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Vows and Violence in the Medieval and Early Modern Chivalric
Romances of France, Italy, and Spain

by

Alani Rosa Hicks-Bartlett

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Romance Languages and Literatures

and Medieval Studies

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender, and Sexuality

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Timothy Hampton, Chair

Professor Emily Bergmann

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Abstract

Vows and Violence in the Medieval and Early Modern Chivalric
Romances of France, Italy, and Spain

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Alani Rosa Hicks-Bartlett

Doctor of Philosophy in Romance Languages and Literatures

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In *Vows and Violence in the Medieval and Early Modern Chivalric Romances of France, Italy, and Spain* I offer a comparative humanistic analysis of seminal works from the medieval and early modern periods, focusing on the relationship between vows and violence in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish literatures. By analyzing the complexity of vows and their susceptibility to failure, I situate broken vows as a textual screen through which any discussion of authority, gender, and religious and racial difference must be read. My focus is threefold: on vows as a speech act intensely revelatory of an individual's understanding of the self and other and the gendered and racialized dynamics implicated therein; on the violence, be it literal or metaphorical, physical or epistemological, which explodes when vows are mismanaged and broken; and finally, on authorial confessions of a pessimistic understanding of vows that further undermines the relationship between self and other, the propensity of actants to violence, and the relationship between text and reader.

Studying medieval literature, in chapter 1, I discuss how the complexity of vows and their susceptibility to failure is dramatized in Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (≈1225/30-1270). The question of faithful representation and narratological promises that each of the Rose's authors

negotiate through the mechanism of an oneiric framework calls attention to the frequent indecipherability of reality and fiction, truth and lies. These themes are further exemplified by the *Rose*'s recurrence to Classical Latin intertexts. The use of two exemplary myths—the story of Narcissus and the story of Pygmalion—are strategically presented by each of the *Rose*'s two authors as self-reflexive commentaries on the fidelity of representation, the mutability and moldability of language, and the actantial capacities of authorial and creational roles.

Responding to the medieval tradition prepared by the *Rose* while recodifying said inheritance, my argument in chapters 2 through 4 focuses on the moral and gendered implications of vow-making and -breaking in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516), Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), and Miguel de Cervantes's *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605 and 1615), respectively. Often displaced upon or metaphorized by an incursive female presence, the broken vows featured in the aforementioned texts all spark highly nuanced discussions of the paradoxically threatening and alluring, volatile and vulnerable position of those who articulate promises, as well as those who believe in promises, and who are thus bound by them. Since promises are so often broken, they foment an epistemologically unstable environment, and a dubious sense of selfhood. Not only do they pose a specific threat to familial, political, 'national,' and religious identity, they destabilize the promises articulated by authors. Consequently, failed narratological promises disabuse readers of their faith in authorial integrity and present a bleak understanding of the individual as isolated and vulnerable in a world where faith and trust have failed. Indeed, the faltering faith caused by defective vows catalyzes psychic fragmentation and vulnerability that can only end in extreme violence or a latent pessimism that is not easily lifted, as the genre of early modern chivalric romance so vividly portrays.

~For Sir Marcus~

*"You are the bread and the knife
The crystal goblet and the wine.
You are the dew on the morning grass
The burning wheel of the sun."*

~Billy Collins, "Litany"

*"For wilderness is our first home too, and in our wild
ride into modernity with all its concerns and problems
we need also all the good attachments to that origin
that we can keep or restore."*

*"Come with me into the woods where spring is
advancing, as it does, no matter what,
not being singular or particular, but one
of the forever gifts, and certainly visible."*

*See how the violets are opening, and the leaves
unfolding, and the streams gleaming and the birds
singing. What does it make you think of?"*

*"We meet wonderful people, but lose them
in our busyness.
We're, as the saying goes, all over the place."*

**~Mary Oliver, "The Summer Beach"; "Bazougey";
"How It Is with Us, and How It Is with Them"**

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Many other scholars have been invaluable interlocutors and mentors: I thank Paul Colilli and Diana Iuele-Colilli for their immense generosity, as well as their brilliance, enthusiasm for literature, language, and teaching, and for their dedicated care over many years: “Dico ch'ad ora ad ora,/ vostra mercede, i' sento in mezzo l'alma/ una dolcezza inusitata et nova,/ la qual ogni altra salma/ di noiosi pensier' disgombrava allora,/ sí che di mille un sol vi si ritrova:/ quel tanto a me, non piú, del viver giova.” The same must be said about Grace Armstrong, Janet Doner, Nicholas Patruno, María Cristina Quintero, Roberta Ricci, and Enrique Sacerio-Gari, who were my earliest and most robust sources of inspiration: “Ya que este favor excede/ Tanto a todos, al lograrse,/ Que no sólo no pagarse,/ Mas ni agradecer se puede”; I could never repay them or thank them enough for their generosity, direction, and rigor. Similarly, Mireille Caille-Gruber, Jean Canavaggio, Antonio Carreño, Mario Domenichelli, Anibal González-Perez, Carmen de la Guardia, Ernesto Livorni, Dacia Maraini, Anthony Oldcorn, Donato Santeramo have been benevolent yet rigorous guides who have generously offered advice and instruction. I am particularly thankful for the guidance of support of Laura Nelson and Charis Thompson, and I also thank Verónica López and Althea Grannum-Cummings for their munificent attention, and dedicated administrative, and bureaucratic help.

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* * *

“Voi, buona Gente, che con lieta cera
Mi siete stati intenti ad ascoltare,
Crediate che l'istoria è bella e vera;
Ma io non l'ho saputa raccontare.
Paruta vi saria d'altra maniera
Vaga e leggiadra, s'io sapea cantare.
Ma vaglia il buon voler, s'altro non lice;
E chi la leggerà, viva felice.”

* * *

As I, were I some wanderer through
The darkest woods to deliver this to you,
A thesis done by candlelight and flame,
Though warrant would it I not by name.
Or perhaps a thesis done by electric bulb and scorn,
In which ideas went to die, or were left unborn,
This little bit provided, sad dinner for a fool,
Contains, within, the long-withered fruit of school.
So now, this student, who still forsakes the goal,
Has to her name but books, and heaps of coal,
Yet if, by chance, this tome's decent in half a measure,
Then please, kind reader, take this as my sole treasure.

* * *

”עס ענדיקט זיך דער הלום.

מיר טרעטן אַרײַן אין דער וואָר.

INTRODUCTION:
The Violence of Deceit: Malleable Vows, Didactic Failures, and the
'Promise' of Correction

*¡Oh tú, que aquestas fábulas leíste:
si lo secreto dellas contemplaste,
verás que son de la verdad engaste,
que por tu gusto tal disfraz se viste!*

-Miguel de Cervantes, *Novelas ejemplares*,
"Soneto de Juan de Solís Mejía,
Gentilhombre cortesano, a los
lectores," (vv.1-4) [Fol.XIIv]

In "Vows and Violence in the Medieval and Early Modern Chivalric Romances of France, Italy, and Spain," I take a comparative humanistic approach to seminal works from the medieval and early modern periods to analyze the fragility of vows and a mounting skepticism towards professions of faith that develops as the medieval period transitions to the early modern period. The primary works under consideration are: Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (≈1225/30-1270), Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516), Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), and Miguel de Cervantes's *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605). Central to the politics of nationhood, gender, and sexuality, I argue that it was due to an awareness of the violability of vows along with medieval and early modern preoccupations with alterity that made trust-based relationships such as political alliances, marriage, and authorial promises the stage upon which, in all of these works, the dramatic mechanics of vow-making and -breaking were theorized.

First, demonized as they were by the religious doctrines, moral philosophy, and prescriptive literature of the period, wives and beloved ladies were easily cast as scapegoats because of the failing and broken vows that were often foisted upon them. As these women were frequently portrayed as the catalysts that inspired said broken vows, the instability they came to represent was suggestive of political, identitary, and authorial insolvency. The need for the mitigation of their damaging effect on others, or their "elimination," so to speak, thus came to signify the

necessary purgation of societal ills through cathartic sacrifice. Second, a burgeoning awareness of the precarious relationship of the individual to the surrounding world developed in conjunction with a growing acknowledgement of the difficulty of enforcing vows and maintaining truth-based relationships. Indeed, the most dramatic scenes of epistemological, spiritual, and religious disorientation occur precisely when characters are forced to grapple with the vicious ramifications occasioned by failed promises and mislaid faith. Finally, the fragile grasp that individuals have on upholding vows and the risks that supervene—for example, the risk to honor, authority, and familial integrity—are dramatized by the fraught relationship between authors and readers, due to the faulty and manipulative textual promises that authors make. Given their opening assurance that their narratological intention is to instruct and aid without sparking discord or leading their readers astray, the capability that authors have to cause their readers harm or cause them to become disoriented and disillusioned if their authorial promises fail dramatizes the correlation between broken vows, destruction, and explosive violence.

In the present study, I isolate examples of vow-making and vow-breaking to contextualize the relationship of broken promises to familial, political, and national failure, particularly given the feudal context heavily circumscribed by vows and obligation from which they emerge. This orientation serves as a framework that elucidates the connection between vows and violence, between problems of faith and moments of epistemological incertitude that can only be mitigated through physical aggression, or through the reparation or extirpation of the bonds and social attachments that hinge upon articulated promises. I examine how the various implications of the scapegoat do much more than straddle the binary between beneficial and restorative, and deleterious and noxious; the scapegoat's ambiguity calls into question rhetorical representations of broken vows and corporal violence while encompassing the tense relationship between Self and Other.

Following J.R. Searle in *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, as one of the fundamental units of verbal communication (16), vows and promises are speech acts with a catalyzing functionality in that they are oriented towards future actions and forge future obligations from the moment of their declaration. In J.L. Austin's triadic division of performative utterances into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, which are presented in his posthumously published *How to Do Things with Words*, it is the perlocutionary level of speech which reveals both the probable intentionality of a given utterance, as well as the effect it ultimately has upon the hearer (14). In terms of this effect upon the person unto whom the vow is made, and the obligatory responsibilities that are subsequently owed, the correlation between vows, their maintenance, and the fragility of the relationship between promissor and promisee determine the degree of obligation and indebtedness that individuals in contractual agreements have towards one another. In turn, this conditions how promissor and promisee regard epistemologically vital issues such as faith, knowledge, and certitude—pivotal

issues at the core of the *Roman de la Rose*, the *Orlando furioso*, the *Gerusalemme liberata*, and *Don Quijote*.

