in aspetto sensibile, disciogliendo l'assioma universale ne' suoi individui in modo che in essi, come fonte per li suoi rivi, si diffonda e per entro di loro s'asconda, come nel corpo lo spirito.[56]

Gravina is less interested here in the poet's inspiration than he is in the power of poetry—potentially salutary but perhaps also harmful—to bewitch the minds of the uneducated. He envisions a kind of poetry that would be accessible to the crude imagination of the everyman; his notion of poetic revival speaks directly to questions of social restoration. This

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[55] Gian Vincenzo Gravina, *Della ragion poetica*, in *Della Ragion Poetica Libri Due e Della Tragedia Libro Uno di Vincenzo Gravina* Giurisconsulto (Venice: Angiolo Geremia, 1731), 11. Gravina's conception of rationalizing poetry is already present in his *Discorso sopra l'Endimione* (1692). See Amedeo Quondam, *Cultura e ideologia di Gianvicenzo Gravina* (Milan: Mursia, 1968), 93. See also Bruno Barillari, *La città del genere umano secondo G.V. Gravina* (Cosenza, MIT, 1968), 53: "l'espressione Graviniana...si traduce nella entusiastica, panica, direi, esaltazione del momento apollineo, al quale soccorre qualcosa del furore ditirambico."

[56] Gravina, *Della ragion poetica*, 11.

enlightened and enlightening, scientific poetry would ideally be transmitted through the words of a poet possessed of extraordinary intellect.

Critical to Gravina's thought is the notion of *delirio*: drawing from ancient ideas of poetic fury, he conceives of *delirio* as an exalted state in which a poet reaches divine (or quasi-divine) intellectual and creative heights, while drawing inspiration from the natural world. This leads him once again to employ mystical language, as in his description of Homer: "Omero perciò è il mago più poeta e l'incantatore più sagace, poiché si serve delle parole, non tanto a compiacenza degli orecchi, quanto ad uso dell'immaginazione e della cosa volgendo tutta l'industria all'espressione del naturale."[57] In Gravina's figuration, poets are (or can be) driven to extreme imaginative heights as a result of their natural melancholic disposition; a kind of divine or mystic *delirio* is the rational arrival point of the melancholic poet's mind, and the tool through which he dismantles the ignorance of the masses.[58]
At the end of his discourse in favor of a *ragion poetica*, Gravina cedes to a Ficinian ideal of poetic fury, adding emphasis to the role of the intellect:

> Imperciocché le dottrine e le locuzioni riscaldate dentro la poetica fantasia, ed indi tramandate, penetrano più altamente e con più vigore negli intelletti, li quali di simil calore imbevuti più efficacemente riscaldano e muovono chi seco tratta, avendo al parer di Platone il furor poetico la medesima potestà che la calamita. Poiché siccome questa a vari anelli di ferro la sua forza comunica, si anche il poeta, di calor divino agitato, agita chi da lui apprende; e questi, col lume e col fervor che ha dal poeta appreso, come con lingua di fuoco riscaldata l'ascoltante. Onde la fiamma, da una mente sola uscita,

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[57] Gravina, *Della ragion poetica*, 7.

[58] On Gravina's notion of *delirio*, see Tiziana Carena, *Critica della* Ragion poetica *di Gian Vincenzo Gravina: l'immaginazione, la fantasia, il delirio e la verosimiglianza* (Milan: Mimesis, 2001), 48ff; Rosalba Lo Bianco, *Gian Vincenzo Gravina e l'estetica del delirio* (Palermo: Centro internazionale studi di estetica, 2001), 119ff. The term *delirio* itself is a plowing metaphor—a straying from the furrow. The plowing image is crucial to Gravina's conception of delirium: it is at once a straying from systematic precision, and an action that may lead to the generation of new life, removed from mechanical regulation. I am indebted to Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta for his thoughts on this etymology.

deriva e trapassa per gl'intelletti di molti, li quali, come a vari anelli, dalla virtù divina d'un solo mirabilmente dipendono.[59]

Gravina subscribes literally to the concept of divine poetic inspiration, but recasts it in Ficinian fashion, as divine *Christian* inspiration—the kind that illuminates Christian truth and leads the poet (and subsequently the listener) to poetic truth, and, subsequently, to God.[60]

In the *Prologo* to his tragedies, Gravina criticizes contemporary theater:

> Né altro affetto uman sapesse esprimere
> che stolti amori, fredde querimonie,
> *e quasi onor traesse dall'insania,*
> e in vece d'adoprar le forze proprie,
> debba le forze adoprar degli artifici,
> di cantori, pittori, statuari;
> de' quali è divenuta ancella ignobile
> colei che sopra loro ha 'l sommo imperio
> e su le scene ha minor parte ed infima
> quella per cui le scene s'inventarono,
> quando alla mente i sensi non prevalser
> e non ardivan la ragion correggere.
> *Questo di nostra età nuovo delirio,*
> armato del piacer di sorda musica
> che ancora i saggi a delirar necessita
> se voglion concorso alla lor opera,
> già preso ed occupato ha tutti gli animi
> e 'l palato ha corrotto in ogni genere:
> perché il teatro è la scuola de' popoli,
> nel cui costume, o buono o reo, si cangiano.[61]

While in his *Ragion poetica* Gravina uses the term *delirio* to signify poetic inspiration, here he clearly intends it in a different way: he describes the costuming, staging, singing, and other customs of contemporary theater as a manifestations of frivolity and essentially simulacra of the former glory and depth of Greek theater. Contemporary theatrical *delirio* and *insania* are at

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[59] Gravina, *Della ragion poetica*, 119.

[60] See Michael J.B. Allen's introduction to Ficino's commentary on the *Phaedrus* and *Ion*. Marsilio Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, ed. and trans. Michael J.B. Allen (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), xxxvi.

[61] Gian Vincenzo Gravina, *Tragedie cinque* (Venice: Giuseppe Bettinelli, 1760), xcii. Emphasis mine.

once aesthetic ills and, as he implies at the end, indications of the *insania publica* of his society.

Yet even Gravina, with his austere chastisement of contemporary theater, does not advocate

for an absolute, Stoic denial of the passions, as the passions are clearly an element of his

universal poetic truth: he subscribes to the "forze proprie" of true passions, rather than the

performative artificiality imposed on them for shallow entertainment purposes.[62]

Muratori

A product of the University of Modena, Ludovico Muratori (1672–1750) gained

notoriety as a scholar, paleographer, priest, political theorist, and somewhat lackluster

Arcadian: although he was an early member of the Academy under the shepherd pseudonym

Leucoto Gateate,[63] he pulled away from Crescimbeni and his followers during the schism of

1711-13 and afterward maintained a critical distance from their practices.[64] From 1695 he

served as a paleographer in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, specializing in medieval

manuscripts; in his later years, he was profoundly influenced by and well-versed in

contemporary French philosophers such as Descartes.[65] His writings were informed by his

investment in history and his dedication to civic and moral reform.[66]

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[62] On Gravina's guidelines for good theater, see Guaita, *Per una nuova estetica del teatro*, 31. Pier Jacopo Martello similarly critiques melodrama in his 1714 treatise *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, as does Marcello in his 1720 work *Il teatro alla moda*. These critiques of theatrical practice fall under the umbrella of broader eighteenth-century literary and cultural critiques and reforms. On this subgenre of eighteenth-century theatrical critique, see Susan M. Dixon, *Between the Real and the Ideal: The Accademia degli Arcadia and its Garden in Eighteenth-Century Rome* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 33ff.

[63] Crescimbeni's *Le vite degli Arcadi* (1708) lists Muratori's pseudonym as Leucoto Gateate; however, he later wrote under the pseudonym Lamindo Pritanio. Minor suggests that he used the later name to distance himself from the Academy after the schism. See Minor, *Death of the Baroque*, 175 n36.

[64] See Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 60-95.

[65] As Robertson notes, Muratori's ideas on poetic imagination were engendered by the Cartesian championing of the spirit (Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 94). On Muratori's position in the Orsi-Bouhours polemic, see Fiorenzo Forti, *Muratori fra antichi e moderni* (C. Zuffi, 1953), 161ff; Paola Gambarota,

Muratori's sprawling, erudite treatise *Della perfetta poesia italiana* is intended as a

defense of Italian poetry, against the attack of Bouhours and his followers: he writes in his

Prefazione a' lettori that poetry is "una dolce ed illustre parte di quella universale erudizione, a

cui aspirano gl'Ingegni più vigorosi, ed essendo fra tutte le nobili ed oneste Arti dilettevoli la

poesia con ragion la Reina."[67] As implied by the title, Muratori works to distinguish good

poetry from bad poetry, and the perfect from the imperfect; through historical expositions

on poets and their texts, as well as reflections on his contemporaries, he attempts to establish

a Horatian notion of poetry that is *dulce et utile* for the contemporary Italian reader.[68] The

treatise would in theory provide contemporary readers with an education in the perception

of good taste.[69] The poet is the privileged protagonist of *Della perfetta poesia italiana*: Muratori

discusses the poet's character, his education, his engagement with intellect and erudition, and

his susceptibility to the path of vainglory. Crucial to this treatise is Muratori's conception of

human fantasy: he sustains that human fantasy, synonymous with imagination, is not

antithetical to reason, but rather together with reason guides the human mind to the heights

of truth. In his 1745 treatise *Della forza della fantasia umana*, Muratori claims to develop his

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Irresistible Signs: The Genius of Language and Italian National Identity (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 82ff; Toffanin, *L'Arcadia*, 23.

[66] In his *Primi disegni della Repubblica letteraria d'Italia* (1703) he envisions the literary academy as social salvation. See Adriano Cavanna, *Storia del diritto modern in Europa* (Milan: A. Giuffrè, 2005), 310; Giovanni Tarello, *Storia della cultura giuridica moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976), 215-221.

[67] Ludovico Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, ed. Ada Ruschioni (Milan: Marzorati, 1971), 42.

[68] Muratori concludes the first chapter of Book III by stating that "la Poesia, non che stimabile, necessaria diverrebbe tra gli uomini, quando ella altro non fosse, che la stessa Moral Filosofia, travestita in abito ameno, e dilettevole: *Sic honor, et nomen divinis vatibus, atque carminibus veimet*, finirò colle parole d'Orazio, il quale, come dianzi dicemmo, non men di noi porta opinione, che in questa nobile unione dell'Utile, e del Dilettevole consista la perfezione della Poesia, la gloria principal de' Poeti" (Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 552-553).

[69] The notion of *buon gusto* was not unique to Muratori: As Robertson writes, the judgment of good taste seems to go back to Gracián, while Boileau and Bouhours had used the phrase in France, and Camillo Ettori had written a treatise entitled *Il Buon Gusto ne' componimenti rettorici* ten years before Muratori's *Della perfetta poesia italiana* (Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 88-9). See also Forti, *Muratori fra antichi e moderni*, 161ff; Toffanin, *L'Arcadia*, 87ff.

ideas on human fantasy: he rehashes debates present in his earlier works, but also shifts his interests more toward medical topics.[70] Rather than focusing on perfect Italian poetry, he fixates on the general qualities of mankind, particularly with regards to the relationship between man's body and spirit.

The question of poetic inspiration bubbles through Muratori's *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, perpetually resurfacing in relation to various aspects of poetic production. As he writes in Book I, Chapter 17:

> Certo è, che per Furore Poetico, e sia Entusiasmo, ed Estro, intesero gli antichi una certa gagliarda inspirazione, con cui le Muse, ovvero Apollo, occupano l'animo del Poeta, e fannogli dire, e cantare maravigliose cose traendolo come fuori di lui stesso, e inspirandogli un linguaggio non usato dal volgo. Perciò un tal Furore si chiamava astrazione, alienazione, o ratto della mente; quasiché più non parlasse il Poeta, ma i Numi per lui.[71]

He continues in his exposition on ancient poetic inspiration, citing Plato, Democritus, and Cicero. While Muratori's investigation of poetic fury clearly references Plato's depiction of poetic madness in the *Phaedrus*, he ultimately does not subscribe to the idea of supernatural poetic inspiration.[72] To the contrary, he writes, "…io ben concedo, che non possa divenirsi gran Poeta senza un tal Furore, ma all'incontro *nego, nascere tal Furore da cagion soprannaturale:*

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[70] Robertson claims that this work is limited to psychological questions and fails to truly probe the nature and function of the poetic imagination (Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 66). See also Luigi Ambrosi, Luigi, *La psicologia dell'immaginazione nella storia della filosofia* (Padua: Cedam, 1959), 127ff.

[71] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 216.

[72] Socrates, debating the role of love and rhetoric, begins his second speech of the *Phaedrus* (244a-257b) by noting a division between positive and negative forms of madness: human madness comprises, among other ills, gluttony and bodily love; madness inspired by the gods, to the contrary, is "the greatest of blessings." He expands on the notion of divine *mania*, dividing it into four categories: prophetic madness, inspired by Apollo; mystic madness, inspired by Dionysus; poetic madness, inspired by the Muses; and erotic madness, inspired by Eros and Aphrodite. He counts philosophy—that is, the love of knowledge—as the highest form of erotic madness, inasmuch as the mind of the philosopher is endowed with wings that bear him to the heights of true, godly beauty.

anzi tengo, esser'egli naturalissima cosa, e potersi in qualche guisa conseguir con Arte."[73] Muratori

seems to almost excuse ancient writers for believing in the powers of poetic fury: he states

that they were likely attempting to gain credit with audiences, and were also unable to

explain the origins of their poetic outpourings. He does not, however, reserve any kindness

for contemporary or past Christian authors who feign(ed) possession by ancient Greek

deities: "Il fecero pure, ed oggidí ancora il fanno i Cristiani, per imitare anche in questo l'uso

de' vecchi, dappoiché han preso in prestito da essi tanti costumi, e tante Deità profane, che

sono senza fallo sogni."[74] Muratori explicitly references Francesco Patrizi and Faustino

Summo, expressing dismay that Christian authors of their wisdom would adhere to a literal

interpretation of Platonic fury;[75] he contrasts Patrizi with Castelvetro, and ultimately defers

to the latter and his figurative interpretation of Platonic fury.

Muratori's rejection of the principle of divinely inspired poetic fury then leads him to

a question: if poetic fury exists but is not a product of divine intervention, what are its

origins? Poets become inspired, he writes, when their *fantasia* becomes excited. A poet must

have both *fantasia* and *ingegno* in order to achieve the elusive *bello poetico*, and can develop fully

into a great poet if he also possesses *giudizio*; he names *fantasia*, *ingegno*, and *giudizio* as the

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[73] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 217. Emphasis mine. In this sense, Muratori falls in line with earlier theorists like Lorenzo Giacomini, who understood the mechanism of poetry as inherently natural. See Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 322-324.

[74] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 217; See also Toffanin, *L'Arcadia*, 94-95.

[75] Summo writes in Book 9 of his *Discorsi poetici*, "Nei poemi Epici ne anche il verso si converebbe, quantumque [sic] il Poeta da furor divino rapito ragioni, s'egli non invocasse le Muse, supplicandole, che conceder gli debbano, che egli fuori dell'usato costume de gli huomini ragionar possa. Et non invoca il poeta per l'imitatione, ma per lo verso. Perché Platone, e tanti altri dopo di lui hanno de' suoi dialoghi imitato, e nulla di meno d'invocatione non hanno havuto di mestieri" (Faustino Summo, *Discorsi poetici* (Munich: W. Fink, 1969), 63).

three powers of the soul.[76] The poet's *fantasia* becomes inspired from sensory perception of

the natural world (*materia*); it is through *fantasia* that the poet reveals the beauty the natural

realm. Thus poetic fury, in Muratori's figuration, is a product of nature and remains rooted

in the aesthetic exploration of and meditation on the natural.[77] Poetic fury, he writes, is a gift

of nature and cannot be acquired through art: he repeats the axiom, "nascere i Poeti, e farsi

gli Oratori."[78]

Muratori buffers his naturalist argument by pointing to poets' natural melancholic

temperament: while discussing their defects, he states that poets "ordinariamente sono di

temperamento focoso, svegliato, e collerico…E perché l'umor malinconico acceso dal

collerico, secondo l'opinione d'alcuni, suol facilmente condurre l'uomo al Furor Poetico,

perciò ne gli eccellenti Poeti suole accoppiarsi l'uno e l'altro umore in gran copia, e formare

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[76] Muratori's conception of the powers of the soul resonates with Baconian and Vichian theory. Bacon names memory, imagination, and reason as the three fountains of the mind; history is produced through memory, poetry through imagination, and philosophy through reason. See Jurgen Trabant, *Vico's New Science of Ancient Signs: A Study of Sematology*, trans. Sean Ward (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 106. For Vico, *memoria*, *ingegno*, and *fantasia* comprise the three elements of the imagination, rather than the soul or the mind (see below). Muratori's conception of *fantasia* and *ingegno* as poetic powers persisted through the eighteenth century, as theorists like Salvatore Corticelli argued for similar configurations.

[77] Muratori circumscribes art within the realm of the natural: "Né altro ha da far l'Arte Poetica per migliorare, correggere, e perfezionar la Natura, se non discoprire, e rappresentare ciò, che se stessa Natura talvolta ha fatto, e fa, o pur potrebbe, e dovrebbe fare di più eminente, secondoché saprà immaginarselo la vigorosa, e feconda Fantasia. Per la qual cosa non ha il Poeta da uscire fuor de' Regni della Natura; altrimenti più non rappresenterebbe il Vero, o il Verisimile, la materia de' quali tutta nasce dentro le miniere della Natura. Ha egli da valersi mai sempre della stessa Natura per far' eminente la Natura…L'Ingegno dunque dell'uomo, e la Immaginativa sua può aiutar la Natura con discoprir quelle Bellezze, ch'ella per se medesima non suole, ma potrebbe talor discoprire" (Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 115). This insistence on the natural and its role as the source of true or verisimilar art is clearly intended as a correction of the excessive and "unnatural" tendencies in Marinist and baroque poetics. He cites false—that is, unnatural—*concetti* as a defining feature of baroque poetry: "Oltre a ciò confesseranno i Francesi anch'essi, che la lor Poesia non è tanto da magnificarsi, come se il Gusto cattivo allignasse ora in Italia, e non punto in Franca; e quasi piacessero ne' tempi addietro alla sola Italia, non alla Francia, le Argutezze, gl'Equivochi, i Concetti falsi, e il raffinamento de' pensieri" (Ibid, 74).

[78] Ibid. On Horace's distinction between poets and certain kinds of orators, see *Satires* 1.10, in *Satires; Epistles; The art of poetry* trans. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014). See also Concetta Cartesia Greenfield, *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics 1250-1500* (East Brunswick, New Jersey, London, Toronto: Associated University Press, 1981), 279-280; L.P. Wilkinson, *Horace and his Lyric Poetry* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1945), 88.

in tal maniera il temperamento loro."[79] Muratori's argument about poetic melancholy draws

from Aristotelian humoral theory;[80] however, he complicates the theory by noting that a

good poet cannot be formed through mere melancholy; he must also be naturally lively and

open to inspiration. It is only through these collective natural qualities that the poet can be

elevated to the heights of (natural) inspiration. Melancholy, he continues, can also easily lead

to detrimental effects: the "madre delle Chimere," melancholy can draw poets toward fear,

suspicion, and perhaps even madness. He names Tasso and Maraco Siracusano as examples

of poets whose melancholy led people to believe they were mad.

In his discussion of poetic fury in Book I, Chapter 17 of *Della perfetta poesia italiana*,

Muratori focuses briefly on the purely physical causes of madness, which, as he states, can be

either of the body or of the soul:

> Per parte del Corpo si agita gagliardamente la Fantasia o dal soverchio cibo, e
> più dal soverchio vino, o dalle febbri, o dalle frenesie, o da altre malattie, e
> spezialmente dalla malinconia, che da' Peripatetici è stimata la principal
> cagione del Furor Poetico. Allora o dormendo noi, o vegliando, proviamo un
> violento moto nelle interne Immagini della Fantasia, come tutto giorno si
> vede ne gli ubbriachi, ed ipocondriaci, e ne' febbricitanti, e ne' frenetici. Per
> parte dell'Anima s'agita forte la Fantasia dalle violente passioni, come dolore,
> sdegno, amore, e simili.[81]

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[79] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana,* 554.

[80] Madness is discussed in vague terms in the Peripatetic pseudo-Aristotelian text the *Problems*: the author attributes *mania* to an excess of heat in the heart, which he considers to be the locus of the soul, and discusses melancholy as a humoral affliction caused by an excess of black bile. Moreover, melancholy temperament is closely associated in the text with brilliance and achievement: the author provides evidence for this claim by naming heroic figures allegedly afflicted with excessive black bile (Heracles, Lysander of Sparta, and the Homeric heroes Bellerophon and Ajax), and then names melancholic men from later times (Empedocles, Plato, and Socrates). He obliquely references poetic fury, but deliberately roots all manifestations of melancholic temperament in nature.

[81] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana,* 218.

He cites a number of authors such as Macrobius, Ovid, and Martial, who advocated for the use of wine in the service of poetic production—however he uses these citations merely as rhetorical devices, in order to demonstrate that even ancient authors attributed poetic inspiration to natural causes (i.e., inebriation). And yet the successful modern poet, he writes, cannot be enslaved by physical alterations. He must be integral in his mind and intellect: "Imperciocché…non s'ha mai tanto bisogno di libertà, e chiarezza nella mente, o sia nell'Intelletto, che quando si dee compor versi; e di leggieri questa chiarezza s'opprime dal vino, inducendo esso troppo agitamento di spiriti, e un impetuoso aggiramento di fantasmi, da cui la conoscenza delle cose vien distornata."[82]

Having dismissed the hazardous effects of excessive wine consumption, Muratori moves to discuss passions that cause movements of the soul: he names *l'amore, lo sdegno,* and *il dolore* as the primary passions, as well as their "figliuoli," *la stima, il dispregio, lo stupor, il diletto,* and *la compassione.*[83] Fantasy is moved so violently by these passions, he writes, that the intellect is oppressed by them and cannot exert its authority; the movement of the passions, inasmuch as it alters individual perception, can actually hold sway over the realm of reason.[84] While a certain degree of agitation is necessary (particularly in the realm of poetic production), man must avoid falling completely pray to the passions; instead, he must hone the passions and direct them in such a way that allows for the production of fruitful images.

Muratori focuses specifically on the effects of love on the production of images: he cites Petrarch's love for Laura in order to show how moved passions can lead to beautiful

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[82] Ibid, 219.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Muratori quotes Aristotle: "Quindi Aristotele nel lib. 2 cap. 1 della Rettor. diceva: 'A chi ama, e a chi odia, o a chi è sdegnato, e a chi è con animo quieto, simili non appariscono le medesime cose; ma o affatto diverse, o differenti in grandezza'" (Ibid, 221).

and sublime images: "Pareva all'inamorata Fantasia del Poeta, che chiunque volesse vedere

un miracolo della Natura, e ogni Virtù, ogni Bellezza unita in un sol corpo, e non giungesse a

tempo di mirar Laura, avesse dappoi a pianger per sempre in pensando, che più non potesse

nascer Donna somigliante a Laura, da lui non veduta."[85] Thus Muratori does not promote a

Stoic extirpation of passionate impulses, nor does he subscribe to a purely Cartesian

conception of madness, but rather advocates for a productive engagement with the passions.

Muratori discusses Ariosto and the madness of Orlando in several chapters of his

Della perfetta poesia italiana, most often in relation to the verisimilitude (or lack thereof) of

Ariosto's imagery. In Book II, Chapter 6, he debates the imagery produced from Orlando's

supposed lovesickness: he first cites an octave from Orlando's fall into madness (XXIII,

126), then quotes from Udeno Nisieli's *Proginnasmi poetici*.[86] While Nisieli solemnly praises

Ariosto for the imagery in this octave, citing the "umore stillato per gli occhi dal fuoco

amoroso," Muratori mocks this supposedly fiery love, stating:

> Egli è ben certo, che alcuni bellissimi sentimenti ha in quel luogo l'Ariosto,
> ma tali non sono i da noi rapportati…il che mi fa dubitare, che de gli occhi
> d'Orlando non uscissero lagrime, ma acqua di rose, e viole, per non dir' altro,
> e più tosto mi muove a riso, che a piangere…Ma l'Ariosto rappresentando
> quell'Eroe, che comincia ad impazzire, stimò forse lecito l'attribuirgli queste
> fanciullesche Immagini.[87]

Muratori does not deny the power of Orlando's lovesickness, but he emphasizes the

ludicrous aspect of the lover's condition; he reads in the text an amorous madness tinged

with absurdity.

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[85] Ibid, 224.

[86] Udeno Nisieli is the pseudonym of Benedetto Fioretti (1579–642), a member of the Accademia degli
Apatisti; his 5-volume *Proginnasmi poetici* (1620–1639) catalogues poetic works.

[87] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 360. Muratori praised Tasso, not Ariosto, as the apex of contemporary
Italian poetry. See Forti, *Muratori fra antichi e moderni*, 77ff.

In his later *Della forza della fantasia umana*, Muratori probes the nature of madness as a disability. In Chapter 8, entitled "Della pazzia e del delirio, deplorabili effetti della fantasia," he adheres to his earlier notion of madness as a product of excess movement of the passions; yet rather than focusing on the generative, poetic possibilities of the passions, he discusses the degrading, degenerative state of the modern madman.[88] "Peggio," he writes, "che bestia è un uomo, qualora perde l'uso della ragione, non fa che azioni sregolate, e parla e sparla sovente fuor di proposito; e se lo sconcerto del suo capo divien maggiore, sempre si truova in pericolo la vita sua, o l'altrui."[89] Not only are the conditions of a madman's existence worse than that of beasts, Muratori continues, but men would even be better off dead than deprived of reason. He immerses his treatise in medical language, discussing the effects of bile and melancholic humor on the brain, as well as possible cures for madness.[90] Yet Muratori does not hold these bestial modern madmen accountable for their defects; they are not sinful, as he states, "l'impazzito, per quante azioni faccia sregolate, ed anche per sé stesse peccaminose, egli non pecca, né offende Dio; e degno è di compatimento presso gli uomini, finché sussiste il disordine della fantasia suddetta…è di dovere, che né pur ci siano attribuiti a colpa i lor cattivi effetti."[91]

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[88] Muratori's image of the bestial madmen is again not truly Cartesian, as he views madness as affecting the intellect.

[89] Ludovico Muratori, *Della forza della fantasia umana* (Venice: Giambatista Pasquali, 1760), 73.

[90] "O il sangue troppo acceso ed agitato della bile, o gli spiriti tramandati dall'umore melanconico, o pure il solo bollore del sangue nella febbre, possono con tal forza salire al nostro cervello, che ne turbine l'economia, e ne sconvolgano la buona armonia." He also discusses the difference between *pazzia* and *delirio*: while *delirio* is a temporary state, *pazzia* can persist if not treated properly with medicine (Ibid, 74).

[91] Ibid, 77. Muratori makes a distinction between the truly *pazzi* and those lacking in prudence: true madmen are blameless in their natural state, whereas men lacking in prudence should be held accountable for their actions. He states, "Se noi volessimo qui ascoltare l'ordinario linguaggio degli uomini, noi avremmo tutto il mondo pieno di deliranti e pazzi. Lo stesso saggio nelle divine scritture non ebbe difficoltà lo scrivere, *che il numero degli stolti è infinito*" (Ibid). This is a quote from the Old Testament ("Stultorum infinitus est numerous", Ecclesiastes I, v., 15), and was later cited by Petrarch ("Infinita è la schiera degli sciocchi", Trionfo del Tempo, v. 84) and by Galileo Galilei ("Infinita è la turba degli sciocchi, cioè di quelli che non sanno nulla").

Vico

Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), born in Naples to a poor family, was largely self-taught. His early studies focused on classic texts, as well as contemporary philosophy; he was initially drawn to Cartesian thought, but would eventually reject some of its main tenets. Between 1686 and 1695 he worked as a tutor for the Rocca family in Vatolla. In 1699 he won the post of professor of rhetoric at the University of Naples; although he aspired to the chair of jurisprudence, he failed to win the position.[92] Vico was a close friend of Gian Vincenzo Gravina and, like many literati in early eighteenth-century Naples, was a member of the Arcadian Academy.[93]

Benedetto Croce names Vico as the founder of the modern science of aesthetics.[94] Vico's works span the fields of philology, philosophy, and history, and draw inspiration primarily from four authors: Plato, Tacitus, Bacon, and Grotius.[95] While his initial studies indicate an adherence to Cartesian rationalism, his later works, particularly his *New Science* and *Autobiography*, oppose the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*: Vico counters Descartes' metaphysical idealism with a physical, historical view of man's evolution.[96] In his *Scienza nuova* (1725, rewritten and reprinted in 1730 and again in 1744), he traces a universal history of man that stems from ancient poetic wisdom; he views human imagination, and not Cartesian reason,

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[92] On this episode see Giambattista Vico, *Autobiography*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1944), 160-165.

[93] Ibid, 154.

[94] Benedetto Croce, *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale. Teoria e storia* (Bari: Laterza, 1912), 223ff.

[95] Vico, *Autobiography*, 154-155.

[96] On Vico's break with Cartesian thought, see De Besaucèle, *Les cartésiens d'Italie*, 144ff.

as the origin of human institutions. His *Autobiography,* written over period of eight years,

chronicles his life and education; the work is intended as a challenge to Descartes' *Discourse*

on the Method.

In his *Scienza nuova,* Vico casts poetic inspiration as a historical process—a *corso* and

ricorso of history—in which man, under the arch of divine order, evolves from a producer of

poetic utterances into a speaker of rational discourse. Nowhere in his philosophical text does

he explicitly address Platonic divine fury, and yet the topic pervades his historical vision of

poetic production. In Vico's configuration, society loops through three ages: the ages of

gods, heroes, and man. He writes that nations "will be seen to develop in conformity with

this division, by a constant and uninterrupted order of causes and effects present in every

nation, through three kinds of natures."[97] Vico casts the first poets as interpreters of natural

phenomena: ancient man heard thunder, he writes, and named it first with abstract sounds,

then with abstract names. As early man could not conceive of natural phenomena through

rationalist terms, he imagined the existence of supernatural deities; theological poetry, the

product of the ancient theological poets, was born through irrational imagination and

mediated by corporeal utterances.[98] Vico thus flatly denies the possibility that poets were

inspired by deities such as Apollo and Venus; he affirms, to the contrary, that poets were

inspired by their own imagination and were therefore able to envision their own inspiration

by divine forces. Like Gravina, he reads figures like Orpheus and Amphion in symbolic,

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[97] Giambattista Vico, *New Science,* trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948), §915.

[98] Croce claims that Vico's ideas on imagination draw from discourses by Gravina and Muratori (Croce, *Estetica come scienza,* 236). See also Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The New Map of the World: The Poetic Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 153ff; Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory,* 192-193.

historical terms, rather than as poets literally inspired by pagan deities.[99] For Vico, ancient

poetic production is irrational,[100] in that it is not beholden to rational speech—and yet it is

not ultimately owed to Apollo and the Muses.

Vico begins his discourse on poetic wisdom in Book II by discussing poetic

metaphysics. He postulates that the first founders of gentile humanity were ignorant giants,

sublime in their corporality and entirely undeveloped in their capacities for reason. Natural

phenomena led them to create the figure of Jove, the first god of the greater gentes:[101]

> Thus, in accordance with what has been said about the principles of the
> poetic characters, Jove was born naturally in poetry as a divine character or
> imaginative universal, to which everything having to do with the auspices was
> referred by all the ancient gentile nations, which must therefore all have been
> poetic by nature. Their poetic wisdom began with this poetic metaphysics,
> which contemplated God by the attribute of his providence; and they were
> called theological poets, or sages who understood the language of the gods
> expressed in the auspices of Jove; and were properly called divine in the
> sense of diviners, from *divinari*, to divine or predict.[102]

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[99] However, as Quondam notes, Gravina and Vico's conceptions of the origins of poetry differ greatly: "A prima vista, il riconoscimento graviniano della poesia come primo linguaggio dell'umanità sembrerebbe pienamente in linea con la definizione vichiana di 'teologia poetica' e di 'poeta teologico', secondo cui 'i primi sapienti del mondo greco furon i poeti teologi', ma basta osservare, per intendere l'abisso che separa le due posizioni, che per Gravina la poesia è la scienza stessa che si veste di 'numeris et metro', mentre per il Vico quella sapienza poetica 'dovette incominciare da una metafisica non ragionata ed astratta qual è questa or degli addottrinati, ma sentita ed immaginata, quale dovette essere di tra i primi uomini, siccome quelli ch'erano di niuno raziocinio e tutti robusti sensi e robustissime fantasie" (Quondam, *Cultura e ideologia di Gianvicenzo Gravina*, 161). See also Mazzotta, *The New Map of the World,* 153ff.

[100] This is an essential point for Vico: he vehemently rejects the argument that ancient man was rational in his thought. As he writes, "All that has been so far said here upsets all the theories of the origin of poetry from Plato and Aristotle down to Patrizzi, Scaliger, and Castelvetro [807]. For it has been shown that it was deficiency of human reasoning power that gave rise to poetry so sublime that the philosophies which came afterward, the arts of poetry and of criticism, have produced none equal or better, and haven even prevented its production....For the wisdom of the ancients was the vulgar wisdom of the lawgivers who founded the human race, not the esoteric wisdom of great and rare philosophers"(Vico, *New Science*, §384, 120).

[101] Ibid, §377, 118.

[102] Ibid, §381, 119.

Vico understands general madness within the framework of his *corso* and *ricorso* of history. While human history begins and re-begins with poetic wisdom, it necessarily ends and re-ends with a descent into a kind of analytical, tyrannical-excessive madness as discussed by Plato in *Republic* IX: "Men first feel necessity," Vico writes, "then look for utility, next attend to comfort, still later amuse themselves with pleasure, thence grow dissolute in luxury, and finally go mad and waste their substance."[103] The social madness at the end of the cycle of man is naturally tied to the process of linguistic development: literal, analytic language loses its connection to the wisdom of its poetic origins, and thus becomes a series of empty concepts detached from meaning. The very advent of an age/ages of reason produces a mad void with its linguistic representation.[104] Similarly, developed man's Stoic-influenced attempt to quell the passions is contradictory to man's original nature: in his discussion of heroic customs (§708), Vico notes that ancient heroes, unlike their modern representatives, were so wild and beholden to their senses that they were "very limited in understanding but endowed with the vastest imaginations and the most violent passions."[105] Modern man is more sophisticated in his speech and more physically delicate than his ancestors, and accordingly his passions are naturally more subdued.

In his *Autobiography*, Vico explores the physical determinants of his life's path, in opposition to Descartes' own, self-determining autobiographical *Discourse on the Method*.[106] Vico begins the story of his life by recounting his fall from a ladder at the age of seven: this

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[103] Ibid, §241.

[104] See Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 214-215.

[105] Vico, *New Science*, §708.

[106] In the 1725 version of the *Autobiography* Vico makes his anti-Cartesian intentions clear: "We shall not here feign what René Descartes craftily feigned as to the method of his studies simply in order to exalt his own philosophy and mathematics and degrade all the other studies included in divine and human learning. Rather, with the candor proper to a historian, we shall narrate plainly and step by step the entire series of Vico's studies, in order that the proper and natural causes of his particular development as a man of letters may be known." See Vico, *Autobiography*, 7.

fall not only fractured his skull and gave rise to a tumor, but also led to the development of

his melancholic, irritable temperament, "such as belongs to men of ingenuity and depth,

who, thanks to the one, are quick as lightning in perception, and thanks to the other, take no

pleasure in verbal cleverness or falsehood."[107] This figuration categorically rejects any notion

of Cartesian dualism: Vico's mental temperament and passions are necessarily linked to the

physical conditions and incidents of his life, just as the development of imaginative

universals is necessarily linked to the physical origins of history of man.

Crescimbeni

Giovanni Mario Crescimbeni (1663–1728), one of the founding members of the

Arcadian Academy in Rome and its first *custode generale* (under the pastoral name Alfisebio

Cario), dedicated the majority of his life and work to literary reform: a staunch critic of

Marinism and baroque style, he advocated for a return to a purer aesthetic and a

reinstatement of the ever-elusive *buon gusto*. Whereas Gravina praised the poetry of Homer,

Crescimbeni favored the verses of Petrarch, as they exemplified a synthesis of pastoral

imagery and contemporary poetic (Bembian) virtue.[108] His engagement with ancient literature

was then largely aesthetic in nature: rather than promoting the moral or social values of

ancient poetry, he fixated on the aesthetic techniques of poetry, and urged contemporary

authors to mimic certain elements of ancient style. The *custode generale* promoted the Tuscan

poet Angelo di Costanzo as a poetic antidote to the baroque excesses of Marinism, and

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[107] Vico, *Autobiography*, 111.

[108] Widely regarded as one of the most influential critical texts written about the Italian language, Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* joined the ranks Dante's own *De vulgari eloquentia* in shaping the theory and use of the Italian language in the Renaissance. In his work, Bembo famously posits his theory of language based on the sonorities of words, favoring sound over contextual expressivity. His oppositional notions of *gravità* and *piacevolezza* serve as the basis for his theory on poetic sound; Petrarchan poetry is the quintessential model for his aesthetic.

wrote extensively on Costanzo's skill in producing poetic beauty; he was also dedicated to

the documentation of the history and works of the Arcadian Academy, as evidenced by his

Vite degli Arcadi illustri (1708–1727), *Le rime degli Arcadi* (1716–1722), and *Notizie istoriche degli*

Arcadi morti (1720–21).

As Crescimbeni focuses primarily on aesthetic concerns in Italian poetry, his

historical and critical writings generally omit any profound exploration of ancient texts.[109]

His *Istoria della volgar Poesia* (1698), *Commentarii* (1702–1711),[110] and *Bellezza della volgar poesia*

(1700) catalogue Italian authors and their works, providing judgment on their respective

strengths and weaknesses. He lauds the works of Costanzo, Ariosto, and Petrarch, and

discusses authors like Dante with decidedly less admiration.[111] Throughout his works, he

promotes a greater sense of liberty in poetic verisimilitude, in response to the needs and

desires of audiences; he also strongly advocates for poetic improvisation, within the

framework of *buon gusto*.

Crescimbeni's *Istoria della volgar poesia*, his later *Bellezza della volgar poesia*, and his

Comentarj intorno alla storia della volgar poesia consider only Italian poetry; his histories

accordingly exclude Greek and Roman texts that deferred to inspiration by divine powers.

The Muses, in his repetitive Christian anthologies, are mere metaphors, as are Apollo, Fate,

and Olympus, among others; he makes this explicit in his *proteste* at the beginnings of his

works. As he writes in his *Istoria*, "Le parole Fato, Destino, Nume, Deità, Adorare, e simili

sparse ne' Componimenti Poetici comprisi nella presente Opera sono semplici abbellimenti

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[109] As Robertson notes, Crescimbeni was not known for his talent or profound ideas (Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 18). See also Walter Binni, *L'Arcadia e il Metastasio*, 357; Foffano, *Ricerche letterarie*, 207.

[110] The *Commentarii*, published in five volumes over the course of nine years, expand on his *Istoria*.