In each of these primary texts, as the facile degradation of promises frustrates faith while impeding stability and certitude, the causal relationship of broken promises to larger manifestations of discord develops. Indeed, while maintained promises encourage a frequently tyrannical dependency, broken promises are necessarily aligned with rupture, disorientation, and failure. Vows are undermined by what structural linguists would later understand as the Saussurian “*arbitraire du signe*” (100), or, via Émile Benveniste’s insistence, in his critique of Saussure offered in his article “*Nature du signe linguistique*,” as the need to consider the referent, or “*l’objet*” in order to understand how a word functions contextually. Vows are also undermined by the instability of identity evidenced through questionable political fidelities and allegiances to authority. On the rare occasions in which vows are indeed appropriately made, they are frequently mobilized to signal moments of: impending disruption that leads to epistemological doubt; a heightening of ‘Inquisitorial’ and interrogational anxieties; and confused understandings of both religious orthodoxy and secular understandings of faith.

In addition to the aforementioned angle of analysis grounded in speech-act theory, I analyze vows primarily from a linguistic perspective. I take the terminology of vows, oaths, promises, and pledges, as well as their variants as articulated in the medieval and early modern Latin and Romance language texts that are covered in this study as linguistically interchangeable and functionally identical. All of the terms communicate a serious level of commitment; all of the terms present that commitment as binding; that commitment miscarries only in cases in which the utterers of the vow fail (usually consciously, and often purposefully) to uphold their word and fulfill their obligations. These fundamental lexical similarities being drawn however, of course the caveat can be given that the distinction between these terms can be revealed through an examination of their more subtle nuances. To this end, “vows” are often closely aligned with behavioral and actancial codes; “oaths” are often employed in the invocation of an authorial or divine force, and as such are often utilized in religious or testimonial declarations. From the Latin *promittere* (*pro-* “before” + *mittere* “to send, to put, to place”), “promises” are the most neutral term of the four and the most directly aligned with prescriptions of future action. Finally, pledges have more overtly juridical and material underpinnings; “to pledge” is to promise, but also to guarantee,” “to give over as security for repayment,” while its nominalized form means ‘hostage, security, bail, and guarantee.’

With the fulfillment of obligations being paramount even if “vows,” “oaths,” “promises” and “pledges,” are understood as distinct, the relationship between vows and the challenges that thwart their maintenance are indicative of the complications that arise from the tenuous relationship between promissor and promisee. From a critical and ethical standpoint, the most basic and universally held understandings of promises opine that they should be maintained whenever possible, particularly if they are regarded as utterances associated with and

indicative of moral obligations or future physical actions. While many critics and ethical theorists insist upon the importance of maintaining promises and analyze the mechanisms that combine when promises are initially made, few examine the ramifications that come about when these promises and vows are broken. Even fewer tackle this issue via literary analysis, which is the objective of this dissertation. The orientation offered here serves as a framework that elucidates the connection between vows and violence, between problems of faith and moments of epistemological incertitude that can only be mitigated through physical aggression. Mirroring the broken vows of their characters, the broken vows of authors do much more than straddle the binary between beneficial and restorative, and deleterious and noxious. They call into question rhetorical representations of truth and authority while emphasizing the tense relationship between Self and Other when truth-based relationships fail.

The breakdown of the present study is as follows:

In chapter 1, “Reading *Le Roman de la Rose*: Negotiating Promises of Truth and Didactic Dreams,” I discuss how the complexity of vows and their susceptibility to failure is dramatized in Guillaume de Lorris’s and Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la Rose*. I also examine the use of classical Latin intertextual references which elucidates how authorial promises and authorial self-representation are negotiated and presented to readers, focusing primarily on the myth of Narcissus in Guillaume de Lorris’s half of the *Rose*, and the myth of Pygmalion, which can be read as a recodifying corrective of the Narcissus story, in Jean de Meun’s concluding half of the work. Given its unorthodox understanding of faith and promises for the medieval context in which it emerges, to varying degrees, the *Rose*, by means of the classical exempla it showcases directly anticipates what we find in the early modern treatment of vows and sacrifice, both intra- and extra-textually. That is, by explicitly linking promises and the problem of faith to the sanctity of a given work, the *Rose* promotes an understanding of literary texts as those that are either lauded for their recuperative and remedial capabilities or critiqued because of the damaging and deviating effect they have upon the reader, the narrator, or even the author himself.

Furthermore, the *Rose* subtly critiques the literary climate that foment a certain laxity surrounding the discussion of vows. Indeed, while the curative effects of reading are compulsively discussed in medieval literature (largely speaking), the satisfaction of salubrious and didactic promises often comes too late to save the love-struck protagonist, whose failed promises and interpretive errors mimic but also (potentially) correct the moral deviance of the reader. Similarly, the vows articulated in medieval literature are often idealized as honorable and irrevocable bonds by retrospectively respectful and nostalgic early modern authors. This interpretation is reductive, however, and the early modern authors discussed here collectively draw attention to the fallibility of vow by repeatedly insisting that they are more susceptible to failure than initially may appear. Particularly in light of Jean de Meun’s acerbic critique of Guillaume de Lorris and the first half of the

Roman de la Rose, this work proleptically stages a skepticism towards vows that will become even more pervasive during the early modern period.

The medieval example of the *Rose* will then lead me to an examination of broken vows and the failed or misleading “evidence” that signal the increasing epistemological uncertainty and violence of the early modern period. As forerunners to Descartes’s discussion of the unstable foundations of knowledge and faith, Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes all feature an obsessive treatment of vows kept and broken, and the epistemological uncertainty and violence that surges in response. Whether presented as an unequivocal critique or as an ironic, or even satirical reversal, the early modern authors I study explicitly link verbal promises and the status and sanctity of a given text. Subsequently, broken vows have ramifications which affect not only the status of literature, but also threaten the sanctity of national, personal, and spiritual identity. The text then, is either lauded for its potentially recuperative and remedial capability, or alternately, critiqued because of the potentially damaging and deviating effect it has upon both the reader, and the narrator or author himself. Moreover, while the didactic and curative effects of reading are assiduously examined in these early modern works, they often come too late to save the protagonist, whose interpretive errors implicitly mimic but also correct the (potential) moral deviance of the readers. Furthermore, each author then situates broken vows at the definitive, generative source of extreme violence. This dynamic replicates itself in the gendered relationships portrayed in the texts on both intradiegetic and extradiegetic levels. Often displaced upon or metaphorized by an incursive female presence, or on any type of body viewed as deviant, the broken vows featured in the aforementioned texts all spark highly nuanced discussions of the paradoxically threatening and alluring, volatile and vulnerable position of those who articulate promises, and those who believe promises, or who are bound by them. Since promises are so often broken, they pose a specific threat to hegemonic conceptions of Christian orthodoxy and to familial, political, ‘national,’ and authorial integrity.

In the *Furioso* for instance, while attention is usually cast upon the wife-trials that probe spousal fidelity, in chapter 2: “Con gli occhi prima”: Doubt, Failure, and Visual Proof in Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*,” I situate the text’s very first broken vows as the devastating catalysts for the violent crises of faith staged throughout the rest of the work. These moments of promissorial crisis are: the broken narratological vows of Ariosto himself that imperil the reader’s rapport with faith, and the Emperor Charlemagne’s failure to keep his word. Charlemagne’s broken promise unleashes uncertainty and suspicion into the world of amorous and political relationships which is necessarily predicated upon faith. This chapter then explores the haziness that conditions the notion of vows and beneficial sacrifice in the *Furioso* focusing particularly on how the vacillating definition of “beneficial” hinges entirely upon the status of vows in the text. That is, vows are either upheld and thus beneficial, or broken, and thus detrimental to the maker of the vow and to the character unto whom the vow is made. In this sense, broken vows legitimize the sacrifices that must be broached in order to rectify the corrupt nature of the state,

the family, or the soul. Next, by focusing on specific heterodiegetic and self-reflexive comments, I will examine how the importance of vows to spiritual, moral, and bodily health is also taken up by the poetic voice, which interrogates the notion of the didactic and curative properties of various textual examples, and the curative potential of the text itself.

The actual structure of the *Furioso*, with its *entrelacements*, *enjambements*, and constant interruptions and deferral, is not just a demonstration of bombastic poetic style and rhetoric as might initially seem. Instead, deferral, which is so often misunderstood by critics as purely an innovative rhetorical strategy orchestrated to sustain attention and create tension, or as a glib way to metaphorically represent the frustration in love and delayed sexual gratification of many of the personages actually has negative consequences. Indeed, it is the poetic act of deferment—“*differire*”—that is so frequently coupled with the verb “*morire*.” This *differire/morire* rhyme scheme posits itself not just as a rhetorical game intended to pique the curiosity of readers by creating suspense and delaying cathartic resolution; rather, constant deferral becomes an indication of a sickly text that begs for its own rehabilitation. When, after many arduous travails and laborious feats the newly flagging narrative is wrangled and begins to draw to a close, borrowing again from Boiardo, Ariosto actualizes another subtle rhyme scheme that is present throughout his entire text: the pairing of “*morto*” with his understandable preoccupation with arriving at “*buon*” or “*mal porto*.” As a final narrative gesture steeped in lassitude and senescence, he uses a description of his return to “*porto*” to illustrate his text’s completion, the cessation of his wandering, and his impending end:

Or, se mi mostra la mia carta il vero,
non è lontano a scoprirsì il porto;
sì che nel lito i voti scioglier spero
a chi nel mar per tanta via m'ha scorto;
ove, o di non tornar col legno intero,
o d'errar sempre, ebbi già il viso smorto.
Ma mi par di veder, ma veggo certo,
veggo la terra, e veggo il lito aperto. (46.1.1-8)

Despite the long didactic and epistemological trajectory the poet has made, he still harbors some doubts about the veracity of his beliefs (“*se mi mostra la mia carta il vero*”). He also continues to treat visual evidence with circumlocutions that reveal his vacillations and suspicions (“*ma mi par di veder, ma veggo certo*,” emphasis mine), that become apparent with his use of “*discoprirsì*,” which connotes the potential of discovery and uncovering, as well as burial. With the open shore that seems to welcome him, the drifting boat of narrative has finally arrived at port, suggesting that the poet may now die tranquilly since his tale has been told. In terms of his critique of the *Innamorato*, while Ariosto’s primary object of scorn is Boiardo. Boiardo not only leaves his work unfinished, and literally and figuratively abandons his audience by “leaving” them in suspense, he walks away from his work *in medias res*, insisting all the while that he will fulfill his narratological vows

should the necessary breath be granted to him: “Però *vi lascio* in questo vano amore / [...] / Un'altra fiata, se mi fia concesso, / Racontarovi il tutto per espresso. (III.9.5, 7-8). Since the seamless, quick completion Boiardo describes never comes, by constantly deferring *his* own narrative, Ariosto is at once deriding Boiardo's inability to “finire” while also showing that his *Furioso*, suffering from narrative contagion so to speak, in many ways is guilty of the same.