[111] This again falls in line with a Bembian understanding of beautiful poetry. See Richard Lansing, ed., *The Dante Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 272.

di Poesia, non già sensi di menti Cattoliche, come furono, e sono gli Autori de' medesimi."[112]

His *protesta* at the opening of his *Bellezza* is essentially the same, although he names Platonic philosophy as a potentially pagan element: "Quei sentimenti di Filosofia Platonica, o d'altra Etnica Dottrina, che discordano da i veri Dogmi della Fede Cattolica, protesta l'Autore d'averli adoperati, come ornamenti della Poesia Italiana; e non già per approvarli, e crederli sufficenti; e però in senso di verità affatto li ripruova, e condanna."[113] With these words, the preeminent Alfesibeo Cario excuses all Arcadian references to pagan religions, appropriating ancient terminology for Christian poetic ends: while his understanding of ancient poetic practices lacks the scientific-philosophical rigor of Vico's *New Science* and the social consciousness of Muratori's and Gravina's works, he nonetheless places Christian truth above pagan illusion. He aims in his works to import certain literary conventions of the ancients, while leaving the literal gods in the past.

Yet he is unable to entirely dismiss poetic fury as a misconception of the ancients. Crescimbeni intersperses comments on poetic inspiration throughout his works; instead of categorically denying the possibility of ancient poetic *estro*, he focuses on modes in which modern poets can *imitate* the inspiration of the ancient Greek poets—this is, of course, in direct opposition to Muratori's condemnation of Christian poets who feign inspiration by pagan deities. In his dialogic exposition on Tuscan imitation of Greek poetry in the *Bellezza*, Crescimbeni names four *circostanze* of Greek poetic production: "forza di lingua, vestimento di cose, verità di concetti, ed entusiasmo, o, per accostarci più a quel, che riconosciamo negli

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[112] Giovan Mario Crescimbeni, *Protesta, Istoria della volgar poesia* (Rome: Chracas, 1698).

[113] Giovan Mario Crescimbeni, *Protesta, Bellezza della volgar poesia* (Rome: Francesco Buagni, 1700). This kind of defensive statement is present in many Italian texts of the period that deal with mythological or pagan subjects.

Autori Greci da noi imitabili, estro."[114] He addresses these four points, first by positing that

the force of the Tuscan language can easily match that of ancient Greek; he then addresses

poetic style, urging for a Ciceronian-Bembian *variazione*, and speaks of different modes of

physical and metaphysical verisimilitude. On the question of divine inspiration, he writes:

> ...io stimo, che in qualche parte possa imitarsi da i Toscani l'estro, almeno
> de' Greci del quarto secolo; poichè, essendo ingenerato l'estro da umor
> malincolico, il quale è comune a tutte le nazioni, non più ne gli antichi Greci,
> che ne' moderni Toscani può ritrovarsi: che siasi dell'opinione d'alcuni sopra
> il furore de' primi, che poetarono, il quale riferiscono a dono di Deitadi, o
> Demoni, che lor commovevano l'animo con fantasie da soprannatural lume
> rappresentate: de' quali Poeti, e del qual furore io non favello, né intendo
> favellare.[115]

Crescimbeni removes the question of modern supernatural inspiration by insisting that *estro*

is a product of melancholy; since modern Tuscan poets can be melancholic, they can also be

inspired like the Greeks.[116] Yet when he moves to discuss the true origins of possible

supernatural inspiration, he quickly deflects to another topic. While Crescimbeni later cites

Patrizi's insight on poetic inspiration, he never directly addresses the origins of the supposed

ancient *estro*; rather, he focuses on the technical aspects of ancient poetry. The discussants

begin a tangent on the poetic conventions of the poetically inspired: "...il Patrizio riferisce di

molte opere...composte in versi esametri, tetrametri giambici, e in altre sorte di versi;

siccome l'ebbero anche i Ditirambici, l'artifizio de' quali consisteva in celare l'istesso artifizio

in guisa ...mentre in questo modo erano giudicati più ripieni di poetico furore."[117] While

Crescimbeni still marginally evades the notion of genuine poetic fury, he proposes that poets

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[114] Crescimbeni, *Bellezza*, 48.

[115] Ibid, 50.

[116] Crescimbeni clearly uses the term *Toscano* to denote contemporary Italian poets—that is, writers of standard Tuscan language used by Petrarch and Boccaccio and later championed by Bembo and his followers as the dominant poetic mode.

[117] Ibid, 52.

could feign inspiration through technical *sprezzatura* (and, consequently, that the modern-day melancholic Tuscan poet could theoretically do the same).[118]

If Crescimbeni's understanding of divine poetic fury was rooted in a notion of technical poetic prowess, he clearly approved of the technical ability of Ludovico Ariosto: in his *Istoria*, he concludes his brief discussion of Ariosto's life by stating, "nell'Epica, che Toscanamente trattò, fece conoscere al Mondo, che il titolo di Divino non conviene solo ad Omero."[119] The epithet of the "divine" Ariosto seems linked to the epic genre, although he is even more elaborate in his praise of Petrarch: "…mentre il suo Canzoniero è quello, che tanto più acquista vigore, quanto più invecchia: di modo che io ardirei dire, che spirito divino egli fosse stato colui, che gliele dettò, dapoichè alle amorose grazie e' seppe aggiunger la quarta, cioè l'Onestà, a dispetto di molti, che non seppero, e non sanno poetar d'Amore se non lasciva, e disonestamente."[120] While Crescimbeni concedes some divine element in the poetry of Ariosto and Petrarch, he still roots this divinity in poetic prowess.

Crescimbeni is relatively quiet on extra-poetic madness in his treatises; he does, however, glance at Orlando's madness and its numerous appropriations in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, including those of some of his contemporaries. Through this brief exploration of Orlando's reinventions, Crescimbeni highlights some

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[118] He repeats his argument of feigned divine inspiration in his eighth dialogue, during a discussion of genre: "In sesto luogo conferma la mia ragione il considerare, che se nella Tragedia, ove mai non parla il Poeta, ma ben sempre favellano coloro, che sono introdotti, si richiede una maniera di parlare meno usata, e affatto diversa dall'ordinaria; quanto più dovrà ciò farsi nell'Epopeia, nella quale per lo più parla l'istesso Poeta quasi con un'altra lingua, come disse Cicerone, *fingendo d'esser rapito da furor divino sopra di se medesimo*, e di favellar coll'aiuto delle Muse, o d'altra Deità invocata" (Ibid, 142. Emphasis mine).

[119] Crescimbeni, *Istoria*, 99. Crescimbeni even mentions the *Divino Ariosto* in his history of Boiardo (93). He discusses Dante's *divina Comedia*, but does not credit Dante himself with divinity (86), which is not particularly surprising considering Dante's tepid legacy in the seventeenth century. See Aldo Vallone, *Storia della critica dantesta dal XIV al XX secolo* (Padua: Vallardi, 1981), 553ff; Uberto Limentani, *Fortunes of Dante in seventeenth century Italy* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Giovanni Battista Marchesi, *Della fortuna di Dante nel secolo XVII* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1898), 1-20.

[120] Crescimbeni, *Istoria*, 88-89.

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aspects of the Orlando's character that had captured the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century imagination. As previously discussed, Crescimbeni heaps praise onto the divine and unparalleled Ariosto and his divine and unparalleled poem; he seems unable to mention the author without digressing into elaborate encomia. In Book II of his *Istoria della volgar poesia*, he outlines the adaptations and re-imaginings of *Orlando furioso*, from excerpts of the poem translated into various Italian dialects, to Goro da Collalto's spiritual reworking of the first canto (1589), to a lament by Orlando entitled *Orlando vicino al suo furore*, included in Nisieli's *Proginnasmi* (1695). Of the theatrical dramas mentioned, he champions Sigismondo Capeci's *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*, "il quale con maravigliosa felicità seppe in essa trasportare non solo l'azione principale del Poema dell'Ariosto, cioè la pazzia d'Orlando, ma anche alcuno de' più begli episodi."[121] Crescimbeni mentions a comic production of the first stanzas of the canti by Giovanni della Casa, "la quale è una trasformazione in ridicolo di tutte le prime stanze de' canti".[122] He makes his feelings about this treatment of Ariostan verses clear: "ma noi non l'abbiamo veduta."[123] He finally references a poem by Giovan Batista Filauro Aquilano, who, being upset by the depiction of Orlando as a madman, had rewritten him as *Orlando saggio*. Crescimbeni's assumption is that none of the re-workings of Ariosto's poem compare to the original: *Orlando furioso* remains something of a sanctified text that can (and should) only be brought back to life as literally as possible. Orlando's madness is not funny, reversible, or reducible, and Ariosto's divine poem can only be touched with the most faithful adaptations.

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[121] Crescimbeni, *Istoria*, 352. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of this work.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

Zeno

Apostolo Zeno (1668–1750), a Venetian poet, librettist, and man of letters, actively engaged with the literary debates and questions of his time: a founding member of the Venetian Accademia degli Animosi, he was also a member of the Arcadian Academy's Venetian colony. Like many other members of Settecento academies, Zeno opposed baroque style and advocated for a betterment of poetic practices. During the Orsi-Bouhours polemic, he wrote in support of Orsi's defense of Italian poetry. Together with Scipione Maffei and Antonio Vallisnieri, Zeno founded the *Giornale dei letterati d'Italia* in 1710, with the objective of compiling and critiquing literary works from the Italian peninsula.[124] Beyond his critical work, Zeno was a renowned poet and librettist: he served as the poet laureate at the imperial court of Vienna between 1718 and 1729, and composed a total of sixty-six dramatic works, including *drammi per musica* and *oratori*. He initiated opera reforms that countered baroque aesthetics: his operas were more concise, structurally more coherent than those of his baroque predecessors, and imbued with a stronger moral tone.[125] Metastasio took over Zeno's position in Vienna, and much of Zeno's opera reform was passed on to Metastasio and his generation of librettists.[126]

In his letters Zeno discusses a broad range of personal and professional themes: he expresses his sentiments toward those close to him, and meditates on many of the literary and philosophical debates of his time. Considering his active role in opera reform, his letters

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[124] On Maffei's life and works, see Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory*, 144ff; Toffanin, *L'Arcadia*, 73ff.

[125] This does not preclude the presence of fantasy and spectacle within Zeno's libretti: his operas were successful in part because of their visual spectacle. See Mercedes Viale Ferrero, "Le didascalie sceniche nei drammi per musica di Zeno," in *L'Opera italiana a Vienna*, ed. M.T. Muraro (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 71.

[126] See Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 231-241. On Muratori's understanding of Zeno's reforms, see *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 586ff. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of Metastasio's inheritance of the post of court poet in Vienna.

provide a key link between theoretical views on poetry and their potential practical

application. In a letter addressed to Antonio Vallisnieri (March 11, 1719), Apostolo Zeno

plays with different figurations of *pazzia*, from melancholy illness to general madness. He

introduces the letter by stating, "Bisogna che corra una qualche cattiva costellazione, la quale

faccia venire le girandole al capo, e cadere in pazzia."[127] His first point is a discussion of the

depression of their mutual acquaintance, Jacopo Giacometti, a professor at the University of

Padova:

> Dimanda la Cattedra di Morale, l'ottiene, si dispera, si dà delle coltellate,
> savio solo in questo, che non se le ha date profonde, ma con timore di farsi
> male…Fausto per timore del terremoto già passato dà in melancolia, teme di
> dover morire, vuole aver male, e non l'ha, crede la morte vicina, perché è
> morto un suo compagno, né vuole uscire di letto, ed è poco che ancor vivo
> non faccia cantarsi l'esequie.[128]

Zeno engages with classic tropes of melancholy: the afflicted Giacometti is fearful, desires to

do himself harm, cannot get out of bed, etc. His third point, a somewhat cryptic attack on

M.M., hinges on the dynamics of social madness. In an oblique reference to Plato's *Republic I*,

he writes, "Vi ponete al fianco una spada nuova di argento, e ve la lasciate rubare. Non è egli

questa una solenne pazzia?"[129] Zeno ultimately turns to a seemingly Erasmian conception of

pervasive madness, jokingly referring to his own monetary earnings: "La M.S. mi ha regalato

di quattro mila fiorini…ed io ho avuta la pazzia di prenderli. Ma chi di grazia non l'avrebbe

avuta? Piacesse al Cielo, ch'io avessi spesso occasioni di così impazzire; ed a voi pure ne

auguro di somiglianti."[130] Zeno's letter indeed sketches a constellation of varying ills: general

madness in the form of slight monetary greed seems less of an offence to him than the

solemn madness of Platonic social behavior; Zeno also does not blame the melancholic

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[127] Zeno, *Lettere* (Venice: Pietro Valvasense, 1752), 54.

professor for his dangerous behavior, but instead expresses concern for his nature and the circumstances that led him to such a state.

Conclusion

Reason, the reigning queen of Arcadian aesthetic, scientific, moral, and philosophical thought, wore many masks, from the poetic to the public, from the historical to the Hippocratic, from the sacred to the sanctimonious—and within this variegated reason lived and breathed myriad forms of madness. *Mania, insania, furore, estro, delirio, pazzia,* and *follia* stood as signifiers for a broad range of literary and social phenomena, sometimes external to the sanctity of reason, but more often circumscribed within that very reason.

Diverse notions of poetic and non-poetic fury—some ancient, some modern—inevitably influenced Arcadian thought. For Crescimbeni, the shepherd of the original Arcadian flock, poetic reason reigned with an aesthetic fist, and poetic *estro* remained a marginal aesthetic exercise rather than a literal possibility; he conceived of extra-poetic madness in similar aesthetic terms, as evidenced by his poetic approach to Orlando's perfect madness. Muratori also denied the existence of true poetic fury, past and present, but explored the role of the *fantasia* in leading the poet toward a naturally (in place of supernaturally) inspired state; he advised moral caution in the consumption of wine, but conceded that men could be naturally disposed to melancholy, madness, or both. While he viewed true, physical madness as an ill that must be addressed with compassion and

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid, 55.

[130] Ibid.

medication, he never conceived of the possibility of an absolute isolation or correction of the mad: madness, like reason, was a part of the natural realm. Vico also denied that poetry was literally inspired by the muses, and he reinterpreted poetic fury within the historical framework of imaginative universals; he viewed original poetry as a physical phenomenon in the age of gods that only developed into rational speech in the age of man. As in his understanding of poetic man, he conceived of contemporary, rational man's mental processes as necessarily linked to his bodily makeup, in opposition to Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*; the character of the madman or melancholic man was therefore at least partly determined by his body, and not by any purity of the rational intellect. Zeno was disturbed by the melancholy of others, dismayed by social madness, and amused by *insania publica*; he allowed for a broad spectrum of madness, within and without reason.

Finally, Gravina, Metastasio's artistic father and the springboard for decades of artistic Arcadian and extra-Arcadian production, conceived of a social project rooted in *ragion poetica*. Yet of all the Arcadian theorists of reason and good taste, his *ragion poetica* was one of the very few that allowed for a literal poetic fury—a madness, a fall, a loss, a *delirio*, that was necessarily a part of reason, generative and regenerative in its deviation. In his understanding, the poet drew inspiration from the light of divine reason and, in a Platonic-Ficinian process, transmitted such inspiration through the interlocking chain of his public. Another part of his classicizing efforts took the form of a moralist critique of modern poetry and its effects on the modern public: he understood his society as immersed in a shallow, uninspired, and passionless poetic aesthetic, and advocated for a return to the true passions and inspiration of the ancients.

No unified image of Arcadian madness emerges from the exploration of these writings in relation to earlier texts on madness: what does emerge, however, is a tapestry in

which we can locate patterns and stitches that are reflected in or in some way resemble the fibers of the eighteenth-century operatic treatments of Orlando, the quintessential madman of many faces and places. The plots of these operatic adaptations of *Orlando furioso*, their music, their language, and their gestures can and must be understood in relation to this Arcadian theoretical tapestry of madness and reason.

CHAPTER 2

Arcadian Opera: Retrospection, Reform, Reason

In a famous passage from his *Bellezza della volgar poesia*, Crescimbeni lambasts Giacinto

Andrea Cicognini as the godfather of bad melodrama: he states that Cicognini's 1649 opera

Giasone:

> …portò l'esterminio dell'Istrionica, e per conseguenza della vera, e buona
> Comica, e della Tragica stessa; imperciocché per maggiormente lusingare con
> la novità lo svogliato gusto degli Spettatori, nauseanti egualmente la viltà delle
> cose Comiche, e la gravità delle Tragiche l'Inventor de' Drammi unì l'una, e
> l'altra in essi, mettendo pratica con mostruosità non più udita tra Re, ed Eroi,
> ed altri illustri Personaggi, e Buffoni, e Servi, e vilissimi Uomini. Questo
> guazzabuglio di Personaggi fu cagione del total guastamento delle regole
> Poetiche, le quali andarono di tal maniera in disuso, che ne meno si riguardò
> più alla locuzione, la quale, costretta a servire alla musica, perdè la sua purità, e
> si riempì d'idiotismi. Fu tralasciato il maneggio regolato delle figure, che
> nobilitano l'orazione, che si ristrinse per lo più dentro i termini del parlar
> proprio, e famigliare, il quale è più adatto per la musica; e finalmente il ligame
> di que' piccolo metri, appellati volgarmente arietta, che a larga mano si
> spargevano per le Scene, e la straboccchevole improprietà di fare altrui parlar
> cantando, tolsero affatto da i componimenti la forza degli affetti, e l'artifizio di
> muovergli negli ascoltanti.[131]

Crescimbeni's attack targets the sung melodramas of Italy's baroque past: he deplores the

mixing of comic and tragic elements, the melting pot of illustrious and base characters, the

disregard for poetic rules, and the impropriety of poetic word in service of music.[132] Yet

Crescimbeni offers a glimmer of hope for contemporary Italy, namely the dramas of

Domenico David and Apostolo Zeno: these dramas, in Crescimbeni's view, do not mix

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[131] Crescimbeni, *Bellezza*, 140.

[132] Burt understands the Arcadian theorist's objection to melodrama conventions as a rejection of the pastoral genre; Harris notes, however, that Crescimbeni's critique is not of any one genre, but rather of certain anti-Aristotelian mixes of genre, characters, and style (Burt, "Opera in Arcadia," 151). See also Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 13ff.

styles or characters, and feature a reduced number of arias, leaving room for the stirring of affections.[133] Crescimbeni thus outlines a series of guidelines that would correct the perceived ills of Italy's operatic past and usher musical drama into an era of good taste and moral soundness. Like many Arcadian critics of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, he calls for reform, and, as he discusses, no artistic medium is as much in need of reform as baroque opera.

This chapter delves into the complex phenomenon of Arcadian opera—into its relation to past operatic conventions, its role as revived Greek drama, its structural and thematic reforms, and its contradictions and inconsistencies. Why were Arcadians so profoundly invested in opera as an artistic medium? How did they conceive of operatic reform? Did reform theory transform into reform practice, and if so, how did such change take place? How did Arcadian opera grapple with the specificities and conventions of operatic madness?

Theories of Arcadian Song, From Grove to Stage

A passage in Crescimbeni's 1708 text *L'Arcadia* evidences the ambivalent role of music in Arcadia, and, as Tcharos proposes, serves as a nostalgic manifesto of Arcadian ideals on the relationship between music and poetry.[134] Crescimbeni narrates the fable of a debate between shepherds Tirsi (representing poet Giambattista Felice Zappi) and Terpandro (composer Alessandro Scarlatti): the two discuss which song would bring delight

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[133] As Freeman notes, Crescimbeni's observation that Zeno's and David's libretti lack comic characters is inaccurate, as both librettists used comic characters in their dramas; Crescimbeni's understanding likely stems from his limited knowledge of the writers' works (*Opera without Drama*, 15). See also Robert Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform of the Libretto," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 21 (1968), 326.

[134] See Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit*, 178ff.

to the other shepherds, debating questions of decorum and the balance of word and text,

and ultimately the two perform a collaborative improvisation. Crescimbeni, in his pastoral

account, concludes:

> Restava intanto ognuno sopraffatto in vedere, come mai gareggiassero que'
> due sì eccellenti Maestri, l'uno di Poesia, l'altro di Musica; e di loro
> gareggiamento giunse a tal segno, che appena ebbe l'uno terminato di
> replicare l'ultimo verso della novella Aria, che l'altro chiuse l'ultima riga della
> sua Musica. Ora questa nuova maniera di fare all'improvviso Musicale
> Accademia piacque tanto alla Brigata, che con essa vollero chiudere la
> conversazione.[135]

Crescimbeni depicts a utopian setting, reminiscent of Virgilian eclogue, in which poetry and

music are woven together in complete harmony; Tirsi and Terpandro, the idealized

representations of a real poet and a real composer, succeed both in complementing one

another's output and in pleasing the audience of shepherds.[136] Song was not only a symbiotic

symbol of the Arcadian mission; it also stood at the heart of Arcadian identity and genealogy,

as Pier Jacopo Martello expresses in his oration for the opening of a new Arcadian theater in

Rome in 1712:

> ... noi Arcadi a guisa appunto di quelli, che, secondo l'opinion de' Platonici,
> aman la musica, perché l'anime loro si van ricordando di que' concenti, che
> udirono già sulle sfere, per una tal quale, se vogliam dirla, reminiscenza ci siam
> ricordati esser'Arcadi, e il nostro genio a quella prima vita candida, libera, e

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[135] Crescimbeni, *L'Arcadia*, 293.

[136] Still, the trope of a rivalry between music and poetry speaks to a kind of violence inherent to the pastoral genre—to a clash between utopia and dystopia. Song is simultaneously the expression of a harmonious world and a reminder of its cruelty. Charles Segal explores such a violence in his analysis of Virgil's ninth eclogue: "The theme of song thus dominates the poem, but with a difference between the two singers. Moeris, the elder, has been more exposed to the realities which exist 'outside' the realm of pastoral song. He has a sense of cruel forces in the world, of vicissitude and old age…He knows too from experience how feeble song is against the violence of the world 'outside'…and he knows how easily the capacity for song is lost. Indeed in his words and in his situation he is the reminder of that 'fragility' of the Vergilian pastoral world" (Charles Segal, *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 290.

pastorale è una suggestione del nostro medesimo sangue, il quale, forse senza avvedersene, si sente Arcade per origine.[137]

Yet Arcadians perceived a profound disparity between the utopian harmonizing of word and song in the pastoral grove and the baroque conventions of musical theater. The theater, they generally concurred, should be a locus of serious, literary drama, and the text should not be overshadowed or overpowered by trifling song.[138] Arcadians tolerated and even embraced the presence of song on the stage, but baroque opera offered the *wrong kind* of song.

Many Arcadians held up theater as a form inherently rooted in the exemplary works of ancient Greek tragedy, and therefore as necessarily literary in origin. There was undoubtedly dissention in Arcadian circles on how and how much contemporary theater could or should reinstate ancient Greek drama: its members debates such questions as Aristotelian unities of plot and action, definition of characters, number of acts,

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[137] Crescimbeni, *Prose degli Arcadi* II, 181. The idea that music was crucial to Arcadian identity and ethics persisted through much of the century; years later, in 1744, Count Pietro Asdente expounded on the Arcadian pairing of music and poetry: "Unirono perciò gli Arcadi a questa prima istituzione il Canto, e la Poesia, e stabilirono rigorosa legge, che nelle Feste pubbliche, e ne' Teatri, ne' pubblici, e privati Conviti, nelle solenni, o particolari Adunanze, Inni, e Canzoni si recitassero, ne' quali, sotto parlar coperto, s'insegnavano le massime necessarie alla conservazione della Civile Società, gli Elementi della Naturale Religione, e i principi del meccanico sistema delle cose create" (*Prose degli Arcadi* Tomo IV, 97). Song figured prominently in Arcadian meetings, both with staged dramas and improvised song. See Smith, "Opera in Arcadia," 4ff.

[138] Tcharos proposes that "Opera's problem was not predominantly that it challenged the primacy of word over music, but that the combinatorial power of word *merged* with music unleashed a new, modern mode for expression where the multiple and stratified 'authoring' intrinsic to its creation complicated and thus made less stable (even if more evocative) the articulation of 'text.' This complexity of authorship adopted by opera entwined discrete strands of expressive practices and their cultural meanings" (Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit*, 4). Many early Arcadian dramas contain indications of song through the indentation of strophic passages. See for example Alessandro Guidi's *Endimione*, contained in MS Arcadia 1, 204r-235v; *La Dafne. Versi per musica di Erilo Cleoneo*, 240r-245v. Baker emphasizes the importance of musical reform in Arcadia: "The Arcadian reform programme has too often been equated solely with the Zeno-Metastasian reform of the libretto. As such, it can only be regarded as an abortive one, necessitating a 'reform of a reform.' It is an over-simplification to regard the goal as solely one of rationalization of the libretto. Of equal importance to the theorists was the restoration of authentic expression to the music; the infusion, or rather re-infusion, of emotion into the recitative and a simplification of the aria in the interests of a direct affective impact comparable to that ascribed to the music of Greek drama. As early as Crescimbeni, the Arcadian commentators perceived that the core of the musical problem of *dramma per musica* existed in the expressive nature of recitative and aria and in their relationship" (Baker, "The Oratorios of Bendetto Marcello," 397, cit. Smith, "Opera in Arcadia," 20).

verisimilitude, and the role of song.[139] Dramatic opera became a significant point of

contention in Arcadian circles, as the operatic stage simultaneously represented a species of

baroque theatrical deformity and a promising locus of reform.[140]

Gravina strongly contested the dominance of song over word and the excess of

rhymed text in sung drama, but nonetheless viewed song as a necessary part of the

socializing process of the theater, and expounded on the edifying effects of Greek chorus.[141]

In his *Ragion poetica*, Gravina lauds the choral conventions of the ancients, but acknowledges

that a modified version of the Greek tragic chorus would be needed for contemporary

theater. In his later *Della tragedia*, Gravina expands on his understanding of the role of music

in Greek drama: he writes that ancient authors did not simply write texts, but actually

composed the music and provided set design. He also posits that ancient tragedy had

essentially two modes of music—one for soloists and one for choruses—neither of which

resembled the recitative-aria formulas of contemporary theater.

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[139] The members of the Arcadian Academy were neither the first nor the only critics to attack baroque opera and advocate for reform. On earlier seventeenth-century critiques of opera, see Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 1-11; Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 321ff. The question of song in theater is, as Rosand discusses, problematized in a well known passage from Aristotle's *Poetics*: "There are, lastly, certain other arts, which combine all the means enumerated, rhythm, melody, and verse, e.g. dithyrambic and nomic poetry, tragedy and comedy; with this difference, however, that the three kinds of means are in some of them all employed together and in others brought in separately, one after the other" (John Barns ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Revised Oxford translation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2: 2317, cit. Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 40 n13). Many Renaissance theorists attempted to decipher this difficult passage, including Varchi, Cinthio, Castelvetro, and Patrizi. See also Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism*, 201ff; Claude V. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), Ch 14. For a general discussion of the history of the debate over hierarchies of song and text, see Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics."

[140] As Smith discusses ("Opera in Arcadia," 9ff), most of the Arcadians who critiqued musical drama lacked the specialized skills and musical cognizance to truly probe detailed musical questions. As a result, many of their expositions on the role of music in theater read as shallow and abstracted from the popular and material realities of the contemporary theater; moreover, many of their suggestions for reform and the reinstatement of the ever-elusive *buon gusto* of the ancients are generally not rooted in any concrete ideas of how theatrical music truly worked, but rather in their individual impressions and imaginings of Greek music. Thus Arcadian opera reform in theory was, in theory, quite distant from its eventual practice.

[141] As Freeman notes, Gravina became more critical of contemporary opera over the years (Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 33-34).

Muratori similarly argues that contemporary musical practices represent an obscene

departure from the austere, useful music of the ancients. In Book III, Chapter 5 of *Della*

perfetta poesia italiana, dedicated entirely to the perceived defects of contemporary drama, he

cites Giusto Fontanini's assessment that contemporary music has no link to its ancient

precursor, "la quale era tutta grave, e scientifica."[142] Muratori claims, in a variation on Plato's

condemnation of poetry, that the effeminate music of contemporary theaters, erroneously

the master of the poetic word and not its servant, feeds the base affections of the people and

inflicts social damage. As a remedy to the ills of such corrupt practices, he suggests a return

to sacred song, particularly in the form of oratory.[143]

Other critics such as Martello passed milder judgment on the conventions of *drammi*

per musica, and voiced discontent with the austere censures of Gravina and Muratori. In his

1715 treatise *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, Martello debates the differences between ancient

and modern tragedy with a pseudo-Aristotelian 'impostor,' obliquely attacking Gravina's call

for a reinstatement of Greek conventions. In their five dialogues, the character Martello and

the 'impostor' concur that Aristotelian rules and ancient Greek theatrical practices should

not be applied literally to contemporary theater, but rather require reinterpretations and

modifications to satisfy contemporary tastes.[144] In the fifth dialogue, a thorough discussion

of musical drama, the 'impostor' begins their discussion for the day by quoting the critic

Charles de Saint-Evremond's denigration of French theater: "I Greci facevano belle tragedie,

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[142] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 573.

[143] Ibid, 576. He does not, however, unequivocally support sacred music, as he demonstrates in his *Della pubblica felicità*: "Molto poi sarebbe da dire intorno a certi cattivi effetti della Musica effeminata, e tanto più in bocca delle Donne, e di quella, che nelle Chiese in vece di conciliar la Divozione, la fa perdere..." (Ludovico Muratori, *Della pubblica felicità* (Lucca, 1749), 174-175).

[144] Freeman notes that the distinctions between Martello's opinions and those of the "impostor" are not consistently clear (*Opera without Drama*, 35). See also Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 330ff.

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ove qualche cosa cantavano; i Franzesi ne fanno delle cattive, nelle quali cantano tutto."[145]

The 'impostor' states that Saint-Evremond's judgment of the French could easily be applied

to the Italians; Martello concurs, but he also proposes that a number of *drammi per musica* are

worthy and enjoyable; all of the works of the *letteratissimo* Apostolo Zeno, for example, rise

above the poorly crafted dramas of the everyday Italian librettist.[146]

The 'impostor' then addresses the hierarchy of poetry and music in the

contemporary theater. Music, he proposes, is undoubtedly the master of poetry in opera, and

rather than denying or deprecating this order, critics should appreciate the fact that Italian

music "solleva gli animi da tutte le cure, e gli assorbe in una spensierata quiete, che di sè

contenti li rende…e più vegeti a tutte le operazioni umane, e così tanto fisica, quanto

moralmente è utile alla repubblica non meno della satirica, della commedia, e della

tragedia."[147] The 'impostor' engages with a sort of ethics of mediocrity—with a notion that

operatic texts are by nature mediocre, but such mediocrity allows for the expressive potential

of the music. He submits three suggestions for operatic reform: firstly, given that music

yields such affective pleasure, perhaps opera should consist of wordless music, as in a natural

setting of singing birds; otherwise, he proposes a change in terminology, stating that

librettists should not be called poets, but rather 'verseggiatori';[148] finally, one could collapse

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[145] Pier Jacopo Martello, *Della tragedia antica e moderna* (Rome: Francesco Gonzaga, 1715), 157. Charles de Saint-Evremond launched an attack on Italian opera with his 1685 publication "Sur les opera." See Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," 15ff; Freeman "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 321; Piero Weiss, *L'opera italiana nel '700*, ed. Raffaele Mellace (Rome: Astrolabio, 2013), 11-12.

[146] Martello, *Della tragedia,* 158. He also names the works of Moniglia and Lemene; *Tolomeo, Achille,* and the two *Ifigenie* by Carlo Sigismondo Capece; *Santa Cecilia, Costantino,* and *Ciro* by "a very eminent author"; *Dafni* by Eustachio Manfredi, *La caduta de' Deemviri* by Silvio Stampiglia, *L'Onestà negli amori* by Monsignore Bernini, and most of the works by Monsignore de Totis.

[147] Ibid, 160.

[148] Ibid, 165.

the entire structure by combining the figure of librettist and composer. He names Francesco

Pistocco as a prime example of such a practice, and exclaims that, "…mi parevan divini que'

versi così incorporati alle note!"[149] Martello's critique ultimately bolsters music as the primary

art and affective agent of opera.[150]

Many Arcadians sustained that true Aristotelian five-act tragedy should be drawn

from history and should progress according to a strict ethic of verisimilitude, without

recourse to magical denouement, intermezzi, or other ahistorical effects. Fables and myths,

to the contrary, were generally considered more adaptable to flexible three-act sung dramas,

as they dealt with gods and mythological stories; song, dance, and machines, although often

distasteful to Arcadian audiences, were more easily digested as functions of mythological or

pastoral dramas.[151] As Martello discusses, reform operas:

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[149] Ibid, 167.

[150] Freeman suggests that Marcello's satirical treatise *Il teatro alla moda* was at least in part modeled on the fifth dialogue of Martello's *Della tragedia antica e moderna*, as it was published only a few years later (*Opera without Drama*, 49). On the relationship between Marcello and Martello, see also Fabrizio Durante, "Vizi privati e virtù pubbliche del polemista teatrale da Muratori a Marcello," in *Benedetto Marcello: La sua opera e il suo tempo*, ed. Claudio Madricardo and Franco Rossi (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 356-363. Scipione Maffei, in his *Teatro italiano*, wholly rejected Martello's proposal that music should be the master of the text: "Furon essi da principio adornati di musica assai men lontana dal recitare," he writes, "e che non interrompeva le azioni, e i discorsi, nè facea perdere ogni bellezza di parole, e di sentimenti, onde assai meno offesa ne rimanea la Poesia; ma tanto si andarono poi trasformando di tempo in tempo, che giunsero a gustar mirabilmente l'un'arte, e l'altra. Vera cosa è, che ne' prossimi tempi alcuni felici ingegni a molto onor gli condussero, nel qual ordine non può negarsi il principato al Sig. Apostolo Zeno, che oltra a sessanta n'ha composti…Ma in ogni modo finchè questa maniera di musica si riterrà, non sarà mai possibile far in modo, che non siano pur sempre un'arte storpiata in grazia d'un'altra, e dove il superiore miseramente serve all'inferiore, talche il Poeta quel luogo ci tenga, che tiene il violinista, ove suoni per ballo" (*Teatro italiano, o sia scelta di tragedie* (Venice: Stefano Orlandini, 1746), I, vii-viii). In an earlier edition of *Teatro italiano*, Maffei omits Zeno's name. See also Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 333.

[151] In this sense, the Arcadian understanding of song with mythical subjects is not much of a departure from Seicento ideals. Seicento theorist Giovanni Battista Doni, for example, writes in his *Trattato della musica scenica* (1635) that deities and nymphs are more naturally disposed to song than humans. See Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. David Bryant (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 175; Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," 10ff. On public tastes in Rome at the end of the seventeenth century, see Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit*, 42-3.

> desumeranno dall'istorie no, ma bensì dalle favole i loro argomenti,
> avvisandosi essere, come in fatti è, troppa crudeltà il deformare
> sfacciatamente la verità de' successi scritti da Livio, da Giustino, da Salustio, e
> da qualunque più antico, e venerato Scrittore, lo che saria inevitabile per
> introdurvi le cose, che vuole il compositore, che vogliono i cantori, le
> cantatrici, che vuole l'architetto, il macchinista, il pittore, e sin l'impresario.
> Ciò pure sarà difficile, ma non impossibile nell'argomento
> favoloso,…essendo la favola più capace di macchina, e d'apparenza, e così
> fanno fortunatamente i franzesi, e così farà l'italiano.[152]

Muratori expresses a similar understanding of non-historical drama, stating that one must

"prender favole di non molto viluppo, ma più tosto semplici, e verisimili, aiutandole poscia

colla novità delle macchine, delle comparse, de i balli, de gl'intermezzi, e di altre simili cose,

che dilettanto ancora la vista…"[153] Indeed, the musical *favola pastorale*, a nod to the Lullian

tragédie lyrique, in theory embodied a compromise between high, spoken tragedy and sung

melodrama, and did less to offend the Arcadian ethos of verisimilitude.[154]

Giasone, paradigm of operatic ills?

Considering Crescimbeni's condemnation of Cicognini's *Giasone*, an examination of

the opera should elucidate some of the baroque opera conventions that provoked such

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[152] Martello, *Della tragedia* 5, 169.

[153] Muratori, *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, 705.

[154] On the link between Arcadian reform ideals and Lully's *tragédie lyrique*, see Tcharos, *Opera's Orbit*, 200; Strohm *Dramma per musica*, 24; Piero Weiss, "Baroque Opera and the Two Verisimilitudes," in *Music and Civilization: Essays in Honor of Paul Henry Lang*, ed. E. Strainchamps and M.R. Maniates (New York: Norton, 1984), 14. On the role of *favole* in the fabric of early melodrama, see Weiss 1982, 276-277. Harris reads the history of opera in the seventeenth century in relation to the pastoral genre. In particular, she points to the pastoral origins of opera, as opposed to the heroic and historic themes of the public theater in Venice that may have embraced elements of pastoralism: "…the 'early pastoral' and the 'Venetian pastoral' opera are different in a number of ways. The first was an independent musical drama, the latter a kind of opera performed in Venice which included pastoralizations as well as pastorals. In many ways the pastoral operas of Venice were more like the heroic operas than the early pastorals" (Ellen T. Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 29).

distaste among the Arcadians and led them to advocate for reform.[155] The first major defect

of *Giasone*, according to Arcadian tenets, would undoubtedly be its subject matter. The opera

is loosely based on Apollonius of Rhodes' epic poem the *Argonautica*, written in the third

century BCE, and tells the story of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece and his relationship

with Medea. Cicognini makes no attempt to conserve the integrity of the source text, and

forgoes any adherence to classical Aristotelian rules and unities.[156] The opera features a

staggering list of seventeen characters, as well as six different choruses; the number of

characters and the complexity of their relationships are in direct opposition to the Arcadian

championing of streamlined, verisimilar plot structures with a limited number of

characters.[157]

As Crescimbeni states, the characters themselves present problems of unity, genre,

and verisimilitude, as they comprise a patchwork of the noble and ignoble, tragic and comic.

High, noble characters such as Giasone, Isifile, and Medea appear next to base, comic

characters, like the hunchback dwarf Demo, and Delfa, a bawdy nurse reminiscent of Dafne

from Tasso's *Aminta*; the juxtaposition between characters is reflected not only in the

content of their discourses, but also in the structure of their arias. Medea's aria "Se dardo

pungente" in Act I, scene 4, for example, delves into the realm of Petrarchan conceits; it is

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[155] Rosand proposes that *Giasone* does not accurately represent Crescimbeni's critiques as much as a number of the operas that it inspired, such as *Alessandro vincitor di se stesso* (Venice, 1651). (Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 276-277).

[156] The *Argonautica* itself was understood as unconventional and a departure from Aristotelian unities, due to the overwhelming presence of the voice of the narrator as well as the fragmentary, episodic nature of the text. On the episodes of the *Argonautica*, see A.W. Bulloch A.W, "Hellenistic Poetry," in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: Greek Literature*, ed. P. Easterling and B. Knox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Cicognini explicitly states in his preface to the opera that his objective in writing *Giasone* is to please himself and the audience: "Io compongo per mero capriccio. Il mio capriccio non ha altra fine, che dilettare: L'apportar diletto appresso di me, non è altro, che incontrare il genio, e il giusto di chi ascolta, o legge" (Andrea Giacinto, *Giasone, Dramma Musicale* (Venice: Giacomo Batti, 1649), 9).