To take the most obvious example of the approximation of vows and literal and metaphorical health, and one that most directly recalls classical discussions of catharsis, the *pharmakon*, expiation, and medicinal remedies, chapter 3, “Breaking Vows for the Sake of the Soul: Missing Referents and the Crisis of Faith in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*” offers an analysis of the first occurrence of broken vows in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. In this work, a series of failed promises inaugurate the text, symptomizing political and religious lassitude. Recalling the negative consequences that pair deferral and death in the *Furioso*, the problematic of delayed and broken promises is fundamental to the interpretive failures and problems with belief and faith that lead to the dissolution of nearly every couple in the work. Aside from Tasso's poetological promises that open his text, the primary episode upon which I will be focusing is the *Liberata*'s third canto. This canto, which has received scant critical attention showcases the intricacies of Tasso's treatment of vows. Indeed, the pronouncement of many of the *Liberata*'s most important vows originate in this chapter, which uses a statue of the Virgin Mary to represent how easily contradictory vows are articulated, dismantled, and articulated again. Moreover, particularly given the faulty (or fraudulent?) religious anchoring of this episode, the facility with which vows are made and unmade is extremely problematic as it encourages the shifting of perspectives and the proliferation of unstable vows that present themselves as racial, sexual and spiritual identity are negotiated. Many of these poorly crafted vows ultimately constitute the deceitful errors that Tasso seeks to revise in the *Gerusalemme conquistata*. Finally, distancing himself from his own work, Tasso also positions the *Conquistata* as a corrective for the *Liberata*'s description of poetry's seductive embellishments—an annihilating stance that reveals the mounting pessimism of the poet's worldview. In terms of how Tasso's poetic voice negotiates the drama surrounding stable versus corruptible vows in the *Liberata*, an examination of the didactic and salubrious promise by which he defines his text necessitates brief mention here. Tasso presents his text *qua* rehabilitative medicine that concerned adults would administer to a sick child in order to restore the youngster's health and life:

Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
di soavi licor gli orli del vaso:
succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
e da l'inganno suo vita riceve. (1.3.5-8)

Yet even this medicine is presented as a cure that is somewhat dubious and duplicitous in nature. It does indeed restore health, but it only does so by operating through the transformative principles of perversion and deceit, which paradoxically serve to somewhat contradict the implicit injunction against inflicting further harm

upon the child. Moreover, the causal relationship established between the act of manipulating (or drinking) “suavi licor” and “succhi amari” suggests that it is not truly the medicine that facilitates the restoration of life, but first and foremost, the act of deceiving and being deceived. This idea of manipulation for the greater good—or in this case, for better health—recalls the *Liberata*’s opening invocation to the Muse, wherein poetry’s double nature is described as having the potential to either lead to restoration or to damage, given that it has the same alternatively sweet, alternatively bitter properties as the sick child’s medicine:

O Musa, [...],
 tu rischiara il mio canto, e tu perdona
 s'intesso fregi al ver, s'adorno in parte
 d'altri dilette, che de' tuoi, le carte.
 Sai che là corre il mondo ove più versi
 di sue dolcezze il lusinghier Parnaso,
 e che 'l vero, condito in molli versi,
 i più schivi allettando ha persuaso. (1.2.1, 6-8; 1.3.1-4)

Just as the boy is ‘persuaded’ to drink the medicine because of its sweet taste, the ornamentation, beauty and “dolcezze” that embellish the text persuade even the most reticent of readers. Thus, the emphasis Tasso gives in these verses to the binaries of revelation and concealment, enlightenment and ignorance, and seduction and refusal, immediately reveals the tensions between truth and deceit; like the restorative medicine, they can serve either to strengthen or imperil. That is, since the true taste of the medicine is concealed by the “soavi licor,” the deceived child drinks more readily; what he otherwise might have refused to imbibe would have cost him his life without this necessary deception. Finally, since Tasso’s text is supposed to offer the same salubrious properties to his readers as does the medicinal liquor to the child, it too can only heal through deceit, or in poetic terms, through adornment and ornamentation. By following this order of operations, the uneasy approximation and vacillation between truth and deceit pave the way for the work’s primary anxieties.

The problematic status of the vow and of promises made regarding restoration and redemption are obsessively staged throughout the entire *Liberata*. Aside from purely constituting Tasso’s poetological vision, they circumscribe the actions of nearly all of his characters. Recalling the negative consequences that pair deferral and death in the *Furioso*, the problematic of delayed and broken vows circumscribe Goffredo’s initial lassitude that leaves the “voto” he made unto God unrealized. Consequently, Goffredo’s hesitation also retards the pledge and action of his men. The problematic of deferral and broken vows is also present in the intricacies of Tancredi’s layered and conflicting promise (to his fellow Christian soldiers, his religion, and to Clorinda); their discordance conditions Clorinda’s upbringing and comes to define her own vow-making experiences. Additionally, they also are fundamental to the interpretive failures and problems with belief and faith that lead to the dissolution of every amorous couple in the work, from major

characters such as Armida and Rinaldo, to minor couples such as Sofronia and Olindo, and Gilidippe and Odoardo.

The perspectival shifting and proliferation of unstable vows that present themselves as racial, sexual and spiritual identity are negotiated, end up constituting the deceitful errors that Tasso later seeks to revise in the *Gerusalemme conquistata* (1593). To this end, the *Gerusalemme conquistata* serves as a remedy and corrective for the deceitful errors of the *Liberata*. Since Tasso revises and amends the metaphor of medicine and health that can easily lead to dissolution and death when not properly manipulated, he must also revise and correct the *Liberata*'s description of poetry's seductive embellishments. Rather than aspiring to the abstract, deviating poetic ideal of "bellezza" and "dolcezza" invoked in the *Liberata*, the revised objective of poetry is to serve as a repository that has the double function of bestowing fame upon those it takes as its subjects, and conserving and preserving memories in a "chiara lingua" that commemorates with assured fixity and lasting conviction: "perch'ogni età l'ascolti, e nulla estingua" (*GC*, 1.4.7-8).

Even though the *Liberata* already shows the symptoms of being obsessed with "renovation" and with educative and correctional processes, the quest towards knowledge is always presented as a thorny one, since the inability to trust the words and vows of others—and oneself—hinders and deviates. The *Conquistata* thus strives to correct and heal the prescriptive model of the *Liberata* by fomenting a more univocal religious and political cosmovision, and by insisting upon the value on unarguable facts, history, and virtue, which should take precedence over a dependence on the words and promises of others, which can only fail. With his rejection of his previous authorial stance and recodification of his authorial promises Tasso's increasingly acerbic critique of poetry's seductive embellishments becomes an annihilating stance that reveals the mounting pessimism of his worldview and his poetic endeavors.

The idea of beneficial sacrifices and their contingency upon vows that are made—be they officially or publically stated vows, or private, implied, or even imagined vows—takes a particularly notable turn in the Spanish Golden Age. Indeed, this pessimism sparked by an increasing awareness of the susceptibility of vows is obsessively featured in Cervantes's *Quijote*, which I discuss in my final chapter, "From the "dicho al hecho": the Incommensurability of Promises and their Fulfillment in the *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*." In the *Quijote* an obsession with doctors, cures, curatives and literal and figurative modes of restoration often proleptically announces the need for some type of sacrificial act—and usually an extremely violent one—to be made in order for the complete restoration of national, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. The backdrop, of course, is yet again the idea of deviant literature and its risks, so fundamental throughout the entire Cervantine oeuvre from the *Don Quijote* to the *Novelas Ejemplares*, to the *Trabajos de Persiles y Segismunda*. Indeed, in all of Cervantes's texts, vows are continually destabilized and shown to be poorly designed. The

authorial voice's own self-reflexive comments evidences and even purposefully draws attention to this untrustworthy terrain.

In the prologue of the *Novelas ejemplares* (published in 1613) for instance, Cervantes sets up the problematic insufficiency of vows by first lamenting the failed promise of his friend to provide him with a desired portrait. This destabilizes him literally, metaphorically, and artistically, leaving him “en blanco y sin figura” (Fol. VIIIv), that is, without a friend in whom to trust, and without the portrait he wants to have to satisfy standard protocol, “como es uso y costumbre” (Fol. VIIIr). He follows this complaint by insisting upon his authorial agency despite the odds, and upon the novelty of his approach: “yo soy el primero que he novelado en lengua castellana, que las muchas novelas que en ella andan impresas todas son traducidas de lenguas extranjeras, y éstas son mías propias, no imitadas ni hurtadas: mi ingenio las engendró, y las parió mi pluma, y van creciendo en los brazos de la estampa” (Fol. IXr). Where Tasso prioritized the “inganno” and deceit that made both the sick child’s vase and his text initially seem other than they actually were, Cervantes privileges the tighter familial and genetic relationship that binds him to his literary ‘product.’ Although Cervantes describes his texts as having some autonomy since they “andean impresas” and then ‘deambulate’ more freely in the press, Cervantes emphasizes his generative relationship to them. He is their “genitor,” in the true sense of the word; they are of him. Nevertheless, in addition to his discussion of the engendering capacity of his “ingenio,” Cervantes promises to cut off his hand if the reading—or consumption—of the stories he writes were to lead his readers astray:

Una cosa me atreveré a decirte: que si por algún modo alcanzara que la lección de estas novelas pudiera inducir a quien las leyera a algún mal deseo o pensamiento, antes me cortara la mano con que las escribí que sacarlas en público. Mi edad no está ya para burlarse con la otra vida, que al cincuenta y cinco de los años gano por nueve más y por la mano. (Fol. IXr)

While the violence he claims he will do to himself should his didactic intentions flop might seem extreme, it becomes even more so when we recall that at the moment in which he pens this declaration, Cervantes only has one functional hand, having lost the use of the other at the battle of Lepanto. Although he vehemently rails against Avellaneda, author of the apocryphal *Quijote*, who referred to him as “viejo” y “manco” and instead exalts the process by which he earned his wounds in the “Prólogo al Lector” to part 2 of the *Quijote*, his desire to avoid inducing “a quien las leyera a algún mal deseo o pensamiento,” is constitutive of his intended text and authorial identity. Accordingly, if he does incite readers to evil, then he must pay the appropriate price: his *novelas* should neither be read, nor should he write again. Yet leaving aside the promise to self-harm in a way that ruins the authorial task and authorial identity for the moment, the oddity of this violent vow put forth in the *Novelas ejemplares* becomes even more peculiar if one remembers that while many of the stories contained within the volume are indeed exemplary, they stand as negative models of comportment, and present negative understandings of trust-based relationships between characters. They primarily feature the bad behavior of

the characters whose actions are propelled by a “mal deseo o pensamiento,” from which, ostensibly, readers are expected to learn through negative example. Theatrically staging the peril into which one can fall both by making vows, and by breaking them, while diagnosing the problem at the root of trust-based relationships as a pessimistic awareness of the difficulty (if not inability) to fully believe another person, *particularly* when vows are made, the pessimism that first effects the bonds between couples subsequently affects all other relationships. Not only can spouses no longer function as such, friends are no longer friends, teachers no longer teachers, servants no longer bound to their masters, and so forth.

In the *Ingenioso don Quijote de la Mancha*, as we shall see, Cervantes’s skepticism and the pathological mismanagement of vows by various characters sheds new light on what is generally understood as a ludic work. Insisting even more explicitly than Ariosto and Tasso on the crumbling and destabilized world of promises, faith, and identity, Cervantes puts forth a vision of modernity as a fiduciary wasteland in which vows are consistently flawed, foiled, or completely absent. It is a world in which the dastardly effects of broken vows can only be mitigated by extreme violence. For instance, Don Quijote is obsessed with keeping his word and problematically assumes that the moral chivalric code he applies to himself will forcefully bind all others as well. In all of his episodes he attempts to invoke—or rather *re*-invoke—the medieval chivalric world that he regards as the standard for proper chivalric comportment, and for the proper maintenance of chivalric vows. However, while he idealizes an admittedly less problematic past, one that was further removed from the trials of faith and the reconsideration of vows that the Inquisition encouraged, he roundly neglects the fact that many of the medieval texts he does so earnestly cite and to which he pays homage are already afflicted by broken vows that incite a systemic failure of belief and faith. Finally, Don Quijote’s unwavering adherence to the literal meaning of words, and the fact that neither he nor other characters understand the vows that he makes leads him and his authors to utter failure—a violent defeat that ends in death and the irrevocable cessation of narration.

The idea of beneficial sacrifices and their contingency upon vows that are made lends easily to the psychic fragmentation and vulnerability that broken vows cause, and which chivalric romance so vividly displays. From the stony women critiqued in the troubadour tradition and the vilification of unpliant women in the *Roman de la Rose*, to Angelica, Dulcinea and beyond, these tensions are showcased in nearly every representation of couples who have exchanged vows. Since unresolved notions of alterity complicate the power differential between genders while introducing notions of contamination, monstrosity, and the “natural” nefariousness of women, women are identified as deviants and are construed as threats to the family, patriarchy, and society in order to rationalize and exalt the inconsequential silencing of their voice and the elimination of their bodies. Building from the medieval representation of vows as fundamental to one’s epistemological orientation and understanding of honesty and truth, due, in large part, to the crises of faith at play in Counter Reformation Europe, the early modern period is uniquely

marked by an increasing awareness that vows themselves are inherently defective. As the authors I study continually warn their readers, any manifestation of faltering faith or broken vows is indicative of the profound epistemological, identitary, and political weakness that can only result in fracture, failure and violence.

Given this proliferation of failed vows and the constant recurrence to an examination of foundational security or instability, problems of faith and knowledge, body and mind found in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, as well as in Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes, and building from the skeptical stance elaborated in Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1580), René Descartes's solution to these early modern anxieties as presented in his *Discours de la méthode* (1637) and *Meditationes* (1641), becomes a theoretical end-point to the dilemma surrounding vows and an appropriate conclusion to this dissertation. In particular, since the authors studied in the previous chapters all go from problematizing failed vows and articulating problems of faith—first through intricate investigations of veracity, instuction, and the implications of narration based on fictional intertextual exempla (as seen in Lorris and Jean de Meun, for example); then through identitary relationships that are damaged by the unwelcome intrusion of the other (as seen in Ariosto and Tasso, in particular), to locating problems of faith in the divide that develops between the Self and Other (as seen in especially Cervantes), and finally, to those which originate and develop within the self, and which are further exacerbated by the failures of faith that isolate and distance the individual from others (which is evidenced in all four of the present study's primary texts)—they should be understood as forerunners to Descartes's prioritization of singularity and his insistence upon the self as the only useful point of inquiry.

CHAPTER ONE:
Reading *Le Roman de la Rose*: Negotiating Promises of Truth and
Didactic Dreams

*Quod he, "what dostow heer
In my presence, and that so boldely?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A werm to comen in my sight than thou."
"And why, sir," quod I, "and hit lyke yow?"*

*Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hindrest hem with thy translacioun,
And lettest folk to han devocioun
To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayest hit nat denye;
For in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,
Thou hast translated the Romauns of the Rose,
That is an heresyge ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
[...]
Wel wot I ther-by thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, and wite nat what hem ayleth.
Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseyde Troilus forsook,
In shewingge how that wemen han don mis?
But natheles, answer me not to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyde goodnesse
Of wemen, as thou hast seyde wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde,
Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe?*

-Geoffrey Chaucer, "Prologue," *The Legend of Good Women*. Dialogue between God of Love and Lover, vv. 243-47; 348-57; 269-71.

Taking the discourse surrounding truth, the promise of a good education, and the veracity of dreams as they are discussed in a seminal medieval work as a point of departure, this chapter discusses the inconsistent treatment of vows in the *Roman de la Rose*. Written by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun and revealed

through their narratological comments and use of intertextual references, the vows each author makes when describing the function he wants his narrative to have are largely idealized as honorable and irrevocable bonds that forge a didactically sound, truth-based relationship between narrator and reader. Yet as my analysis will demonstrate, these vows are more susceptible to failure than initially might appear. Rather than insisting upon a univocal meaning, the arguments of Lorrís and Jean de Meun suggest that while individual empirical experience can indeed illuminate, “truth,” and promises of truth, are often polyvalent and palimpsestic in nature.

In conjunction with narratological promises that reveal how each of the authors situates his text, the way in which they take classical *auctores* as guarantors who substantiate the veracity of their work, and the way in which they utilize intertextual exempla grounded in myths further evinces their understanding of promises and truth (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 29-33; Brownlee, “Pygmalion” 201; Regalado, “Contraires” 64).¹ Yet like the exempla themselves, the representation of promises and truths is contradictory at best. While the process of critiquing promises, prognostication, and truth is overt throughout both halves of the *Rose*, the manner in which these themes are elucidated in each author’s portrayal of myth are fundamental, though more subtle, and more implicit than explicit. Indeed, while Lorrís uses his recodification of Ovid’s myth of Narcissus to emphasize the annihilating drive of improperly oriented vows of love, his presentation of the mythical example is simultaneously suggestive of the failure of improperly oriented narratological vows.

As we will discuss later, when Lorrís concludes his retelling of the myth, he uses an unexpected *sententia* to critique the fidelity and questionable vows between lovers that are poorly maintained. This judgment not only appears to critique the myth itself, it seems directed towards the wrong audience (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 133). As such, it becomes suggestive both of the authorial misrepresentation that fractures Lorrís’s initial promises to the reader and of the pervasiveness of readerly misunderstanding that emphasizes the difficulties of interpretation. Similarly, in his continuation of the *Rose*, Jean de Meun comments on all three of these iterations of frustrated vows, and ‘corrects’ Lorrís’s use of the myth of Narcissus with his presentation of the myth of Pygmalion. Although the Pygmalion myth, particularly as Jean de Meun inherits it from Ovid, seems to focus on successful vows and the successful activation of an amorous relationship, Jean de Meun’s satirical and caustically disparaging view of Lorrís’s text injects a vein of pessimism into even this more felicitous mythical interpretation. Ultimately, both halves of the *Roman de la Rose* offer an exceedingly pessimistic interpretation of vows, particularly when taken together.

¹ In “‘Des contraires choses’: La fonction poétique de la citation et des exempla dans le ‘Roman de la Rose,’” (February 1981), pp.62-81, Nancy Freeman Regalado helpfully counts each author’s use of mythical exempla *Literature* 41 (February 1981), pp.62-81: “Guillaume n’avait cité qu’un seul *auctor*, Macrobe, et n’avait donné qu’un seul *exemplum*, celui de Narcisse. Jean de Meun, par contre, cite plus de 80 fois les auteurs et les écrits de la tradition latine, et son *Roman* comprend une soixantaine d’exemple de la tradition antique” (64).

A consideration of authorial control, lies, fiction, and the truth couched in the promise of Love, just like the arrows “forz et tranchanz [...] et agues por bien percier”(vv.925-26) that prick and stab at the lover’s heart, the major narratological concerns of the *Rose* are established from the poem’s very first lines:

Maintes genz cuident qu’en songe
 N’ait se fable non at mençonge.
 Mais on peut tel songe songier
 Qui ne sont mie meçongier,
 Ainz sont après bien aparant. (vv. 1-5)

Written between 1225 and 1230 by Guillaume de Lorris and completed around 1270 by Jean de Meun,² this “involved allegorical and didactic tale” (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 10) initially presents itself as a love manual or amorous compendium (Huot, *Medieval Readers* 18-27). Anchoring itself in the tradition of courtly love, it assertively promises to serve as a sort of *ars amatoria* “Ou l’art d’amour est tout enclose” (v. 39). From the protasis of the poem, the authorial voice proclaims that aside from its didactic aspirations, and in addition to being “bone et nueve,” the material of which the poem is made—a dream—is also reliable and true. As such, it will hopefully gain him the favors of his lady and ensure the futurity of the union: “Or doint dieus qu’an gre le reçoive / Cele pour cui je l’ai empris” (vv. 39-40).