[157] As a point of comparison based on the same myth, Euripides' play *Medea* features only a handful of characters and one chorus, and only one character is onstage with Medea at any given moment;

also is extremely regular in its meter of senari. She sings, "Se dardo pungente / D'un guardo lucente / il sen mi ferì, / Se in gioia d'Amore / Si strugge 'l mio core, / La notte e il dì, / Se un volto divino, / Quest'alma rubò, / Se amar è destino, / Resista chi può."[158] Her servant Delfa's comic aria "È follia" in Act III, scene 10 challenges Medea's loyalty to love and destiny, and instead proposes that Medea enjoy as many lovers as possible. In a highly irregular and metrically jarring aria, she sings:

> È follia
> Frà gl'Amori
> Seminar la Gelosia,
> Per raccoglier al fin' rabbie, e rancor,
> Consolar sol' ne può
> Quel ben' che in sen ci stà.
> La Gioia, che passò,
> In fumo, in ombra, in nulla se ne và;
> Chi vuol sbandir dal cor' doglia, e martello
> Lasci amar, ami ogn'un, goda 'l più bello.[159]

Demo's comic aria, "Son gobbo," is not nearly as complex as Delfa's, but is still formally irregular: he begins with the lines, "Son Gobbo, son Demo, / Son bello, son bravo, / Il mondo m'è schiavo…" and concludes with, "Ogni Dama per me arde, e so, so, / So, so, arde, e so, so, so."[160] While Arcadians objected to the excessive, sing-song-y rhyming of musical arias, they certainly would not have approved of Delfa's highly irregular aria, nor of Demo's simplistic, oafish rhymes, and in no way do the lowly characters' songs correspond to the Arcadian notion of the theater as moral instruction. Indeed, this scene reads as an exemplum of Muratori's notion of theatrical *cattivo gusto*, as described in his treatise *Della*

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[158] Giacinto, *Giasone*, 21.

[159] Ibid, 91. As Rosand discusses, Delfa's aria combines four meters and different accentuation patterns, producing a notably off-balance effect. See Rosand, *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, 270-271.

[160] Giacinto, *Giasone*, 27-28. Demo's linguistic limitations are noted even in the drama itself: after his aria, Orestes comments, "Linguaggio curioso" (Ibid, 28).

pubblica felicità: "Il Teatro per se stesso non è illecito. Tale lo fan divenire le oscenità de' Comici, e le Commedie di cattivo costume...Il vedere quivi insegnare le malizie, scredita e messa in ridicolo la Virtù, il Vizio allo stringere de' conti felice..."[161]

Yet lasciviousness is not limited to the comic characters in *Giasone*: Giasone himself, the supposed noble hero of the opera, appears at first as a libertine, invested only in pleasures of the flesh. After Argonauts Besso and Ercole debate Giasone's sex-crazed attitude in Act I, scene 1, Giasone emerges abruptly in scene 2 with a lengthy aria on pleasure: he sings, "Delizie, contenti, / che l'alma beate, / fermate, fermate: / su questo mio core / deh più non stillate / le gioie d'amore. / Delizie mie care, / fermatevi qui!"[162] Giasone's opening aria lauds sex and pleasure, much like Delfa's later aria "È follia"—and yet Giasone's words are inherently more problematic than Delfa's, as she embodies a comic role while he, according to Arcadian tenets, should be a paradigm of nobility; at the very least, Delfa's class and character match her words, while Giasone's discourse casts him as a morally useless, class-confused libertine.

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[161] Muratori, *Della pubblica felicità*, 172. Muratori comes back to this argument in Chapter XXVI (*De pubblici onesti Giuochi*), excusing himself for his redundancy but noting that the Italian theater is in such a state of degeneration that it deserves another word. He also mentions *opere in musica* as "dannose allo stato" (420) and "non diversi dalla Commedia plebea" (421).

[162] Giacinto, *Giasone*, I. 2 (16). Bianconi argues that the rhythm of this aria gives it the lilt of a lullaby, and that throughout the opera Giasone's arias take on a lullaby feel, placing the protagonist in a perpetual, dreamy state of desire. See Bianconi *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, 206. On gender and desire in *Giasone*, see McClary, *Desire and Pleasure*, 119ff.

Apostolo Zeno: Opera Reform, in Practice

While Arcadians never managed a revival of ancient Greek theatrical practices, they did affect reform on the operatic stage, and did gradually alter the public palate for baroque musical drama. Music was restructured to include more recitative and less arias—a change that, as Burt notes, seems as if it would have pleased Arcadian theorists, but in reality arias became much longer and often followed the ABA structure of the *da capo* form. "In general," Burt writes, "the words 'decorum' and 'elevation' seem best to characterize the reform; there is elegance of structure, and, on the part of the nobler characters, an insane passion for the virtuous."[163]

Metastasio is widely considered a director of reform in opera and the librettist who drove the structural and affective conventions of *dramma per musica* to their most developed consequences;[164] and yet Metastasio's poetry only became truly paradigmatic beginning in the mid-1720s, decades after the birth of Arcadia and its critiques of opera. As shown by the writings of Crescimbeni, Muratori, and Martello, Apostolo Zeno stands as the first dominant practicing poet of Arcadian opera reform: his dramas represent a new wave in the practice of *opera seria*—one that, although a distant cry from Gravina's call for a reinstatement of ancient choruses, practically achieves a number of Arcadian goals.[165] Perhaps even more significant for the culture of opera reform at the time was the idealized image of Zeno as a mascot for

[163] Burt, "Opera in Arcadia," 168.

[164] See Burt, "Opera in Arcadia," 144.

[165] On the relationship between Zeno and Metastasio, see Binni, *L'Arcadia e il Metastasio*, 292ff; Remo Giazotto, *Poesia melodrammatica e pensiero critico nel settecento* (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1952), 36ff. See also Strohm, *Dramma per musica*, 19ff.

Arcadian aesthetics: Zeno was fashioned by Arcadia and fashioned himself as a paradigmatic practitioner of Arcadian *buon gusto*.[166]

In his epistolary exchanges with Muratori at the turn of the century, Zeno expresses ambivalence toward the opera libretto as literary form. He discusses the two functions of the libretto—as literary text to be read by literati, and as a shell for a musical performance that would ideally please the public; these functions, he believes, are incongruous and often incompatible. "Io stesso…sono il primo a darvene il voto della condanna," he writes, "Il lungo esercizio mi ha fatto conoscere, che dove non si dà in molti abusi, si perde il primo fine di tali componimenti, ch'è il diletto. Più che si vuole star sulle regole, più si dispiace; e se 'l libretto ha qualche lodatore, ha poco concorso."[167] Zeno subscribes to a Muratorian notion of investment in public *diletto*: although he resists the popular tastes of contemporary audiences, he still recognizes that enjoyment is the primary goal of the theater and the only means through which to instill moral edification.[168] Zeno's conception of *opera seria* is thus necessarily political in its scope: the theater becomes a Platonic locus of moral edification, enhanced—but not overshadowed—by the flourishes of contemporary operatic practices.

In a letter written to his brother in 1721, Zeno discusses Domenico David's 1693 opera *La forza della virtù* as a model of early opera reform: Zeno praises David's opera, and

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[166] Arcadians in the early part of the century did not designate Zeno as a reformer, but rather an ideal poet; the title of 'reform poet' was attributed to the librettist later in the century by writers such as F.S. Quadrio, Ranieri de' Calsabigi, J.J. Rousseau, Charles Burney, and others. See Freeman, "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 333.

[167] Zeno, *Lettere* I, 121. See Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 27-28.

[168] Zeno did believe, nonetheless, that an opera could be pleasing both to read and to watch onstage: he notes, for example, that his 1721 opera *Don Chisciotte* "sarà cosa nuova e curiosa sopra le scene, e darà a molti del divertimento anche letta." (Zeno, *Lettere* II, 34). Freeman asserts that "Although Zeno and several of his contemporaries tried to achieve equal degrees of literary and popular success by writing libretti whose character developments and plots would be complicated enough and whose style dignified enough to please Arcadian tastes, but understandable enough on the stage not to antagonize the theatrical public, they realized that some of their works were more successful for one group than for the other" (*Opera without Drama*, 25).

notes that it was not only well received by audiences but was also defended by members of

the Accademia degli Animosi in Venice:

> Non si può dire a bastanza l'applauso, che ottenne questo componimento
> Drammatico. Fu recitato in tutti i migliori teatri d'Italia, e replicato in Venezia.
> Il suo emulo Dottor Giannini stampò anche contro di questo Dramma una
> mordace censura, dalla quale in pubblica radunanza fu difeso dagli Accademici
> Animosi in casa Grimani, ove dopo finita l'Accademia fu arsa pubblicamente
> la suddetta censura. Dai libri dell'Accademia, che sono presso i Sigg. Durli,
> potete ricavare il tempo preciso di questa funzione, che per verità fu assai
> strepitosa, e i nomi degli Accademici, che vi ragionarono in difesa del David,
> uno de' quali anch'io fui.[169]

Despite his ambivalent position on the opera libretto, Zeno produced thirty-six

libretti: those rooted in historical subjects included his early *Gli inganni felici* (1695), based on

Herodotus' *Histories*, and *Alessandro Severo* (1717), based on Roman history; he also drew

from and adapted texts for his libretti, such as from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* for his

opera *La Griselda* (1701), and from Cervantes' *Don Quixote* for his *Don Chisciotte in Sierra*

Morena (1719). He engaged with exoticism and eastern themes, such as in his *Teuzzone* (1706),

stories from northern Europe, as in *L'amor generoso* (1707), and even employed elements such

as tombs and grim landscapes that, as Viale Ferrero argues, paved the way for

Romanticism.[170] These operas, diverse in their themes and subject matter, did not strictly

adhere to Arcadian ideals of pastoral drama as espoused by Muratori and Martello; yet, as

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[169] Zeno, *Lettere* II, 229. Crescimbeni names David and Zeno as model librettists of the reform. See his *Bellezza della volgar poesia* and *Notizie degli Arcadi morti* III, 110. Burt names *La forza della virtù* as the first Arcadian opera ("Opera in Arcadia," 154), and argues that the work provided a model for the later reform practices of Zeno, and ultimately for those of Metastasio himself. *La forza*, written in three acts, is an allegorical opera in which the characters represent human traits; David's libretto offers a straightforward alternation of recitative and aria, with only one dance interlude. His servant character, Padiglio, sings no arias and does not serve a comic function. But, as Burt notes, the most "Arcadian" traits of *La forza* are "the direct delineation of character, the orderly action, the lack of comedy," and "the high tone" (162).

[170] Viale Ferrero, "Le didascalie sceniche," 71.

Tcharos notes, Zeno maintained an ethos of pastoral lyricism within his operas, and in so doing upheld a modified vision of Arcadian pastoral drama.[171] His operas, although not strictly Aristotelian in form, also exhibited certain unities and structural consistencies: he generally only placed a handful of characters onstage, followed only one plot line, and restricted the plot to a short period of time and a limited number of settings.[172] Crescimbeni was not entirely correct in his declaration that Zeno's libretti lacked comic characters, but Zeno did often avoid writing comic characters in his serious dramas,[173] and, in line with Arcadian precepts, he favored recitative in *versi sciolti* over strophic arias.

Zeno's first opera, *Gli inganni felici*, is a complex web of mistaken identity, intertwined love stories, dances, and a mix of noble and base characters—in short, Zeno adheres to many of the baroque conventions that he would later reject. Undoubtedly, many of Zeno's reform ideals took hold in his later operas: *La Griselda*, for instance, is structurally more streamlined than *Gli inganni*, as Zeno focuses on a single narrative and excludes any comic scenes.[174] Even more telling of his reform in *La Griselda* is the remarkable moral facelift that

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[171] On Zeno's 'abandonment' of the Arcadian investment in pastoral drama in favor of more popular historical and tragic subjects, see Weiss, "Teorie drammatiche e 'infranciosamento," 292; Weiss, *L'opera italiana nel '700*, 38ff. See Tcharos for a discussion of Zeno's pastoral lyricism within his historical operas (*Opera's Orbit*, 44).

[172] An analysis of Zeno's output must take into consideration the fact that he wrote for both public and private spheres, and that he catered to his different audiences in different ways: his operas written at the court of Vienna, for example, indulged Charles VI and the Habsburg dynasty. See Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 31; Michael Stegemann, "Vivaldi und Wien," in *Nuovi studi vivaldiani: edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, ed. Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1988).

[173] Freeman discusses the likelihood that Crescimbeni was basing his judgment on a small number of libretti: "[Crescimbeni's remarks] cannot possibly have resulted from a familiarity with the contemporary Venetian operatic repertory as a whole, for when one compares the libretti written by David and Zeno during the 1690s with those of their Venetian contemporaries, it is apparent that the characteristics mentioned by Crescimbeni are not distinguishing characteristics. Comic characters appear in two of the four historical libretti of Zeno which had been produced in Venice before May 31, 1698, and in all three of the David libretti produced there before that date. And there were poets other than Zeno and David who wrote libretti for Venice during the 1690s which, although they contain no comic characters, are not mentioned by Crescimbeni" (*Opera without Drama*, 15).

[174] Zeno does however praise the comic scenes added to the opera for a performance in Florence in 1703: "Ho letta la Griselda, e mi sono infinitamente piaciuti i ridicoli, che con tanta saviezza il Sig. Gigli vi ha aggiunti. I

he performs on the original Boccaccio tale from the last day of the *Decameron*. Boccaccio's

Marquis Gualtieri, a paradigm of tyrannical sadism, tortures his wife Griselda for no reason

apart from his "matta bestialitade;"[175] Zeno's Gualtiero, although a stiff despot in the

beginning of the opera, ultimately exhibits his virtue and wisdom: in the last scene Gualtiero

valiantly declares, "Popoli, che rei siete / Al cielo, ed al Re vostro: omai scorgete, / Qual

Regina ho a voi scelta: a me qual moglie. / La virtù, non il sangue / Tal la rende a'

vostr'occhi, ed al mio core. / Or con tal pentimento / Facile a voi perdono il vostro

errore."[176] Zeno is careful to adhere to serious, noble subjects, but even more careful in his

placement of morally outstanding characters onstage: for the sake of exemplarity and moral

edification of the public, he effectively remedies the ethical ambiguity in Boccaccio's novella

and concludes his opera by depicting his heroes as models of integrity and morality. His

investment in 'high' drama is not necessarily restricted to kings and queens, but rather

focuses on characters' noble spirits; as he prefaces *La Griselda*, "In essa ho procurato di

conformare all'argomento lo stile, maneggiando passioni tenere, e serbando ne' miei Attori

carattere di mezzana virtù, senza frammischiarvi alcuno di quegli avvenimenti strepitosi ed

Eroici, che si ricercano nelle Storie più illustri, e ne' più grandi Teatri."[177]

 La Griselda also exhibits some of the formal characteristics of Zeno's opera reform.

Nearly all of the arias are strophic *da capo* structures and occur at the end of scenes, after

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cangiamenti che per entro vi si son fatti, sono di sì piccolo conseguenza, che non mi hanno dato fastidio, nè me l'han fatta parer diversa da quella, ch'io prima la pubblicai." (*Lettere*, I 66). *La Griselda* also features a servant character, Ismeno; on Zeno's inclusion of servants in his dramas, despite Crescimbeni's claim that the librettist had purged lowly characters from his operas, see Freeman "Apostolo Zeno's Reform," 327.

[175] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* (Milan: Garzanti, 2008 [1974]), X, 10.

[176] Apostolo Zeno, *Poesie drammatiche* (Venice: Giambatista Pasquali, 1744), III, 84.

[177] Apostolo Zeno, *La Griselda, Dramma per Musica* (Venice: Niccolini, 1701), 9.

which the character leaves the stage.[178] Exceptions to this form, such as Costanza's amorous

aria outbursts in the middle of Act I, scene 8 ("Un sol de' tuoi sguardi") and in the middle of

Act II, scene 2 ("D'un ciglio, d'un guardo"), denote extreme emotional turmoil or

excitement;[179] undoubtedly Zeno had verisimilitude in mind when allowing the spontaneous

song of a young lover at the beginning of a scene, while his other, more dignified characters

sing only when pushed to their maximum affective potential at the end of scenes.

Arcadian drama, *per musica*

While Zeno's dramas constitute a certain notion of Arcadian literary reform, the

specificities of Arcadian music, if any exist, are harder to pinpoint, if for no other reason

than that Arcadians never expressed precise theories of music. The ideal Arcadian opera was,

as previously discussed, one in which music did not interfere with the expressivity of the

text; the musical settings of *drammi per musica*, written after the texts and often independent

of librettists' work, functioned largely as amplifications of affective literary expressions and

characterizations. Composers struggled to conform their music to the formulaic reform

libretti while still serving public *diletto*, and consequently either worked with revised texts or

emphasized certain aspects of the strophic settings. Aria types emerged in *opera seria* that

provided musical indications of a character's mental state or class, as expressed in music by

rhythmic tropes, time signatures, key areas, melodic styles, and instrumentation: as Webster

discusses, these musical attributes were not rigid in their application, but actually signifiers

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[178] On the *da capo* aria in *La Griselda*, see Robert Cannon, *Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 35ff.

[179] Griselda's *da capo* entrance aria at the beginning of Act II, scene 5 is also exceptional: upon her return to her native woods, she sings, "Care Selve, a voi ritorno / Sventurata Pastorella. / E pur quello, il patrio Monte: / Questa è pur l'amica Fonte, / E sol'io non son più quella" (39).

within a loose semiotic system.[180] Carlo Goldoni discusses such aria types in his *Commedie* (1761) and his Mémoires (1787), noting that librettists must carefully assign *arie di bravura*,[181] arias *di mezzo carattere*,[182] and others.[183]

Zeno's strophic passages in his libretti often proved problematic for composers because of their relative irregularity and rigidity of characterization and affect.[184] Carlo Goldoni's 1735 adaptation of Zeno's original *La Griselda* for a musical setting by Antonio Vivaldi in Venice evidences the ways in which an Arcadian libretto, with its long stretches of recitative in *versi sciolti* and clunky, austere strophic exit arias, was adapted to the popular stage.[185] Goldoni shortened recitatives and replaced the arias with highly regular strophes

[180] Webster, "Arias as Drama," 29ff. On *opera seria* aria types, see also Freeman, *Opera without Drama*, 204ff; Reinhard Strohm, 73; J.H. Van der Meer, *Johann Josef Fux als Opernkomponist*, 3 Volumes (Bilthoven: A.B. Creyghton, 1961), II, 69-97.

[181] *Arie di bravura* were usually melismatic, showy settings sung by a virtuosic principal character. By *melismatic*, I intend the horizontal application of music to text: whereas syllabic music sets individual notes to words, a melismatic setting entails a number of notes for each word, effectively stretching the words out over musical time.

[182] The *aria di mezzo carattere* refers to an aria that sits between high and middle style.

[183] Goldoni writes, "L'Auteur des paroles doit fournir au Musicien les différentes nuances qui forment le *clair-obscur* de la musique, et prendre garde que deux airs pathétiques ne se succèdent pas; il faut partager, avec la même précaution, les airs de bravoure, les airs d'action, les airs de *demi-caractères*, et *les menuets*, et *les rondeaux*. Sur-tout, il faut bien prendre garde de ne pas donner d'airs passionnés, ni d'airs de bravoure, ni des rondeaux aux seconds rôles" (Goldoni I, 129, cit. James Webster, *Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 201 n6). See also Di Benedetto, "Poetics and Polemics," 37-38.

[184] In Freeman's words, "Operatic essayists began even during the eighteenth century to criticize Zeno for his insensitivity to the musical aspects of poetry. His use of such unmusical proper names as Asaf and Mahobet, Childerico and Peuceste, Aglatida and Gismondo, and his recourse to aria verse forms involving the juxtaposition of awkwardly combined metrical feet and of stumbling lines of irregularly varying length are the principal charges. To these may be added the complaint that the subject matter and mode of expression, while excellent perhaps for a rationalistic delineation of complicated plot and character development on the *Antioco* model, must often have been anything but inspiring for the composers who set Zeno's libretti" (*Opera without Drama*, 206-207).

[185] A number of settings of *La Griselda* preceded Vivaldi's, including those by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo (1701), Antonio Maria Bononcini (1718), and Alessandro Scarlatti (1721). On the different versions of the opera and in particular the setting by Scarlatti, see Strohm, *Dramma per musica*, 33ff; Weiss, *L'opera italiana*, 61-62.

that express the characters' interiority, often through nature similes.[186] In Act II, scene 2,

Goldoni substitutes Costanza's aria "D'un ciglio, d'un guardo" with the simile aria "Agitata

da due venti"; the rhythmic and thematic differences between the two arias are evident from

a comparison of the texts:

Zeno (1701)   Goldoni/Vivaldi (1735)

D'un ciglio, d'un guardo   Agitata da due venti
A' rai più non ardo.   freme l'onda in mar turbato
Già spenta è la face   e 'l nocchiero spaventato
D'amore per me.   già s'aspetta naufragar.
Più luce di scettro   Dal dovere, e dall'amore
Mi piace,   combattuto questo core
Mi accende,   non resiste; par, che ceda,
Che in mano risplende   e cominici a disperar.
Di Sposo, e di Rè.   Agitata &c.
        D'un &c.

Vivaldi musically represents Costanza's turbulent affect with a virtuosic *aria di bravura*,

characterized by a flurry of fast notes in the orchestral accompaniment and a florid,

melismatic vocal line that depicts the symbolic *due venti* with wide leaps in register

While the aria "Agitata da due venti" does not appear in Zeno's original libretto and is not

explicitly tied to Arcadian ideals, it nonetheless adheres, via simile and tone painting,[187] to

Zeno's characterization of Costanza as a troubled lover, and for the most part does not

interfere with Zeno's dramatic recitative.[188] The music is perhaps flashier and longer than

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[186] Strohm defines the simile aria as the "expression of a commonplace truth with a metaphorical depiction of an emotional situation, which had to be addressed to the audience" (*Opera without Drama*, 12-13). See also Bucciarelli, *Italian Opera and European Theater*, 66ff; Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 105.

[187] By the term *tone painting* I refer to a musical setting that literally depicts a word or phrase, such as a scalar musical passage that depicts a text about moving up, or a fast rhythm that depicts running. See Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 102ff.

[188] Goldoni slightly alters the recitative in this scene, but the most apparent difference between Zeno's and Goldoni's texts is the placement of the aria within the scene: Zeno gives Costanza a unique mid-scene aria, as a

Arcadian theorists would have desired, but it still maintains the affects and class characterizations of Zeno's tightly knit drama. "Agitata da due venti" is by no means representative of all aria procedures in eighteenth-century *opera seria*, but it does provide a base for understanding the passage between Arcadian literary reform and the practice of eighteenth-century opera with music—or, as expressed in Zeno's libretto conundrum, the passage between the written, Arcadian drama and the performed, popular spectacle, complete with the *diletto* of virtuosic music.

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depiction of her extraordinary mental turmoil and a direct product of her discussion with Roberto (he asks her, "Tu nieghi / Al tuo fedel Roberto anche d'un guardo / Il misero diletto?" which evolves into her aria "D'un ciglio, d'un guardo"). Goldoni restructures the scene in a more conventional manner by placing all of Zeno's recitative before the exit aria *Agitata da due venti*. Bononcini's setting keeps Zeno's original scene organization and aria; Scarlatti's setting moves the scene between Costanza and Roberto to Act I, changes the recitative, and substitutes Costanza's aria with another, "Voi sospirate," at the end of the scene.

CHAPTER 3

Arcadian Orlando and the Venetian Stage, 1713–1714

Undoubtedly part of the explosion of the operatic Orlando trend was a result of the vibrant

Venetian setting at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, a theater that in the 1710s was in the hands of

composer and impresario Antonio Vivaldi.[189] Charles Burney, in his *General History of Music:*

From the Earliest Ages to the Present, dedicates ample space to the emergence of Vivaldi onto

the Venetian scene—Vivaldi, a composer who "merits a place among the candidates for

fame in this species of composition,"[190] a master who "distinguished himself at Venice, as a

dramatic composer," and who "in 1714, set *Orlando Finto Pazzo*; and between that period and

the year 1728, produced fourteen operas for the same city, in the performance of which he

generally led the band."[191] Although Burney wrote and traveled in Italy in the later part of the

eighteenth century, his extensive expositions on the early Venetian opera scene—and

especially on Vivaldi's Venetian opera scene—speak to the influence and broad appeal of the

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[189] Glixon and Glixon define the operatic impresario as "the person in charge of the production, who selected the creative team and the performers (unless they were already members of the company), and made the business and artistic decisions…This person often played simultaneously many of the roles previously described, especially theater renter, investor, and cashier, but could also be a hired professional" (*Inventing the Business of Opera*, 4). See also Franco Piperno, "Il sistema produttivo, fino al 1780," in *Storia dell'opera italiana*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, Volume 4 (Turin: E.D.T., 1987), 17ff; John Rosselli, *The Opera Industry in Italy from Cimarosa to Verdi: The Role of the Impresario* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Michael Talbot, "A Venetian Opera Contract of 1714," in *The Business of Music*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002).

[190] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the earliest ages to the present period*, 4 Volumes (London, 1776–1789), Vol. 4, 178. Burney catalogues the master composers and masterfully composed operas of Venice in the eighteenth century; beginning with the "elegant and graceful Francesco Gasparini" and his opera *Tiberio* (1702), he moves chronologically through a number of operatic compositions by Antonio Caldara, Antonio Lotti, Alessandro Scarlatti, and others.

[191] Ibid, 535. On other critical receptions of Vivaldi in the eighteenth century, see Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 15.

Red Priest's musical dramas.[192] Vivaldi, a self-fashioned independent businessman of opera,

inserted his dramas into the fabric of Venetian popular theater, and was also able to transmit

and translate his works or excerpts of his works from Venice to other cities, from public to

private stages, and, in diasporic fashion, from Italy to other countries.[193] Strohm notes that

Vivaldi benefitted from "the enjoyment of patronage and critical acclaim, ecclesiastical

status, financial reserves, long-standing musical experience with many opportunities to

experiment, a large pool of local performers, and the opportunity to develop and recycle

musical ideas," all of which aided in the proliferation of his operatic works.[194]

Vivaldi set the stage for his operatic career in Venice with a production of *Orlando*

furioso in November of 1713 and another of *Orlando finto pazzo* in 1714, both written for the

Teatro Sant'Angelo.[195] The 1713 setting of *Orlando furioso* was particularly successful, as it led

to repeat performances in Venice and to recycled and rehashed dramas, including cobbled

pasticci[196] abroad. Vivaldi's arias from both operas enjoyed a relatively long shelf life, moving

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[192] Vivaldi was nicknamed the *prete rosso* because of his position in the Church and his red hair. Carlo Goldoni makes note of this nickname in his *Mémoires*, in a satirical passage on Vivaldi and his compositional process: "Le noble Grimani, propriétaire du théâtre de Saint-Samuel, faisait représenter dans cette saison un opéra pour son compte, et, comme il m'avait promis de m'attacher à ce spectacle, il me tint parole. Ce n'était pas un nouveau drame qu'on devait donner cette année-là, mais on avait choisi la *Griselda*, opéra d'Apostolo Zeno et de Pariati, qui travaillaient ensemble avant que Zeno partît pour Vienne au service de l'Empereur, et le compositeur qui devait le mettre en musique était l'abbé Vivaldi, qu'on appelait, à cause de sa chevelure, il *Prete rosso* (le Prête roux). Il était plus connu par ce sobriquet que par son nom de famille" (Goldoni, *Memoirs*, 153-4). See Karl Heller, *Antonio Vivaldi: The Red Priest of Venice*, trans. David Marinelli (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1997), 268-271; Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 565-571.

[193] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the early eighteenth-century artistic diaspora from Italy; see also Strohm, *Essays on Handel and Italian Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5ff.

[194] Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 14.

[195] *Orlando furioso* was not Vivaldi's first opera, although it was his first Venetian production. Vivaldi's first opera, *Ottone in Villa* (1713, libretto by Domenico Lalli), was staged in Vicenza. See Strohm 2008, 111ff. The Teatro Sant'Angelo was very accessible to the Venetian public; as Casotti noted in 1713, "Al S. Angelo si va volentieri perché costa poco l'entrarvi ma si fa l'opera scadente," cit. Remo Giazotto, *Antonio Vivaldi*, (Turin: ERI, 1973), 144.

[196] The term *pasticcio* refers to the eighteenth-century operatic practice of cobbling together recycled arias to create a new operatic work: often composers wrote *pasticci* out of economic interests and public demand (if, for

between different singers, different productions, and different audiences. Yet even more

widespread than Vivaldi's music for the pair of *Orlando furioso*-based operas were the libretti

for the two works—and particularly the 1713 libretto of *Orlando furioso*—which were written

by Grazio Braccioli, a relatively unknown Ferrarese lawyer and librettist. Braccioli's 1713

theatrical adaptation of Ariosto's renaissance epic served as the libretto for numerous

different operas between 1714 and 1740 in Italy and abroad,[197] and an even larger number of

revivals and repeat performances; his output of *Orlando*-based libretti, destined for Vivaldi's

musical settings on the Sant'Angelo stage, played a large role in planting the seed that grew

into the craze of the crazed operatic Orlando and his travels through the European

continent.

Braccioli, beyond his primary occupation as lawyer and secondary application as a

verseggiatore of libretti (in Martello's words),[198] was also a Ferrarese shepherd of the Arcadian

Academy and a proponent of literary reform. Few texts remain of Braccioli's *oeuvre*, but his

expositions on his operas, in the form of apologies, *argomenti*, and dedications, betray

elements of the Arcadian agenda and speak to the Academy's push toward more elevated

theatrical standards. Still, Braccioli's libretti overflow with popular operatic tropes that had

held over from the Seicento—among them, magical endings, multiple love stories, cross-

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example, an aria was particularly famous it could be rehashed and represented). On *pasticci* see Strohm, *Dramma per musica*, 11; Strohm, "Handel's Pasticci," in *Essays on Handel*, 164ff. On Vivaldi's *pasticci* that drew from the 1713–1714 *Orlando furioso*, see Lowell Lindgren, "Venice, Vivaldi, Vico and Opera in London, 1705–17: Venetian Ingredients in English Pasticci," in *Nuovi studi vivaldiani: edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, ed. Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1988); Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 137ff.

[197] Settings of Braccioli's 1713 libretto include a production in Brunswick (1722), with music compiled by G.C. Schürmann; in Prague (1724) at the theater of Count Franz Anton Von Sporck, with music by Vivaldi; in Guckuksbade (1724), with music by Antonio Bioni; in Mantua (1725), with music by Orazio Polaroli; in Venice (1727), with music by Vivaldi; in Brussels (1727) by various composers; and in Venice (1738) with music by G.B. Lampugnani. See Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 376-377. See also Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici* (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990) Vol. 4, 328-330.

[198] See Chapter 2, 61.

dressing, monsters, and one very prominent madman. This chapter explores how Arcadian

reason shaped the protagonist of Braccioli's libretti, the mad Orlando—how the specificities

of Orlando's language and behavior speak to a notion of staged *Arcadian* madness, and

ultimately how such madness translated into the popular artistic medium of opera. As

Braccioli and Vivaldi worked closely together at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, a discussion of the

operas' musical settings will serve to enhance and complicate my reading of the dynamics of

Arcadian reason and madness on the early Settecento stage.

A tale of two (or three) Orlandi

Braccioli's libretti figure into a larger eighteenth-century trend of operatic settings of

chivalric epics: his 1713 *Orlando furioso* was not the first operatic adaptation of Ariosto's text,

and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* was not the only chivalric epic that boomed as operatic material

in the early years of the Settecento.[199] Episodes from Torquato Tasso's epic *Gerusalemme*

liberata, almost exclusively involving pastoral scenes between Armida and Rinaldo, graced

stages in Venice, Naples, and abroad throughout the eighteenth century; Braccioli himself

penned a Tasso-based opera, *Armida in Damasco*, in Venice in 1711.[200] What, then, sets

Braccioli's *Orlando*-based libretti apart? How can these libretti be viewed as seminal—as

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[199] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Carlo Sigismondo Capece's 1711 opera *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*. See Rosand, "Orlando in Seicento Venice" for an exploration of the history of the seventeenth-century operas based on *Orlando furioso*; see also Martin Steinebrunner, "Orlando furioso: Vom Epos zur Oper. Stationenen des Wandels literarischer Bilder zwischen Mittelalter und Barock," in *Nuovi studi vivaldiani: edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, ed. Antonio Fanna and Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1988); Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 131 n46.

[200] Music by Giacomo Rampini. On the numerous settings of episodes from *Gerusalemme liberata* and *Orlando furioso* in the eighteenth century, see Buch, *Magic Flutes*, Appendix C. See also Anna Laura Bellina, "Dal mito della corte al nodo dellos stato: il 'topos' del tiranno," in *Antonio Vivaldi. Teatro musicale, cultura e società*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi, Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1982), 297ff.

source texts or source projects—within the vast economy of staged chivalric episodes in the Settecento?

Giammaria Mazzuchelli includes Braccioli in his catalogue *Gli scrittori d'Italia* (1753). He writes that Braccioli, a "rinomato Scrittore di Drammi,"[201] was born in Ferrara in 1682 to a noble family. A lawyer by trade, he moved to Venice and "esercitò il suo fervido ingegno nella Poesia Drammatica, nella quale conseguì molto applauso;"[202] after some years he returned to Ferrara and revived his legal career. Braccioli was a member of the Accademia degli Intrepidi in Ferrara, of the Infecondi in Rome, and of the colony of the Arcadian Academy in Ferrara. A list of his printed works includes eleven dramas, all but one of which were written for the Teatro Sant'Angelo in Venice between 1711 and 1715;[203] Mazzuchelli also names a *Ragionamento circa l'unità del luogo nelle Tragedie*,[204] two Oratorios for music, eight sonnets, as well as a number of Braccioli's unprinted dramas and studies.[205] As demonstrated by Mazzuchelli's list of Braccioli's *oeuvre*, the Ferrarese lawyer-librettist wrote dramas almost

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[201] Giammaria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia, cioè notizie storiche, e critiche intorno alle vite, e agli scritti dei letterati italiani* (Brescia: Giambatista Bossini, 1753), 1954.

[202] Ibid, 1955.

[203] Mazzuchelli names the 1727 version of *Orlando furioso* as one of Braccioli's dramatic works performed at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, although by that point Braccioli had already left Venice and abandoned his composition of dramas.

[204] As Brizi discusses, this *ragionamento* was read February 21, 1723 in an academic circle. See Bruno Brizi, "Gli Orlandi di Vivaldi attraverso i libretti," in *Antonio Vivaldi: Teatro Musicale, Cultura e Società*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 1982), 316 n5.

[205] Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori d'Italia*, 1955-1956. See Braccioli's sonnets in Girolamo Baruffaldi, Conte Grassini, and Giuseppe Lanzoni, eds., *Rime scelte de' poeti ferraresi antichi, e moderni* (Ferrara: Bernardino Pomatelli, 1713), 542ff. Luigi Ughi also includes Braccioli in his *Dizionario storico degli uomini illustri ferraresi* (1804), although his focus is more on Braccioli's erudition: he writes, "Legale nel Sec. XVIII. ancor ricordato per la sua erudizione, e per i talenti diversi, ond'era dotato; era nipote di Gio. Ciavernelli, di cui sostenne la riputazione colla sua pratica delle Scienze. Vivea nel 1735, e ci lasciò diverse cose parte mss., e parte stampate: *Orazioni: Discorsi accademici; Dissertazioni; Drami; Poesie liriche*" (*Dizionario storico degli uomini illustri ferraresi* (Ferrara: Giuseppe Rinaldi, 1804), 87). Lucia Collavo discusses Braccioli's unpublished *Guida ai dilettanti di pittura di Venezia*: the manuscript, she writes, serves as a witness to the world of Venetian theater and performing arts. See Collavo, "Sul manoscritto del ferrarese Grazio Braccioli dedicato alla pittura veneziana (1712–1728): Indagine conoscitiva per l'edizione di una fonte della storia dell'arte e della cultura italiana del sec. XVIII," *Predella* 30 (2011).

exclusively for the Teatro Sant'Angelo; it was undoubtedly here, in the baroque halls of the

popular theater, that Braccioli and Vivaldi met and began their collaboration.

Yet the story of the 1713 and 1714 seasons at the Teatro Sant'Angelo stretches

beyond the bond between Vivaldi and Braccioli. The original 1713 production of *Orlando*

furioso may or may not have been at all set to music by Vivaldi: Braccioli's libretto names

composer Giovanni Alberto Ristori as the composer of the opera's music, although most

scholars agree that Vivaldi, in his role as impresario and opera producer, at least partly

contributed to the composition of the original music for the 1713 opera.[206] This first setting

of an Ariosto-themed opera at the Teatro Sant'Angelo drew wide acclaim: as Braccioli would

later write, his *Orlando furioso* was so successful that it lasted for a period of over forty

performances in its first season.[207] The Orlando craze at the Teatro Sant'Angelo was born,

and those involved in opera production at the theater house wisely followed *Orlando furioso*

with another Ariosto-based opera, Braccioli's *Rodomonte sdegnato*, set to music by

Michelangelo Gasparini during the carnival season of 1714. Orlando and the principal cast of

Ariosto's *Furioso* are absent from *Rodomonte sdegnato*: in their place Braccioli depicts a Saracen

love story and incorporates tangential episodes from the source text such as that of the *donne*

omicidi. In the economy of the opera, Braccioli's Rodomonte acts as a mirror to his operatic

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[206] See Brizi, "Gli *Orlandi*," 319ff; Eric Cross, "Vivaldi's Operatic Borrowings," *Music & Letters* 59 No. 4 (1978),
431-433; John Walter Hill, "Vivaldi's *Orlando*: Sources and Contributing Factors," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed.
Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 329-330; Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*,
133ff.

[207] In the preface to his 1714 drama *Rodomonte sdegnato* (Venice: Rossetti, 1714), Braccioli writes, "L'Universale
continuato aggradimento che ha riportato dalla tua amorevolezza per lo spazio oltre quaranta recite il mio
Orlando furioso me ha incoraggito a prestarti un nuovo Dramma tratto dallo stesso Celebre Poema
dell'Ariosto." He also refers to the success of *Orlando furioso* in the preface to his 1714 opera *Orlando finto pazzo*:
"Ed avendo conosciuto una distinta parzialità nell'approvazione ch'ebbe l'anno scorso il mio *Orlando furioso*,
onorato di così abbondevole concorso per il lungo tratto di presso cinquanta [!] recite, ho voluto servire al
genio de' miei spettatori col mettere su il teatro *l'Orlando finto pazzo*"; and again in the preface to his 1714 revival
of *Orlando furioso*, where he mentions the original production's "solenne approvazione l'anno scorso su questo
Teatro" (8). See Rosand, "Orlando in Seicento Venice," 98 n4.

predecessor at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, Orlando. Rodomonte is described as "orgoglioso, Folle nel proprio amore,"[208] and "insano,"[209] in his love for Doralice. Thus while Braccioli uses different material for his second Ariosto-based libretto, he essentially applies the same motifs and affects that gained him such success in his 1713 *Orlando furioso*, transferring Orlando's heroic struggle and madness to a Saracen protagonist.[210] *Rodomonte sdegnato* was followed in the 1714 season at the Teatro Sant'Angelo by Braccioli and Vivaldi's *Orlando finto pazzo*, an opera that drew from both Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, and that absorbed many of the tropes of deception and mistaken identity that prevailed in baroque opera. Finally, at the end of the 1714 season, the Teatro Sant'Angelo revived the highly successful *Orlando furioso* from the previous year, with the replacement of some of Ristori's musical material with music written by Vivaldi himself. Thus the 1713 and 1714 seasons at the Teatro Sant'Angelo were veritable seasons of Ariosto—seasons steeped in material from *Orlando furioso* that proved popular enough with audiences to merit repeat performances, thematic continuity, and even revivals in later years.[211]

Tenets of the Arcadian Academy simmer through Braccioli's works. Aristotle is omnipresent in his writings, as both approximate guide and theoretical counterpoint, and throughout his operatic texts Braccioli self-consciously explains and explores his poetic

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[208] Braccioli, *Rodomonte sdegnato*, 15.