The narrator himself at least, is convinced of the reliability of his detailed treatise, and he states that regardless of what people might say, he insists that he has first-hand, intimate knowledge of the discourse that he is offering. This knowledge allows him to unquestionably believe in the truthfulness of dreams as well as in the veracity of language and of the text he presents, which is anchored in a personal, oneiric experience:

Car adroit moi ai ge creance
 Que songe sont senefiance
 Des biens au genz et des anuiz,
 Que li plusor songent de nuiz
 Maintes choses covertement
 Que l’en voit plus apertement. (vv. 15-20)

The confidence that his surety grants to the narrator then makes him into an ideal and trustworthy teacher, who is able to successfully guide his readers, ostensibly to facilitate their acquisition and understanding of thorny issues initially seen only “covertement.”

The insistence upon the authenticity and truthfulness of the text by the *Rose*’s first poetic voice is nothing new for medieval literature. Neither is the author’s recurrence to the dream topos.³ Yet what is more noteworthy in this

² See F. M. Warren, “On the Date and Composition of Guillaume de Lorris’s *Roman de la Rose*,” *PMLA*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1908), pp. 269-284, and Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, Trans. Jane Donnett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) pp. 81-85.

³ Dreams in the medieval period have received great attention, particularly their frequent representation as divinatory, allegorical, and hermeneutic tools. Among 20th and 21st century critics, see Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First Roman de la Rose*

specific context is the anchoring of the text in a dream world that is strategically orchestrated to cast a highly nuanced veil of ambiguity upon the narrative; this “coverture,” so to speak, hazy and uncertain as it is, undermines the vow of truth that has just been made. As such, given Lorrís’s dexterous ability to bring together symbols and language such that they operate on innumerable levels and can be interpreted variously—as metaphor, allegory, or exegesis, for example—the text boasts a constant vacillation between what is presented as truth or reliable empirical experience, and what is presented as fictional or susceptible to the diversity and subjectivity of individual interpretation. This vacillation dramatizes the text’s obsession with alternately scattering and ordering signs and information in accordance with whom and with what can be trusted (Kay, *Romance* 70; Bloch 140; Kristeva 286-87), and with the “limitless, or rather end-less” possibilities of language (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 183). For example, in the first half of the *Rose*, readers quickly notice a palimpsestic narrative structure with layer upon layer of possible semiological meanings.⁴ Translated into modern French as “intime conviction,”—which is suggestive of the almost secretive, intimate, and privileged nature of the speaker’s certitude—the narrator’s belief or “creance” in the heuristic utility of dreams emphasizes their semiological function. “[...S]onge sont senefiance”(v.16) he says, or in other words, dreams stand in the poem as

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 109-116; Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 96-106; A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Stephen Nichols, “The Medieval ‘Auctor’: An Idea Whose Time Hadn’t Come,” in *The Medieval Author in Medieval French Literature*, ed., Virginie Greene (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 77-101; C.H.L. Bodendam, “The Dream in Late-Medieval French Literature,” *Medium / Evum* 54 (1985), pp. 74-86; Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage* (78-85); Jacques Le Goff, *L’imaginaire médiéval* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); and Kathryn Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, Literary Form* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), especially pg. 129-35.

On the “senefiance” of dreams and their departure from what is allegedly “verité” in Chrétien in particular, see Paul Vincent Rockwell, *Rewriting Resemblance in Medieval French Romance: Ceci N’est Pas un Graal*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995): 47-58; On the dream vision particularly from a perspective that considers generic assessments, see the section “Transition from Chronicle to Dream Vision,” in Douglas Kelly’s in *The Art of Medieval French Romance*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) p. 309-12, and his earlier *Medieval Imagination: Rhetoric and the Poetry of Courtly Love*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

⁴ For more on how these multiple registers and interpretations undermine the veracity of the text by being “deceitful” unto themselves and fracturing the text since they prevent a singular interpretation, see Susan Stakel’s *False Roses: Duality and deceit in Jean de Meun’s Roman de la Rose*. Similarly, Poirion examines the role of the fountain, (which is at once particular to the *Roman de la Rose* yet also clearly flaunts its similarity to the treacherous fountain that “incitat error” of Ovid’s Narcissus [*Metamorphosis* III. 417-431]), as a *locus* of deceit that performs its own interpretive duplicity: “Mais la magie du miroir est ambiguë. Elle peut révéler ce qui se cache, elle peut aussi décevoir. Le narrateur le dit : ‘Cil miroers m’a deceu,’ ce miroir m’a trompé, et il ajoute que s’il avait connu son pouvoir, il ne se serait pas laissé prendre” (63). See his article “Narcisse et Pygmalion dans le Roman de la Rose,” in *Essays in Honor of Louis Francis Solano*, eds., Raymond J. Cormier and Urban T. Holmes University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 92 (Chapel Hill, 1970) :153-65

“significations” and “signs” which mark the various interpretive possibilities of the text.⁵

Yet this very obsession with meaning exposes the difficulty of distinguishing truth from fiction, separating attested fact from personal experience, and differentiating reliable proof from subjective hypothesis. For instance, while the argument of the narrator overtly emphasizes the veracity of the text, both the initial context that is provided for the narrative, and the embellishing intertextual details that decorate it, have the double function of also subverting and undermining any complete certainty or faith that the reader might have concerning both the veracity of his truth-steeped ‘love manual,’ and the nature of the text itself. In other words, what claims to be a true love story validated by an annunciatory dream, and what simultaneously presents itself as a work representational of love, and as a work that also teaches about love, proves to not always merit being so readily or easily believed.

Even Lorris’s description of having provided a text that ‘encloses’ within it ‘l’art d’amour,’ elucidates his paradoxical process of exalting the text’s veracity and authority only to dispel it with a confession of doubt and fragility. For example, he bestows authority upon his text by referencing Macrobius and by so obviously aligning it with Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*.⁶ As David Hult explains in *Self-Fulfilling*

⁵ Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle : composé d'après le dépouillement de tous les plus importants documents manuscrits ou imprimés qui se trouvent dans les grandes bibliothèques de la France et de l'Europe.... Tome septième*, Remembrant-Trair. Date d'édition : 1995 pg.355 “segnefiance.”=“signification, signe, marquée. And Frédéric Godefroy, *Lexique de l'ancien français*. 1995. Page 477.

⁶ Much like the paradoxical relationship between truthful dreams and fiction that is evidenced in the literal enclosure of the word “songe” within its rhyme pair “mensonge,” the function of “enclosure” as metaphor for Lorris’s intertextual poetic strategies merits further attention. For a discussion of the *songe / mensonge* coupling, see

Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, “Overt and Covert: Amorous and Interpretive Strategies in the Roman de la Rose,” *Romania* 111(1990): 143-60; Kevin Brownlee, “Pygmalion, Mimesis, and the Multiple Endings of the Roman de la Rose,” *Yale French Studies*, No. 95, Rereading Allegory: Essays in Memory of Daniel Poirion (1999), pp. 193-211 (especially 198-200); Strubel, “Écriture du songe et mise en oeuvre de la ‘senefiance’ dans le *Roman de la Rose* de Guillaume de Lorris,” in *Études sur le “Roman de la Rose” de Guillaume de Lorris*, ed. Jean Dufournet (Paris: Champion, 1984), 145- 79; and Hult, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies*.

It is Hult again, who most clearly addresses this issue: first in his discussion of the “paranomastic coupling” of *songe* and *mensonge*, which, “according to [...] etymological proof,” renders “anything contained in a dream [...] a lie, a statement bearing no relation to reality (and, consequently, intrinsically untrustworthy and of little significance”(114); and then in his analysis of Lorris’s decision to recur to Ovid in his initial situation of his text:

The ambiguity of the word *enclose*, which could mean ‘contained,’ ‘hidden,’ or even ‘imprisoned,’ adds to the difficulty [of interpretation]. Moreover, if we notice that here Guillaume is quoting the well-known title of Ovid’s most popular work in the Middle Ages (*L’Ars d’Amor*), we might entertain even more seriously the possibility that Guillaume is articulating an intertextual relationship of authority: Explicitly, Guillaume’s own title, *Le Roman de La Rose* has replaced (or subsumed) the *Art of Love*; implicitly, romance has replaced art (doctrine), and the Rose—the ultimate symbol—has replaced Love. (135)

Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First Roman de la Rose, this is a process by which Lorris is “articulating an intertextual relationship of authority” (135). Indeed, Lorris is setting up an intercalated process of authorial reinforcement by confirming both the authority of the author(s) with whom he associates himself and his own capacities as author. As Hult explains, “The Narrator passes from a purely exterior form of authority (the use of the sentential and the appeal to an *auctor*’s name, Macrobius) to the authority of subjective experience and ends with the account of a specific, unique occurrence. In each case, it is a matter of seeking a *garant*, a base upon which the Narrator’s own discourse may rest and in which it may find its justification” (133). At the same time, and despite this Macrobian *garant* of authority however, Lorris’ alignment with Ovid also casts doubt upon the veracity of the material that he has presented as constitutive of his “intime,” singular, and individual experience. Understood in this fashion, the Ovidian intertext accentuates the typification of the lover and the lover’s experience, thus betraying Lorris’ promise of singularity and authority at the precise moment in which he attempts to assert it.

Similarly, despite the implied promise to “plus apertement” reveal what dreams conceal, the *Rose* frustrates interpretation time and again through deferment and intertextual references that present themselves as the narrative unfolds. In terms of deferment, as the lover progresses through the dream, emphasis is repeatedly given to the necessity that readers wait for the “senefiance,” or meaning of the dream, and thus, that they wait for the meaning of the text to be revealed. Only then can the text’s narratological promises to come to fruition. Nevertheless, the long wait, textual vacillations, and the frustration of “sens” ultimately combine to suggest that the only reliable clues to which readers have access is an acknowledgement of the multiplicity of experience and the diverse and subjective potential of interpretation. Indeed, the curious intertextual laurels upon which *Le Roman de la Rose* rests, and the polyphonic opening of the text along with the juxtaposition of opinions implicit therein prematurely complicate the reading process and make interpretation even more difficult (Luria 50; Minnis 25; Heywood 13).