[209] Ibid, 18.

[210] The mirroring of Orlando's madness in the figure of Rodomonte is not an innovation of Braccioli's, but occurs already in Ariosto. On this parallel see for example Elissa B. Weaver, "A reading of the Interlaced Plot of the *Orlando furioso*: The Three Cases of Love Madness," in *Ariosto Today: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella, and Roberto Fedi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 126ff.

[211] Cavicchi discusses Braccioli's role in the *Orlando* cycle of the 1713–1714 seasons, noting that the librettist had conceived of the project in Ferrara and managed to bring it to the stage in Venice. In Brizi's words, "…il ciclo melodrammatico degli *Orlandi* rimane un'idea e un programma del Braccioli: egli, come giustamente osserva Cavicchi, trapianta e sviluppa a Venezia un progetto che imprenditorialmente aveva concepito e inizialmente realizzato in patria" (Brizi, "Gli *Orlandi*," 318). On the prevalence of Ariosto at the Teatro Sant'Angelo in these years, see Brizi, "Gli *Orlandi*," 318ff.

freedoms, never quite apologizing for his liberty with source texts. In his preface to

Rodomonte sdegnato he writes:

> A' tempi di Aristotile e di Orazio a due soli capi si riducevano i Poemi
> Drammatici, al Tragico cioè ed al Comico [...]; a' tempi nostri sonosi trovate
> le Pastorali non piccolo ornamento della Drammatica Poesia; ed i Drammi
> per Musica sono stata invenzione la più dilettevole che potesse rinvenire il
> buon gusto. In questi, secondo la varietà de' suggetti, talvolta non bene si
> adatta l'austerità delle regole Tragiche, e purché non si dia di quelle
> strabocchevoli irregolarità che sconciano il costume e danno nell'impossibile
> non che nel verisimile, egli è permesso allentar il freno e, con qualche corda
> toccata abello studio falsa, dare un più grazioso risalto all'Armonia delle parti
> che danno piacere vedute ed udite in teatro e non lette solo in un libro.[212]

Braccioli expresses an ethics of musical theater—a notion of *buon gusto* that lives and moves

through the medium of an entertaining staged spectacle. Brizi rightfully claims that

Braccioli's approach to theatrical material parallels that of Pier Jacopo

Martello in his *Dialogo sopra la tragedia antica e moderna*, published also in 1714.[213] Braccioli also

echoes Apostolo Zeno's problematization of the double nature of the libretto medium—as

both a text to be read and a public performance to be executed.[214] Braccioli's poetic

flexibilities are situated within the framework of Arcadian utility, *buon gusto*, and an ethics of

theater as education.

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[212] Braccioli, *Rodomonte sdegnato*, 8, cit. Brizi, "Gli *Orlandi*," 317.

[213] Brizi, "Gli *Orlandi*," 317.

[214] See Chapter 2, 68.

Orlando's Genre Fury

In his preface to the 1713 *Orlando furioso* libretto, Braccioli directly addresses the most

pressing problem of any performative adaptation of an epic text—namely, the reduction of a

vast adventure to the textual and spatial confines of the theater:

> La pazzia di Orlando, per l'amore di Angelica; gli amori di Ruggiero con
> Bradamante; le fatucchierie, e gli Incanti d'Alcina sono così celebri
> nell'incomparabile poema di Lodovico Ariosto principe fra tutti i poeti; che
> ad ogni straniero clima, non che alla nostra Italia, sono notissimi. Di loro ho
> dovuto formare un Dramma, e per dire la verità non senza grande
> apprensione, ho impreso a scriverlo; da una parte mi si è parata avanti la
> difficoltà di accozzare insieme, in una sola azzione, ed in un suol luogo,
> azzioni appunto, e luoghi tanto fra di loro lontani.[215]

Braccioli notes in his apology that he decided to condense the plot to the love, madness, and

healthful restoration of Orlando. Alcina's island, a magical realm located somewhere in the

Atlantic Ocean, serves as the sole locus of the librettist's adaptation, encapsulating the

characters in a hermetically sealed land of the marvelous.

Braccioli's *Orlando furioso* employs a number of baroque elements and devices,

including multiple amorous subplots and supernatural scenes. As Strohm discusses,

Braccioli's 1713 libretto evidences Arcadian reform not through the cleaving of gratuitous

baroque material, but rather through the moral edification and enlightenment of Orlando.[216]

Indeed, in the final scene of the opera's final act, Astolfo shows Orlando a torch and

restores his wits; distinctive from the vial that Astolfo retrieves from the moon in Ariosto's

source text, the torch stands as a symbol of Platonic wisdom and understanding, and speaks

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[215] Grazio Braccioli, *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Marino Rossetti, 1713), 6.

[216] Strohm *Operas of Vivaldi*, 131-132.

directly to an ethos of enlightenment. Ruggiero brings the opera to a conclusion with an axiomatic statement on learning: "Saggio, chi dal fallir Prudenza impara."[217]

Braccioli's version of Orlando's madness is, like the entirety of his adaptation, necessarily confined to the limits of the stage and to the limits of staged genres: Orlando is both physically contained within the walls of the stage of the Teatro Sant'Angelo and restricted to the Aristotelian unified place and time of Alcina's island, along with the other characters. "La sola Isola di Alcina," he writes, "nelle vicinanze del di lei Palazzo, forma il luogo in cui l'azzione si rappresenta; quantunque nel vasto Poema ingombrino per così dir mezzo Mondo le molte azzioni da me ristrette nel Dramma ad una sola; il cui principio, mezzo, e fine sono l'Amore, la Pazzia, ed il risanamento d'Orlando."[218]

Unlike Ariosto's verbally restricted madman, Braccioli's Orlando excessively verbal and necessarily musical in his madness. He pronounces recitative, sings arias and *ariosos*, and engages in consistent verbal communication with the other characters. Braccioli signals Orlando's initial moment of madness in Act II, scene 15 of the libretto with a direct (albeit abridged) quotation from Canto XXIII of the original *Orlando furioso*: "Arde Orlando, che Orlando? Eh Orlando è morto, / la sua donna ingratissima l'ha ucciso; / Io son lo spirto suo da lui diviso; / E son coll'ombra mia, che sola avvanza / Esempio a chi in Amor pone speranza."[219] Orlando's following recitative hints at his actions in the source text: addressing

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[217] Braccioli, *Orlando furioso* (henceforth referred to as *OF13*), 71. It is noteworthy that Braccioli gives Ruggiero this final statement, considering Ruggiero's moral education in Ariosto's text.

[218] Braccioli, *OF13*, 8.

[219] Braccioli, *OF13*, II.15 (50-51). In the 1727 libretto *Orlando* this verse is quite different, as it focuses on Orlando's division from Angelica: "Io son lo spirto suo da *lei* diviso." (Grazio Braccioli, *Orlando Furioso* (Venice: Marino Rossetti, 1727), II.13 (41). Emphasis mine).

a myrtle tree, he vows to uproot and fell it, pulling the trunk from its roots. Instead of

actually physically uprooting the tree from the stage, Orlando launches immediately into an

aria, "Ho cento vanni al tergo": he sings that he has one hundred feathers on his back, two

hundred eyes on his forehead, and at least one thousand hearts filled with rage. The text of

the aria moves from Orlando's physical self-perception to his metaphorical, mock-

encyclopedic movements. Orlando sings that with his hundred wings he flies from valley to

mountain, surveying things with his many eyes and breathing through his raging hearts:

> Ho cento vanni al Tergo;
> Ho duecent'occhi in fronte;
> E nel furor ch'ho in sen,
> Mi adiro almeno almen
> Con mille cuori.
> Sovra que' vanni io m'ergo;
> Volo dal Piano al monte;
> Quelle Pupille io giro;
> Con tutti i cuor
> Nel mio furor
> Sospiro.[220]

Act II closes with an unconventional reversion to recitative, as Orlando proclaims a

confused echo of his own aria, "Occhi, vanni, furor, cuori; o martoro! / Amanti, e sposi! Qui

sposa a Medoro!"[221] "Ho cento vanni al tergo" invokes an image from the epic tradition: in

Book IV of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Rumor spreads news of the marriage between Dido and Aeneas.

She is described as "fleet-winged and swift-footed…who for every feather on her body has

as many watchful eyes below (marvelous to tell), as many tongues speaking, as many ears

that listen. She flies by night, screeching through the shadows between earth and sky, never

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[220] Ibid, II.15 (51). This aria resonates with notions of monstrosity; I will explore the place of monsters in *Furioso*-based operas in Chapter 4.

[221] Ibid. On the conventions of *da capo* exit arias in *opera seria*, see my discussion of opera terms in the introduction to this dissertation. Eric Cross considers all of "Ho cento vanni al tergo" to be an accompanied recitative, rather than an aria. See Cross, "Vivaldi's Operatic Borrowings," 431ff.

closing her eyes in sweet sleep."[222] Braccioli's Orlando describes himself as a raging monster,

capable of flight and littered with an excess of bodily features, much like Virgil's Rumor.

Orlando also fills a similar role as Rumor, in his interpretation and report of a marriage:

Rumor's dissemination of the story of Dido and Aeneas's wedding opens the uncontrolled

and uncontrollable gates of gossip, while Orlando's report floods his own mind and body

with uncontrolled and uncontrollable thoughts and actions. The Virgilian image of Rumor

allows Braccioli to depict madness as an assault on the protagonist's sensory perception, with

his fragmentation and multiplication of body parts; Orlando's self-description resonates with

an almost Vichian conception of the role of the physical body in processing external stimuli.

Orlando appears next in Act III, scene 4, joining Bradamante, Ruggiero, and Alcina

in the temple of Hecate; he enters spouting another literary reference, now with an allusion

to the tragic genre. "Cortese Ifigenia", he begins, "il furibondo Oreste/ Sen viene a te, che

della Grecia è in bando."[223] This invocation of Greek figures is undoubtedly linked to the

tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides, although likely the more applicable and more

proximate association is with seventeenth-century French tragedy, such as in Racine's 1674

work *Iphigénie*, a highly successful five-act drama written for Louis XIV and his *Divertissements*

de Versailles.[224] The poetic form of Orlando's meditation on Iphigenia and Orestes also

betrays a nod to tragedy: the reference is sung as recitative in lines of *endecasillabi* and *settenari*

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[222] Virgil, IV, 180: "…pedibus celerem et pernicibus alis, / monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae, / tot uigiles oculi subter (mirabile dictu), / tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, to subrigit auris. / nocte volat caeli medio terraeque per umbram / stridens, nec dulci declinat lumina somno" (translation mine).

[223] Braccioli, *OF13*, III.4 (56).

[224] See Mitchell Greenberg, *Racine: From Ancient Myth to Tragic Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 164ff.

sciolti, in accordance with the Arcadian notion that tragedy should not be polluted with rhymed song.

From his tragic reference, Orlando shifts into a long digression on love and desire. Introducing his narration with, "Senti, senti, e compiangi," he begins the story of Amore and a beauty:

> La Storia miserabile, ma vera:
> Il mio povero Amore una bellezza
> Avea invitato al Ballo, allora quando
> Madama Crudeltà, Monsù rigore,
> Nimici giuratissimi d'Amore
> Fecero il bel desire. (ahi cruda sorte!)
> Fecero il bel desir riuscire in vano.[225]

Orlando continues his story, reporting that cruelty embodied (*Madame la cruauté*) voiced her rejection of Amore; he quotes her in French, stating, "...petit fripon, je ne veux pas" ("naughty little boy, I don't want to")[226] and, Orlando recounts, with that, Amore was left to dance by himself. Orlando, interrupting his own story, begins to dance: "Danziam Signora la follia d'Orlando," he states, "Suonate, che fate? / La la, la rala." Braccioli indicates in the margins that Orlando is "in atto di danzare."[227] The story of Amore and a beauty, with its comic interjections, dancing, and recourse to French dialogue, dips into the realm of comic theater. Orlando's dancing serves to decenter his role as protagonist, while casting doubt on his genre classification. He should be the noble, lofty hero of the opera, and yet he finds himself dancing onstage, like a comedic stock character. The Babelic eruption of French into his speech points to a trope that marked mad scenes in *commedia dell'arte*: Isabella Andreini,

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[225] Braccioli, *OF13*, II.3 (56-57).

[226] Ibid, III.4 (57). The 1727 libretto produces the same verse in Italian.

[227] Ibid.

for example, had famously depicted comic madness by singing French *chansons* in her 1589

performance of the *commedia dell'arte* play *La pazzia d'Isabella*.[228]

Orlando's schizophrenic mad scene ends with yet another mythological literary

reference, as Orlando superimposes the story of Daphne and Apollo onto Angelica and her

betrayal:

> Vola, vola, vola, vola, vola.
> Che vola? Amor che fugge; e Apollo
> Vedete dietro lui montato in furia
> Per l'altissima ingiuria
> Fatta all'onesta sua Dafne pudica
> Mettendo nel bordello il casto Alloro
> Quando Angelica fu sposa a Medoro.[229]

The conclusion of the scene is an allusion to the lyric tradition and to Ovid's depiction of

Daphne and Apollo in his *Metamorphoses*.[230] Orlando literally embodies the lyric imaginary in

grafting himself onto Apollo, the mythological lyric figure *par excellence*. Undoubtedly the fact

that Braccioli writes this lyric passage as an aria is no mistake: as discussed in Chapter 2,

many Arcadians conceded that mythological or pastoral figures, unlike lofty, tragic

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[228] Isabella was described as "come pazza se n'andava scorrendo per la cittade, fermando or questo ed ora quello, e parlando ora in spagnuolo, ora in greco, ora in italiano, e molti altri linguaggi, ma tutti fuori di proposito, e tra le altre cose si mise a parlar francese et a cantar certe canzonette pure alla francese…Si mise poi ad imitare li linguaggi di tutti i suoi comici, come del Pantalone, del Graziano, dello Zanni, del Pedrolino, del Francatrippa, del Burattino, del Capitano Cardone e della Franceschina" (Giuseppe Pavoni, *Diario…delle feste nelle solennissime nozze delli serenissimi sposi il sig. duca Ferdinando Medici e la sig. donna Christina di Lorena*, 29-30, cit. Flaminio Scala, *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative*, ed. Ferruccio Marotti (Milan: Il polifilo, 1976), lxxv, and Fabbri, "Alle origini di un 'topos'," 164. Fabbri also makes the connection with Isabella's multilingual madness and Orlando's French usage in Braccioli's *Orlando furioso*. See also Diana Robin, Anne R. Larsen, and Carole Levin, eds., *Encyclopedia of women in the Renaissance: Italy, France, and England* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 10-11.

[229] *OF13*, III.4 (57).

[230] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976–1977), I.452.

characters, could sing and produce rhyme without altogether destroying the opera's sense of verisimilitude.

Orlando continues with his excessively verbal and inherently literary madness in the following scenes: he jumps from a comparison of Angelica and Amphion to a reversion to his French address of *Madame la Cruautè*, from a direct quote of Ariosto ("Iriterò contro i tuoi sciocchi errori / Le donne, i Cavalier, l'arme, e gli Amori"[231]) to references to other worlds and other love stories. He alludes to infernal imagery, singing an unconventional four-line *arioso* in which he damns Angelica to Hell and compares her to a Fury; he also refers to the Hydra and Acheron.

Braccioli's Orlando, in his theatrical straight jacket, possesses none of the kinetic energy of Ariosto's mad protagonist; he is by no means the wordless, physical madman from the pages of Ariosto's text, but rather expresses his madness verbally through leaps in genre. The mad, operatic Orlando is first a figure from the epic tradition (with his aria "Ho cento vanni al tergo"), then a narrator of tragic characters (with his recitative on Ifigenia and Oreste), then a dancing, French-speaking stock character from the comic tradition of *commedia dell'arte* (with his story of Amore and a beauty), and finally the apotheosis of the lyric form (with his aria "Vola, vola, vola, vola, vola"). Braccioli's Orlando then stands an Arcadian madman—a meta-literary geyser of Aristotelian genre classifications that defies the limited and limiting genre exigencies of early eighteenth-century opera. Unable to restrain himself to the strict boundaries of tragedy or classical drama, he flies freely and wildly over the literary terrain. Rather than killing men and horses and destroying idyllic landscapes like his literary forefather, Braccioli's operatic Orlando pollutes Arcadian theatrical *buon gusto* with

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[231] *OF13*, II.5 (59).

abandon, slashes aria forms into unconventional *ariosos*, and rumbles through the conventions of *opera seria*. Orlando is un-Aristotelian and anti-Arcadian in his poetic sequence.

Yet the conclusion of the opera neatly resolves Orlando's poetic crisis and restores him to reason: Astolfo, together with Logistilla and her soldiers, rouses Orlando with a torch and heals him of his madness. The torch, a symbol of enlightenment, puts an end to Orlando's literary schizophrenia and deposits him in a placid *lieto fine*. The revived hero addresses Angelica and Medoro with words of wisdom and encouragement: "Godi, o bella, il tuo sposo; e tu Garzone / La tua consorte in pace; il Ciel v'ha uniti / In dolce amico Nodo. / Egli sia eterno, e nol rallenti mai, / Non che lo sciolga, invida forte amara."[232] Ruggiero then pronounces the moral of the opera: "Saggio, chi dal fallir Prudenza impara."[233] Orlando is wise and ultimately heroic because he learns from his mad episode and sees the light of reason; on a meta-literary level, he dissolves his genre schizophrenia and is restored to the proper conventions of *opera seria*. Braccioli's Orlando thus encapsulates a Gravinian notion of the theater and its inherent madness: Orlando is himself bewitched and bewitching in his madness, and it is through such madness that he purges himself and the drama of all ills. He is a symbol of a *maga salutare*—a *delirio* that, through his own madness, functions to *sgombrare le pazzie* and uphold the conventions of Arcadian opera.[234]

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[232] *OF13*, III.14 (71).

[233] Ibid.

[234] Gravina, *Della ragion poetica*, 11. This is not to say that Braccioli was explicitly invoking Gravina's theory of the theater, but rather that Braccioli was entrenched in the Arcadian debates on theatrical conventions.

Vivaldi's musical setting amplifies the complex poetics of Orlando's mad scenes with unorthodox tonalities, rhythmic tropes, and instrumentation. Yet this musical fragmentation is quite distant from Monteverdi's notion of an aesthetics of madness in early opera: Orlando, in his 1713 form, comes to embody not only a literary madman, but also one who jumps between musical tropes and aria conventions—one who invests his song with a gamut of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operatic styles. His first mad aria, the Virgilian "Ho cento vanni al tergo," begins as a species of *bravura*-rage aria.[235] The orchestra plays a quick, aggressive, and rhythmically limping introduction, and Orlando enters in imitation. Both the orchestra and the vocal line musically depict the dynamic movement of Orlando, the Rumor-like monster, as described in the aria: the lines jump frenetically back and forth between melodic peaks and valleys, just like the flight "dal Piano al monte" in the aria's seventh line. Indeed, the line "Volo dal Piano al monte" is the climax of the aria's first section, after which point the music changes. Vivaldi sets the line "Quelle pupille io giro" in a slow time, Adagio, and in a gentle, *cantabile*-like style that provides a dramatic contrast to the earlier rage music. Orlando sings the line "Con tutti i cuor, con tutti i cuor" in one bar of aggressive allegro, reverts in the next bar to his Adagio tempo for the word *Sospiro*, and the

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[235] Rage arias are identified by several names in eighteenth-century texts, including *aria agitata, aria di strepito, aria di smania,* and *aria infuriata.* See Mary Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 140. For the purposes of this dissertation I use Vivaldi's version of "Ho cento vanni al tergo," found in his 1714 manuscript, even though Giovanni Alberto Ristori was the original composer of the aria, and Vivaldi retained much of Ristori's material from the original aria. One significant change between Ristori's 1713 "Ho cento vanni al tergo" and Vivaldi's 1714 version is the initial time signature: Ristori sets the beginning of the aria in 3/4 time, while Vivaldi's is in 4/4; Vivaldi also enhances some of Ristori's affects with more complex musical figures and more orchestral activity. I choose to analyze Vivalid's (and not Ristori's) aria for several reasons: firstly, precisely because Vivaldi's setting is more effective at expressing the varying affects; secondly, as previously discussed, Vivaldi was intensely involved in the *Orlando furioso* seasons at the Teatro Sant'Angelo, and even though Ristori may have been the first composer, Vivaldi was clearly always a crucial piece of the theatrical and musical production; finally, an exploration of Vivaldi's "Ho cento vanni" evidences a distinctive musical style and certain thematic continuities in his operatic production between *Orlando furioso* and *Orlando finto pazzo.* For a comparison of the 1713 and 1714 versions of "Ho cento vanni," see Cross "Vivaldi's Operatic Borrowings," 431-433; see also Strohm's chart of borrowings (*Operas of Vivaldi,* 724ff).

orchestra closes the phrase with a bar of Allegro sixteenth notes that echo the aria's fast-paced orchestral introduction. Braccioli writes Orlando's lines "Occhi, vanni, furor, cuori; oh martoro! / Amanti, e sposi! Qui sposa a Medoro!" as *versi sciolti*, separate from the aria, and Vivaldi indeed sets the lines in a kind of lamenting recitative: the indication *tempo a piacimento* is written above the music, and the bass line of the orchestra sustains long, recitative-like notes. The key is suddenly in C minor, the parallel to the beginning of the aria's C major.[236] Moreover, Vivaldi's bass line, moving from F in stepwise motion down to the aria's tonic, C, nearly forms a baroque-style *lament bass*—a syntactical-musical device that expresses lament through a descending tetrachord in the bass line.[237] Although the aria itself seems to end with the word *sospiro*, both in the libretto and in Vivaldi's recitative-like setting of the following lines, Vivaldi adds a brief orchestral coda after the line "Amanti, e sposi! Qui sposa a Medoro!" A frenetic passage in C major with scrubbing eighth notes in the upper strings, the coda imposes an abrupt *da capo* feel at the end of Orlando's overtly non-*da capo* mad aria, and resonates with the tonality and texture of the beginning of "Ho cento vanni." The act ends innocuously in C major, as if Orlando's aria had magically adhered to conventional *opera seria* structures and procedures: the final coda seems almost like a parody of standard, *da capo* practices, highlighting the differences in "Ho cento vanni al tergo"—its musical-syntactical

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[236] On tonality in Vivaldi, see Bella Brover-Lubovsky Bella, *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2008); Howard Mayer Brown, "Embellishing Eighteenth-Century Arias: On Cadenzas," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984). On recitative practices in Venetian opera see Beth Lise Glixon, *Recitative in Seventeenth-Century Venetian Opera: Its Dramatic Function and Musical Language* (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1985), 47ff.

[237] Composers such as Monteverdi and Francesco Cavalli used the lament bass extensively in the seventeenth century, as did many composers in the early eighteenth century, including Vivaldi himself. On Vivaldi's use of the lament bass, see Brover-Lubovsky, *Tonal Space*, Chapter 8. I refer to this line in "Ho cento vanni al tergo" as *nearly* a lament bass, as the harmonies it forms do not adhere to the standard harmonies of a descending tetrachord: in a diatonic lament bass, the notes form a *Phrygian scale*—that is, four notes with the intervals tone-tone-semitone. In "Ho cento vanni al tergo," the four notes descend in intervals of tone-semitone-tone. In order for the line to be truly *Phrygian*, the penultimate note must be a D flat, rather than a D. Despite this distinction, the descent still undoubtedly hints at the tradition of the baroque lament bass.

eccentricities, its leaps between different musical affects and forms, its complex tonalities

and unpredictable nature. Braccioli's epic-themed aria becomes a locus for musical

fragmentation and musical-stylistic introspection in Vivaldi's setting; "Ho cento vanni"

evidences the division of *opera seria* selfhood with its many wings, many eyes, and many

hearts (see Example 3.1).

Exegesis of the Fake

Braccioli's 1714 text *Orlando finto pazzo* draws mostly from an episode from Boiardo's

Orlando innamorato (Cantos IV and V from Book II), with a number of thematic overlays and

character mixing with Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. He modifies elements of Boiardo's text in the

following ways, as discussed by Ferruccio Tàmmaro: Falerina is given the name Ersilla, and

mirrors the role of Alcina in the *Furioso*; Brandimarte, Orlando's friend and companion, is

depicted as in love with Ersilla (much like the plot between Alcina and Ruggiero in Ariosto's

Orlando furioso); Origille, a relatively minor character in Boiardo I.29, appears as a lover of

Grifone, another character from the *Innamorato*; Braccioli adds two other characters,

Argillano (protector and lover of Ersilla) and Tigrinda (lover of Argillano).[238] The most

notable invention in the opera—or, in Tàmmaro's words, the most notable

contaminazione[239]—is of course the feigned madness of the principal character. Braccioli

addresses this innovation in his *argomento*:

> Cotesta finta pazzia, non è toccata dal Boiardo, ma non è perció, ch'io non la
> creda un mezzo confacevole, e proprio a condurre a fine un Dramma; poema
> in cui se, per insegnamento de' Maestri, alle volte è lecito il variare suggetti

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[238] Ferruccio Tàmmaro, "Contaminazione e polivalenze nell'*Orlando finto pazzo*," *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, XVII (1982), 75.

[239] Ibid.

storici, e noti; farà per mio avviso ben più lecito il farlo in suggetti favolosi, e presso che ignoti; ne' quali deve comparire il Poeta col inventare purché *Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris.* Molti grandi, e rinomati personaggi (ne lo rapportano le Storie) hanno felicemente con simulate Pazzie effettuati de' vasti disegni, e su gli essempj di loro ho arrischiato anch'io d'inventare la *Finta Pazzia di Orlando*, e mi stimarò ben fortunato, se averò incontrato il gradimento del mio lettore, e più del mio spettatore.[240]

Braccioli justifies his depiction of Orlando's *finta pazzia* by invoking great literary figures that feigned madness to achieve their goals;[241] the librettist transfers such madness to his 1714 Orlando, but also depicts himself as a kind of meta-literary feigned madman who uses feigned madness as a means to the end of his opera.[242] Feigned madness, unlike its genuine counterpart, can be wielded, molded, used as a tool. An aria in Act III, scene 8, sung by Brandimarte, speaks to this ethics of deception: "L'inganno stesso / Virù diviene / Allor che opprime la crudeltà. / E spesso spesso / Pel commun bene / Fingersi insano non fù viltà."[243]

The phenomenon of *finta pazzia* appeared widely in baroque operas: as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, Giulio Strozzi and Claudio Monteverdi envisioned a feigned madwoman in their 1627 opera *La finta pazza Licori*; this was followed by composer Francesco Sacrati's *La finta pazza* in 1641, then Strozzi's text *La finta savia* (set to music by Filiberto Laurenzi and others in 1643), and at the end of the seventeenth century, in 1696,

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[240] Grazio Braccioli, *Orlando finto pazzo* (henceforth referred to as *OFP*), 3-4. Braccioli takes the Latin quotation from Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 338.

[241] Braccioli is likely referring to Odysseus's feigned mad episode, as told in Apollodorus's *Epitome* 3. 7 (XII), and perhaps Solon's feigned madness, as told by Plutarch in his *Life of Solon*, 8.

[242] This is an interesting adaptation of Ariosto's own approach to *Orlando furioso*, as Ariosto repeatedly questions and problematizes his own sanity as author and authorial figure. Braccioli depicts himself as being able to feign a loss of control over his material, but ultimately wields the device of feigned madness to manipulate the plot of his drama.

[243] Braccioli *OFP*, III. 3 (62).

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Matteo Noris wrote the libretto *La finta pazzia di Ulisse*, set to music by Marco Antonio Ziani. Tàmmaro rightfully yokes the tradition of feigned madness in baroque opera to a baroque conception of melodramatic artifice: the baroque stage itself stood as an embodiment of crafted otherness. Yet Braccioli sets apart his feigned madman from the *finti pazzi* of the seventeenth century, as his 1714 Orlando acts as a feigned version of his true mad self. A Don Quixote-like figure, this Orlando is highly conscious of the story of his own madness, as represented in Ariosto's sixteenth-century *Orlando furioso* and in Braccioli's own *Orlando furioso*, staged just one year before *Orlando finto pazzo*.[244] In the 1714 text, Orlando deliberately references his own mad persona and positions himself as an Other, a double. Orlando's deception—his *finta pazzia*—is just one of many deceptions in the opera: the plot is a nearly incomprehensible chain of love and mistaken identity, and Orlando's madness, rather than standing as the principal matter of the drama (as it did in Braccioli's earlier *Orlando furioso*), functions as a narrative thread woven between and around the complex stories of requited and unrequited love.[245] The opera's protagonist hardly acts as a leading man: he spouts some 'mad' recitative in the second and third acts, but only sings one aria in the entire work— "Non paventi giammai le cadute," a 'sane' *da capo* aria that praises virtue and affirms the eternal triumph of the virtuous.[246]

Orlando's feigned mad scenes, blatantly self-aware and carefully constructed, differ greatly from the 1713 Orlando's Aristotelian poetic geyser. His first 'mad' episode, executed in the presence of Argillano, Origille, and Brandimarte in Act II, scene 10, hinges on the

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[244] Tàmmaro, "Contaminazione e polivalenze," 75.

[245] See Walter Kolneder, *Vivaldi, his Life and Work*, trans. Bill Hopkins (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 176-178.

[246] "Non paventi giammai le cadute / Chi virtute / Seguendo, ed amore / Vanta in petto coraggio, e valor. / Che se cade, cadendo da forte / Non ha morte, / Ma eterni al suo cuore / Gloria, Palma, Trionfo, ed Onor." (III.9, 63) Strohm notes that Orlando as almost entirely devoid of character (*Operas of Vivaldi*, 146).

'true' story of Orlando and Origille, as told in Boiardo I.29. Orlando, feigning to be himself, begins with an aside, "Finger convien," and then introduces his story to Argillano with a caveat: "se senza senno io sia / Se giusta è l'ira mia / Giudice elleggo te; siedi ed ascolta…"[247] He explains how he came across Origille hanging from a tree by her braids, having been punished by the knights Ariante, Lucrino, Uldano, and Oringo for her coquettish behavior.[248] As he recounts, Orlando, moved by pity and love, rescued Origille and slayed her tormentors, only to be betrayed by the maiden. The meaning of the story is rendered ambiguous by its truthfulness: the sane Orlando, acting as a madman who imagines himself to be the mad Orlando, tells a supposedly mad tale that, in reality, is strictly rooted in events from Boiardo's narrative. Orlando litters his tale with mad, Babelic language, such as his onomatopoeic exclamation of "Patatif, Patatof tagli alla gamba" when describing his defeat of the knight Ariante. He also seems to reference his own mad language and poetic tropes from the 1713 *Orlando furioso*: he recalls, "Mill'onte, e mille scherni / Ricevette un'Eroe del ragno mio / Dalla scaltra crudel,"[249] and also warns against the beauty of Origille's eyes: "son belli è vero, / Ma non ne troverai certo due altri / Ladri, e al pari di loro, astuti, e scaltri."[250] The discussion of her dangerous eyes, compounded by the image of the *mill'onte* and *mille scherni*, resonates with the aria "Ho cento vanni al tergo" from *OF13*. In the same "mad" episode Orlando links Origille to his story of *Amore e una bellezza*, again from *OF13*: he describes how Origille, bound to the pine tree, "al suon de' sospiri / Danzava

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[247] Braccioli, *OFP*, II.10 (40).

[248] Jo Ann Cavallo reads this episode in Boiardo as a kind of Boccaccian *novella*, reminiscent of Nastagio degli Onesti (*Boiardo's* Orlando Innamorato: *An Ethics of Desire* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1993), 86).

[249] These lines are absent from the musical setting.

[250] Braccioli, *OFP*, II.10 (41).

all'Italiana un ballo in aria…"[251] While Orlando feigns madness in his digression on Origille,

he displaces the mad imagery onto Origille, rather than absorbing it himself: he depicts *her* as

the Virgilian monster, and describes *her* unconventional dance in the air. Not only is Orlando

a sane man feigning to be a Quixotic madman who envisions himself as the mad Orlando,

but his madness is even disembodied, transferred to another character.

Braccioli further problematizes Orlando's *finta pazzia* in Act III, scene 7: Ersilla,

attempting to confirm that Orlando is, indeed, himself, casts a spell that produces the sound

of Angelica's voice. Orlando responds with a kind of excitement that borders on true

amorous madness: "Oh voce! ah, che rimiro! oh / Del mio bel Nume il volto. / Apritevi

pupille a far sereno / Il torbido di quest'alma amorosa."[252] Brandimarte rescues Orlando

from Ersilla's spell by feigning that he himself is Orlando,[253] at which point the true Orlando

awakens from his seemingly true amorous madness; Orlando then again channels his

performative, feigned fury, signaled again by an aside, "A vaneggiar ritorno."[254] He again falls

into Babelic speech with an introduction of "Papè! gli è vero affè!"[255] and then offers a 'mad'

meditation on the figure and name of Orlando:

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[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid, III.7 (60).

[253] As Scott Levin discusses ("Vivaldi's and Braccioli's Adaptation of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato: Orlando finto pazzo*" (Bachelors Thesis Columbia University, 2012), 11), Brandimarte's appropriation of Orlando's character is rooted in an episode from Boiardo, at King Manodante's castle (II, 12). In the episode Astolfo appears and reveals Brandimarte's true identity; Brandimarte, in turn, insists that Astolfo is mad: "[Astolfo] avea nel cervello un gran diffetto, / Perché d'ognior che scemava la luna, / Divenia rabbioso e maledetto" (II, 12.41).

[254] Braccioli, *OFP* III.7 (60).

[255] The word *papé* is undoubtedly a reference to the crux at the beginning of *Inferno* VII (Plutus's clucking words, "Papè Satàn, Papè Satàn aleppe!"). The specific context of Orlando's speech differs greatly from that of Plutus, but the function is similar: both characters are at least partially unintelligible in their speech, engendering a hermeneutical crisis on the part of the reader/spectator.

> Quando d'esser Orlando io mi credea
> Esaminando ben la mia bravura,
> Io mi avveggo, che sono
> Il flagello di Astrea?
> Orlando era un gran nome; io l'avea preso
> Per comparir in aria di Guerriero;
> Ma flagello di Astrea! riempie pure
> I miei vasti disegni un nome tale!
> La tirannia, la crudeltà cadranno
> Sotto del suo sferzare oppresse, e dome:
> Mi disorlando amico, e ti ringrazio,
> Che fino ad or tu mi prestassi il nome.[256]

Orlando evidences a certain awareness of the prevalence of infernal imagery in operatic mad

scenes: his opening word, *Papè*, seems to refer to the first line of Canto VII of Dante's

Inferno, "Pape Satàn, pape Satàn aleppe!" spoken by Plutus.[257] The word *Papè* also

underscores Orlando's conscious attempt at nonsensical language, as the cryptic, Babelic

opening lines from *Inferno* VII comprise one of the most exegetically challenging *cruces* in the

entirety of Italian literature. With his speech, Orlando (still assuming the guise of a man

pretending to be Orlando) enacts a bewildering splitting of selfhood: transforming his name

into a verb, *disorlando*, he liberates himself from the name of the protagonist, and in so doing

shatters his Quixotic appropriation of Orlando's name, noting that he is not worthy to be

the executor of justice (*il flagello di Astrea*).

By the end of the third act, Orlando reveals that he is actually himself, and through

repetitions of the phrase "io sono Orlando" he defeats Ersilla and carries the opera to its *lieto*

fine. The nearly incomprehensible and infinitely complex *finta pazzia* of Orlando serves to

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[256] Braccioli, *OFP* III.7 (60-61).

[257] *Inf* VII, 1. References to Dante were not common in opera of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and almost no operatic adaptations of the *Commedia* appeared until the nineteenth century. Dantean quotations and figures appeared in opera almost exclusively as infernal tropes, such as in the line from *Inf.* 3, "Lasciate ogni speranza o voi ch'entrate," uttered by the character Speranza in Alessandro Striggio's early opera *L'Orfeo* (1607). See Fabbri, *Monteverdi*, 68; John Whenham, ed., *Claudio Monteverdi:* Orfeo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 [1986]), 66-67.

problematize both sanity and insanity, both the purity of the word and its Babelic pollutants, both honesty of character and theatrical artifice. The complexities of the opera evidence a problematic liminality: all of the characters, in their deceptions and feigned identities, can slip toward madness; all of them can embody and absorb Orlando's mad behavior and language. But deception, as Braccioli discusses, can serve as a useful tool when wielded correctly. Orlando, then, stands as a productive symbol of artifice, theatrical and real. Whereas the true mad Orlando of 1713 destroys the landscape of *opera seria* by thrashing through poetic genres, the feigned mad Orlando of 1714 maintains his position as an Arcadian hero: he hints at a mixing of different genres but never fully plunges into them himself; he utters nearly exclusively recitative in *endecasillabi* and *settenari sciolti*, adhering to an Arcadian conception of the decorous role of song in the theater; he engages with theatrical artifice, but only in order to triumph over the immorality and maleficence of Ersilla, the quintessence of evil deception. Orlando endures temptation in the form of Angelica's voice and Origille's physical presence, and nearly succumbs to the shadows of true madness, but in the end he proves himself impeccably virtuous, and, most importantly, rigorous in his poetic identity as a sane, Arcadian hero.

The manuscript of Vivaldi's *Orlando finto pazzo* setting, littered with edited passages and substitute arias, points to the challenges the composer faced when setting Braccioli's tortuous text. Lines of recitative from the libretto are absent from the score, and certain arias are written and rewritten to accommodate the demands of specific singers.[258] The music of

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[258] As Strohm discusses, the last page of the score provides unique insight onto Vivaldi's compositional process: the last piece, the substitute aria "Sventurata navicella," is a simplistic tune, and on the top of the page Vivaldi wrote, "Se questa non piace, non voglio più scirvere di Musica." This page seems to evidence Vivaldi's

Orlando's *finta pazzia* is predictably less dazzling and less complex than the music of

Orlando's true madness in *Orlando furioso* (1713), if for no other reason than that Orlando

sings no 'mad' arias in *Orlando finto pazzo*. The setting of his feigned mad recitative does,

however, exhibit certain musical tropes that speak to the ambiguity of his mental state.[259]

Vivaldi sets Orlando's 'mad' account of his meeting with Origille in such a way that casts

doubt onto whether Orlando is feigning madness or has actually descended into genuine

pazzia. The music problematically immerses Orlando in the past actions of his story and

provides commentary to his sanely insane words (see Example 3.2). This musical depiction

begins with some subtle tone painting: Orlando's harsh words about Origille's eyes, "Ma non

ne troverai certo due altri / Ladri, e al pari di loro, astuti, e scaltri," are set with broad,

chromatic leaps—an ascent from C to B flat between *altri* and *ladri*, then another ascent

from A to a high E flat between *loro* and *astuti*, and a descent from the high E flat to F

natural on *astuti*. These leaps, highly irregular in their interval spans and tonal implications,

speak to Origille's treacherous nature and unpredictability.

Orlando also musically echoes Origille's *sospiri* (with a descending fifth from C to F),

as well as her dance in the air (with quicker, dancing eighth notes), and her prayer to the

Padri Achei (with a chorale-like progression, in which the vocal line moves in perfect

rhythmic synchronization with the bass). With these devices Orlando is not only reenacting

the details of his story, but actually seems musically immersed in Origille's actions, as if he

had taken on her character and her experiences; the deceptive Orlando, in his musical

frustrations with the limitations and challenges inherent to any opera production. See Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 154. For a more general discussion of changes in the score, see Strohm, *Operas of Vivaldi*, 146ff.

[259] Cross briefly discusses Orlando's feigned mad recitative (Eric Cross, "The Relationship between Text and Music in the Operas of Vivaldi," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 292). See also Steinebrunner, "Orlando furioso," 76 n86.

meditation on Origille, enacts an true Orlando-like splitting of selfhood through musical

means (see Example 3.3).

Orlando directs his attention in the story to himself and the onset of his supposed

madness, and in turn his tone painting becomes more deliberate and more exaggerated (see

Example 3.4). With the line "Donna…Donna…(il furor di già m'invade)," the orchestra

aggressively invades the recitative: Orlando is no longer alone with the bass line, but is

interrupted three times by a flurry of mad orchestral sixteenth notes.

With his onomatopoeic utterance of "Patatif, Patatof," the bass line joins his voice in

unison, tonally painting the movements of his sword (see Example 3.5). The description of

his riding off with Origille on Brigliadoro expands on the libretto: the exclamation *ai ai ai!* is

inserted between *Brigliadoro* and *galoppa*, and Orlando sings his *ai ai ai* at the interval of a

rising perfect fourth (between A and D), mimicking a horn call.[260]

The tone painting in this section seems to represent Orlando's madness itself: the

orchestra first invades his speech, just as he describes how the *furor* invades him; the bass line

accompanies his Babelic *Patatif, Patatof*, musically depicting his physical fury; and Orlando's

nonsense cry of *ai ai ai* is set as a mad hunting call. Orlando, though he is capable of feigning

his own mad words, is not safeguarded against the fury of mad musical tropes: by invoking

the name of madness, mad music, in the form of raging sixteenth notes, sword sounds, and

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[260] The horn call was usually expressed in music of the period with the interval of a perfect fifth, not a perfect fourth. This motif appears in *Autunno* from Vivaldi's *Quattro stagioni* and in his Concerto No. 10 in B flat major (*La caccia*); see Paul Everett, *Vivaldi: The Four Seasons and Other Concertos, Op. 8* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 55. I call this figure in Orlando's recitativo a hunting call because of its alternation between the dominant tone (A) and the tonic (D): although this is technically a perfect fourth, this movement between tonic and dominant resonates also as a perfect fifth. Moreover, the figure ends on a D (with the last syllable of *galoppa*), producing a perfect fifth in the end. It seems that hunting sounds were indeed part of Vivaldi's vision for the opera: the score of *Orlando finto pazzo* included the use of *tromboni da caccia*. See Michael Talbot, *Vivaldi* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 126; Michael Talbot, *The Vivaldi Compendium* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2011), 98.

horn/battle calls, indeed invades him and pushes him toward genuine operatic fury. Orlando's madness is feigned, controlled, mimetic, but not devoid of danger. The music in this passage highlights Orlando's vulnerability—his liminal position between sanity and insanity, between artifice and unchecked rage. It shows the instability of any *finta pazzia*, as artificial madness is necessarily yoked to true fury, and mimetic gesture can easily slip into the realm of chaotic truth. It shows that even the most steadfast Arcadian hero is not immune to the mad siren song.

CHAPTER 4

Orlando's Monstrous Journey from Arcadia to the London Stage, 1711–1733

"Spirto immortale, hai tu ne l'alma
il tuo solo e santissimo ricetto."
Raro mostro e mirabile, d'umano
e di divino aspetto;
di veder cieco e di saver insano;
di senso e d'intelletto,
di ragion e desio confuso affetto!
e tale, hai tu l'impero
de la terra e del ciel ch'a te soggiace."

      -Battista Guarini, *Il pastor fido*[261]

"L'Opera est un monstre qui n'a ni proportion ni vrai semblance."

      - Gabriel Bonnot de Malby, *Lettres a Madame la Marquis de P…sur l'opera*[262]

The Venetian Orlando, with his mad romp through literary genres, was neither the first nor

the only operatic Orlando to emerge from Arcadia. In 1711 the Arcadian poet Carlo

Sigismondo Capece penned his drama *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*; the text was then set to

music by Domenico Scarlatti and performed at the home of Maria Casimira in Rome. While

the music from this performance is lost, the surviving libretto evidences an adherence to a

strict Arcadian ethos of pastoral elegance and elevation. Capece depicts Orlando's madness

as thematically monochrome, rooted in images of monstrosity and the Underworld; the

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[261] Battista Guarini, *Il pastor fido* (Venice: Marsilio, 1999), III, chorus.

[262] Gabriel de Malby, *Lettres a Madame la Marquis de P…sur l'opera* (Paris: Didot, 1741), 3.

supporting characters, based loosely on Ariosto's original cast of knights and ladies, exhibit a

noble pastoral lyricism. Magic is kept to an absolute minimum in Capece's rendition—

literally reduced to the miniscule band of Angelica's ring—and any hint of comedy has been

eradicated from Capece's page. His drama is, then, a perfect Arcadian concoction. Yet

Capece's Orlando did not remain sealed in his Arcadian locus: the German composer

George Frideric Handel, having spent a period of his life in Italy (including several years in

the presence of the Arcadians in Rome), exported Capece's libretto to the London stage in

1733, more than two decades after the original, private production. Handel's opera deformed

Capece's original composition, overwhelming the story with magical elements and comic

language. Though rooted in the same text, Handel's *Orlando* essentially reversed the Arcadian

purity of Capece's source libretto, and reintroduced spectacular effects and mixed linguistic

registers, immersing the work in elements that the Arcadians had fought to eradicate from

baroque opera. Handel's appropriation of Capece's text evidences a dramatic

metamorphosis: Capece's perfect, Arcadian version of the Orlando tale, once loose from its

Roman home, grew into an extravagant baroque spectacle, monstrous in its composite parts

and decidedly un-Arcadian in its aesthetic.

Capece and *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*

Carlo Sigismondo Capece was one of the original golden boys of the Arcadian Golden Age:

a shepherd of the founding cast of the Arcadian Academy in Rome, Capece,[263] described by

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[263] Capece's name is often written *Capeci* (particularly after 1697). Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli, in his *Biblioteca volante*, writes his name as *Capece* (*Biblioteca volante* (Venice: Giambattista Albrizzi Girolamo, 1735), II, 56-7). In 1692 Capece adopted the Arcadian shepherd name Metisto Olbiano.

a contemporary as a "seguace delle Muse,"[264] adhered loyally to Arcadian pastoralism and an

ethos of *buon gusto*. He served as a politician and diplomat, bouncing between his native

Rome and foreign courts in France, Spain, and Germany. Between 1690 and 1714 he was

particularly dedicated to poetic production and reform, as evidenced by his intense

involvement in Roman academies and the title of "segretario delle lettere italiane, e latine,"[265]

bestowed on him by Maria Casimira, the exiled Queen of Poland who had inserted herself

into Roman society and the Arcadian milieu beginning in 1699.[266] Capece began his poetic

career as a librettist for performances in private theaters in Rome, including the theaters of

the Palazzo Colonna (home to the Colonna family) and the Palazzo Zuccari (home of Maria

Casimira), catering to the tastes of Roman aristocrats and men of the Church, and often

fitting his dramas to the characteristics and life events of his patrons.[267] Capece imbued his

works—particularly his early libretti—with a heavy pastoral touch: while he adapted a

number of characters and stories from Greek tragedy and historical dramas, he generally

inserted them into a pastoral landscape and set them in a pastoral framework of lovelorn

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[264] Cinelli Calvoli, *Biblioteca volante*, 57.

[265] Capece was sent to French court by Cardinal Francesco Maidalchini in the 1670s; he returned to Rome around 1680 and served as the "segretario delle ambasciate" under Cardinal Girolamo Casanate; around 1689 he was named "Giudice dello Stato di Ronciglione" by Alessandro VIII; in the last years of the seventeenth century, Pope Innocent XII named him governor of the city of Terni, and then also of Cascia and Assisi. In 1695 he returned to Rome and took the post of "Agente della Provincia del Patrimonio." Between 1704 and 1714 he served as "segretario delle lettere italiane, e latine" under Maria Casimira of Poland, and in 1714 he moved with her to France and stayed there with her until her death in 1716. He then returned to Rome and took positions first under the princes of Bavaria, and ultimately served the Princess Teresa Grillo Pamphili. Cinelli Calvoli, *Biblioteca volante*, 56; Emilio De Tipaldo, ed., *Biografia degli italiani illustri nelle scienze, lettere, ed arti del secolo XVIII, e de' contemporanei* (Venice: Alvisopoli, 1837), IV, 374-375.

[266] On Maria Casimira's sojourn in Rome and her links to the Arcadian Academy, see Gaetano Platania, "Maria Casimira Sobieska a Roma: Alcuni episodi del soggiorno romano di una regina polacca," in *'Effetto Roma': il viaggio* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1995), 9ff.; Roberto Pagano, "'Venni a Roma Cristina e non Cristina...'" in *Händel e gli Scarlatti a Roma: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi*, ed. Nino Pirrotta and Agostino Ziino (Florence: Olschki, 1987), 265ff; Strohm, *Dramma per musica*, 34ff.

[267] Bragaglia names Capece a "personaggio alla moda nel grandioso Seicento teatro romano" (Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Pulcinella* (Rome: Gherardo Casini, 1953), 216.

shepherds and shepherdesses.[268] He received wide praise for his works, earning a place

among the most admired librettists of the period: Pier Jacopo Martello lists "il Tolomeo,

l'Achille, le due Ifigenie di Carlo Capece" as paradigms of good contemporary drama, along

with works by Apostolo Zeno, Eustachio Manfredi, and Silvio Stampigli.[269]

Capece produced his *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia* two decades after the birth of

Arcadia: by 1711, Gravinian schism was rupturing the idyllic academy landscape, and the

theatrical purity of the Crescimbenian *favola pastorale* was being supplanted by a new

formulation of historic drama for the popular stage, as exemplified by Apostolo Zeno and

his heroic libretti of the 1710s.[270] Orlando had not yet swept European operatic stages with

his madness: Capece was the first to depict an eighteenth-century operatic Orlando, even

before Grazio Braccioli and the nexus of the Teatro Sant'Angelo and Vivaldi in Venice.[271]

The first Arcadian Orlando landed firmly in the realm of Roman pastoral theater, a

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[268] This broad application of pastoral aesthetics to dramatic themes was a crucial characteristic of pastoral opera, as Harris discusses: "Just as the pastoral oases do not make the Italian epics any less heroic, so a pastoral episode does not alter the otherwise heroic structure of a play or an opera. In fact, when such an oasis does appear in a play, this means that the play itself cannot be a pastoral. In a pastoral the Arcadian landscape must envelop the entire world. Thus it is a peculiar feature of the pastoral theme that its inclusion in a non-pastoral composition does not disturb that work's mode, yet an interruption of the pastoral world, by making that world an oasis, does destroy the pastoral mode. Only excised from their original context, do these oases become fully fledged pastorals" (*Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 5). Capece's *argomento* of *Tetide in Sciro* (1713) evidences this intersection of heroic-tragic drama and pastoral amorous intrigue: "L'Amore d'Acchille con Deidamia Figlia di Licomede Re di Sciro, e il suo discoprimento per la sagacità di Ulisse è favola così nota, che servendo d'argomento alla presente Operetta, non ha il Lettore bisogno d'altro, per intenderne, senza pena gli avvenimenti. Solo vi si aggiunge per maggior vaghezza il Personaggio di Antiope Figlia di Teseo, il quale come historicamente si narra, da Plutarco, e altri fù creduto ucciso da Licomede; e perciò verisimilmente si finge, che la Figlia Antiope amata già da Licomede, e a lui promessa in Isposa, sdegnata poi per la creduta morte del Padre, si portasse travestita in habito virile, e sotto nome di Filarte in Sciro, per vendicarsi, e uccider l'Amante..." (3).

[269] Martello, *Della tragedia antica e moderna* V (119-120).

[270] As Harris notes, Crescimbeni praised Zeno only for his early (pastoral) works; Zeno's name disappears entirely from Crescimbeni's encomia after 1700 (*Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 34).

[271] Strohm sees a link between Capece's *Orlando* and Braccioli's *Orlando furioso* through the soprano Maria Giusti: Giusti sang the role of Angelica in the Venice productions of 1713–1714 and, he proposes, must have also appeared in Capece's Roman opera in 1711. Moreover, the Marchese Scipione dal Sale of Vicenza was involved in operas by both librettists; Strohm believes views these connections as a network through which the Orlando operas were disseminated. See Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 117.

monstrous madman among pining pastoral lovers and literary reformers.[272] Crescimbeni, the

pastoral purist, heaped praise on Capece's *Orlando*: "Carlo Sigismondo Capece Segretario

della M.S.," he wrote in 1714, "il quale con maravigliosa felicità seppe in essa trasportare non

solo l'azione principale del Poema dell'Ariosto, cioè la pazzia d'Orlando; ma anche alcuno

de' più begli episodi; ed ella è impressa col titolo *L'Orlando, ovvero la Gelosa Pazzia*."[273]

Crescimbeni's admiration of *Orlando* is predictably limited to the written text by Capece, and

entirely sidesteps the theatrical and musical elements of the performed spectacle; still, the

fact that Crescimbeni discusses the libretto at all demonstrates that Capece's adaptation of

Orlando and Orlando's madness resonated harmoniously with Arcadian pastoral ideology—

at least on the page.

     L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia was the second carnival-season opera to be performed

at Maria Casimira's private theater in 1711.[274] In his address to the reader of the libretto, after

the obligatory bow to Ariosto and his very famous poem, Capece highlights one change that

he makes to the original material—that is, the use of Angelica's ring in restoring Orlando's

health, in place of the vial of his wits. Capece justifies this adjustment with an invocation of

Boiardo and the edicts of verisimilitude:

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[272] Harris notes that most adaptations of epic texts in the seventeenth century drew from pastoral scenes, rather than episodes that deal with magic or battle. She lists Salvadori and Gagliano's 1619 opera *Il Medoro* and Saracinelli and Caccini's *La Liberazione* (1625), both Florentine productions that adapted pastoral scenes from *Orlando furioso*; she also names the 1626 Roman production *La Catena d'Adone*, by Tronsarelli and Mazzochi, based on pastoral scenes from Marino's *Adone*; and a pastoral opera by Rospigliosi and Rossi, *Erminia* (1733), based on a combination of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and *Aminta*. See Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 225.

[273] Crescimbeni, *L'istoria della volgar poesia*, 352.

[274] As Strohm notes, "Maria Casimira's theatre opened on 19 January [1711] with *Tolomeo et Alessandro, ovvero la corona disprezzata*, by the Queen's household artists Carlo Sigismondo Capeci and Domenico Scarlatti…The same three artists produced Maria Casimira's second opera of this carnival, *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*" (*Dramma per musica*, 40).

> ...sarebbe vana fatica il cercare di meglio spiegarlo [*Orlando furioso*], tanto più, che si è procurato non discostarsi da un così celebre Autore, se non quanto ha portato l'obligo delle unità del tempo, e azzione, richeste più strettamente nel Tragico, che nell'Epico; e perciò si fa risanare Orlando dal furore, non con l'ampolla portata da Astolfo, ma con l'Anello di Angelica, col quale un'altra volta, narra il Boiardo, che ritornò in se stesso, quando per la forza di un'incanto havea perduto, e memoria, e senno: Onde non è inverisimile questo nuovo avvenimento appoggiato sul primo, con gli altri, che si fingono per maggior vaghezza dell'Opera, non contrarii a quelli del sopradetto Poema.[275]

The substitution of Angelica's magic ring for the vial of Orlando's wits retrieved by Astolfo from the moon is, naturally, not the only difference between Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Capece's *Orlando*. Aristotelian unities dictate a major shift from the source material, as they would later do for Braccioli and his adaptation: unlike Braccioli, however, Capece sidesteps the realm of the magical (i.e. Alcina's island) in favor of an unspecified pastoral setting. Aside from the introductory battle scene between Orlando and Zerbino, the opera runs through a sequence of commonplace pastoral scenes, from a "Bosco chiuso con veduta di Villaggio" (I.4) to a "Villaggio di Case rustiche, e Cappanne" (I.7), from a "boschetto di lauri con bocca di grotta, e fonte" (II.7) to a post-apocalyptic/post-Orlando "Campagna con ruine di case, ed alberi" (III.6). The characters, bearing only a minimal resemblance to their parallels in Ariosto's source text, are also decidedly rustic, woody, un-magical. Angelica and Medoro drive the plot with their idyllic, Petrarchan love. Isabella and Zerbino traipse through the pastoral landscape, losing and finding one another around trees and through groves; Capece hints at elements of the original story of Isabella and Zerbino from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, but ultimately he corrects the characters' tragic fate and deposits them in the placid terrain of the conventional *lieto fine*. Orlando thrashes and destroys the idyllic scene, as he does in

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[275] Carlo Sigismondo Capece, *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia* (Rome: Antonio de' Rossi, 1711), 3.

Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Capece adds the character Dorinda, a *pastorella* who embodies the

pastoral character of the work; an elegant nobody, in Harris' words,[276] Dorinda pines over

Medoro and acts as messenger—an organic, linguistically refined growth of her idyllic

setting.[277]

The plot of Capece's *Orlando* is quite simple, relative to other baroque dramas of the

time. The libretto begins with Orlando and Zerbino on the battlefield, lamenting their state

as unrequited lovers; Zerbino mistakenly assumes that his beloved, Isabella, is actually in

love with Orlando, and Isabella spends the entirety of the opera attempting to assuage

Zerbino's doubts. Angelica and Medoro are already wed, have already carved their names

into every tree, and unsuccessfully attempt to avoid Orlando. Dorinda loves Medoro, but

Medoro is not interested. In Act II, Dorinda accidentally reveals the story of Angelica and

Medoro to Orlando, and he goes mad. Act III delves further into Orlando's madness, as he

destroys Dorinda's home, presumably killing Isabella and Medoro inside. All ends well, of

course: Dorinda slips Angelica's ring on Orlando's finger, restoring his wits, and both

Medoro and Isabella survive the attack. The libretto ends with the correct pairing of

lovers—Angelica with Medoro, Isabella with Zerbino—and a gracious invitation to all the

characters by Dorinda, forever frozen in her virginal nymph state,[278] to join her in the

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[276] Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 4.

[277] Dorinda is a pastoral character that appears in Guarini's *Pastor fido*.

[278] As Renato Poggioli discusses, the fulfillment of conjugal love is antithetical to the pastoral; Dorinda's position as a maiden at the end of the opera perpetuates her image as a pastoral ideal. In Poggioli's words, "In the pastoral married love and wedded bliss are almost contradictions in terms. No pastoral poet, at least when keeping his inspiration within the bounds of the genre, has felt any inclination to raise his humble eclogue to the level of a solemn epithalamium, or to drown the quiet music of his idyll under the noise of wedding bells. This in spite of the fact that so many pastorals end with a marriage which in the course of the story was more hoped for than expected; and which is postponed as late as possible...in order to permit all possible digressions and divagations about subtler or more attractive forms of love" (*The Oaten Flute* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975), 55).

cappanna. Together the characters pronounce the moral of the work: "Chi può dir, che l'amor sia follia, / Quando cangia in diletto il martir. / Sol la fiera crudel gelosia / Con Orlando fa amando impazzir."[279]

Like Braccioli's Orlando, Capece's madman is physically restricted to the locus of his madness and to the confines of the stage, together with the other characters of the opera. The two Orlandos also share an excessive verbosity in their madness, although their respective mad languages—the modes and specificities of their mad speech—differ greatly. Capece's Orlando launches into his fury prematurely: even before reading Medoro and Angelica's tree carvings, he rages in a lengthy stretch of recitative, acting as a Herculean figure who laments his own powerlessness in the presence of the Furies: "Dove, dove guidate, / Furie che m'agitate, il piede errante? / Per ritrovar l'indegna / Coppia, che si nasconde agl'occhi miei: / E tu dimmi ove sei / Ingrata, che mi fuggi!"[280] He sings an unconventionally lengthy thirty-two lines of recitative before finally falling into a fairly standard (albeit medial[281]) aria, and then jumps back into recitative for another thirty-one lines, bringing the scene to an end. It is in this second stretch of recitative that Orlando discovers the carved evidence of Angelica's betrayal:

> "Ma oh Dio! qual nuovo horror m'arresta i passi,
> Che infauste note io miro
> Scolpite in queste piante, e in questi sassi!
> Son pur desto, non sogno, non deliro,
> Io leggo, io vedo pure (ah perche [!] pria
> Di vista così ria
> Non chiuse eterno sonno gli occhi miei)

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[279] Capece, *Orlando*, III.11 (64).

[280] Capece, *Orlando*, II.8 (37).

[281] The term *medial* refers to an aria that occurs in the middle of a scene.

> Leggo quei nomi rei
> D'Angelica, e Medoro
> Del lor perfido amore, io quì rileggo
> Le memorie scolpite; e pur non moro!"[282]

The birth of Orlando's madness is stygian, dictated from the very beginning by death and horror, a preamble to the assemblage of underworld monsters and figures that will lead him through the maze of his physical and metaphysical suffering. Unlike Braccioli's Orlando, who in following years would jump almost playfully from genre to genre, Capece's mad Orlando throws an anchor into the stygian water and stays there, a madman firmly planted in the horrors of the Underworld.

In Act II, scene 11, Angelica disappears with the help of her magic ring, and Orlando, deprived of the vision he had lamented not having lost sooner, launches into another remarkably long, thirty-eight-line stretch of recitative, rife with infernal imagery. He first proclaims to the invisible Angelica, "Forza di Stigie larve a me ti cuopre..." and, after a lengthy discourse on sight, quotes the original Orlando's mad declaration from *Orlando furioso*.[283] He continues with his collection of underworld monsters and images: "Sì l'ombra sono, e voglio / Ne' Regni del cordoglio, / Fra l'ombre tormentate, / Cercar se alcuna v'è, che si contenti / Di cambiar con i miei li suoi tormenti. / Or sù la stigia barca/ Di Caronte a dispetto, / Già solco l'onde nere; ecco di Pluto / Le affumicate soglie, e l'arso tetto."[284] He once again interrupts himself with a medial aria, "Già latra Cerbero," and continues with

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[282] Ibid (39).

[283] "Poiche l'ingrata di sua man m'ha ucciso; / Sono lo spirto mio da me diviso, / Son l'ombra, che n'avanza, / Esempio a chi in amor pone speranza" (Capece, *Orlando*, II.10 (42)). It is interesting to note that Capece's Orlando speaks in first person, unlike Ariosto's Orlando who addresses himself as a disembodied other ("sono lo spirto *suo* da *lui* diviso").

[284] Ibid.

more recitative, referencing monsters, Proserpina, and "cieco Averno."[285] Orlando's last line

of recitative in the scene, "V'è chi pianga d'Amore," seems almost to confuse him, as the

sounds of "V'è chi pianga d'Amore" morph into the first line of his *da capo* exit aria, "Vaghe

pupille": the fricative *v* feeds the beginning of *Vaghe*; the velar stop *k* that introduces the

word *chi* becomes the closely-related sound *g* in the second syllable of *Vaghe*; the bilabial stop

p introduces the word *pupille*, and the vowel *e* carries through to the end of *pupille*. Having

reconfigured the sounds of his speech, just as he reconfigures his own identity as a mad,

non-self, Orlando continues with a schizophrenic, vision-obsessed, pseudo-Petrarchan song

to himself:

> Vaghe pupille, non piangete, no,
> Che ne i Regni del pianto
> Il vostro solo può
> Destar pietà:
> Ma sì, piangete sì,
> Che questo dolce incanto
> Se un giorno mi tradì,
> Hoggi contro il mio cor forza non ha.[286]

In Act III, Orlando continues spouting hellish visions and seeing morbid and monstrous

sights. In scene 8, he conjures elaborate and confused scenes of vengeance against Angelica,

mistaking her first for the Boiardan witch Falerina, then accusing her of impersonating

Venus when she is truly the fury Megaera ("Maga…in sembianza di Venere, Megera; / Et io

per vendicarmi / Della sofferta ingiuria / Un Demone sarò , se tu sei Furia").[287] He tells

Angelica that she, "empia Medea," must die, and that he, as Jason, will exact his revenge.

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[285] Ibid, 43.

[286] Capece, *Orlando*, II.11 (43).

[287] Ibid, III.8 (56).

Orlando's visions ultimately exhaust him, and at the end of scene 8 he spouts a calming

discourse, full of hopeful subjunctive verbs and images of sleep:

> Già per la man d'Orlando
> Da ogni Mostro più rio purgato è il Mondo;
> Goda tranquilla pace hora la terra,
> Nè di Sfingi, ò Chimere
> Il terror più la scuota:
> Non crollino le sfere
> D'Atlante sù le spalle:
> E per l'obliquo calle
> Il Sol con lieto corso
> Ad Eto, e a Piroo rallenti il morso,
> Finche vada a posar di Teti in grembo,
> Dando luogo alla notte,
> Che spunta già dalle Cimmerie grotte:
> Et è seco Morfeo,
> Che i papaveri suoi sul crin mi sfronda,
> Porgendomi a gustar di Lete l'onda.[288]

He falls asleep while singing a (non-*da capo*) aria: "Già l'ebro mio ciglio / Quel dolce liquore

/ Invita a posar. / Tù perfido amore / Volando, / O' scherzando / Non farmi destar." In

the following scene Zerbino and Dorinda take advantage of Orlando's sleep to restore his

wits by means of Angelica's magic ring—although the ring is only nominally magical, as

Capece forgoes any explicitly magical *denouement* and abstains from the use of baroque stage

machinery.

Orlando's hellish fury is not thematically remarkable: he, like so many feigned and

real operatic madmen before him, invokes scenes of the Underworld. Yet his fixation with

monstrosity—with monsters like Cerberus and infernal dragons—expands and complicates

his visions of mad underworld scenes, and introduces a complex specular discourse. Orlando

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[288] Ibid, 57.

at once sees monsters and is himself monstrous; he watches spectacles of the monsters around him and is himself a spectacle. Undoubtedly Capece had in mind the true etymological sense of *mostro*—that is, a spectacle, something on display. This notion of monstrosity necessarily denotes Otherness, ambiguity of ontology and gender, attraction and repulsion; Orlando's monstrosity and monstrous meditations disrupt the pastoral landscape and the pastoral purity of Arcadian theater.[289] The libretto is littered with variations on the noun *mostro* and the verbs *mostrare* and *dimostrare*. Angelica, speaking to Orlando, notes that Zerbino "ben mostrò partir di tè geloso";[290] Medoro asks about Orlando, "Ma chi fu mai quel mostro sì umano…";[291] Orlando invokes again and again the monstrous creatures of his underworld fantasies. The word *mostro* appears (in both singular and plural forms) eleven times in the libretto, and the verb *mostrare* eight times; in several instances, the verb form is ambiguous and double, a specular form of itself—whether as the second-person singular present verb *mostri*, which could also be a plural form of the noun, as a first person singular *mostro*, which is identical to the singular form of the noun, or as a third person singular *passato remoto* form *mostrò*, which is very close to the singular noun. The verb *mirare* also appears frequently in the libretto, reinforcing the crisis of sight and spectacle.

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[289] I draw my definition of the term *monster* from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's exposition on monstrosity in the introduction of his volume *Monster Theory*: as he discusses, the monster is "an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place. The monster's body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence. The monstrous body is pure culture. A construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically 'that which reveals,' 'that which warns,' a glyph that seeks a hierophant. Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again. These epistemological spaces between the monster's bones are Derrida's familiar chasm of *différance*: a genetic uncertainty principle, the essence of the monster's vitality, the reason it always rises from the dissection table as its secrets are about to be revealed and vanishes into the night" (*Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4).

[290] Capece, *Orlando*, I.9 (23).

[291] Ibid, III.1 (44).

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Beyond the explicit uses of the words *mostro, mostrare*, and *mirare*, the characters implicitly act in spectacles of monstrous performativity: they describe themselves as bizarrely dismembered, inhuman figures, and pronounce declarations of not-quite being. They have no eyes, or only eyes, or are not in their own bodies. Zerbino, in his first words to Orlando in Act I, scene 1, establishes this notion of bodily fragmentation: "Del tuo Valor discuopre / Le usate prove; e più, che alla tua voce / La man d'Orlando io riconosco all'opre…";[292] Isabella, in her address to Zerbino in Act I, scene 3, proclaims, "Non sei forse Zerbin; forse io non sono /Quell'istessa Isabella…";[293] in scene 5, Medoro's amorous verses toward Angelica figure the two of them as a monstrous, composite being, "Di due alme, e due cori, un'alma, e un core."[294] Isabella faints in scene 8, and, as she awakens, she problematizes her liminal position between life and death, as well as Zerbino's monstrous character: "Chi mi richiama in vita? / Sei tu forse, o crudel? ma già lontano / Da me volgesti il piede: / Vanne mostro inhumano, / Vanne a vantar la mia tradita fede: / Vanne, ch'io quì rimango, / Non so se debba dir più viva, o estinta; / Ma viva sol quanto sospiro, e piango."[295] In Act II, scene 7, Medoro again spouts amorous verses declaring his fusion with Angelica: "Specchio del tuo bel viso / Mi fecero quest'onde; e io mirai / Con doppio mio piacer, fuor di me stesso, / Or nella sfera sua, sì vaghi rai, / Or nell'acque pur vagho il lor riflesso."[296] Orlando invokes his state of non-being from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*: "Et io più non son'io / Poiche l'ingrata di sua man m'ha ucciso; / Sono lo spirto mio da me diviso, / Son l'ombra, che

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[292] Ibid, I.1 (5).

[293] Ibid, I.3 (9).

[294] Ibid, I.5 (12).

[295] Ibid, I.8 (20).

[296] Ibid, II.7 (35).

n'avanza, / Esempio a chi in amor pone speranza."[297] Yet unlike in Braccioli's libretto, where

Orlando quotes the lines from Ariosto at the onset of his madness, in Capece's work

Orlando declares his Ariostan fragmentation essentially halfway through the economy of his

mad discourse, between long and confused meditations on his own eyes, on Medoro and

Angelica's merged monster arm (the very arm that carved the Petrarchan verses that led to

Orlando's madness), on Proserpina's arms, on Orlando's own knightly arm: his very speech,

bifurcated by the original Orlando's original words, mimics the fragmentation motif of his

madness and echoes the libretto's general fixation on monstrous divisions of selfhood and

disembodiment.

Capece's libretto thus dramatizes a troubling relationship between the tranquility of

the pastoral setting and the violent, monstrous spectacle it engenders. His *Orlando*

underscores a subterranean turbulence not only in his own text, but also in the pastoral

genre in general—a brooding violence under the surface of the calm hills. This dynamism of

tranquility and violence, of calm and storm, of the wholesome shepherd and the menacing

monster, is not unique to Capece's conception of the pastoral. Theocritus, in his *Idyll* XI,

inserts the Homeric cyclops Polyphemus into a pastoral landscape, imbuing the cyclops with

a shepherd's voice and morphing his monstrosity into a pastoral poetics of desire for the sea

nymph Galatea.[298] Ovid adapts this tale in his *Metamorphoses* XIII, depicting the cyclops as

both an unrequited pastoral lover and a destructive monster: Polyphemus first attempts to

woo Galatea with a lengthy song, but once he sees Galatea with her lover Acis, he reverts to

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[297] Ibid, II.11 (42).

[298] Theocritus begins the idyll with an address to his friend, the poet-physician Nicias of Miletus, stating that love has no medicine aside from poetry:[298] "Twas [poetry], at least," he states, "gave best comfort to my countryman the Cyclops, old Polyphemus, when he was first showing beard upon cheek and chin and Galatea was his love" (*Idyll* XI.7-9).

the kind of monstrous, violent behavior that characterizes him in Homer's *Odyssey*, and kills

Acis. As Galatea narrates:

> …Such vain complaints he uttered, and rose up (I saw it all), just as a bull
> which, furious when the cow has been taken from him, cannot stand still, but
> wanders through the woods and familiar pasturelands. Then the fierce giant
> spied me and Acis, neither knowing nor fearing such a fate, and he cried: '*I
> see you*, and I'll make that union of your loves the last.'"[299]

Ariosto himself evokes this crisis of the pastoral monster in his depiction of Orlando: a

pastoral setting serves as catalyst, locus, and victim of the Orlando's madness. Orlando, like

Polyphemus, exercises a poetics of pastoral desire but fails in his attempt to capture his

beloved, and, as a result, degenerates into a state of pernicious, sub-human monstrosity.[300]

He also, like Polyphemus, becomes monstrous as a direct result of his vision: Polyphemus,

before hurling a boulder at Acis, declares that he *sees* Galatea and her lover; Orlando's

madness is spurred by the sight of Angelica and Medoro's love poetry and, finally, the sight

of their marital bed.

Monstrosity, in its physical manifestations and specular resonances, also pervade

renaissance and baroque pastoral plays. Giovanni Battista Guarini uses variations on the

word *mostro* twenty-three times in his *Pastor fido*, and, like Capece, he plays with the

problematic duality of monstrosity and spectacle—of active verb (*mostrare*) and receptive

noun (*mostro*). The shepherd Silvio goads his fellow shepherds to the hunt with the following

words:

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[299] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XIII, 870-875. Emphasis mine. The original Latin reads only *video*, omitting the objects of his sight.

[300] On Orlando as a Polyphemus character, see Harris, "Eighteenth-Century Orlando," 107. On the figure of the cyclops in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* see Jo Ann Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 19.

Se fu mai ne l'Arcadia pastor, di Cintia e de' suoi studi amico,
cui stimolasse il generoso petto
cura o gloria di selve,
oggi il mostri, e me segua
là dove in picciol giro,
ma largo campo al valor nostro, è chiuso
quel terribil cinghiale,
quel mostro di natura e de le selve[301]

The most monstrous spectacle in *Il pastor fido* proves to be Love itself, as the satyr declares:

"Il mondo / non ha di lui più spaventevol mostro. / Come fèra divora, e come ferro /

pugne e trapassa, e come vento vola; / e dove il piede imperïoso ferma, / cede ogni forza, /

ogni poter dà loco."[302] *Amor* is monstrous because of its damaging effects on man (and on

satyr); yet perhaps even more monstrous is its capacity to shift form—to be beast, blade, and

wind, to evade visual categories and classifications. The chorus later echoes this crisis of

love, naming it a "Raro mostro e mirabile, d'umano / e di divino aspetto; / di veder cieco e

di saver insano; / di senso e d'intelletto, / di ragion e desio confuso affetto!"[303] Similar

tropes of monstrous love appear in Tasso's earlier pastoral play *l'Aminta*: the satyr

pronounces, "Amor venale, / amor servo de l'oro è il maggior mostro / ed il più

abominabile e il più sozzo, / che produca la terra o 'l mar fra l'onde."[304] The character

Dafne, in her recollection of her first love, proclaims:

Fui vinta, io te 'l confesso, e furon l'armi
del vincitore umiltà, sofferenza,
pianti, sospiri, e dimandar mercede.
Mostrommi l'ombra d'una breve notte

[301] Guarini, *Pastor fido* I.1, 5-13.

[302] Ibid, I.5, 929-941. Emphasis mine.

[303] Ibid, III.9, 1359-1363.

[304] Torquato Tasso, *Aminta*, in *Opere*, 5 Volumes, ed. Bruno Maier (Milan: Rizzoli, 1963-1965), II.1, 68-71.

> allora quel che 'l lungo corso e 'l lume
> di mille giorni non m'avea *mostrato*;
> ripresi allor me stessa e la mia cieca
> simplicitate, e dissi sospirando:
> "Eccoti, Cinzia, il corno, eccoti l'arco,
> ch'io rinunzio i tuoi strali e la tua vita."[305]

Dafne describes the process of enlightenment that coincided with her first experience of erotic love; such love is contingent upon spectacle—upon a *mostrare* of light. Agostino de' Beccari's 1555 *Il sacrificio*, the work recognized by Guarini and later by Crescimbeni as the prototypical pastoral play,[306] also makes ample use of configurations of *mostro* and *mostrare*, often within the context of discourses on love.[307]

   Monstrosity is thus a prevailing theme in the economy of the pastoral play: monsters are pernicious, shape-shifting Others that stand in juxtaposition to the integrity and bodily purity of idealized shepherds and shepherdesses; they are also (dis)embodiments of

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[305] Ibid, I.1, 68-77. Emphasis mine.

[306] Guarini notes in his *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* that Beccari named his *Sacrificio* a *favola*, later adding the name *pastorale*: "E poi corso questo aggiunto di Pastorale, e ha col tempo acquistato forza, e significato di sustantivo. Talche quando si dice una pastorale, senz'altra compagnia, s'intende favola di pastori. Et così per tutto è oggi questo nome ricevuto, e inteso quand'egli è solo la pastorale del Beccari, la pastorale del Tasso, e cosè ancora di tutte l'altre, benche gli autori loro si sien serviti di quella voce per addiettivo quando l'hanno accompagnata con favola, che significa qualità, e non per sustantivo significante azione distinta da quella favola" (Battista Guarini, *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1603), 51). Crescimbeni lists a series of qualities of a pastoral play, noting that "Tutte queste cose furono principi della buona Pastoral Poesia da rappresentarsi in iscena, la quale finalmente nacque circa il 1555 che Agostino de' Beccari parimente Ferrarese pubblicò col mezzo delle stampe il suo *Sagrifizio* con titolo di Favola Pastorale, del quale si sono poi serviti quasi tutti i Compositori di simile spezie di Dramma…ed è di giusta grandezza; e peravvenuta è la prima Poesia Pastorale, dove sia introdotto il coro parlante; e se non ha tutti i più fini artifizi della perfettissima Comica, ne ha ben tanti, che bastano per dare all'Autore il vanto dell'invenzione, come egli medesimo se' l diede nel Prologo di essa, e gliele confernò il Guarini ed altri dopo lui" (*Istoria*, 224).