This complicated process of attempting to inspire confidence, faith, and trust only to immediately interrogate, test, and destabilize each of these objectives undermines the initial promises articulated by author to the reader. This subsequently calls into question what the text promises to be about: aside from an instructive manual on the art of love, it is story of a Lover’s attempt to woo his beloved. Guillaume de Lorris’s section of the *Rose* thus presents the allegorical dream of a lover enamored of a beautiful woman “qui tant a de pris / Et tant est digne d'estre aimee / Qu'ele doit estre Rose clamee” (vv. 42-44). Despite the difficulties of possession—“mes espines i avoit tant, / Chardons et ronces, c'onques

“Enclose” is a word that also serves to unite the process of narration with the development of love. As Evelyn Birge Vitz reminds us in *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire*, (New York: New York University Press, 1992), love is described as being “‘enclosed’ within the lover’s heart. [...] ‘j’ai dedenz le cuer enclouse une moute pesant maladie’(71).

n’oi / Pooir de passer l’espinoi / si qu’au boton poïsse ataindre,” and “Mielz vouroie ester mors que vis” (vv. 1871-1873; 3780)—the beleaguered Lover puts forth a lengthy attempt to gain her favors, though his initiatives ultimately fail and he is unable to possess the rose. This ‘failure’ is both metaphorical and literal given that Lorris promises to show the lover’s successful possession of his beloved yet does not, and given that Lorris’ half of the *Rose* ends *in medias res*.⁷

In terms of the *Rose*’s other half, Jean de Meun’s continuation, which adds nearly 18,000 verses and presents a more sustained philosophical and conversational story of the Lover’s efforts and devotion, offers many satirical episodes that critique Lorris and the tradition of courtly love. These scenes, along with many intertextual episodes that showcase Jean de Meun’s authorial philosophy critique the first half of the *Rose* and expose Lorris’ failures, as he views them. Though numerous, the infelicities of Lorris’ text according to Jean de Meun primarily amount to his inability to uphold his poetological pact with the reader to fully narrate his work and thus provide an adequate education on the doctrine of Love. More largely, Jean de Meun critiques how Lorris’ failure to deal with vows and faith in an appropriate fashion becomes even more problematic since it amounts to a failure to model good behavior. Jean de Meun sees this failure as deleterious indeed, and all the more so given that Lorris presents his work as a didactic manual that he alleges will instruct and guide his readers well.

Novelty in the *Ars Amatoria* to the *Rose*: Ovidian Intertextual Borrowings and Lorris’ Didactic Promise of Originality

From the first lines of Guillaume de Lorris’ section of the poem, the text immediately puts forth an authorial promise that proleptically announces how vows will be managed throughout the rest of the work. He acknowledges both how susceptible vows are to individual interpretation and how illusory is the knowledge

⁷ Though Lorris’s portion of the *Rose* is often seen as an incomplete text that Jean de Meun realizes (“Guillaume de Lorris’s *Rose* has always been accepted as a fragmentary, unfinished work, obligingly completed four decades later by the verbose and erudite Jean de Meun,” [Hult *Self-Fulfilling*, 5]), the case has been made, and convincingly, for Lorris’s section of the *Rose* to be read as a complete work. Indeed, throughout the entirety of *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies* Hult gives much needed attention to Lorris and reads it as a “finished work, insofar as it can be seen to form an artistic whole consistent with stylistic and narrative standards of judgment as well as with medieval poetic traditions” (6). See Poirion, *Le Roman de la Rose*, (Paris, 1973) p. 60, also quoted in Hult, as well as Brownlee, “Pygmalion,” 199.

For the purposes of this project however, I will regard Lorris’s text as one that suffers from incompleteness as my focus is primarily on how Jean de Meun redeploys considerations of authority and narratological promises and exemplar order to ‘correct’ his predecessor’s text.

to which they purport to be bound. In the incipit *Lorris* presents his text as having a didactic purpose that is three-fold in nature.⁸ First, the story serves to encourage people to love. Second, it cautions against the disparity between absolute truth and professions of truth by teaching readers that the “maintes genz” who have misunderstood the function of dreams are also those who are therefore incapable of giving a reliable testimony or proper judgment of dreams. Third, the story is situated such that it reveals to readers the secrets contained within the dialectical space of the “maintes choses” of which the valence and significance are purposefully distorted, concealed, and deferred until they can later be understood, or seen “apertement.”

Despite this didactic presentation that serves as an implicit promise to the readers dependent upon the education they can find “enclose” within the exposition of the love story, an immediate subversion of the educative potential of the text complicates its very status. While *Lorris*’ narrator began by insisting on his “creance,” that is, his belief and faith in the interpretability and veracity of dreams—as we have already seen, “Car adroit moi ai ge creance / Que songe sont senefiance / Des biens au genz et des anuiz” (vv.15-17)—he vacillates between an insistence on the connection of dreams to truth and obscurity to error. *Lorris* undermines his opening assertion that dreams do correspond to prognostication and truth when he confounds the straightforward and reliable function he has just claimed they have through subtle yet telling rhetorical and grammatical moves. He first undermines his profession of truth by obliquely implementing a conjunction of exclusion and/or alternative (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 132; Georgiev, 223-25), which frustrates grammatical expectations; he then destabilizes his initial truth-claim further by utilizing a double negative:

Si vi un songe en mon dormant
 Qui mout fu biaux et mout me plot
 Mes en ce songe onques riens n’ot
 Qui trestout avenu ne soit,
 Si com li songes devisoit
 Or vueil cest songe rimoier [...] (vv. 27-31)

As Hult explains, with this rhetorical posturing the narrator is transitioning from his rather broad initial presentation to a more individualized and “specific discourse.” While this progression initially might seem to substantiate his claims regarding the truthfulness of his message due to the surety of his empirical experience which others would not have the authority or wherewithal to contradict,

⁸ In the introduction to their indispensable *Rethinking the "Romance of the Rose"* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot have identified at least three different "orientations" in twentieth-century *Rose* criticism: the "neo-patristic perspective" views the poem as a fictional encoding of Augustinian orthodoxy; the "philosophical perspective" interrogates links between the *Rose* and twelfth-century Neo-Platonists, especially the School of Chartres; and finally, a generalized "literary" perspective employs a variety of critical methodologies in order to probe the *Rose*’s intricate rhetorical, poetic, narrative, and thematic structures (2).(172)

Lorris casts doubt upon the very “songe” that he is situating as prognostic, and his honest desire to “rimoier.” This doubt is illustrated in the chasm that develops between his acknowledgement of the fascination and beauty of the dream: “Si vi un songe [...] / Qui mout fu biaux et mout me plot,” and his greater interest in an assertion of “the dream’s properties, its function of iteration—which, as we have seen, is equivalent to a fixation on truth interpreted as prophecy” (*Self-Fulfilling* 133). As Hult puts it:

The subject of the dream (or the dream experience itself) was beautiful and pleasant [...], *but* (“mes”) there was nothing in the dream that did not later take place exactly as the dream told it. Instead the conjunction one would expect at this point, *et*, Guillaume here places a *mes*, conjunction of exclusion, which seems to suggest that the beauty inherent to the dream and its realization are incompatible. (*Self-Fulfilling* 132-33).

Paradoxically then, and despite his evidential “si vi,” the narrator is strategically using “mes” to call into question his own profession of trustworthiness by insinuating that there is an underlying adversarial relationship between the dream’s aforementioned pleasing qualities, evidentiary proof, and truth.

Furthermore, while the narrator does extol the pleasure and beauty that can be derived from dreams, the unswerving relationship between “songe” and “senefiance” no longer endures. Rather, the lover’s dream, which he insists was indeed truthful, is presented as slightly distanced from reality, since the implementation of litotes frustrates the correspondence between what the dream predicts and what comes to pass: “[...] en ce songe onques riens n’ot / Qui trestout avenu ne soit, / Si com li songes devisoit.” From a rhetorical standpoint, litotes both minimize and emphasize; they diminish and curtail the importance of their referent through understatement yet this understatement is so dramatic and conspicuous that the indicated referent ultimately garners more attention.⁹ Paradoxically, by emphasizing this divide through negative statements tailored to reiterate the truthfulness and reliability of dreams, the narrator draws attention to the complexities of both authorial representation and hermeneutic interpretation. Moreover, despite this contradiction, and by linking this uncertainty with his compositional function—“Or vueil cest songe rimoiier,” the narrator is also able to emphasize the status and singularity of his authorial intent. He is the sole person with the capacity to render this dream’s mysteries interpretable and intelligible.

Problematically, at least for a text that claims to be manufactured with honest intentions and insists that the benevolence and trust of readers are necessary for the text’s successful realization, this contradictory yet conscious

⁹ On the function of the litote and its connection to the “movance modalisatrice liée à la subjectivité du lecteur,” see Anna Jaubert. “Dire et plus ou moins dire. Analyse pragmatique de l’euphémisme et de la litote,” *Langue Française*, No. 160, Figures et point de vue (Décembre 2008), pp. 105-116 (105). On the rhetorical development of litotes in classical literature see: Francis P. Donnelly, “Homeric Litotes,” *The Classical Weekly*, Vol. 23, No. 18 (Mar. 17, 1930), pp. 137-140 and his “Homeric Litotes (Concluded),” *The Classical Weekly*, Vol. 23, No. 19 (Mar. 24, 1930), pp. 145-146. See also Oswald Ducrot, *Pré-supposés et sous-entendus*, *Langue Française*, No. 4, La Sémantique (Décembre 1969), pp. 30-43.

posturing also alerts readers to the strategic machinations of the author. Indeed, rather than the transmission of a pure and honest experience, free from strategy, manipulation, or hyperbole, the story contained within Lorris' *Rose* and presented as truthful begins to undo itself. Unraveling occurs from the moment in which readers become aware that the poetological promise to fully and truthfully narrate what love is, is countered and subtly undermined by the poetological intent to craft—that is, to *fabricate*—a conceptually sophisticated and rhetorically artful story. This embellished story is then strategically angled to best captivate, mold, enchant, and instruct readers. This dynamic makes the parallelism between lovers and authors explicit. In this case, Lorris is not solely trying to gain the benevolence of the reader, but that of the lady; as such, the seduction of the lady and the seduction of the reader can be viewed as twin ideations of the same process (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 8).

Even the choice to open the poem by mentioning that it can be read as a type of instruction manual, singular because of its quality and novelty, casts doubts upon Lorris' trustworthiness, for the stylized rhetorical posturing that he presents largely consists of rhetoric borrowed from earlier traditions. Among many other intertexts,¹⁰ Lorris' profession of singularity automatically brings a previous work to mind: Ovid's *Ars amatoria*. The similarities in terms of structure and theme that establish themselves between Ovid's text and Lorris' would be intelligible to a medieval audience. More suggestively still, since Lorris is so overtly borrowing the profession of truthful intent from another author, rather than an exemplary stance that corroborates and supports his argument, the intertextual relationship between his and Ovid's didactic promise fractures any belief in the genuineness and specificity of his own authorial oath. It does so all the more since the connection between the love manual and artistry gestures towards artificiality.¹¹ This relationship is then one that trades the honesty of one's empirical experience for a crafted didacticism and for the stylized rhetoric and creative inspiration that are far more ambiguous and subjective than veridical, and consequently, far more connected to the imagination than to the truth.

¹⁰ Countless critics have discussed the issue of intertextuality in the *Roman de la Rose*. See, for example, Nancy Freeman Regalado, "Des contraires choses' [...]"; Michelle Freeman, "Problems in Romance Composition: Ovid, Chretien de Troyes, and the Romance of the Rose," *Romance Philology* 30 (1976), 158-68; Sylvia Huot, "The Medusa Interpolation in the Romance of the Rose: Mythographic Program and Ovidian Intertext," *Speculum*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), pp. 865-877; and John Fleming, "Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets," *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose. Text, Image, Reception*. Ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 81-100. On intertextuality medieval literature more generally, see: Douglas Kelly, "Les inventions ovidiennes de Froissart: Réflexions intertextuelles comme imagination," *Literature* 41 (February 1981), pp. 82-92.

¹¹ See Jean-Charles Payen, "L'art d'aimer chez Guillaume de Lorris," in *Etudes sur le Roman de la Rose de Guillaume de Lorris*. Paris: Champion, 1984.

An instructional elegy with didactic and erotodidactic characteristics, quite similarly to the *Rose*, the *Ars amatoria* offers instruction in the affairs of love.¹² More similarly still, the incipit of the *Ars amatoria*, reveals one of Lorris' first borrowings since Ovid situates novelty, newness, and education in love as boons to reading and learning from his work: "Siquis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi, / Hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet" (vv. 1-2). With this presentation, and by drawing attention to his experience and master, and to novelty, newness, education, and love, Ovid is explicitly entering into a contractual relationship with his reading public. He promises to educate and guide all those who are "non novit amandi" by means of the instruction he offers in his text.¹³

In addition to guidance however, Ovid also emphasizes the type of information that can be obtained from reading his text as rooted in truth: "Usus opus movet hoc: vati parete perito; / Vera canam" (vv. 29-30). Indeed, he draws attention to the positionality of these lessons and knowledge with references to the tangibility of his material, and to the idea of his book as *locus*—as the point of entry that offers a propitious terrain for education.¹⁴ By using spatializing words such as

¹² In particular, it details: how to properly court and woo a lady; how to behave once love is reciprocated, and how ladies should respond to amorous attentions. The guide Ovid provides in the *Amatoria*, is largely considered to be 'undone' in the *Remedia Amoris*.

¹³ See Robert Durling, "Ovid as Praeceptor Amoris," *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Jan., 1958), pp. 157-167, for an astute and vibrant analysis of the importance the poet's "profession of experience," [following A.L. Wheeler] which hinges upon his public's ironic ignorance and subsequently confirms his own authority and validates the didactic function of his work all the more (158). Similarly, in "Georgic Imagery in the *Ars Amatoria*," Eleanor Leach discusses the ironic play between "encourage[ing] the lover with promises of success" (144) and emphasizing love's unpredictability and uncontrollable nature, which again explicitly situates the poet in a position of authority.

For Leach, love's disorderly and brute nature—exemplified in disorderly women who cannot fully understand love—is dramatized by through animal metaphors and descriptions of taming: "Just as the artisan or farmer imposes his skills upon the objects of his trade, so does the lover impose his craft upon the unruly race of women whose natures must be forced into conformity with an orderly system of love" (149). Not only does this exalt his experience yet again, it situates all men as the "cultivators and controllers of their natural environment" (149), and perhaps elucidates the violent and authoritative mechanisms at play in the *cueillette* of the rose.

For a thorough discussion of the violent underpinnings of the seizure of the rose, see Noah D. Guynn, "Authorship and Sexual/Allegorical Violence in Jean de Meun's 'Roman de la rose'," *Speculum*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (Jul., 2004), pp. 628-659 (especially 630-32, and 657-59); for violence elsewhere in the *Rose* see David F. Hult, "Language and Dismemberment: Abelard, Origen, and the Romance of the Rose," in *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. by Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 101-30; and Jonathan Morton, "Wolves in Human Skin: Questions of Animal Appetite in Jean de Meun's 'Roman de la Rose,'" *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 105, No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 976-977.

¹⁴ Since the readers' educational encounter is activated as they experience the material and as that experience progresses, one might look to Stanley Fish's early theories on affective stylistics and the question of linear versus non-linear understandings of texts, and the various temporalities involved in reading. See *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972). See also Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), and his *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore:

“hoc” and repeating “arte,” Ovid also emphasizes the level of instruction, inspiration, and talent that are necessary for the creation and transmission of his message: “Arte citae veloque rates remoque moventur, / Arte leves currus: arte regendus amor” (vv. 3-4). Vacillating yet again from this valorization of the artistry and skill that necessarily must embellish—and thus depart from—the truth, the poetic voice of the *Ars amatoria* directly anticipates Lorriss’ promise of originality. Ovid insists that his discussion of love is not only truthful, but that the singularity of his experience makes him uniquely poised to be the sole authority on this matter. Neither the inspiration of Apollo, nor the inspiration of magisterial birds or the Muses were needed:

Non ego, Phoebe, datas a te mihi mentiar artes,
Nec nos aerae voce monemur avis,
Nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clisusque sorores
Servanti pecudes vallibus, Ascra, tuis:
Usus opus movet hoc: vati parete perito;
Vera canam: coeptis, mater Amoris, ades! (vv. 25-30)

Experience alone is what motivates and ‘moves’ the poet; and it is an experience that he presents as singular and “vera,” just as Lorriss will do.

Anticipating the type of subversion seen as *Le Roman de la Rose* progresses, the *Ars amatoria* makes it clear that instead of being a true didactic manual, the text is much more of a witty and sarcastic satire.¹⁵ For example, in the poet’s description of how he was selected by Venus to compose the poem, he jocosely aligns himself with prodigious actants in other domains that have little to do with the art of Love:

Curribus Automedon lentisque erat aptus habenis,
Tiphys in Haemonia puppe magister erat:
Me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori;
Tiphys et Automedon dicar Amoris ego. (vv. 5-8)

Although they stress the authors’ singularity, these hyperbolic and almost random comparisons reveal that the text only flaunts its promise of didacticism rather falsely, and in jest. By aligning himself with the Argonaut’s pilot, Tiphys, and the

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Hans Robert Jauss’ *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, Trans., Michael Shaw, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982); and *Towards and Aesthetic of Reception*, Trans. Timothy Bahti, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), and Umberto Eco’s *The Role of the Reader: Explorations of the Semiotics in Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

¹⁵ On the satirical nature of much of Ovid’s literary production, see Durant Waithe Robertson’s discussion of Ovidian connections to Chrétien and the *Roman de la Rose*, as well as what he terms the “Ovidian spirit” in his essay “The Cligés and the Ovidian Spirit,” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) pp. 173-82. See also E.K. Rand’s “Ovid and the Spirit of Metamorphosis,” in *Harvard Essays on Classical Subjects* (Boston, 1912), and Christopher Brunelle, on the “supergenre” of elegiac satire—a term he takes from Stephen Harrison, and Ovid’s satirical eroto-didactic angle in “Ovid’s Satirical Remedies,” *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry*, Eds., Ronnie Ancona and Ellen Greene, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp.141-58 (especially 141-45).

charioteer of Achilles, Automedon,¹⁶ the poet is not just dramatically mixing genres, he is aligning the difficulty of controlling horses and navigating uncharted seas with the challenging task of discussing love. The parallel the poet creates is that just as Tiphys and Automedon struggled to exert control over forces that seemed uncontrollable and uncontrollable, so too will the poet be forced to grapple with the challenges of his task. Similarly, just as the pilot and charioteer were successful, so too will he ultimately succeed in controlling Love's frenzied and wild course and thus fulfil the text's didactic vow.

The ironic, subversive nature of the lover in the *Ars amatoria* is emphasized yet again when the Lover reverses the traditional didactic principle of experiencing love in order to become more ennobled. Rather, he brags that while love is often obdurate and wild, ("Ille quidem ferus est et qui mihi saepe repugnet: / Sed puer est, aetas mollis et apta regi," [vv. 9-10]), he knows much more about love than Love itself: "Aeacidae Chiron, ego sum praeceptor Amoris" (I.17). As a result, Ovid's Lover promises that he is able to control and dominate love, and indeed, instruct and mold it himself. Nevertheless, rather than focusing on his personal amorous experience he turns to descriptions that highlight his rhetorical and literary sophistication instead.

By refusing to acknowledge any literary connection to his literary predecessors, Lorris flaunts his rhetorical prodigiousness, and betrays his confidence in the naiveté of his readers all the more. In other words, despite the many structural and thematic similarities with Ovidian works (Minnis, *Magister* 22-4), the omission of a direct reference to Ovid has the same function as his frequent use of litotes. The exclusion serves only to destabilize the initial narratological promises put forth in the *Rose* since it converts Ovid and his text into an absent referent. The rather evident intertextual relationships then loom over the French text they have obviously influenced. Thus, even this first connection made to another time period, text, and author subverts Lorris' story and the reliability he has wished to bestow upon himself to an even greater degree, since his direct and substantial connections to Ovid are purposefully concealed.