[307] As an example, see Ofelio's speech on love in Act II: "Tu sai con quanto amor, con quanto zelo, / Con quanta carità, con quanta fede, / Per quanto s'han potuto stender forze / D'un pastor vecchio qual son'io, gravoso / E ripien di molt'anni, c'ha cosperso / Il capo e 'l petto di gelata brina, / Ho cerco sempre compiacerti in quello / Ove più vago il tuo desir s'è mostro, / Onde scorgendo ov'or lieto ti mena / Amor, che fe' di te già e di Carpalio / Preda onorata, e quanto sia il disio / D'ambedue di raccogliere quel frutto / Che può sol dar Amor, poiché si mostra / Il tempo a questa sì onorata impresa / Atto e opportuno, a te ratto correndo / Son venuto sin qui debole e stanco, / Benché il disio ch'avea di ritrovarti / Mi fea parer la via molto più breve / Che se per altrui corso avessi meno" (Agostino Beccari, *Il Sacrificio* (Ferrara: Alfonso Caraffa, 1587), II.4, 295-313).

spectacle, of theatrical artifice and the crisis of spectatorship. Pastoral monsters at once

represent and efface the veneer of the pastoral stage. Capece's labyrinthine exploration of

monstrosity in its many forms summons the problems, the contradictions, and the

spectacular and specular crises of the pastoral play, a genre that he inherited directly from

sixteenth- and seventeenth-century stages. His spectacle of pastoral monsters is complicated

even further by his own position in the Arcadian Academy: Capece inhabited the pastoral

hills of a new golden age and was himself an eighteenth-century literary shepherd. He was a

purveyor of the new, operatic *favola pastorale*, and a peddler of Arcadian theatrical reason and

buon gusto. He resided in a realm described by Dill as "a post-Cartesian world where sense,

grammar, and understanding were preeminent values," where "monsters were the ultimate

offense to reason." Monsters "represented unintelligibility, gibberish, neologism."[308]

Monsters—deformations, disproportionate beings, composite forms, baroque

overgrowths—stood in direct antithesis to the golden ratios of Arcadia's new golden age:

Crescimbeni and his fellow shepherds adhered to Horace's figurations in his *Ars poetica* of

balance and verisimilitude, actively shunning monstrosities in all their distorted forms.[309]

Yet, as a number of critics from the early and mid-eighteenth century argued, opera

was itself a species of baroque monster—a composite art form that distorted any sense of

balance or verisimilitude. As Dill notes, much of this criticism grew in French circles: the

poet Pierre di Villiers wrote in 1717 that "operas are only a monstrous jumble,"[310] as they

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[308] Charles Dill, *Monstrous Opera: Rameau and the Tragic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). 13.

[309] "Humano capiti ceruicem pictor equinam / iungere si uelit et uarias inducere plumas / undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum / desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne, / spectatum admissi, risum teneatis, amici? / Credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum / persimilem, cuius, uelut aegri somnia, uanae / fingentur species, ut nec pes nec caput uni / reddatur formae" (Horace, *Ars poetica* 1-9). See also Dill, *Monstrous Opera*, 12-13.

[310] Les Opera ne sont qu'un fatras monstrueux" (323), trans. Dill, *Monstrous Opera*, 13.

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mix disparate elements in an unnatural way.[311] Similar arguments continued to fuel the

flames of debate over operatic forms: a poem by Jean de Serré de Rieux, published in 1734,

meditates on the problems of Italian opera, stating, "Capriciously immolated, the rules of the

scene find themselves violated by monstrous traits."[312] He later identifies operatic

productions as "monsters of Italy." The English critic and dramatist John Dennis engaged

with similar notions of the monstrosity of Italian opera, and named Italy itself as perverse in

its taste for the unnatural: in his *Essay on Italian Opera* (1706), he argues:

> When I affirm that an Opera after the Italian manner is monstrous, I cannot
> think that I deal too severely with it; no not tho I add, that it is so
> prodigiously unnatural, that it could take its beginning from no Country, but
> that which is renown'd throughout the World, for preferring monstrous
> abominable Pleasures to those which are according to Nature.[313]

Arcadians like Capece were undoubtedly well-versed in arguments such as these: Capece's

Orlando, taken in the context of these debates, can then be understood as a self-aware meta-

monster, a mad spectacle romping through the mad spectacle of opera, shattering, distorting,

mutating the pastoral form, and draping it uncomfortably over the baroque operatic stage.

Yet Capece's Orlando, in his madness, can inhabit and explore the monstrous

spectacle from which he is born: he can wax about the Furies and Cerberus and the

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[311] This argument, with its focus on monstrosity and the unnaturalness of opera, echoes the sixteenth-century dispute between Battista Guarini and Jason Denores over the genre of the tragicomedy. Denores writes, "E per far vedere che quel che ho detto non è senza il consentimento di uomini intelligentissimi, e che da loro sono stato indotto a chiamare tali composizioni mostruose. Che cosa è di grazie la Tragicommedia, che quel mostro di Orazio *Amphora coepit institui currente rota cur urceus exit?* che cosa è la commedia pastorale, che quell'altro mostro dell'istesso *Delphinum sylvis appingit fluctibus aprum?* che cosa è la Tragicommedia pastorale, che quel terzo mostro triforme del medesimo *Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam Jungere si velit, e varias inducere plumas. Undique collati membris ut turpiter atrum Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne?*" (Jason Denores, *Apologia*, in *Delle opere del Cavalier Battista Guarini*, Vol. 2 (Verona: Giovanni Alberto Tumermani, 1737), 372).

[312] "Les regles de la scène au caprice immolées / Par des traits monstrueux s'y trouvent violées" (Rieux, 101, cit. and trans. Dill, *Monstrous Opera*, 13).

[313] John Dennis, *The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis* (London: John Darby, 1718), 468.

Underworld, he can allude to visual spectacles and cast himself as the star in his horrendous visions. He can do these things because ultimately he is revived from his madness: Orlando emerges a rational hero who "vinse incanti, battaglie, e fiere, e mostri...," one who "Di se stesso, e d'Amor hoggi ha vittoria..."[314] With the ending of his libretto Capece seems to imply that opera, like the mad Orlando, can be revived from its monstrosities, restored to reason, reformed of its anti-Horatian deformities. Crescimbeni, in his *Istoria della volgar poesia*, praised Capece's drama because of its fidelity to Ariosto; he was also undoubtedly attracted to the way in which Capece dramatized literary and meta-literary notions of monstrosity within the integrity of the pastoral setting, and, perhaps most importantly, how he teetered on the border of theatrical madness without actually plunging into the mad theatrical world of mixed genres, mixed registers, and baroque excesses. Capece's drama depicted a stylized Crescimbenian figuration of theatrical madness—one that was expressed through a formulaic imitation of mad tropes (e.g., references to the Underworld) but that maintained an impeccable sense of Arcadian *buon gusto*. Yet Capece birthed his tamed and tamable monster into Arcadia with no foresight of how it would break out of its gilded cage, fly to new lands, and terrorize new stages.

Handel and the Metamorphosis of Orlando

John Mainwaring, Handel's first biographer, wrote of the composer in 1760, "I think it is highly probable, that whatever delicacies appear in Handel's music, are owing to his journey into Italy; and likewise that the Italians are much indebted to him for their management of

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[314] Capece, *Orlando*, III.11 (64).

the instrumental parts that accompany the voice; in which indeed some few of them have succeeded admirably well."[315] Handel, a German composer, rose to fame for his immersion in and perfection of Italian musical forms: a master of opera, oratorio, and cantata, he effectively exported Italian music to northern Europe and contributed significantly to its longevity.[316] Handel arrived in Italy a student and quickly proved himself an avid composer and innovator, taking advantage of the conditions of patronage and the quickly changing theatrical practices of the Italian states. While little is known about the details of Handel's time in Italy, some information is available on his different patrons and the cities in which he composed: Mainwaring claims that Handel first came to Italy under the invitation of Ferdinando de' Medici in Florence, shortly after Ferdinando's visit to Hamburg in 1705–1706.[317] The composer likely passed most of 1707 in Rome, under the patronage of Cardinal Pamphili and then of the Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli: since opera was banned at the time in Rome, his first opera, *Rodrigo,* was staged at the Teatro del Cocomero in Florence at the end of 1707. Handel spent most of 1708 in Rome, apart from some time in Venice and Naples, and in 1709 he bounced between Rome, Florence, and Venice.[318] While he spent much of his Italian sojourn in Rome, each winter Handel traveled to different Italian cities where operas were being staged.[319] It was by means of this dynamic movement through the

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[315] John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760), 173-174.

[316] This is in contrast to a number of Italian composers—particularly in private circles in Rome—who refused to allow their works to spread outside of Italy: Arcangelo Corelli, a member of the Arcadian Academy, was one such Italian composer. See Strohm, *Essays on Handel,* 6.

[317] Mainwaring, *Memoirs,* 49ff.

[318] See Harris *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition,* 150-1; Reinhard Strohm, "Händel in Italia: Nuovi contributi," *Rivista italiana di musicologia* IX (1974), 152-174.

[319] Strohm, "Händel in Italia," 152-174; Strohm, *Essays on Handel,* 11. For a timeline of Handel's stay in Italy, see Carlo Vitali, "Italy—Political, Religious, and Musical Contexts," in *The Cambridge Companion to Handel,* ed. Donald Burrows (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 40ff.

peninsula that Handel perfected his craft, drawing from diverse sources and diverse musical scenes. In 1711 Handel brought his Italian opera *Rinaldo* to London, and, following its tremendous success, he stayed in London and continued importing Italian-influenced musical traditions and practices.[320]

During his time in Rome—and specifically in the Arcadian loci of his patron Marquis Ruspoli—Handel was exposed to the practices of Roman Arcadia, and came into contact with Arcadian-affiliated composers such as Alessandro Scarlatti, as well as a number of librettists. Carlo Sigismondo Capece was very much a part of the milieu in which Handel moved in Rome, and the two formed a working relationship during the period of Handel's stay. In 1708 Handel set Capece's sacred oratorio *La resurrezione* to music for the occasion of Easter Sunday at Ruspoli's Bonelli Palace.[321] The composer would later bring two of Capece's operas to London: first the opera *Tolomeo* in 1728,[322] and finally, an adaptation of Capece's *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia* in 1733.

Unlike Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso*, Handel's *Orlando* was not particularly successful: after its first performance on January 27, 1733, the opera was performed again only ten times, and was then essentially forgotten until 1922. Various factors contributed to this tepid reception,

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[320] See Donald Burrows, *Handel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83ff; Winton Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 28ff. On the details of the production of Handel's first operas in London see Ellen T. Harris, ed., *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, Vol. 7. (New York and London: Garland, 1989), vii-xi; Elise B. Jorgens, "Orlando Metamorphosed: Handel's Operas After Ariosto." *Parnassus: Poetry in Review* 10. No. 2 (1982), 45ff.

[321] The performance was commissioned by Ruspoli, and was performed on Easter Sunday (April 8), 1708. See Burrows, *Handel*, 47; Anthony Hicks, "Handel and the Idea of an Oratorio," in *The Cambridge Companion to Handel*, ed. Donald Burrows (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 148. See Strohm, *Essays on Handel* (10) for a discussion of Handel's indebtedness to Capece's poetry.

[322] On *Tolomeo* and the librettist Nicola Haym's reworking of Capece's source libretto see Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 58-59.

including competing theaters and economic concerns.[323] Nonetheless, Handel continued to

push Ariostan narratives onto the London stage, ultimately producing a trilogy of *Furioso*-

based operas: he later staged his *Alcina* (1735) and *Ariodante* (1735).[324] The only opera of the

trilogy that achieved immediate success was *Alcina*, a work that was performed eighteen

times in the season and was later revived. Despite the relative disinterest in Handel's

Ariostan operas, the significant presence of the *Furioso* in his oeuvre suggests that London

audiences at least somewhat enjoyed his depiction of Ariostan narratives, and at least

somewhat appreciated the way in which he transformed scenes of pastoral simplicity into

grand baroque spectacles, fit for the London stage.

The precise journey from Capece's Arcadian *Orlando* to Handel's London production

is still subject to speculation: Capece's libretto underwent significant alterations upon its

arrival in London, and Handel's 1733 opera *Orlando* bears only a superficial resemblance to

Capece's source text. The characterizations are different, the cast of characters is different,

and even the title is clipped (in place of Capece's *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia*, Handel

names his opera simply *Orlando*). The 1733 *Orlando* has only five characters: Orlando,

Angelica, Medoro, Dorinda, and the wizard Zoroastro. A great deal of ambiguity surrounds

the question of who altered Capece's libretto for Handel's opera. As Strohm discusses, the

Roman librettist Nicola Haym would have been the only one capable of effectively adapting

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[323] As Harris notes, "*Orlando's* innovative aspects and its success did not forestall the collapse of Handel's second venture. The competition Handel now faced was stupendous. A rival Italian academy was being forced among political lines. King George II continued to support Handel while his son, Prince of Wales, with whom the king was in conflict, conceived of the notion of attacking his father through his favoured musician. Thus the Opera of the Nobility, armed with Handel's best singers, librettist Paolo Rolli, and composer Nicola Porpora, set out to conquer the *opera seria* audience of London" (Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 231).

[324] Both *Orlando* and *Alcina* deal with magic; *Ariodante*, to the contrary, contains no supernatural elements. Dean thus groups *Orlando* and *Alcina* with three more operas by Handel, all of which are based on magic: *Rinaldo* (1711), *Teseo* (1713), and *Amadigi* (1715). See Dean, *Handel and the Opera Seria*, 77ff. Harris proposes, however, that the three *Furioso*-based operas should be considered together—not only because of their shared source text, but because they all deal with pastoral themes. See Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 225.

Capece's text—and yet, seeing as Haym died in 1729, he likely was not alone in his efforts.

Strohm convincingly argues that Handel himself handled the libretto and modified it for his

London production—that it was Handel who executed the most apparent changes to the

libretto, namely the addition of the character Zoroastro and the metamorphosis of the

character Dorinda.[325] Handel's Argomento points to these changes, casting the characters

Dorinda and Zoroastro as embodiments of the dynamics of love, madness, and restoration:

> Quel che si finge di più nell'Amore di Dorinda Pastorella per il Principe
> Medoro, e nel Zelo costante del Mago Zoroastro per la Gloria d'Orlando, è
> per dimostrare, quanto sia baldanzoso l'Amore nell'insinuarsi nel core di chi si
> sia, e quanto l'Uomo Savio sia sempre pronto a porger' il suo aiuto, per
> ricondurre nel buon camino quelli, che guidati dalla Passione l'hanno
> smarrito.[326]

Zoroastro and Dorinda: Zombies in Arcadia

Handel's Zoroastro functions as a wise, Atlante-like astrologer figure,[327] far removed

from the Mesopotamian Zoroastro antagonist found in a number of mid-eighteenth-century

French and Italian dramas.[328] Zoroastro, the self-proclaimed guardian of Orlando's glory

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[325] See Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 266-267. See also Harris, *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, xii-xv.

[326] Handel, *Orlando*, 2. All citations are from a facsimile of the 1733 libretto, found in Ellen T. Harris' edited collection *The Librettos of Handel's Operas*. The facsimile, which shows the bilingual English-Italian print of the libretto, comes from a copy housed at the British Library (907.1.2).

[327] On Zoroastro as an Atlante figure, see Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 264-265. Zoroastro appears once in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, in Canto XXXI: "Questa è la cruda e avvelenata piaga / a cui non val liquor, non vale impiastro, / né murmure, né imagine di saga, / né val lungo osservar di benigno astro, / né quanta esperienza d'arte maga / fece mai l'inventor suo Zoroastro: / piaga crudel che sopra ogni dolore / conduce l'uom, che disperato muore" (XXXI.5). A number of scholars have noted Handel's Zoroastro's similarity to the character of Sarastro in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (1791). See William Gibbons, "Divining Zoroastro: Masonic Elements in Handel's *Orlando*," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 34 No. 2 (2010) for a discussion of Zoroastro in relation to Masonic themes.

[328] Strohm names examples of the Mesopotamian Zoroastro figure found in Francesco Silvani's *dramma per musica Semiramide* (1730), the *tragédie lyrique Semiramis* by Destouches (1718) and Rameau's *Zoroastre* (1749). He

("Di tua Gloria custode / Ti stimolo a seguirla. Ergi 'l tuo core / Alle grand'Opre")[329] and

the paradigmatic confluence of magic and knowledge, pushes the protagonist to abandon his

amorous folly and turn his heart to reason and greatness. From his first appearance in the

first scene of *Orlando*, Zoroastro presents himself as an operatic paradox: he enacts change

and guides Orlando with an anti-rational and inverosimilar magical toolbox, yet his sole

function in the opera is to act as Orlando's spiritual guide toward the light of reason. His

magic also helps with set changes: between scenes 2 and 3, the stage directions note, "Il

mago fa segno colla verga, e li Genj portano via il Monte, comparendo in suo loco la Regia

d'amore, che in figura di fanciullo siede nel Trono avendo a suoi piedi addormentati alcuni

Eroi dell'Antichità."[330] Zoroastro sings an aria about the spectacle at the end of scene 2,

commenting on the magical revelation: "Mira, e prendi l'esempio; / Nè appender voti, che di

Gloria al Tempio. / Lascia amor e siegui Marte / Va, combatti per la Gloria. / Sol oblio quel

ti comparte, / Questo sol bella memoria."[331] He reappears in Act III, scene 6, again with his

genii, to save the day:

> Impari ognun da Orlando,
> Che sovente ragion sì [sic] perde amando.   [*Parla ai Geni*]
> O voi del mio poter ministri eletti,
> Or la vostra virtute unite meco.
> Si cangi il Bosco in speco.
>   [*Fa*, [sic] *segno, e la Scena si transforma in orrida spelonca*]
> Là al furor dell'Eroe siatene attenti,
> Che fra pochi momenti avrò Vittoria,
> E l'Eroe renderò sano alla Gloria.

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also notes, however, that a German tradition of Semiramis operas featured a benevolent Zoroastro: this
includes performances in Düsseldorf (1703) and Brunswick (1709?); Strohm connects Handel's Zoroastro
character to this German tradition (*Essays on Handel*, 263). See also Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 163 n29.

[329] Handel, *Orlando*, I.2 (4).

[330] Ibid, I.2 (7).

[331] Ibid.

Sorge infausta una procella
Che oscurar fa il Cielo, e il Mare
Splende fausta poi la Stella
Che ogni cor ne fa goder.
Può talor il forte errare,
Ma risorto dal suo errore,
Ciò che pià gli diè dolore
Rende immenso il suo piacer.
        [*Parte, e li Genj entrano nella spelonca*].[332]

Finally, it is none other than Zoroastro who restores Orlando's wits toward the end of the

opera. He proclaims in his apostrophe to the heavens:

Ecco il tempo prefisso
Amor, fa quanto puoi,
Che Orlando schernirà gl'inganni tuoi.
Tu che del gran Tonante   [*Rimirando il Cielo.*]
Coll'Artiglio celeste
Il folgore sostieni;
Le mie leggi son queste:
Dalla Region stellante
Che rappida a me vieni
Reca il divin liquore
Per risanar dell'egro Orlando il Core.
        [*Fa segno colla verga, e quattro Genj per aria accompagnano un Aquila, che porta un vaso
        d'oro nel becco. Zoroastro prende il vaso, e l'Aquila colli Genj vola via per aria. Il Mago
        s'accosta ad Orlando, quanto esce Dorinda.*][333]

This particular *denouement* is decidedly more magical than Capece's original resolution, and

even more magical than Ariosto's own depiction in *Orlando furioso*: in Handel's opera,

Orlando is revived through purely magical means, with essentially no human intervention.

Zoroastro's actions also cast him as a meta-hero, in his function as savior of the opera's *lieto*

fine: whereas in Capece's libretto Medoro and Isabella are saved from their tragic ending by

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[332] Ibid, III.6 (40-43).

[333] Ibid, III.9.

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earthly coincidence, in Handel's adaptation, Zoroastro becomes the *deus ex machina* patron of

happy endings: "Orlando," he proclaims, "al tuo furore, / Geloso di tua Gloria / Io fui

custode, e dalla morte Io trassi / Angelica, e Medoro, / E per Ambo da te la grazia

imploro."[334]

Zoroastro's words also fall outside the linguistic perimeters of Capece's Arcadian

loci, resonating with themes of mysticism, magic, and otherworldliness. Toward the end of

his final prayer in Act III, scene 6, he describes Orlando as *risorto*, the past participle of the

verb *risorgere*. The word hints at pastoral naturalism—as in, the *sorgere* of the sun[335]—as well

as the light of Neoplatonism, but the notion of *ri-sorgere*, *re-rising*, invokes a vision of Christ

risen and, more generally, of the undead.[336] Orlando's restoration to his wits is most often

described in other sources as a *risanare*,[337] a return to health: Zoroastro's verb *risorgere*

resonates with entirely different, other-worldly spheres, and affirms Orlando's *katabasis*

narrative. Orlando's *risorgere* denotes a previous death—a (perhaps mental) trip to the

Underworld and a mad tangle with a cast of stygian monsters, the likes of which were

present already in Capece's source text. Zoroastro's unorthodox choice of the verb *ergere* at

the beginning of Act I, scene 2 similarly denotes a spiritual elevation: the magician goads

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[334] Ibid, III.10 (48).

[335] The verb *sorgere* appears several times in Guarini's *Pastor fido*. See for example the Prologue: "Come a quel sol, che d'oriente sorge, / tante cose leggiadre / produce il mondo, erbe, fior, frondi e tante / in cielo, in terra, in mare alme viventi…"

[336] The verb *risorgere* appears often in medieval texts in reference to supernatural or religious occurrences. See for example Guittone, *Rime* 26.12: "S'eo resurgesse, com fenice face, / già for a la fornace / lo putrefatto meo vil corpo ardendo…; Dante *Par* 14.125: "Ben m'accors'io ch'elli era d'alte lode, / però ch'a me venìa 'Resurgi' e 'Vinci' / come a colui che non intende e ode." Ariosto makes use of the verb in *Orlando furioso* to describe a battle between Mandricardo and Rodomonte: "Ma come ben composto e valido arco / di fino acciaio in buona somma greve, / quanto si china più, quanto è più carco, / e più lo sforzan martinelli e liee; / con tanto più furor, quanto è poi scarco, / ritorna, e fa più mal che non riceve: / così quello African tosto risorge, / e doppio il colpo all'inimico porge" (XXIV, 103). In this instance *risorgere* hints at a monstrous re-rising—as if Rodomonte, in his monstrous nature, possesses the strength to perpetually regenerate.

[337] See for example Ariosto, *OF* XXXI, 48. 8; XXXIX, 47. 4.

Orlando with the imperative "Ergi 'l tuo core / Alle grand'Opre."[338] Zoroastro also uses the

unusual adjective *egro* to describe Orlando at the end of the opera: the term speaks both to

Orlando's melancholy lovesickness and his current state of sleep: Zoroastro might have

described him with any number of similar terms, such as *triste, stanco, debole*—yet *egro* denotes

both physical and metaphysical fatigue, linking Orlando's physical state to the abstract realm

of his otherworldly madness.[339]

Zoroastro's magic feeds not only his words, but also his music, as Handel immerses

Zoroastro's song in musical signifiers that resonate with realms of the magical. Throughout

the opera, Zoroastro's scenes incorporate idiosyncratic instrumentation (including flutes and

two *violette marine*[340]) and unusual tonalities and instrumental ensembles.[341] Charles Burney

described Zoroastro's opening accompanied recitative as possessing "a wild grandeur…of a

very uncommon kind."[342] The magician begins the opera with his *accompagnato* in B minor—

an unorthodox key that, as Dean proposes, "seems to reflect a spiritual world beyond the

reach of mortality and time."[343] The accompanying strings play a *martellato* pattern in the

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[338] Handel, *Orlando*, I.2 (4). The verb is rarely found in Italian texts: it appears in Francesco da Buti's *Inf* c. 18, 100-114 ("cioè nella seconda, che col muso sbuffa; cioè erge e leva il viso…), and in Ottimo, *Inf* c. 17 ("per confondere la vanagloria di costei, prese forma d'una vecchia, e con belle parole corregeva questa folle, che non ergesse si l'animo per questa sua arte").

[339] The adjective *egro* appears only once in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, in the narrator's self-identification with Orlando's lovesickness at the beginning of Canto IX: "Ma l'escuso io pur troppo, e mi rallegro / Nel mio difetto aver compagno tale; / Ch'anch'io sono al mio ben languido et egro, / Sano e gagliardo a seguitare il male" (IX, 2. 3).

[340] The *violetta marina* was an instrument with a number of sympathetic strings, similar to the *viola d'amore*. The instrument was invented by Pietro Castrucci, who led Handel's orchestra in London for over two decades.

[341] See Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 165; Dean, *Handel's Operas*, 247.

[342] Burney, *A General History of Music*, Vol. 4, 363. See also Dean, *Handel's Operas*, 242; Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 164.

[343] Dean, *Handel's Operas*, 242.

opening bars that echoes almost a pentatonic scale,[344] adding to the mystical quality of

Zoroastro's character, but also reinforcing his foreignness—his role as an eastern Other.[345]

He sings: "Gieroglifici eterni / Che in Zifre luminoso ognor splendete, / Ah! che alla mente

Umana / Altro che belle oscurità non siete" (see Example 4.1).

Capece, though drawing from Ariosto's text, had essentially effaced all evidence of

magic and mysticism from his libretto; Handel's addition of Zoroastro immediately

problematizes Capece's non-magical pastoral setting, and reintroduces the possibility of

baroque spectacle, machines, and magic *denouements*, complete with *genii*, floating temples,

fancy wands, and musical magic. Zoroastro is operatic magic revived from its sleepy tomb, a

zombie of baroque artifice that Capece had previously buried under his Arcadian

pastureland.

Handel's Dorinda is also an operatic zombie, but of a different type: while Capece's

Dorinda fulfills the role of the chaste *pastorella*—the simple but decidedly elegant and

elevated shepherdess[346]—Handel's Dorinda is brash and perhaps even comic in her speech.

Indeed, Strohm proposes that Handel crafted the role of Dorinda for a specific actress,

Celeste Gismondi (known by the stage name La Celestina), a diva of the opera scene in

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[344] The *pentatonic scale* refers to a scale pattern that uses five tones, instead of the seven tones of the scale in Western classical music. The pentatonic scale was and still is a staple of some traditional music of Asia, especially in China. Such resonances with eastern musical traditions culturally displace Zoroastro, evidencing him as musically Other. See also Dean on this figure (*Handel's Operas*, 242). Buch reads this figuration as resonating with church music of the previous century (*Magic Flutes*, 163).

[345] For the sake of this dissertation, I provide only one example of Zoroastro's music, even though, as Strohm proposes, the theme merits a dissertation unto itself (*Essays on Handel*, 263). On Zoroastro's music in general see Buch, *Magic Flutes*, 163-165; Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 263-265.

[346] This depiction of the *pastorella* stands as a departure from the medieval French lyric form of the *pastourelle*, in which a shepherdess exhibits her sexual prowess and cunning.

Naples and, later, in London: La Celestina was renowned for her performances in comic

intermezzi.[347] Dorinda is certainly a principal character in Handel's *Orlando*,[348] one that appears

more often and sings much more than the Dorinda of Capece's original libretto: Handel's

Dorinda fills the roles of two of Capece's female characters, Dorinda and Isabella. In

Capece's libretto Dorinda first appears in Act I, scene 6 in a desperate exchange with her

beloved, Medoro; in Handel's rewrite, Dorinda opens Act I, scene 4 with a lengthy soliloquy

that speaks to a transformation of her pastoral essence:

> Quanto diletto avea tra questi Boschi
> Nel rimirar quegli innocenti scherzi
> E di' Capri, e de' Cervi!
> Nel serpeggiar de limpidi Ruscelli
> Brillar i fior, ed ondeggiar le piante;
> Nel garrir degli Augelli,
> Nello spirar di Zefiretto i fiati.
> Oh giorni allor beati!
> Ora per me funesti.
> Io non so che sian questi
> Moti, che sento adesso entro il mio core.
> Ho inteso dir, che ciò suol fare amore.[349]

Dorinda, cognizant of her contented past as a simple *pastorella*, declares her current torment

in love: this self-conscious, decidedly Petrarchan soliloquy casts her as a new species of

Dorinda, a principal character who knows herself and problematizes her own pastoral

essence. Indeed, her disassociation from her past self echoes the first quatrain from

Petrarch's first sonnet in his *Canzoniere*: "Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono / di quei

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[347] See Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 249ff.

[348] Wiley Feinstein reads Handel's Dorinda as an Ariostean narrator whose comedic elements resonate with Ariostean irony: he does not propose that Handel had intimate knowledge of the *Furioso*, but rather that the narrator in the *Furioso* and Dorinda fulfill similar functions in their respective works. See Feinstein, "Dorinda as Ariostean Narrator in Handel's *Orlando*," *Italica* 64 No. 4 (1987).

[349] Handel, *Orlando*, I.4 (8).

sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core / in sul mio primo giovenile errore / quand'era in parte

altr'uom da quel ch'i' sono…"[350] In Act I, scene 7, Dorinda utters another soliloquy: Handel

extracted her words directly from Capece's libretto, yet in the original text she speaks them

at the end of Act I, scene 6, rather than occupying an entire scene for herself, as she does in

Handel's later version. Her speech expresses her wish to fully immerse herself in the fiction

of Medoro's amorous words. "Povera me!" she exclaims, "Ben vedo che mi alletta / Con un

parlar fallace; / Ma così ancor mi piace, / E ogni sua paroletta / Mi fa all'udito certa

consonanza / Che accorda col desio pur la speranza."[351] She then sings an aria addressed to

the "care parolette" in which she so desperately wishes she could believe. Once again,

Dorinda presents herself as a self-aware, self-possessed, independent Petrarchan lover. Her

declaration of "ben vedo" resonates again with the first sonnet of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*: "Ma

ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto / favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente / di me

medesmo meco mi vergogno…"[352] Dorinda continues with her self-aware, Petrarchan

meditations on love: she appears again alone onstage at the beginning of Act II, scene 1,[353] in

Act III, scene 2, and Act III, scene 5. Handel gives as many solo scenes to Dorinda as to

Orlando; Dorinda also sings five arias in the opera—nearly as many as Orlando's seven arias.

Perhaps the most distinctive element of Dorinda's metamorphosed persona is her language:

as Strohm discusses, Dorinda, the avatar of La Celestina, employs language that falls outside

the standard linguistic codes of the Arcadian pastoral. Her solo recitative and aria in Act III,

scene 5 best exemplify this idiosyncratic component of her character:

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[350] Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, ed. Marco Santagata (Milan: Mondadori, 2004), 1, 1-4.

[351] Handel, *Orlando*, I.6 (13-15).

[352] Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, 1. 9-11.

[353] In Capece's libretto this scene is given to Isabella, although Dorinda's song is only four lines, whereas Isabella first sings a *da capo* aria and then sings another ten lines of recitative. See Capece, *Orlando*, II.1 (27).

S'è corrisposto un Core,
Teme ancor del suo amore.
Se un altro è mal gradito
Prova il martir del barbaro Cocito.
Nel Mar d'amor per tutto v'è lo scoglio;
E vedo ben, che amar è un grand imbroglio.
Amor è qual vento
Che gira il cervello:
Ho inteso che a cento
Comincia bel bello
A farli godere;
Ma a un curto piacere
Dà un lungo dolor.
Se uniti due cori
Si credon beati,
Gelosi timori
Li fan sfortunati;
Se un cor è sprezzato
Divien arrabbiato,
Così fa l'amor.
Amor &c.[354]

As Strohm argues, a number of Dorinda's words mark her as linguistically Other: her use of

the word *cervello*, for example, instead of the more refined *mente*, points to a kind of "everyday

language,"[355] almost grotesque in its connotations. Her characterization of Love as *un grand*

imbroglio also departs from the more elevated language of her fellow noble shepherds, as the

term *imbroglio* resonates strongly with traditions of comic theater. Strohm does not mention

Dorinda's descriptor *curto*, which seems to be a Neapolitan pronunciation of the word *corto*,

and which she uses in place of the loftier word *breve*; her word *arrabbiato* similarly has no

place in Arcadia. As Strohm pronounces, "These are slight but decisive departures from the

linguistic code of the *dramma per musica*, including its pastoral variety. Shepherdesses in

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[354] Handel, *Orlando*, III.5 (40).

[355] Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 253.

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opera…are not supposed to speak like that. This is not exactly the language of the 'gentil

pastorella,' but of the 'villana' or comic servant of the intermezzi…"[356] Interestingly,

Dorinda's language is not uniform: she at times speaks as the *gentil pastorella*, and at others as

the *villana*. Her solo in Act III, scene 2 is a condensation of her *villana* persona, as it contains

the bulk of her comic or base words. She has another idiosyncratic, grammatically and

syntactically puzzling *villana* moment in Act III, scene 9, as she states, "Ben Io diss'Io,

ritorna a rimpazzire: / È meglio di fuggire."[357] This doubling of the personal pronoun *io*,

combined with the doubling (or perhaps quadrupling, in this case) of *ritorna a rimpazzire*,

emphasizes Dorinda's linguistic register, as does her misuse of the preposition *di* in the

following line. Her lines earlier in the scene similarly betray a sense of grammatical

otherness: in response to Zoroastro, she cries, "Ah! che fate Signor? s'egli si desta / Certo

ambidue ne uccide," and "È più sicur a lo lasciar dormire."[358] Here Dorinda misuses the

preposition *a*, and misplaces the direct object pronoun *lo*. Yet in other instances she exhibits

classic pastoral poise in her linguistic production: her dialogue with Medoro in Act III, scene

1, for example, resonates with the image of the *gentil pastorella*, and, as previously discussed, a

number of her lines are excerpted directly out of the elevated pastoral poetry of Capece's

source text. This intermittency of Dorinda's comic persona reinforces the argument that her

role in the opera draws from the tradition of comic *intermezzi*: she is a double Dorinda—

primarily the *gentil pastorella* of Capece's original libretto, but occasionally, intermittently, she

inhabits the role of the comic, Neapolitan *villana*.

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[356] Ibid.

[357] Handel, *Orlando*, III. 9 (48).

[358] Ibid, 47. See Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 253.

While Dorinda's words pull her toward the realm of the comic, they still maintain a

distance from the overtly bawdy jokes and jabs of early baroque opera. As Keith James

Johnston discusses, humor in the comic intermezzo "is usually less crude and directed at

behaviours rather than physical maladies":[359] thus Dorinda's language is decidedly less

grotesque than that of Badoaro's Iro (from *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) or Cicognini's Demo

(from *Giasone*), as discussed earlier in this dissertation.[360] The music of her *villana* persona is

similarly subtle in its humor, and less mimetically grotesque—or, in Johnston's terms, less

associated with 'comic realism'[361]—than the humorous musical tropes in baroque operas like

Monteverdi's *Giasone*.[362] Nonetheless, Dorinda's music does mimetically reflect her words in

a way that expresses a subtle sense of "comic realism." Her aria "Amor è qual vento" (see

Example 4.2), which contains a rich collection of her *villana* words, musically depicts a wind

that scrambles her *cervello*. A virtuosic showpiece aria, "Amor è qual vento" demands

extraordinary leaps that speak to the fact that the singer's brain is itself scrambled, pulled to

both extremes of the mezzo-soprano's range. Celeste Gismondi's range stretched from a low

A to a high C³, as Strohm discusses,[363] and the intervals in "Amor è qual vento" stretch her

from a low B (one note above her lowest) to a high B (one note below her highest). These

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[359] Keith James Johnston, "È caso da intermedio! Comic Theory, Comic Style and the Early Intermezzo (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011), 228.

[360] See Introduction, 18-19; Chapter 2, 65.

[361] Johnston, 244ff. Johnston notes that in the *intermezzo*, 'comic realism was most often expressed through imitation of military instruments and the imitation of beating hearts" (244). On the music of the comic *intermezzo* and its comic realism, see also Charles E. Troy, *The Comic Intermezzo: A Study in the History of Eighteenth-Century Italian Opera* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1979), 91ff.

[362] A discussion of musical humor lands outside the scope of this dissertation, but, as Johnston notes, "Tickling the musical funny bone requires more than writing comically preposterous music. It requires the composer to manipulate the listener's expectations and to make them compare the music they hear against their existing knowledge of musical forms, conventions and taste" ("È caso da intermedio!" 242). On musical comedy in the intermezzo see Johnston, "È caso da intermedio!" Chapter 5.

[363] See Strohm *Essays on Handel*, 250.

leaps, beyond their humorous mimesis of the singer's scrambled brain, serve also as a subtle

parody of serious tropes of emotional mimesis in *opera seria*. Such leaps were often employed

in arias to denote emotional torment, as in Costanza's aria "Agitata da due venti" in Vivaldi's

Griselda:[364] while Dorinda's aria teems with musical signifiers of emotional turbulence, her

over-exaggerated leaps, when linked to her comic words, denote a kind of parodic

expression of serious, dramatic turmoil.

If, as Strohm effectively argues, Handel did indeed reconstruct the role of Dorinda

for a star of the Neapolitan comic *intermezzo*, he essentially reversed the efforts of Capece

and his fellow reformers to bar baroque comedy from opera, and in so doing revived a

practice that had been buried under the moralistic ethos of Arcadian theater. Like the

magical Zoroastro, the comic Dorinda rose as an undead figure from baroque operatic past,

punctuating and possessing Capece's solemn, comedy-free text with the lowly language,

clunky grammar, and mimetic music of the comic *intermezzo*.

I use the term *zombie* in part because of its resonances in Enlightenment-era Europe:

instances of undead rising from the grave were reported throughout the Hungarian Empire

between around 1670 and 1770. These "imaginary monsters," as Phillip Cole terms them,[365]

were not physically real, but spoke to political and social insecurities, and served as abject

counterpoints to the Cartesian bodies of reason. Cole notes, "Vampires and other Undead

beings represent some of our deepest insecurities, and so can tell us something crucially

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[364] See Chapter 2, 74-75.

[365] Phillip Cole, "Rousseau and the Vampires: Toward a Political Philosophy of the Undead," in *Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy: New Life for the Undead*, ed. Richard Greene and K. Silem Mohammad (Chicago and LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 2010), 184-185.

important about the politics of fear."[366] If the Undead represent political and social

insecurities, I propose that these tropes of magic and comedy in baroque opera represent a

kind of aesthetic (and necessarily social) abjection, countering the realm of 'reasonable' and

verisimilar theater—that is, the Arcadian theater of *buon gusto*—with the specter of 'bad taste'

from earlier decades. Zoroastro and Dorinda are operatic zombies because they serve as

abject counterpoints to Arcadian reform opera and reform heroes, and because they conjure

precisely the kinds of anxieties that engendered such reforms.

Monsters, Decomposed and Recomposed

Handel's *Orlando* stars two zombies, but what of the many monsters of Capece's

original libretto? What of the predominance of the monstrous, the underworld beasts, the

spectacles of madness and love, the permutations of the verb *mostrare*? Handel's libretto,

perhaps surprisingly, is almost entirely monster-free. The word *mostro* appears only twice,

both times in the mouth of Orlando: in Act I, scene 9 he sings an aria from Capece's original

text, "Fammi combattere," in which he mentions the *Mostri e Tifei* that he proposes to fight;

in Act III, scene 8, just as he is falling asleep, he again draws from the original recitative in

Capece's libretto, reporting that, "Già per la man d'Orlando / D'ogni mostro più rio purgato

è il mondo."[367] While he invokes the furies and other underworld creatures, he largely skirts

around the explicit mention of monsters, as do the other characters. The verb form *mostrare*,

which appears eight times in Capece's libretto, is also entirely absent from Handel's

adaptation. Undoubtedly part of this absence relates to the fact that Handel's text is

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[366] Ibid.

[367] Handel, *Orlando*, III.8 (44).

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significantly shorter than Capece's: Handel's libretto spans fifty-one pages, as compared to

Capece's sixty-four pages. Yet this discrepancy in length does not entirely account for the

absence of specific words—especially not of the words *mostro* and *mostrare*, which feature so

prominently in the original libretto and so aptly suit the subject matter. It seems that Handel

replaced explicit invocations of the monstrous with implicit monstrosities—that the figures

Zoroastro and Dorinda, the operatic zombies, function in the libretto as the practically

monstrous, epitomizing the spectacle of baroque operatic past in all its monstrous

figurations. Having revived the spirits of stage magic and comedy, the two characters

embody the theatrically monstrous, and threaten the proposed purity and integrity of

Capece's Arcadian opera.

Orlando's mad speech and other characters' references to Orlando in Handel's

libretto are also decidedly less monster-centered than in Capece's original text: many of

Orlando's explicit meditations on the monstrous in Capece's work are absent in Handel's, or,

at the very least, abridged. As an example, Handel splices Orlando's aria "Già latra Cerbero"

in half, from its original ten lines to a mere five lines, and effectively transforms it into a

cavatina.[368] This cut not only changes the sense of the text, but also cements the aria into a

metrically problematic sequence of *quinari sdruccioli* and one *tronco*; the *mostri* and *chiostri* are

missing, but so are the only non-*sdruccioli quinari* of the whole aria:

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[368] The term *cavatina*, in its eighteenth-century context, refers to a short aria, simpler than the *da capo* aria. See
Randel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 153.

Capece (1711)	Handel (1733)
Già latra Cerbero;	Già latra Cerbero
E già dall'Erebo	E già dell'Erebo
Ogni terribile	Ogni terribile
Squallida furia	Squallida furia
Sen vien a me.	Sen vien a me.[369]

Ma tra quei *mostri*
Degl'empii chiostri
Dov'è il più horribile?
Che l'alta ingiuria
Soffrir mi fè!
        Già &c.[370]

The new Orlando still invokes the monstrous imaginary of his earlier self—still meditates on

the horrors of Cerberus and the furies—but he conspicuously evades any explicit mention of

the word *mostro*. He similarly clips the recitative that follows: whereas in Capece's text he

follows his aria with, "Quello, quello cerch'io, / Che con volto giocondo, e chioma d'oro; /

È il più indegno, e più rio / Mostro, ch'habbia l'abisso; e è Medoro,"[371] in Handel's text

Orlando abridges his own speech, stating, "Ma la Furia, che sol mi diè Martoro / Dov'è?

Questa è Medoro."[372] The difference is subtle but significant: in Capece's text, Medoro is

identified as the foulest *monster*, and in Handel's libretto he acts as the worst of the *furies*.

Handel's replacement of *mostri* with *furia* could be motivated strictly by continuity: as he had

halved the original aria, deleting the word *mostro*, he perhaps elected to continue with the

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[369] Handel, *Orlando*, II.11. As Harris notes (*The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, xiii), there is an incorrect *da capo* indication in the Italian. The aria "Vaghe pupille" is similarly mislabeled in the Italian libretto as a *da capo* aria, even though Handel sets this text as a rondo (*The Librettos of Handel's Operas*, xiii, 228). Harris considers the structural and harmonic elements of this aria (together with other aspects of *Orlando*) as evidence of Handel's shift toward a German pastoral style. See Harris, *Handel and the Pastoral Tradition*, 228ff.

[370] Capece, *Orlando*, II.11 (42-43). Emphasis mine.

[371] Ibid, 43.

[372] Handel, *Orlando*, II.11 (32).

image of the fury, rather than introducing an incongruous monster image. Such

considerations of continuity cannot, however, account for other conspicuously absent

allusions to monsters: at the beginning of Act III, scene 1 in Capece's text, Medoro concerns

himself with Angelica's fate but quickly interrupts himself, exclaiming, "Ma chi fu mai quel

mostro sì inhumano, / Che a fuggir la costrinse, / E del suo bel sembiante / Se non amore

almen, pietà nol vinse."[373] The same scene in Handel's text begins the same way, but Medoro

avoids any identification or discussion of the monster Orlando.

Handel's Orlando is, nonetheless, decidedly monstrous, as Handel again supplants

discussion of the monstrous with monstrous practice: Orlando, rather than verbally invoking

monsters, enacts his own monstrous spectacle, primarily with his music. During his only solo

mad scene in Handel's libretto, Orlando envisions a stygian scene of Charon's boat, as he

does in Capece's libretto (see Example 4.3). "Ecco la Stigia barca," he declares, "Di Caronte

a dispetto / Già solco l'onde nere: Ecco di Pluto / Le affumicate Soglie, e l'arso Tetto."[374]

He then launches into his cavatina, "Già latra Cerbero," as quoted above. Stage directions in

Handel's libretto indicate that Orlando is to act "Come s'entrasse in barca."[375] To

accompany Orlando's boarding of his imagined boat to the Underworld, the music

mimetically depicts the monstrous scene: his words "già solco l'onde" trigger a unison

melody in the strings in a highly unusual 5/8 time. The limping scalar passages musically

paint the scene of the splashing of the stygian waves against the belly of Charon's boat, and

goad Orlando to musically swim through the monstrous river.

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[373] Capece, *Orlando*, III.1 (44).

[374] Handel, *Orlando*, II.11 (32).

[375] Ibid.

The irregular rhythm, mimetic in its musical splashing, not only conjures imagery of the Underworld and its monsters, but is itself a musical time that would have resonated as monstrous: in the early eighteenth century, the division of a bar into five units (rather than symmetrical two, four, or six unites) would have been perceived as a deformity, indivisible and incongruous. Orlando's stygian rhythm, infamous for its heterodoxy, received a wealth of attention; Charles Burney discussed it, noting that, "Handel has endeavoured to describe the hero's perturbation of intellect by fragments of symphony in 5/8, a division of time which can only be borne in such a situation."[376]

The cavatina that follows, "Già latra Cerbero," musically illustrates the monster Cerberus (see Example 4.4): as Dean notes, the strings play rhythmic figurations in unison, mimicking the howling of the three-headed underworld dog.[377]

Handel's London adaptation of *Orlando* pollutes the rational, anti-comic, anti-magical ethos of Arcadia, and, even though the opera stages the triumph of reason over the monsters of madness—even though Zoroastro vigorously enforces the reign of reason—the production itself, with its floating castles and wands, with its scrambled-brain-aria and comic Neapolitan diva, with its inflated musical mimesis and murky sounds of the Underworld, is itself monstrous, a composite beast born of disparate baroque elements. It seems that Capece's *Orlando*, once freed from its rigid Arcadian cage, flew to new lands, regrew its monstrous parts, and reanimated the dead of baroque opera.

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[376] Burney, *A General History of Music* IV, 364. Johann Kirnberger, a German critic writing in the later part of the eighteenth century, expressed similar ideas about 5/8 meter: "...we divide the pulses into groups of two, three, or four. We do not arrive at any other division in a natural way. No one can repeat groups of five and even less of seven equal pulses in succession without wearisome strain" (Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, trans. David Beach and Jurgen Thym (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 383). On this musical boat-rocking see also See Dean, *Handel's Operas*, 245; Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 259ff.

[377] Dean, *Handel's Operas*, 245. Strohm situates "Già latra Cerbero" somewhere between a serious 'ombra' scene and a mock-ritual of conjuring ghosts, citing the aria's *sdrucciolo* verses and triple meter (*Essays on Handel*, 259).

CHAPTER 5

Metastasio's *Angelica serenata* and the Failure of Arcadia

Pietro Metastasio was the most celebrated poet of the eighteenth century. He scaled the

cliffs of European Parnassus, ultimately establishing himself as a literary symbol and practical

demigod of Italian poetry; his works significantly impacted the topography of literary culture

throughout the European continent, and were touted as paradigms of tasteful Italian

lyricism. A number of critics, including Rousseau and Goldoni, claimed that Metastasio

transformed Italian literature just as Racine transformed French literature decades before.[378]

Others pointed to the stark contrast between the pre-Metastasian and post-Metastasian eras,

and in so doing elevated the Italian poet to an almost Christological status.[379] His opera

libretti were set to music by the most famous composers of the eighteenth century, including

Vivaldi, Handel, and Mozart, and his spectacles graced hundreds of European stages, both

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[378] Rousseau, *Dictionaire de musique* (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1768), 350: "L'énergie de tous les sentimens, la violence de toutes les passions font donc l'object principal du Drame lyrique; e l'illusion qui en fait le charme, est toujours détruite aussi-tôt que l'Auteur e l'Acteur laissent un moment le Spectateur à lui-même. Tels sont les principes sure lesquels l'*Opera* moderne est établi. Apostolo Zéno, le Corneille de l'Italie; son tentre élève qui en est le Racine, ont ouvert e perfectionné cette nouvelle carrière." (J.J. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de musique* [facsimile]. Geneva: Éditions Minkoff, (1998), 350). Goldoni, *Tutte le opere*, ed. Giuseppe Ortolani, 6 Volumes (Milan: Mondadori, 1935), I, 187-188: "je pourrois avancer que Métastase a imité Racine par son style, et que Zeno a imité Corneille par sa vigeur." See Gabriele Muresu, *La parola cantata: Studi sul melodramma italiano del Settecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982), 23ff. See also Remo Giazotto, *Poesia melodrammatica e pensiero critico nel settecento* (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1952), 131-132.

[379] See for example Charles Burney, *A General history of Music* IV, 517: "In the first operas poetry seems to have been the most important personage; but about the middle of the last century, machinery and decoration seemed to take the lead, and diminished the importance both of music and poetry. But as the art of singing and dramatic composition improved, music took the lead, and poetry and decoration became of less consequence, till the judgment of Apostolo Zeno, and the genius of Metastasio, lifted lyric poetry far above its usual level." Stefano Arteaga also named Metastasio "il primo poeta filosofo della sua nazione" (II, 97) and "il primo poeta drammatico lirico dell'universo" (II, 176). See Arteaga, *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano: dalla sua origine fino al presente*, 3 Volumes (Venice: Carlo Palese, 1785).

public and private.[380] His texts were steeped in what Elena Sala Di Felice has termed textual 'totalitarianism'—that is, they functioned as holistic theatrical creations, and took into account theatrical issues like staging and music.[381]

Yet before his explosion onto the European literary scene, Metastasio took shade in the groves of Arcadia: his vast poetic output was born of Arcadian idealism, and gave voice to the elevation and *buon gusto* that the pastoral academy sought to put into practice. Metastasio's poetry, which comprised dozens of opera libretti as well as other dramatic and non-dramatic compositions, exemplified the tastes of an era and functioned as the practical fulfillment of Arcadian literary reform. Melchiore Cesarotti, an Arcadian in the latter part of the eighteenth century, notes that while Apostolo Zeno paved the way for the reform of the melodrama, it was Metastasio who carried it to its ultimate, Arcadian iteration. He praises Metastasio as:

> …il poeta degno soltanto di Roma, il nume della scena drammatica […] Osserverò piuttosto che niun altro più di lui può giustificare i nostri comuni principi, niuno può mostrar meglio i diversi effetti della prevenzione e del genio, del gusto fattizio e di quello della natura. Un dotto della vostra adunanza, rispettabile per molti titoli, prosator tanto nobile, quanto sgraziato verseggiatore, critico prevenuto, ma ragionator imponente, e che ardiva credersi libero coi ceppi al piede, sembrava aver preso assunto di guastar colla sua disciplina lo spirito il più felice del secolo. Egli volea ch'ei radesse il suolo, schiavo della regola, quand'era fornito di penne per tentar un volo da Dedalo, e che apprendesse le leggi del teatro dall'usanze dei greci, quando per inspirazion di Melpomene ne leggeva tutta l'arte dentro il suo cuore: fortunatamente i principi e l'esempio di tutto il corpo parlarono più alto che

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[380] On the details of Metastasio's legacy, see Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 231ff; Strohm, *Essays on Handel*, 232ff.

[381] Elena Sala Di Felice, *Metastasio: Ideologia, drammaturgia, spettacolo* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1983), 19, cit. Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 234.

l'autorità d'uno de' suoi membri, rinvigorirono la ragione, ed inanimarono il genio: qual prodigiosa diversità![382]

And De Sanctis, in his *Storia della letteratura italiana*, discusses Metastasio not only in terms of his Arcadian formation, but even of his inherently Arcadian character: "Metastasio, che cercava la tragedia con la testa, era per il carattere un arcade, tutto Nice e Tirsi, tutto sospiri e tenerezze [...] Aveva, come il Tasso, grande sensibilità, molta facilità di lacrime, ma superficiale sensibilità, che poteva increspare, non turbare il suo mondo sereno."[383] It has been through these types of narratives about Metastasio—about his Arcadian education, his Arcadian ideals, and his inherently Arcadian spirit—that Metastasio came to be recognized as the prime practitioner of Arcadian literary culture.

Metastasio's Arcadian career brought him to the Academy's *sede* in Rome, and later to Naples; it was in Naples, in 1720, that he wrote his first dramatic composition destined for a musical setting, the *Angelica*.[384] The composition was not a full-scale opera—indeed it was not an opera at all, but rather a *serenata*: it comprised only two parts, and employed a small cast and minimal staging.[385] The *Angelica* was set to music by the Neapolitan composer

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[382] Melchiore Cesarotti, *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue e del gusto* (Pisa: Società letteraria, 1800), 327-8. See also Maria Teresa Acquaro Graziosi, *L'Arcadia: trecento anni di storia* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1991), 38-9.

[383] Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. Maria Teresa Lanza (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1970), 763, cit. Friedrich Lippmann, "'Semplicità' e 'naturalezza' in Metastasio," in *Il Canto di Metastasio: Atti del Convegno di Studi Venezia*, ed. Maria Giovanna Miggiani (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni, 2004), 6. On De Sanctis's depiction of Metastasio, see also Sala di Felice, *Metastasio*, 169-170. See also Binni, *L'Arcadia e il Metastasio* (253) for a discussion of Metastasio's Arcadian spirit.

[384] The title *Angelica* is often used interchangeably with the title *Angelica e Medoro*.

[385] The eighteenth-century *serenata* was, as Tcharos argues, a theatrical genre unto its own: "The *serenata* is distinctive among the vocal genres...because it often involved striking degrees of visual and sonic spectacle, with larger instrumental forces as part of its performance mechanism and mode of expression. Nevertheless, the musico-dramatic core of the *serenata* was more closely akin to similar vocal genres that were not fully operatic in narrative style and in formal presentation, but highlighted the solo voice or intimate dialogue in a musical format characteristic of much secular vocal music of the period" (*Opera's Orbit*, 98). For an in-depth discussion of the *serenata* see Tcharos, Chapter 3. This distinction of the *Angelica* as a *serenata* problematizes the

Nicola Porpora, and performed for a private celebration of Empress Elizabeth Christine's

birthday in August of 1722.[386] The *serenata* resonated widely through Europe, and a number

of composers, particularly toward the latter half of the century, utilized Metastasio's libretto

for their musical settings.[387]

At first glance the *serenata* seems like a perfect Arcadian drama: it focuses on the love

relationship between Angelica and Medoro, and includes three pastoral stock characters,

Licori, Tirsi, and Titirio. The characters sing in pastoral tropes, rooting their song in the

earth and couching their amorous pursuits in naturalist terminology. Orlando is present but

not the main focus: his madness, which had been reverberating through pastoral stages in

the early years of the eighteenth century, is merely tangential in Metastasio's plot.

Metastasio's Orlando has only two mad scenes, and they are not nearly as mad, as expansive,

or as idiosyncratic as the mad scenes in Braccioli or Capece's dramas; even the title of the

work, *Angelica*, neglects the mad hero and his actions. With the *Angelica*, Metastasio seems to

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work's relationship to *Orlando furioso*-based operas, like those written by Braccioli and Capece. I focus in this chapter not on the differences in genre between Metastasio's work and earlier thematically similar operas, but rather on the poetics of the *Angelica* and the role of Orlando in the economy of the drama. Metastasio's *serenata* may derive in part from a sixteenth-century poem entitled *Serenata* by Niccolò Machiavelli: Machiavelli channels Ovidian tropes in his poem, but ultimately uses the pastoral mode in order to explore complexities of form and genre; his *serenata*, like Metastasio's, plays with the boundaries of pastoralism. On Machiavelli's *Serenata* see Albert Ascoli and Angela Capodivacca, "Machiavelli and poetry," in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. John M. Najemy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 197.

[386] Nicola Porpora (1686–1768) was a crucial figure in the Neapolitan musical scene: he was a successful opera composer, and trained a number of singers including the castrato Farinelli. Porpora and Metastasio collaborated on a number of operas, beginning with the *Angelica*. On Porpora and his works, see Francesco Florimo, *La scuola musicale di Napoli e i suoi conservatorii: con uno sguardo sulla storia della musica in Italia* (Naples: V. Morano, 1880–1882), II, 310ff.

[387] The libretto was later set to music by Francesco Milano (c. 1740), Ignazio Fiorillo (Padua, 1743), Paolo Scalabrini (Hamburg, 1746), Giovan Battista Mele (Madrid, 1747), anonymous (Wolfenbüttel, 1751), Francesco Brusa (Venice, 1756), Giovanni de Sousa Carvalho (Lisbon-Queluz, 1778), Michele Mortellari (Padua, 1796); Gaetano Sertor's text *l'Angelica e Medoro* is also based on Metastasio's *Angelica*, and was set to music by Gaetano Andreozzi, nicknamed l'Jommellino (Venice, 1783) and Francesco Gardi (Venice, 1784). In the nineteenth century there were also two parodies of Metastasio's drama written in Neapolitan dialect: *Angelica abbandonata* by Michele Zezza (Naples, 1840) and *Angelica accojetata* by F.S. (Naples, 1841). See Buch, *Magic Flutes*, Appendix C (376-377); Bruno Brunelli, *Tutte le opere di Pietro Metastasio* (Milan: Mondadori, 1943–1954), 1312 n1.

have successfully transplanted the story of Orlando to Arcadia by neutralizing the mad hero and shifting the focus to the elevated pastoral love shared between Angelica and Medoro.

But ultimately Metastasio's *serenata* is the least Arcadian of all the Orlando-based Arcadian dramas in the eighteenth century. The work bulges with anti-pastoral tropes, problematizing the supposed purity of the Arcadian stage: Orlando and Angelica, two foreigners in the pastoral grove, set into motion an ethical-poetic crisis that infects even the most steadfast of pastoral characters. What begins as a perfect Arcadian drama concludes with a world in crisis—a world in which pastoral language lies as a skeleton emptied of meaning, in which nature cannot be distinguished from artifice, in which Arcadian reason is impotent against the gravity of madness. With his first dramatic composition, Metastasio, the paradigmatic Arcadian poet, distances himself from the very grove that birthed him, and calls into question the very essence of the Arcadian mission.

Arcadian Poet, Against Arcadia?

Metastasio was doubly transfigured into Arcadia: born Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi in Rome in 1698, he was adopted by Arcadian theorist Gian Vincenzo Gravina and given the pseudonym Pietro Metastasio;[388] in 1718 he became an official member of the Arcadian Academy and took the shepherd name Artino Corasio. This nominal transformation—this *trapassar* from one identity to another—speaks directly to Metastasio's formation and to the influences that would shape his poetry: Pietro Metastasio was a species

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[388] The name Metastasio, which means *passage* or *transition*, was a Greek translation of his own name, Trapassi. By substituting his Latinate surname with a Hellenic one, Gravina rooted Metastasio in a neo-classical tradition—one that was undoubtedly suited more to Gravina himself than to the Arcadian Academy.

of Gravinian product, chiseled into a Cartesian-inspired neoclassicist; Artino Corasio was an

Arcadian lyricist, imbued with the *buon gusto* of the pastoral academy.

While Gravina was initially attracted to the young Metastasio because of his poetic

skill and improvisation, he kept his adopted pupil on a strict didactic diet of Homer, Virgil,

Horace, and Ariosto, and forbade him from poetic composition and improvisation;

Metastasio nonetheless pursued improvisation, and continued to read works by his preferred

poets, Ovid, Tasso, and Marino.[389] Three months after Gravina died, Metastasio became a

member of Arcadia, although his Arcadian metamorphosis was an uncomfortable one: as

Gravina had been the instigator of the Arcadian schism of 1711, members of the Academy

expressed discomfort at the prospect of admitting Gravina's pupil. Metastasio exuded

reverence for his teacher, and adhered to a Gravinian neoclassicism that had gone out of

fashion in the Arcadian Academy.[390] Metastasio even recited his poem *La Strada della Gloria*, a

tribute to the recently-deceased Gravina, for an Arcadian meeting in 1718: *La Strada*, written

in *terza rima*, recounts a Dantean dream in which Gravina, depicted as a Virgilian figure,

advises and guides his adopted pupil.[391] While there are no accounts that tell how *La Strada*

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[389] Marcantonio Aluigi, *Storia dell'Abate Pietro Trapassi Metastasio, Poeta Drammatico* (Assisi: Ottavio Sgariglia, 1783), 13ff; Brunelli, *Tutte le opere*, XI-XII.

[390] Metastasio's classical education is evident in his early letters, which were written in Latin and Greek. See Brunelli, *Tutte le opere* III, 1-10. Acquaro Graziosi underscores the ambivalent attitude with which Roman society—particularly those with ties to the Arcadian Academy—held toward Metastasio and his Gravinian past. She cites a source from 1726 that comments on the performance of Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata* in Rome: "Le decorazioni, le comparse furono di estreme magnificenza, alla romana...Il popolo dimenticò per allora i pregiudizi del Gravina, che si dicevano passati nel suo figliolo adottivo, ed assordito dall'incanto dell'opera non pensò all'autore. Ogni scena fu un continuo batter di mani" (Carducci, *Pietro Metastasio*, cit. Maria Teresa Acquaro Graziosi, "Pietro Metastasio e L'Arcadia," in *Metastasio da Roma all'Europa* (Rome: Collana della Fondazione Marco Besso, 1998), 51-2. On Metastasio's relationship to Cartesianism see Giuseppe Giarrizzo, "L'ideologia di Metastasio tra cartesianesimo e illuminismo," in *Convegno indetto in occasione del II centenario della morte di Metastasio* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1985); Sala Di Felice, *Metastasio*, 176ff.

[391] Metastasio introduces the scene with Dantean imagery and language: "Già l'ombrosa del giorno atra nemica / Di silenzio copriva e di timore / L'immenso volto alla gran madre antica: / Febo agli oggetti il solito colore / Più non prestava, ed all'aratro appresso / Riposava lo stanco agricoltore: / Moveano i sogni il vol tacito e spesso, / Destando de' mortali entro il pensiere / L'immaginar dall'alta quiete oppresso. / Sol io veglio fra cure

was received in Arcadia, it is unlikely that the Crescimbenian shepherds would have taken

kindly to a poem that elevated Gravina, an exiled schismatic, to the level of an omniscient

Virgilian guide.

Equally troublesome to the academy members would have been Metastasio's

admiration for the poetry of Marino: Arcadians viewed Marino as the nadir of *cattivo gusto* of

the previous century, and accordingly dismissed any poetry that drew from Marinist

aesthetics. Metastasio's indebtedness to the Seicento poet is evident in his early works,

particularly *Gli orti esperidi* (1721), which, much like Book VII of Marino's *Adone*, depicts a

scene of Venus and Adonis in a garden; the *Angelica* similarly engages with Marinist tropes.

Metastasio was thus flanked by two figures that stood in direct opposition to

Arcadia—Gravina, with his austere Hellenism, and Marino, with his florid Seicento language.

In 1719, only one year after his induction into the Academy, Metastasio left for Naples,

citing the tense climate he experienced in Rome. "I miei domestici interessi mi

trasportarono, già molti mesi, in Napoli," he wrote in 1719 to Francesco d'Aguirre, "e mi ci

ritenne poi la considerazione del pertinace odio che ancor si conserva in Roma non meno al

nome che alla scuola tutta dell'abate Gravina, beata memoria, mio venerato Maestro. Qual

odio, se non in tutto almeno in parte, si è trasfuso, e come discepolo eletto e come erede,

sovra di me."[392]

Considering Metastasio's problematic position in Arcadian circles, how is it that he

came to be identified as the practitioner of Arcadian poetry? In what ways can his poetic

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aspre e severe, / Com'egro suol che trae l'ore inquiete, / Né discerne ei medesmo il suo volere. / Al fin con l'ali placide e secrete / Sen venne il Sonno, e le mie luci accese / Dello squallido asperse umor di lete." See Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 755-759. See also Acquaro Graziosi, "Pietro Metastasio e L'Arcadia," 55-57.

[392] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* III, 20.

output speak to Arcadian ideals? Metastasio's name is conspicuously absent from

Crescimbeni's sprawling catalogues of Arcadian activities: this is likely in part because of his

ties to Gravina, but the lacuna also underscores the fact that Metastasio's dramas were

largely incongruous with Crescimbeni's vision of ideal pastoral poetry. They were too

historical, too rooted in Gravinian thought, too florid with their Marinist leanings, or simply

too experimental. Yet Metastasio did blend the aesthetics of the new, post-schism Arcadia

with his Gravinian teachings, particularly during his time in Rome, as Acquaro Graziosi

notes:

> La prima fase della produzione artistica del Nostro dunque si innesta nella tecnica e nella poetica arcadiche, evidenziando tuttavia quella creatività che è frutto fondamentale della formazione classicista e razionalistica del pensiero del Caloprese e del Gravina, espresso con figure chiare e concatenate logicamente secondo una dialettica cartesiana. Il Metastasio quindi compone una serie di sonetti per monacazioni e per nozze, in cui l'elaborazione di squarci paesaggistici, di immagini naturali armonicamente strutturate, in una tecnica linguistica raffinata, di solito, quale connotazione personale, sono rapportati in un disegno equilibrato di regole immanenti e trascendentali, che allargano gli orizzonti in una concezione universale.[393]

Despite his problematic position between old and new Arcadia, Metastasio's poetry is rooted

in an Arcadian ethos that transcends the schismatic divide: his work is invested with a

profound notion of literary good taste and with the charge that literature must both speak to

reason and engender reason. A number of elements of theoretical Arcadian literary reform

take concrete shape in Metastasio's works: in his dramas the text is the dominant medium,

presiding over music and the other arts;[394] he purges the comic characters and episodes that

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[393] Acquaro Graziosi, "Pietro Metastasio e L'Arcadia," 53.

[394] In a letter to Francesco Giovanni di Chastellux in 1766, Metastasio describes the necessary dominance of poetry over music: "Aspira per avventura la musica a cotesta suprema magistratura? Abbiala in buon'ora, ma s'incarichi ella in tal caso della scelta del soggetto, dell'encomia della favola; determini i personaggi da introdursi, i caratteri e le situazioni loro; immagini le decorazioni; inventi poi le sue cantilene, e commetta finalmente alla poesia di scrivere i suoi versi a seconda di quella. E se ricusa di farlo perché di tante facoltà

Crescimbeni deplored; he maintains an elevated style, adheres to a strict notion of verisimilitude, and invests his dramas with morally exemplary material.[395] This is to say that while Metastasio never fit comfortably in Arcadia, his works did encompass the broad strokes of Arcadian literary reform and invested the eighteenth-century stage with elements from the theories of Gravina, Crescimbeni, and Muratori.

Vienna and the Aesthetics of Empire

Despite his semi-Christological status as the bearer of a new order, Metastasio was not the first eighteenth-century opera reformer. As discussed in Chapter 2, Apostolo Zeno and his own operatic reform predated Metastasio, and served to facilitate Metastasio's rise to literary fame. Zeno was himself an Arcadian, and his dramas were immediately lauded by Arcadians like Muratori and Crescimbeni; Metastasio inherited the legacy of Zeno's Arcadian dramas and shaped his own works in the shadow of his literary-dramatic predecessor. Beyond

necessarie all'esecuzione d'un dramma non possiede che la sola scienza de' suoni, lasci la dittatura a chi le ha tutte, e sulle tracce del ravveduto Minucio confessi di non saper comandare, ed ubbidisca." See Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* IV, 438, cit. Sala di Felice, *Metastasio*, 7-8. Sala di Felice also notes that Metastasio's adherence to the idea of poetry as the dominant artistic medium resonates with Arcadian theories: "Sotto il profilo teorico nessuno degli autori di poetiche del Settecento arcadico rinunziò mai alla visione razionalistica della lingua come *medium* privilegiato della conoscenza, in quanto codice almeno parzialmente arbitrario, frutto di un'operazione mentale a livello di elaborazione e di recezione, e pertanto superiore alle arti visuali, che erano definite sì *naturali* (ma tale aggettivo qualificava anche l'arte musicale) epperò inferiori, in quanto dirette alla percezione sensibile. Da queste concezioni epistemologiche discendeva conseguentemente una idea logocentrica del teatro, non contestata da alcuno degli autori di poetiche sia tragiche, sia melodrammatiche del periodo arcadico..." (*Metastasio*, 26-27). See Sala di Felice, *Metastasio*, Ch. 1 for a more general discussion of Metastasio's understanding of the relationship between poetry and music. Enrico Fubini explains the relationship between music and poetry in Metastasio's dramas as a rational-irrational binary: "L'irrazionalità delle arie appare come una concessione alla fantasia, alla soggettività, al sentimento, giustamente dosato, una piccola partentesi in un insieme in cui tuttavia domina un ordine provvidenziale, in cui trionfa sempre il lieto fine, in cui la virtù e la ragionevolezza vincono sempre." Fubini argues that one could remove the arias from Metastasio's texts without changing the dramatic structure—that the music serves as an irrational counterpoint to the rational thrust of the written word (Enrico Fubini, "Razionalità e irrazionalità nel melodramma metastasiano," in *Metastasio e il melodramma: Atti del Seminario di Studi Cagliari* I, ed. Elena Sala Di Felice and Laura Sannia Nowé (Padua: Livania, 1985), 43.

[395] Sala di Felice, *Metastasio*, 39. On Metastasio's absorption of Arcadian ideals, particularly as they speak to social structuring, see Binni, *L'Arcadia*, 263-264.

Arcadia, Metastasio inherited Zeno's position as court poet for the Holy Roman Emperor in Vienna, the Habsburg monarch Charles VI: Zeno resigned from his post there in 1729, leaving the position open to Metastasio, the promising young star of Italian letters. In the early years of his career as *poeta cesareo*, in the 1730s, Metastasio composed eleven large-scale *drammi per musica*, including a number of his most celebrated works—*Adriano in Siria, Demetrio, Olimpiade, Demofoonte, Clemenza di Tito, Attilo Regolo, and Achille in Sciro*. These dramas, like Zeno's own Viennese works, do contain traces of Arcadian lyricism and hints of pastoral idealism, but do not adhere to an Arcadian formulation of the *favola pastorale*: instead, they are rooted in historical episodes. It was Metastasio's particular blend of historicity and poetic lyricism, particularly in these early years in Vienna, that truly catapulted him to literary superstar status. Opera theorist Stefano Arteaga, in his *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano*, upholds Metastasio's operatic output as extraordinary precisely because of its historical roots: he notes that whereas fables destabilize the operatic stage, detaching it from the realm of the real, historical drama speaks directly to a profound, philosophical truth.[396]

Metastasio fully subscribed to the prepotency of his monarch, and strove to serve as a poet that could effectively represent the glory of Charles VI. Having just arrived in Vienna in 1730, he expressed his awe in the presence of the Emperor, and positioned himself as a hopeful Homeric bard of the court:

> Mi venne a mente, che mi trovavo a fronte del più grande Personaggio della terra, e che doveva essere io il primo a parlare; circonstanza che non conferisce ad incoraggiare [...] Qui io parlai con voce non credo molto ferma, con questi sentimenti: 'Io non so, se sia maggiore il contento, o la mia confusione nel ritrovarmi a' piedi di Vostra Maestà Cesarea. È questo un motivo da me sospirato fin da' primi giorni dell'età mia, ed ora non solo mi trovo avanti il più gran Monarca della terra ma vi sono col glorioso carattere

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[396] Arteaga, *Le rivoluzioni* I, 335ff., cit. Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 242-243.

di suo attual servitore. So a quanto mi obbliga questo grado e conosco la debolezza delle mie forze, e se potessi con gran parte del mio sangue divenir un Omero, non esiterei a divenirlo…So, che per quanto sia grande la mia debolezza, sarà sempre inferiore all'infinita clemenza della Maestà Vostra, e spero, che il carattere di Poeta di Cesare mi comunichi quel valore, che non ispero dal mio talento.'[397]

As he notes in this account, Metastasio held an admiration for the office of the emperor even in his youth. His affinity for and interest in imperial rule is rooted in his Gravinian education: in his time as Gravina's pupil, Metastasio studied works that upheld imperial ideals, and even Gravina's own political thought hinged on the values and structure of the Roman Empire.[398]

Metastasio's dramas serve to uphold the virtues of the Emperor and Empress and to surround them with depictions of righteous leadership: his protagonists, the dramatic avatars of (or sometimes counterpoints to) his patrons, speak to an ethos of enlightened leadership and nobility of spirit.[399] In his *Adriano in Siria* (1732), for example, the emperor Adriano is torn between love and his imperial conquests, and ultimately chooses his duty over personal desire, although perhaps not quickly enough. Feldman views *Adriano in Siria* as problematic in its depiction of sovereignty, in that Adriano's final epiphany and resolution are depicted in

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[397] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* III, 50, cit. Adam Wandruszka, "Pietro Metastasio e la corte di Vienna," in *Convegno indetto in occasione del II centenario della morte di Metastasio* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1985), 295. Feldman discusses Metastasio's mythopoetic construction of himself as court bard, referencing his own account of the reception of his opera *Demetrio*: "Domenica scorsa andò in scena il mio *Demetrio* con tanta felicità, che mi assicurano i vecchi del paese che non si ricordano di un consenso così universale. Gli ascoltanti piansero alla scena del'addio: l'augustissimo padrone non fu indifferente: e non ostante il gran rispetto della cesarea padronanza, in molti recitativi il teatro non seppe trattenersi di dar segni della sua approvazione. Quelli che erano miei nemici sono diventati miei apostoli…" (*Tutte le opere* III, 58-59, cit. Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 241).

[398] In his treatise *De romano imperio* (1713) Gravina lauds the Roman imperial structure as a paradigm of political equilibrium, in that it balances the civil power of the Senate with the military power of the emperor; Gravina understands Rome but also imperial governments in general as providing a civilizing structure to society.

[399] As Sala di Felice notes, while Metastasio's dramas were often imbued with an encomium of his monarch, he also used the *licenze* to explicitly state his purpose (*Metastasio*, 194-195).

such a way that actually figures him as a failed, corrupt monarch. She notes, "Seemingly

Adriano in Siria thus conflates the enlightenment idea of the monarch as an instrument of

clemency with the Pauline idea that all kings are divine, regardless of whether they are good

or bad, because their power comes from God."[400]

Indeed, Metastasio distances Charles VI from Adriano in his *licenza*, creating an

oppositional relationship between the two monarchs:

> Cesare, non turbarti; a te non osa
> somigliarsi Adrian. Quando al tuo sguardo
> le sue vicende espone,
> fa spettacol di sé, non paragone.
> Troppo minor del vero
> l'immagine sarebbe; e troppo chiare,
> Signor, fra voi le differenze sono.
> A lui diè luce il trono, la riceve da te. Fu grande e giusto
> ei talvolta, e tu sempre. I propri affetti
> ei debellò, tu li previeni. Ei scelse
> tardi le vie d'onor, tu le scegliesti
> de' giorni tuoi fin su la prima aurora.
> Lui la terra ammirò, te il mondo adora.[401]

Adriano stands as an image of poor leadership and weakness that juxtapose Charles VI's

own leadership and strength. Metastasio's drama also serves a didactic function in showing

how all men—even great emperors—are susceptible to the sways of passion, and how the

only remedy to such passion is an adherence to duty and Cartesian reason. Metastasio

dramas, particularly in the 1730s, present an idealized, exemplary vision of the virtuous

sovereign—of a leader whose rule is informed both by his divine appointment and his

personal virtue; as Joly writes, "toccava proprio all'arte drammatica la funzione di calarla

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[400] Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty*, 261.

[401] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* I, 575-576.

nella realtà, di renderla operante al livello degli individui, perché da quella, per così dire,

catarsi affettiva nascesse un regnante atto a sostenere insieme l'impero del cuore e quello del

mondo."[402]

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Metastasio's Viennese dramas like *Adriano*

in Siria were perceived as reflecting the essence of the *ancien régime*: Metastasio had earned his

living as a court poet, and his output was unmistakably marked with a heavy philo-imperial

touch. In the 1790s his dramas were retouched to reflect the shifting political realities of the

time. His text *La clemenza di Tito*, for example, first performed in 1734, was originally

intended as a political libretto that would reflect the famed *clementia austriaca* of the Habsburg

dynasty and Charles VI.[403] In 1791 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote his own musical setting

of Metastasio's text, and, as John A. Rice notes, the later *Clemenza di Tito* transferred

Metastasio's philo-imperialism to the later emperor, Leopold II; the allegory of the opera,

which was essentially anti-revolutionary and pro-monarchist, served to warn Leopold's

subjects against the dangers of revolution.[404]

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[402] Jacques Joly, *Dagli Elissi all'Inferno: Il melodramma tra Italia e Francia dal 1730 al 1850* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1990), 86. These figurations of virtuous, enlightened rulers resonated with theories of Enlightenment leadership, such as the notion of enlightened absolutism, which proposed that leaders should embrace reason and foster social progress. However it seems that Metastasio did not fully subscribe to an ideal of enlightened absolutism: as Joly discusses, the librettist straddled the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, engaging with 'old' ideas of the emperor as divine ruler, and with 'new' notions of the empire as social contract: "Parlare di 'ideologia del sovrano virtuoso' è già opporre il poeta cesareo ai contemporanei fautori del 'despota illuminato.' La differenza fondamentale sta nel fatto che per Metastasio il potere è capace di *rigenerarsi da sé*, esclude cioè l'intervento o l'associazione all'esercizio del governo dei corpi intermediari, sui quali il monarca potrebbe appoggiarsi, vale a dire la nobiltà togata, o la frazione più dinamica, ed erede dei valori aristocratici, della borghesia" (Ibid, 85). On enlightened absolutism see John G. Gagliardo, *Enlightened Despotism* (New York: Crowell, 1967); Leo Gershoy, *From Despotism to Revolution, 1763–1789* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944); H.M. Scott, ed., *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1990).

[403] See John A. Rice, "Political Theater in the Age of Revolution: Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*," in *Austria in the Age of the French Revolution, 1789–1815*, ed. Kinley Brauer and William E. Wright (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 133ff.

[404] Ibid, 132; see also Joly, *Dagli Elissi all'Inferno*, 93-94.

While Metastasio's imperialist bent resonated well with later proponents of the *ancien régime*, others took less kindly to his philo-imperialist persona and to the politics of his dramas. Vittorio Alfieri, for example, famously described what he perceived as Metastasio's pedantry and servility in Viennese court: "... quell'adunanza di letterati di libri classici mi parea dover essere una fastidiosa brigata di pedanti. Si aggiunga, che io avendo veduto il Metastasio a Schenbrunn nei giardini imperiali fare a Maria Teresa la genuflessioncella di uso..."[405]

From his little bows at court to the political content of his dramas, Metastasio was constructed and constructed himself as a proponent of imperial power. While his presence in Vienna served to augment his investment in the Empire, he had already been conditioned from his youth to uphold imperial values; already in his time in the Arcadian grove, Metastasio was thinking globally, beyond the confines of pastoralism and the colonies of the Roman Arcadian Academy. His works ultimately resonated more with the political realities of the Habsburg Empire than they did with the imagined literary empire of Arcadia.

L'Angelica, serenata: Empire Trumps Arcadia

Metastasio composed his *Angelica* in 1720, ten years before his appointment to the court in Vienna—yet he had already fixed his gaze on the monarchy, and intended the work as a performance for the celebration of Empress Elizabeth Christine's birthday. In his *licenza* at the end of the *serenata*, Metastasio writes that although he should have composed something in praise of Elizabeth Christine, *augusta Elisa*, nothing he could write would ever do her justice:

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[405] Alfieri, cit. Wandruszka, "Pietro Metastasio e la corte," 293.

Questo è il dì fortunato, augusta Elisa,
In cui la tua grand'alma
Colla terra cambiò l'astro natio.
Ah so ben ch'io dovrei
Sol della glora tua vergar le carte;
Non d'Orlando, e Medoro
Rinnovar le follie, cantar gli amori.
Ma chi ridir potrebbe
Le lodi tue senza far onta al vero?
Forse è minor delitto
Tacere i pregi tuoi, che dirne poco.
Io volentier mi taccio;
Che son de' miei pensieri
Interpreti più fidi
Il silenzio, e 'l rossor, che le parole.[406]

While this apology addresses Metastasio's purpose in omitting the birthday empress from his

drama, it blatantly sidesteps the question of why he decided to compose a work based on

Canto XXIII of *Orlando furioso* for her birthday[407]—and, moreover, why he decided to

compose an *Orlando furioso*-based work for her birthday that depicted a pastoral world in

crisis. The *Angelica*, then, must be explored as a work that dramatizes not only the

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[406] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 136-137.

[407] Metastasio also wrote a defense of his work, addressed to the learned men of Naples, in the preface to the first printed edition of the work: "Come che gli eccellenti e dotti uomini, di cui in ogni facoltà la città di Napoli vie più che ogni altro luogo al presente abbonda, non sogliamo abbassare il loro discernimento al giudizio di cose tanto a loro inferiori; pure, perché ad essi, come a degni giudici e maestri, si dee giustamente ragione di tutto ciò che o per necessità o per elezione vien prodotto alla luce, si studia l'autore di scusare, non già difendere, appo loro, il presente drammatico componimento. E, in vero, egli avrebbe per avventura potuto, per se medesimo, più acconciamente provvedere non meno alla condotta della favola che alla gentilezza dell'espressione; ma il doversi addattare alla soverchia angustia del tempo in cui ha dovuto ed essere scritto dall'autore e posto ancor sulle note, il comporre in un genere di poesia così dall'usato differente, l'incontrare la proprietà e abilità de' rappresentanti, ed infiniti altri legami, che malagevolmente si comprendono da chi non vi si trovi intricato, debbono a buona equità liberarlo dalla apparente taccia di trascuraggine. Coloro però i quali per essere degni giudici dell'altrui produzioni (se pur ve n'ha di tal fatta) di niun'altra cosa s'avvisano abbisognare che di pretenderlo, e, come alcuna cosa esce al pubblico, così la si recano innanzi e sedendo *pro tribunali*, francamente pronunciano sopra il merito delle altrui fatighe, esercitino pure a lor posta l'infelice mestiere di medicar lode dagli altrui difetti. Tanto più che l'autore non ha dato opera al presente componimento per esserne da più reputato, ma per servire al genio di chi si è degnato comandarglielo. E, ove ciò siagli riescito, ad ogni altra sua ragione di buona voglia rinunzia. La favola è tratta, come ognun sa, dall'Ariosto: ma, per comodità della rappresentazione, in alcuna parte alterata..." (*Tutte le opere* II, 1312-1313).

relationship between reason and madness in Arcadia, but also the relationship between an imagined Arcadian empire and the historical empire of the Habsburg line.

Despite the pastoral tropes in the *Angelica* and the presence of pastoral characters, Metastasio's pastoral world in the *serenata* is not a closed Arcadian system: the pastoral countryside is depicted as a space in flux, continually invaded by non-pastoral characters and anti-pastoral ideals. Orlando, Angelica, and (to a lesser extent) Medoro, a trio of worldly others, threaten the purity of the pastoral landscape with their knowledge of the art of deception and their linguistic prowess; with their foreign toolbox they instigate a reign of terror over the shepherds and destabilize their golden-age world.

Angelica, the *serenata*'s namesake, is the prime manipulator of the pastoral system. She opens the drama by rooting her love for Medoro in the pastoral landscape: "Esci, dal chiuso tetto, / Medoro, idolo mio; fra queste frondi, / Fra quest'erbe novelle, e questi fiori / Odi come susurra, / Dolce scherzando, una leggera auretta, / Che all'odorate piante, / Lieve fuggendo, i più bei spirti invola, / E nel confuso errore / Forma da mille odori un solo odore."[408] The opening dialogue between Angelica and Medoro resonates with amorous pastoral tropes and naturalist imagery; in the following scene, the true pastoral lovers, Licori and Tirsi, mirror Angelica and Medoro's dialogue. Yet the appearance of Orlando sends the placid pastoral love world into disorder: once Angelica hears of the knight's arrival, she switches gears, morphing from a pastoral lover into a master of deception. "Nasconditi, Medor," she commands, "saprò ben io / Con guardi, e vezzi teneri, e fallaci / Lusingarlo."[409] She approaches Orlando with amorous verses, speaking of their shared love and inviting him

[408] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 111.

[409] Ibid, 119.

to remove his armor. Medoro and Licori observe the scene and, through theatrical asides, express their shock at Angelica's skill in manipulating Orlando. Medoro laments, "Ancor che finto sia, pur mi dà pena / Questo suo favellar," then, "Aimè, troppo s'avanza," "Angelica, mio Nume, / Sembran troppo veraci i detti tuoi," and finally, "Meglio è partir, che tollerar tal pena."[410] Licori comments on the strangeness of Angelica's behavior, pointing to her role as a foreigner: she states, "Ve' quanti amanti, / Benché schive, e ritrose, / Sanno acquistar le cittadine ninfe!" and later "Che cruda, Ma leggiadra fierezza!" Upon Orlando's departure from the scene, Licori questions Angelica, "Così dunque s'impara / Nelle cittadi ad ingannar gli amanti?" Angelica responds, "Semplicetta Licori, / Ami, e l'arte d'amar sì poco intendi? / Apprendi prima ad ingannare, apprendi."[411] Licori closes the scene with an aria: "Non so come si possa / Far vezzi, e non amar, / Piangere, e sospirar / Senza tormento. / Come saprò fallace / Narrar mentito amor, / Se pria dentro il mio cor / Amor non sento?"[412] Over the course of this brief scene, Angelica proves herself as both a master and teacher of deception, providing the simplistic shepherdess Licori with an education in how to feign love.

Angelica's didacticism pervades the following scenes, as Licori learns how to fashion herself into a false lover; Angelica employs Licori, the student of amorous manipulation, to divert Orlando's attention with her newfound skills. During the opening scene of the second part of the *serenata*, Licori, still unclear on how to entrap Orlando, beseeches Medoro, "Dimmi che far io debba / Perchè Orlando il mio amor non prenda a vile; / Ed anch'io cercherò farmi gentile." Medoro responds, "Angelica abbastanza / A finger t'insegnò

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[410] Ibid, 120.

[411] Ibid, 119-120.

[412] Ibid, 121.

parole, e sguardi. / Digli, che avvampi, ed ardi, / Che lontana da lui pace non trovi; / Dì, che brami pietà; sospira, e mesci / Di qualche lagrimetta / Quelle amorose note."[413] Angelica and Medoro promote a poetics of artifice, in which words can be molded and manipulated like weapons: in the case of Orlando, Licori can craft her speech into a discourse of poetic love and entrap him with her feigned sighs and tears.

The juxtaposition between Licori's ingenuousness and Angelica and Medoro's verbal craftiness points to a conflict that broadly defines the *Angelica*—that is, the battle between nature and artifice. Licori and Tirsi stand as the quintessential pastoral pair, unwaveringly natural in their speech and mannerisms. Angelica and Medoro, to the contrary, are the embodiment of artifice, in that they successfully shift character and discourse to achieve their ends.[414] Before her departure from the pastoral scene, Angelica gifts Licori with a bracelet that celebrates the triumph of artifice over nature:

> Da me ricevi in dono
> Questo, che il manco braccio
> M'adorna e cinge, aureo legame. In lui
> Il minor pregio è la ricchezza. Offerva
> Con qual maestra mano
> L'artefice prudente
> Le gemme all'oro attentamente unio;
> Talchè non ben distingui
> Se le congiunse o la natura, o l'arte.[415]

Licori, once alone with the metallic symbol of artifice, laments her fall from the purity of nature, invoking the legacy of her shepherd father:

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[413] Ibid, 123.

[414] This depiction of Angelica and Medoro as masters of artifice reverses Ariosto's characterizations: in *Orlando furioso*, the lovers are bound in pastoral simplicity, not rhetorical prowess.

[415] Ibid, 128.

Questo è il metallo infame,
Di cui parlando il genitor talvolta,
Fuggi, disse, o Licori,
Quei fallaci splendori.
Coll'insidie, e le risse
Ei nacque a un parto solo; egli si fece
Indegno prezzo d'innocenti affetti;
E i maritali letti
Furon per lui talor tragiche scene.
Me beata, e felice,
Che di lui non mi curo
Ornar le membra, o riempir la mano.
Quei limpidetti umori,
Quei semplicetti fiori,
Che m'offre il prato, e 'l fiumicello in dono;
I fregi miei, le mie ricchezze sono.[416]

Licori and Tirsi are ultimately divided in the antepenultimate scene of the *serenata*: Tirsi

departs with Angelica and Medoro, leaving behind his grieving lover. While they engage in

their usual amorous pastoral tropes, the scene is littered with doubt: Licori begs, "Deh non

far più, ben mio, / Oltraggio co' sospetti alla mia fede," and Tirsi responds, "Io temer non

vorrei; / Ma tu sei troppo vaga, io troppo amante."[417] Because of Licori's education in poetic

artifice, her words can no longer be trusted as true and natural: the purity of her speech,

once a synecdoche for the naturalism of the pastoral landscape, has been corrupted by

Angelica and Medoro's imported linguistic craft. Having learned to feign love with Orlando,

she can no longer produce the natural love tropes that were once her only mode of

expression. Licori's discursive fall from the pastoral grove speaks broadly to a notion of the

inevitable failure of any pastoral system: she proves that nature cannot be isolated from

artifice—that the idea of a hermetically sealed pastoral grove is nothing but an unsustainable

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[416] Ibid, 128-129.

[417] Ibid, 132.

fantasy. The Arcadian ideal of a return to a golden age of pastoral simplicity is simply

impossible in the real realm of the constructed baroque world.

Metastasio's depiction of the triumph of artifice over nature draws directly from the

baroque poetics of Giambattista Marino: in *Le Delizie,* Canto VII of the *Adone*, Marino stages

a scene in which Adonis and Venus take respite in the garden of the ear, a sensual *locus*

amoenus. In a theatrical setting of sensory totality, they listen to songs and stories told by

Mercury and others. Mercury tells of a duel between a nightingale and a lutenist: at the

beginning of the contest, he recounts, the two blend harmoniously in lament. However the

harmony quickly descends into a discordant competition: the lutenist, scornful of the duel,

begins to scratch at the lute's strings with his nail.[418] The nightingale, described as "di Natura

infaticabil mostro," repeats the sound with his beak, challenging the lutenist's technical

artistry with his own abilities. The lutenist pushes his artifice to its extreme: he employs a

vast range of virtuosic techniques, including key-changes, scales, fugal patterns,

syncopations, and trills. Finally he resorts to an execution of war-like music, challenging

natural harmonies with unnatural discord and loud sounds; the bird is unable to repeat the

bellicose sonorities and dies, exhausted and weak. Marino interjects, through the narration of

Mercury, that, "Maestria tale ed arteficio tanto / Semplice e natural non cape un canto."[419]

This tale of the duel between a representative of nature (the nightingale) and a represent of

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[418] Alessandro Piccinini, in his treatise *Intavolatura di liuto, et di chitarrone* (1623), describes precisely this technique
of scratching the lute's strings. See Victor Coelho, "Marino's 'Toccata' between the Lutenist and the
Nightingale," in *The Sense of Marino: Literature, Fine Arts and Music of the Italian Baroque*, ed. Francesco Guardiani
(Ottawa: Legas, 1994), 400.

[419] Marino, *L'Adone* (Milan: Mondadori, 1976), VII, 53 (7-8).

human artifice (the lutenist) evidences that man, with his technical capabilities, can surpass that very nature from which he is derived.[420]

Even the setting of Metastasio's *serenata* resonates with Marino's *Adone*: Metastasio writes, "La Scena si finge in un giardino di una casa di delizie in campagna, nelle vicinanze di Parigi."[421] The *Angelica* takes place neither in the open pastureland of the original scene from *Orlando furioso*, nor in the golden-age Arcadian grove; instead, Metastasio locates his *serenata* in a garden of a *casa di delizie*, enclosing his drama in an artificial, sumptuous space typical of the Baroque period, akin to the garden of delights in the *Adone*.[422]

In previous theatrical settings of *Orlando furioso* in the Settecento, the mad Orlando served as an antithesis to Arcadian reason: in Braccioli's text he raged through the literary canon, and

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[420] This scene resonates with Book XVI of Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, in which a vocally marvelous bird in Armida's magical garden sings a song of love and death: "Vola fra gli altri un che le piume ha sparte/ di color vari ed ha purpureo il rostro, / e lingua snoda in guisa larga, e parte / la voce sí ch'assembra il sermon nostro. / Questi ivi allor continovò con arte / tanta il parlar che fu mirabil mostro. / Tacquero gli altri ad ascoltarlo intenti, / e fermaro i susurri in aria i venti. / 'Deh mira' egli cantò 'spuntar la rosa / dal verde suo modesta e verginella, / che mezzo aperta ancora e mezzo ascosa, / quanto si mostra men, tanto è piú bella. / Ecco poi nudo il sen già baldanzosa / dispiega; / ecco poi langue e non par quella, / quella non par che desiata inanti / fu da mille donzelle e mille amanti. / Cosí trapassa al trapassar d'un giorno / de la vita mortale il fiore e 'l verde; / né perché faccia indietro april ritorno, / si rinfiora ella mai, né si rinverde. / Cogliam la rosa in su 'l mattino adorno / di questo dí, che tosto il seren perde; / cogliam d'amor la rosa: amiamo or quando / esser si puote riamato amando'" (*GL* XVI, 13-15). The magical bird not only sings beautifully, but actually produces human speech (*il sermon nostro*); he is a liminal figure between the realm of nature and the realm of man, embodying a hybrid essence of animal physicality and human technology. His presence on the magical island of Armida is inherently problematic: the garden of Armida's island is a realm of artifice and the marvelous that mimics the natural realm of the pastoral. The bird vocalist is therefore a physical and sonic embodiment of a tension between nature and artifice.

[421] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 111.

[422] *Case di delizie* or *ville di delizie* were country houses that belonged to nobility in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; they were often opulent and ornate in style. Francois Robert, in his *Dizionario di geografica moderna dell'Enciclopedia metodica di Parigi*, catalogues a *casa di delizie* and its extravagant components: "Vi sono due castelli, uno in fondo alla valle, più antico; l'altro sulla collina e d'architettura moderna. Ne' giardini le acque piane e zampillanti, le cascate, le statue, e tutte sorte d'ornamenti vi sono sparsi a larga mano. Tutto, fino alla chiesa del villaggio, manifesta la suntuosità che accompagnava i passi di M. de Montmartel..." (Robert, *Dizionario di geografia moderna dell'enciclopedia metodica di Parigi* (Rome: Desiderj, 1795), 508). On the aesthetics of the *giardino delle delizie* in Marino, see Renato Barilli, *Dal Boccaccio al Verga: La narrativa italiana in età moderna* (Milan: Bompiani, 2003), 177ff.

in Capece's libretto he proved himself both unnatural monster and unnatural meta-monster. Yet in Metastasio's *serenata* the stakes are radically different, in that the Arcadian setting is nothing more than an artificial, Marinist construction. Orlando's madness in the *Angelica*, rather than juxtaposing the reason of Arcadia, sits in the problematic nexus of nature and artifice: his rage derives from his inability to distinguish between natural and artificial speech, between natural and artificial love, and between natural and artificial emotion. His path toward madness steers him through both Angelica and Licori's feigned affections, imbuing him with a crisis of hermeneutics: he responds to Licori's advances with, "Io non intendo i detti tuoi," and "Forse meco scherzar piace a Licori."[423] His fury derives from a discursive *insania publica*—a muddling of speech that infects the general economy of the play. As in Muratori, Zeno, and Vico's understanding of public madness, the clouded and clouding discourses of the *Angelica* seep from public to private spheres, from broad social confusion to profound personal crises. Orlando's fury is an inevitable product of his environs and the artificial, baroque discourses that surround him.

Orlando finally descends into madness toward the end of the *serenata*, at the sight of Angelica and Medoro's amorous poetry scribbled into a tree: the old shepherd Titiro states, "Se nol credi al mio labbro, / Credilo agli occhi tuoi. Quindi d'intorno / Tronco non v'à, che di lor man non mostri / Impresse queste note: / *Liete piante, verdi erbe, e limpid'acque, / A voi rendon mercè de' lor riposi / Angelica, e Medor amanti, e sposi.*"[424] Once convinced of the veracity of the written words, he delivers his first mad monologue:

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[423] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 124.

[424] Ibid, 129. Titiro's reading of Angelica and Medoro's carved love lyrics begins with a direct quotation from *Orlando furioso* (XXIII, 108. 1).

Perfidissima donna,
Anima senza fede! Or questi sono
Quelli teneri sensi,
Che testè mi giurasti? In questa guisa
Il guideron mi rendi
Degli eccelsi trofei,
Che ò sol per tua cagione
In India, in Media, e in Tartaria lasciato?
Va pur, fuggi ove vuoi;
Cerca del vasto mare
Le riposte caverne, o ti riduci
Nel centro della terra; ovunque vai,
No, che non troverai
Parte così sublime, o sì profonda,
Che all'ira mia, che al mio furor ti asconda.
Ti giungerò, crudele;
Ti sbranerò su gli occhi
L'infame usurpator de' miei contenti;
Il cadavere indegno
Lascierò palpitante ai corvi in preda;
E renderatti a lui,
Se forse più veloce
Verso il regno dell'ombre i passi affretta,
Compagna nel morir la mia vendetta.
    Mi proverà spietato
    Chi mi sprezzò crudel;
    Nè al braccio mio sdegnato
    Potrà rapirti il Ciel.[425]

This initial mad speech is not particularly mad. Orlando rationally declares that Angelica has

deceived him, and then vows his revenge. True madness distorts any understanding of time

and space: Ariosto's Orlando rages aimlessly through the world, Braccioli's Orlando projects

his fury onto remote times and places, and Capece's Orlando immerses himself in the

timeless realm and imagined space of the Underworld. Metastasio's Orlando, in planning his

revenge, maintains a rational understanding of past and future, and of earthly distances. His

vengeful imagery is also firmly rooted in physical reality: rather than plunging his future self

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[425] Ibid, 130-131.

into Underworld waters or envisioning himself as a raging creature, he depicts a gruesome scene in which he, in his function as a human warrior, flays Medoro in front of Angelica and then leaves his pulsing cadaver to be eaten by crows. Never before has the mad Orlando been so aligned with his sane self and in touch with the realities of his world; his crisis of hermeneutics initially leads him not to abstract realms of fury, but rather to a realistic vision of a vengeful future.

Nicola Porpora's musical setting of Orlando's first mad monologue reflects the rationale of the hero's sentiment (see Example 5.1). Porpora sets Orlando's speech as an accompanied recitative, using interjections by the strings to depict the dynamism of his imagined revenge: rapid arpeggios follow Orlando in his future pursuit of Angelica, leaping with him through the depths and heights of his revenge.

Orlando's aria at the end of the scene also conveys his not-quite-mad, revenge-based fury (see Example 5.2). "Mi proverà spietato" functions as a revenge aria: the strings accompany Orlando's anger with thick textures and rapid notes.

Orlando's second mad monologue, which concludes the *serenata*, is markedly madder than his first. The scene takes place after Angelica and Medoro have departed, and after Licori and Tirsi have been separated by their linguistic crisis. Night has fallen, and Orlando wanders through the woods:

> Ove son? Chi mi guida?
> Quest, ch'io calco ardito,
> Son le fauci d'Averno, o son le stelle?
> Le sonanti procelle,

Che mi girano intorno,
Non son dell'Ocean figlie funeste?
Sì sì, dell'Ocean l'onde son queste.
Vedi l'Eufrate, e 'l Tigri,
Come timidi, e pigri
S'arrestano dinanzi al furor mio!
Oh Dio, qual voce, oh Dio,
Quali accenti noiosi!
Angelica, e Medoro amanti, e sposi!
Numi, barbari Numi,
Angelica dov'è, perchè s'asconde?
Rendetela ad Orlando, o ch'io sdegnato
Farò con una scossa
Fin da' cardini suoi crollare il cielo;
Confonderò le sfere,
Farò del mondo una scomposta mole,
Toglierò il corso agli astri, i raggi al Sole.
Infelice, che dissi!
Misero, che pensai!
Io volger contro il Ciel la destra, il brando!
Crudo Amor! Donna ingrata! e folle Orlando!
Deh lasciatemi in pace;
Che volete da me, maligne stelle?
Ah sì, ben io v'intendo:
Quei sanguinosi lampi,
Quelle infauste comete
Son dell'ira del Ciel nunzi crudeli.
Partite; io del suo sdegno
Il ministro farò. Vuol ch'io mi svella
Dalle fauci la lingua? o che col ferro
A quest'alma dolente apra la via?
Il farò volentier. Brama ch'io mora?
Orlando morirà: vi basta ancora?
   Da me che volete,
   Infauste comete?
   Non più, ch'io mi sento
   L'inferno nel sen.[426]

Deprived of the light of day, Orlando plunges further into his own internal darkness and

loses his sense of spatial and temporal reality: he no longer understands himself to be in the

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[426] Ibid, 135-136.

pastoral grove, but rather at the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, or perhaps at the banks

of Hell itself. He turns his eyes to the stars, and, just as he had struggled to interpret the

meaning of Angelica and Licori's words, he struggles to decode the night sky. Like a failed

Dantean hero, incapable of reading the physical signs of the heavens, Orlando decides that

the stars are the messengers of divine rage, rather than divine love. Yet there is still hope for

Orlando's enlightenment and revival from his madness: among the stars he spots a benign

light, stating, "Ma qual astro benigno / Fra l'orror della notte a me risplende? / Chi la pace

mi rende?"[427] This new star could shed the light of reason on Orlando and restore him to his

wits, just like the light of the torch in Braccioli's *Orlando furioso*. But instead, Orlando, still lost

in his love madness, projects an image of Angelica onto the light: he is trapped in the realm

of illusion, and is unable to distinguish between the true light of reason and the mirage of his

own fury.

Porpora's musical setting highlights Orlando's celestial turbulence through a series of

technical devices in the strings (see Example 5.3): whereas in the previous mad recitative

Porpora had depicted the dynamism of the hero's movements through arpeggios and leaps

in register, during the second recitative the composer roots Orlando in a kind of anxious

stasis, relying on tremolos (a vibration of the bow on one note) and repeated arpeggiated

chords[428] to achieve an aesthetic that is at once static and other-worldly.

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[427] Ibid, 136.

[428] The arpeggios here differ from those in Orlando's previous mad recitative because of their repetition: whereas the earlier arpeggios achieved ascents and descents in pitch, these are simply repeated and therefore lead nowhere.

Orlando concludes the opera with mad but formulaically amorous verses:

Ah sì, tu sei,
Angelica, cor mio. Ma tu paventi?
Vieni, vieni: ove fuggi?
Più sdegnato con te, cara, non sono;
Torna, torna ad amarmi, e ti perdono.
Aurette leggiere,
Che intorno volate,
Tacete, fermate,
Che torna il mio ben.[429]

His final arioso, when taken in isolation, contains no indications of mad speech or mad behavior; even Porpora's music casts Orlando's sentiments as a simple love lament in ¾ time (see Example 5.4).

Orlando's address of the *Aurette leggiere* belongs to the aesthetics of a pastoral lover like Licori, not to a mad knight who just a few scenes earlier had vowed to flay Medoro and feed his corpse to the crows. Orlando's madness resides precisely in this dissonance: having been conditioned by the artifice of amorous pastoral language, he, in his rage, dons the veneer of a gentle pastoral lover. The pastoral mode can offer him no salvation, but can only drape his madness in coded golden-age lyricism. Orlando, at the end of the *Angelica*, is still mad, unenlightened, unresolved; Arcadia, with its mix of Marinist and naturalist tropes, with its Enlightenment aesthetics and promise of a new dawn, is unable to restore him to reason.[430]

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[429] Metastasio, *Tutte le opere* II, 136.

[430] Harris discusses this lack of resolution in the Metastasian libretto, and points to a later adaptation of the libretto (1739) by Giovanni Battista Pescetti that sidesteps the fate of Orlando even more dramatically: Pescetti's version ends, Harris writes, "with the lovers' decision to flee, which we are to assume they do safely. Orlando thus becomes even more the anonymous satyr than he had been in Metastasio's original text."

Yet the ending of the *Angelica* is not a true ending: Metastasio follows Orlando's mad

pastoral arioso with the *licenza* addressed to Empress Elizabeth Christine. He praises her

virtuous character and deposits her on a mythological plane, depicting the *Austriaco Nume* as

a light that radiates throughout the world. The *licenza* ends with a chorus, accompanied in

Porpora's score with a grandiose, celebratory ensemble of strings, oboe, horns and trumpet:

Coro I

In così lieto dì
Ride sereno il ciel,
Nè turba oscuro vel
Del Sol la face.

Coro II

In così lieto dì
Più bello il mondo appar,
E nel suo letto il mar
Senz'onda giace.

Tutti

Di Elisa al dolce nome
L'erbetta il suol riveste,
Tacciono le tempeste,
E l'aura tace.[431]

The true *lieto fine* of the *serenata* is achieved not through the dramatic action itself, but

through the august presence of the Empress on her birthday. It is she who calms the sky and

the sea, quiets the storms and the winds; it is she who wipes away mad mirages and calms

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Pescetti's libretto is the only known adaptation of Metastasio's source text that employs this particular ending. See Harris, "Eighteenth-Century Orlando," 117-118.

[431] Ibid, 137-138.

the violent world of Orlando and his pastoral crisis; it is she who, in Gravinian terms, serves to *sgombrare le pazzie*. The Empress, unlike Arcadia, offers salvation, restoration, reason: as a representative of the Empire, she holds the key to an enlightened future.

Metastasio, the famed Arcadian reformer of eighteenth-century opera, was thus only nominally Arcadian, adhering to pastoralism only as an aesthetic veneer: his true style and true aesthetic were rooted not in the Arcadian grove, but in the enlightened lands of the Empire. Through his depiction of Orlando in the *Angelica*, he demonstrated that any attempt to seek enlightenment or reason elsewhere—particularly in the utopian pastoral setting of Arcadia—was simply madness.

CONCLUSION

Here I turn once again to Ellen T. Harris's categories of operatic Orlando in the eighteenth

century: the hero, the satyr, and the fool. This dissertation has probed the valences of

Orlando in his heroic iterations: Grazio Braccioli's *Orlando furioso* (1713) and *Orlando finto*

pazzo (1714), analyzed in Chapter 3, depict Orlando as a madman, real or feigned, that,

despite of (or perhaps in virtue of) his madness, manages to save the day. His specific brand

of heroism is not simply an expression of epic, or of romance, or even of narrative:

Braccioli's Orlando is also a meta-hero, an encapsulation of Arcadian meditations on literary

genre. Carlo Sigismondo Capece's *L'Orlando ovvero la gelosa pazzia* (1711), discussed in Chapter

4, depicts Orlando as a satyr—a monster (and therefore spectacle), reminiscent of the

cyclops Polyphemus, always on the fringes of Angelica and Medoro's golden-age world.

Capece produces monstrous imagery without plunging the drama itself into the (meta-)realm

of the monstrous: his Orlando envisions Underworld scenes, and rages, dismembered,

disjointed, othered, through the scenes, but the scenes themselves adhere to a

Crescimbenian vision of a perfect, tasteful pastoral play. Handel's London adaptation of

Capece's libretto (*Orlando*, 1733) makes meta-monstrous the thematically monstrous, adding

comedic and magical zombies that were antithetical to Arcadian ideals: Handel's

manipulation of the characters of Dorinda and Zoroastro pollutes the theatrical purity of

Capece's drama, rendering it appropriately spectacular for London audiences. As discussed

in Chapter 5, Metastasio's *Angelica* also depicts Orlando as a satyr figure: a pastoral Other,

Orlando is pushed so far to the fringes of narrative that he is altogether absent from the title.

Metastasio plays with the depiction of the pastoral and the tangential movements of

Orlando, the unresolved and unresolvable madman, in order to display the prepotency of imperial power and subtly critique the ideals of the Arcadian world. These eighteenth-century operatic iterations of Orlando as hero and satyr are emblematic of Arcadian questions—questions of genre, literary legitimacy, cultural proliferation, social and political anxiety. They are the iterations of Orlando as Arcadian intertext, molded in the groves and on the stages of an age of reason and good taste.

But one of Harris's categories is conspicuously absent from this dissertation: Orlando the fool. This lacuna is not intended as a negation of the category: Orlando was indeed an operatic fool, and a popular one—so much so that by the end of the eighteenth century, nearly all traces of the serious Orlando had been reworked into comedy. An outgrowth of the Neapolitan *opera buffa* tradition, operatic Orlando first graced comic stages in Naples in 1735, with Francesco Antonio Tullio's *Angelica e Orlando*, set to music by Gaetano Latilla.[432] The comic Orlando that we know best today, however, comes from later in the eighteenth century: Carlo Francesco Badini penned the comic *La pazzia di Orlando* in London in 1771; in 1775 Nunziato Porta revised the libretto as *Orlando paladino*, a text that was most famously set to music in 1782 by composer Franz Joseph Haydn at Esterháza. Porta and Haydn's Orlando is a fool, as Harris notes, because he is pitiful: in a quixotic, gender-bending adaptation of the famed *arme* and *amori*, he mistakes the shepherdess Eurilla for his nemesis Medoro, and woos his squire Pasquale, thinking that he is Angelica. Alcina, moreover, who is recast in *Orlando paladino* as a beneficent sorceress, flicks Orlando about from idyllic grove to castle to the Underworld: she has him caged, transformed into stone

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[432] Arcadian librettist Domenico Lalli wrote a tragicomic *La pazzia d'Orlando* (Venice, 1715), following the success of Braccioli and Vivaldi's *Furioso* collaborations at the Teatro Sant'Angelo; I exclude this work from my discussion, however, because of its prose form. See Döring, *Ariostos "Orlando Furioso,"* 230ff; See Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *A New Chronology of Venetian Opera and Related Genres, 1660–1760* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 567.

and back again, and takes him to be dunked by Charon in the river Lethe (thus there is no enlightenment at the end of the opera—Orlando simply forgets his troubles). And Pasquale, the squire, laments, in pure comic fashion, his perpetual hunger. *Orlando paladino* draws from tropes of *opera seria* but ultimately transmutes the drama of the *Furioso*—the heroism, the unrequited love, the question of man's essence and ontology—into quixotic buffoonery.

Comic Orlando landed in late-eighteenth-century opera also in fragmented form: in Lorenzo Da Ponte's comic opera *Così fan tutte* (1790), set to music by Mozart, the soldier and lover Guglielmo announces in his aria "Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo"[433] that "Un Orlando innamorato / Non è niente in mio confronto; / Un Medoro il sen piagato / Verso Lui per nulla io conto."[434] The aria devolves into a hyperbolic parody of classical and contemporary references:

> Son di foco i miei sospiri
> Son di bronzo i suoi desiri,
> Se si parla poi di merto
> Certo io sono e egli è certo
> Che gli uguali non si trovano
> Da Vienna al Canadà,
> Siam due Cresi per ricchezza,
> Due Narcisi per bellezza
> In amor i Marcantoni
> Verso noi sarian buffoni
> Siam più forti d'un ciclopo,
> Letterati al par di Esopo.[435]

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[433] Mozart ultimately replaced "Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo" with another aria, "Non siate ritrosi." See Bruce Alan Brown, *Così fan tutte* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press 1995), Chapter 2.

[434] Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Così fan tutte* I.3 (aria 15a), cit. Daniel Heartz, *Mozart's Operas*, ed. Thomas Bauman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Appendix (251-252).

[435] Ibid.

Guglielmo places Orlando and Medoro next to Croesus, Narcissus, Marc Anthony, Aesop, a cyclops, and Canada; the *Furioso* rivals are threaded into an absurd collection of misfits, intellectuals, rulers, lovers, and distant lands.[436]

I exclude these comic adaptations and appropriations of Orlando from this dissertation because they are decidedly un-Arcadian. Comic Orlando is itself an Arcadian oxymoron: such a lofty figure, in Arcadian theory, could be treated only with the seriousness owed to the greatest of tragic heroes. And, anyway, comedy had no place in the Arcadian imagination: it was, as Crescimbeni and other like-minded shepherds argued, a vulgar relic of the Baroque age. Toward the end of the century, however, once Arcadian reform had been itself subject to reform and scrutiny, Orlando, in his serious permutations, no longer served as a symbol of the century, and no longer embodied debates about language, literature, and sovereignty. His multiform madness, once so pertinent to the ethos of an enlightened age, became itself fragmented, diffused, dissolved into parody, dissected for its humorous bits. Comic Orlando was the by-product of a waning Arcadian shelf life.

Foucault's words ultimately hold true for the end of the eighteenth century and the replacement of the serious, Arcadian madman with the anti-Arcadian (or, at the very least, un-Arcadian) mad fool: "the man of tragedy and the man of madness confront each other, without a possible dialogue, without a common language; for the former can utter only the decisive words of being, uniting in a flash the truth of light and the depth of darkness; the

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[436] In Da Ponte's early version of the aria, he references 'Sebeto,' an ancient name for Naples, in place of Vienna. See Brown, *Così fan tutte*, 17.
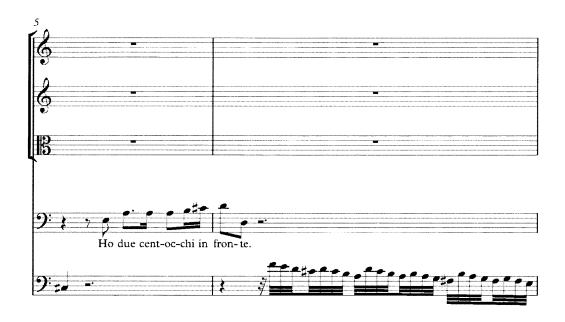
latter endlessly drones out the indifferent murmur which cancels out both the day's chatter

and the lying dark."[437] Arcadia, vis-à-vis operatic Orlando, offered temporary dialogue,

momentary dialogic interstices, but no lasting resolution of the tapestry of madness in an

enlightened age.

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[437] Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 108.

Ex. 3.1: "Ho cento vanni al tergo," *Orlando furioso* (II.15)

Ho due cent-oc-chi in fron-te.

e nel furor ch'ho in sen, m'ad - dir al - men - al - men con mil - le cu - o -

ri. So - pra quei van - ni io m'er - go

vo lo dal pi-a-no al mon-te. Que - l-e - pu -pil le io gi-i- ro.

Con tut-ti cuor, con tut-ti____ cuor sos-pi - i - ro._____

Oc-chi, van-ni, fu-ro - r, cuo-ri, oh mar - to-ro! A-manti e

spo - si,   An - ge - li - ca,   e Me - do - ro!

Ex. 3.2: "Ma non ne troverai altri due ladri," *Orlando finto pazzo* (II.10)

ma non ne tro-ve - rai cer-to du-e al-tri la-dri, e al pari di loro as - tu-ti e scaltri

Ex. 3.3: "Ella al suon de' sospiri," *Orlando finto pazzo* (II.10)

ella al suon de' sospi - ri dan -za - va all it - al - ia - na un bal-lo in ari-a

e chie-de-rà pie-ta-de a quan-ti De-i già ad-or-a ne' templi i Padri Ach - e - i

Ex. 3.4: "Io mi mossi pietoso," *Orlando finto pazzo* (II.10)

Io mi mos-si pie-to-so,   e a con-fes-sarti il vero anch-am-o-ro-so;   che nel cuor di un

Er-oe qual sai ch'è Orlando, col man-ti-ce,   col fuo-co,   e il zolfa-rel-lo   sta semp-re in__

Example 3.5: "E l'abbato, atterro Oringo," *Orlando finto pazzo* (II.10)

Ex. 4.1: "Gieroglifici eterni," *Orlando* (I.1)

Ex. 4.2: "Amor è qual vento," *Orlando* **(III.5)**

mm. 26-39

re,

Ex. 4.3: "Ecco la stigia barca," *Orlando* (II.11)

Ec-co la sti-gia bar-ca,   di Car-on-te   a di-spet-to   già sol-co l'on-de,

già sol-co   l'on-de ne-re.

Ec-co di Plu-to le affu-mi-ca-te sogl-ie, e l'ar-so let-to!

Ex. 4.4: "Già latra Cerbero," *Orlando* (II.11)

mm. 1-10

Già lat-ra Cer - ber-o,   già lat-ra Cer be-ro,

e già dell' E - re - bo   o-gni ter- ri - bi-le   squal- li-da   fu-ri - a

sen vien a me,   sen vien a me,   sen vien a me!

Ex. 5.1: "Ovunque vai," *Angelica* **(II)**

O vun-que vai___ no che non tro-ve - rai parte co-si sub-bli me___

o si pro-fon - da che all' ira mi - a al mio furor as-con da.

ti giun-ge-rò cru-de - le,   ti sbra-ne-rò sugl' occhi l'in-

fa-me usur-pa tor de miei con-ten - ti   e il cada-vero in-deg no   las ce rò pal-pi

Ex. 5.2: "Mi proverà spietato," *Angelica* (II)

mm. 1-2

Ex. 5.3: "Ove son," *Angelica* (II)

O-ve son,   chi mi gui- da?   ques'te ch'io cal-co ar - di-to   son le fau-ci d'Av-er-no,

o   son   le   stel - le?   Le son-an - ti pro-cel - le,   che mi

Ex. 5.4: "Aurette leggiere," *Angelica* (II)

mm. 1-6

Au - ret - te leg - gie-re ch'in -tor-no vo -la — — — — te,

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