A Critical Examination of the *Rose's* Promise of Veracity and Reliability

The developing fissure which begins to undermine the narrator's truth-claim can be seen starting from the addressees of the first lines of *Le Roman de la Rose*.

¹⁶ See Pierre Colaclicès, "Horace et Automédon," (Trans., Marianne McDonald). *Latomus*, T. 33, Fasc. 2 (Avril-Juin 1974), pp. 382-384, and George Stagakis, "Therapontes and Hetairoi, in the "Iliad", as Symbols of the Political Structure of the Homeric State." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 15, H. 4 (Nov., 1966), pp. 408-419.

Represented by the dialectic of covering and uncovering, the obscure veil that clouds the beginning of the tale in an ambiguous haziness piques the attention of the reader as both literary and semiological codes are simultaneously multiplied and broken apart,¹⁷ and as the lone voice of the narrator resounds against the cohesive plurality of voices implied by “maintes genz.” These individuals do not believe in what Jacques Le Goff aptly terms “la démocratisation des rêves” in his discussion of the function of dreams in medieval culture (“Les rêves” 299-306). That is, they do not believe in the truthfulness of dreams, but even more specifically, they shun the potential veracity of a lay person’s individual (and thus, far too subjective) oneiric experience—a stance that is later reinforced by Jean de Meun’s refusal to accept the “veracity” of Lorrís’ text, by “correcting” it.

Moreover, the appositional relationship of “maintes genz cuident [...]” and “mais” stresses the singularity of the narrator’s take on dreams. In so doing, he precociously forces the reader to immediately undertake the crucial epistemological deliberation so privileged in texts narrated in first person (Booth 159)¹⁸: what information should be believed? Are the story and content credible? Is the narrator reliable? (Booth 158-9). Will the textual promises that have been made be upheld? Is the judgment of the “maintes genz” correct, or rather, should trust be put in the lone narrator who finds refuge and support only in an author of the past? And finally, whose professions of truth should readers believe, and more importantly, whom does the text encourage readers to believe? As if the narrator wished to perversely destabilize his own text, what is curious in *Le Roman de la Rose* is that the decisions that need to be made concerning the narrator’s reliability and the trustworthiness of his promise are encouraged even before readers know much about the narrative voice. A series of doubts and questions arise even before readers have been introduced to the primary material of the story: Love, the amorous passions of the Lover, the dramatic quest he undertakes to possess his rose, and the many frustrations and vagaries of love and desire.¹⁹

Furthermore, since the text itself is generated from a dream, we learn that this too places the actual creative production on somewhat unstable ground. Although dreams were frequently considered to be prognostic during the Middle

¹⁷ In “Miralls magics, miralls perillosos... Assaig d'interpretació dels elements artúrics al *Roman de la Rose* de Guillaume de Lorrís,” which offers an analysis of the Arthurian elements of the *Roman de la Rose*, Laura Borrás Castanyer draws attention both to the didactic formulations and metaphors illustrating the shadowed obscurity of some of the elements of the poem, which serve to effectuate the interpretive (and learning) process of the readers. She says the poem has chiaroscurist properties and must “ser vist com un apassionant joc de clarobscur, un joc de llums i d'ombres [...]” (20).

¹⁸ Booth is of course primarily referring to texts of the 19th- and 20th- centuries, but his focalization on the representational strategies of authors using first person narratives remains germane to the context in which Lorrís was writing as well.

¹⁹ See the discussion of selfhood, agential representation, and desire that Evelyn Birge Vitz offers throughout *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire*. Her chapter on the *Rose*, “Inside/Outside: Guillaume’s *Roman de la Rose* and Medieval Selfhood,” which explores the process of discovery and unfolding that the lover goes through, and which correspond to the “autobiographical narrative” so dependent upon the internal doublings and the “inside/outside dichotomy,” is most important to our present concerns (64-95).

Ages, and were lauded for their divinatory or prophetic properties and their capacity to reveal, it was frequently the case that when dreams were not rooted in a neutralizing hagiographic, patristic or strictly allegorical context, they could just as easily be viewed as delusions. Understood as being too frequently founded in demonic magic, pagan practices or absurdity, they did nothing but contaminate society with their false diagnoses and treacherous claims of having access to some higher, secret or divine knowledge (Kruger 3-5). An awareness of the polyvalent nature of dreams would accompany medieval readers as they pondered the role of dreams and dreaming in literature, particularly if these dreams encompass the authorial pact between reader and poet.

Yet since it is difficult to know whether or not the lover is reliable, and since it is even more difficult to know if the material presented and symbolized by the dream is true, the task which is laid before the reader and ‘interpreter’ of the text proves to be a complicated one. Questioning both the multiplicity of meaning, and the modern reader’s potential ability to interpret the signs and “sens” of texts of yore, Daniel Poirion begins his critical analysis of *Le Roman de la Rose* with a self-reflexive, self-evaluative rumination that raises questions pertinent to any analysis of textual content and, by pondering the intended role of the reader, reader reception theories:

Livre mystérieux, le *Roman de la Rose* invite le lecteur à l’émerveillement, à l’inquiétude, à la spéculation intellectuelle. Inévitablement on passe de la lecture à l’exégèse, et de la rêverie poétique à l’exercice de l’herméneutique. Sommes-nous mieux armés qu’autrefois pour nous lancer dans cette entreprise? Nous avons appris la complexité de toute œuvre littéraire. Nous savons que nous ne pouvons pas prétendre retrouver le sens, comme une communication directe, surprise par une oreille indiscrete, entre un auteur et un lecteur. (8)

These sentences touch upon the crux of the concerns raised by Poirion’s lengthy critical response to a text whose “true” meaning is drastically conditioned by an entrance into an oneiric world. By noting the temporal disconnect that might distance the text from a contemporary audience, Poirion also notes the series of ‘mysterious’ details and allegorical complexities which seem much more obscure and unfamiliar to the modern reader than they would have seemed to his medieval contemporaries. As a result, the temporal divide of centuries complicates a coherent understanding of the text as well as undermines faith in the interpretive capacities of the reader.

Nevertheless, the touch of pessimism that imbues Poirion’s introduction is not really pessimism at all, but rather a hyperawareness of the richness of the *Roman de la Rose*. He is bringing attention to the work’s historical and contextual particularities, as well as an understanding of the surprising distance between promise and realization, between utterance and context—or “énoncé” and “énonciation,” to use Benveniste’s terms (80-85). This also aligns with the idea of the ironic incompatibility between text and interpretation that Jauss puts forth in “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,” with his idea of the “horizon of

expectations,” that can disarrange the “semantic horizon” or semantic intentionality given to the text by the author (1548). Jauss continues, to also stress the need to literally negotiate with and enter into a sort of mediation with the text. Only then, he claims, is a proper interpretation of the text possible:

In the triangle of author, work, and public the last is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but rather itself an energy formative of history. The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addresses. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon-of-experience of a continuity in which the perpetual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them. (1551)

This negotiation is suggestive of a certain flexibility in regards to how authorial vows are articulated. Not only does it bring the agency of readers to the fore by demanding their active participation, it also reiterates that promises and obligations do not have one meaning, but a multiplicity of meaning given the diversity and unique temporal situation of all heuristic interpretations.

One of the areas in which mediatory action is the most necessary and tantalizing, but also the most complicated, is with respect to the relationship between dreams, interpretation and meaning, since in their marriage lie helpful clues for discerning: the relationship between sign and signification; image and imagination; and what is presented as truthful and trustworthy information. In their discussion of the theoretical and evidential approaches to understanding dreams, Alan Gabbey and Robert Hall explain how the dream framework opens up the semantic and interpretive possibilities of the text, in a manner that is at once liberating and frustratingly elusive:

The interpretation of dreams is rarely answerable to either evidential or settled theoretical control. When the phantasms of the dreaming mind seem unaccountable, as they often do, they seem to belong to a mental world beyond the reach of historical, philosophical, or scientific analysis, a world for which the rules of methodological engagement seem inappropriate, rather than merely impossible to observe. (651)²⁰

Sharing the qualms of Poirion, and the explanation of Gabbey and Hall, Douglas Kelley in *Internal Difference and Meaning in the Romance of the Rose* also grapples with the uneasy hermeneutic complexity of the *Rose*. While he also is aware of the difficulty of the task of the reader, he returns to the text as primary *locus* for the genesis of bountiful heuristic possibilities. Though Kelley states that the problem of the multiplicity of interpretation is germane to any and all literary texts, he posits that what is unique about the *Rose* is precisely its intentionally methodic accumulation of layer upon layer of meaning and its insistence upon the multivalent interpretation of dreams and truth.

²⁰ See Alan Gabbey and Robert E. Hall, "The Melon and the Dictionary: Reflections on Descartes' Dreams," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 51-668.

Returning to the overarching narrative framework of the dream presented in the *Rose* however, in *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Steven Kruger repeatedly demonstrates the perceived polarity of dreams by the medieval public.²¹ Dreams, (primarily taken for divinations) were revered because they tested the limitations and possibilities of human knowledge, yet were also feared and denigrated for this very same reason. The medieval public was often apprehensive of the daring unorthodox departures that dreams seemed to take from reality, Biblical texts and religious doctrines. From Biblical times, to the end of the Late Middle Ages, the binaries and tensions that established themselves between the inherent reality or falsehood of dreams only became more intensified (Kruger 7-16). From the beginning of the *Roman de la Rose*, since the protagonist toys with these same tensions as he purposefully draws attention to the abyss that separates truth from “ymagination,” and reality from dreams, the reader is made aware of the many conflicting referents that pepper the text. This will subsequently determine in whom or in what trust should be placed, and how authorial vows are understood.

In the opening lines of the poem, after he details the metaphorical fee that was exacted of him by Love, Guillaume de Lorris’ Lover describes the act of dreaming in a peculiar manner that both accentuates the way in which his personal oneiric experience is wholly divergent from a collective understanding of dreams, while also allowing him to coyly manipulate the reader by over stressing the truth, clarity, and exemplarity of his dream. The lover insists upon the importance of the visual nature of his dream, in order to give a greater sense of reliability to his dream story. This experience of sleeping “mout forment,” is not just an oneiric, fantastical reverie, but something that he sees—a type of visual proof to which he is witness. As if he were a passive observer in the oneiric theater of his mind, he claims that he saw his entertaining dream before himself as he slept:

[...] couchier m’aloie
 Une nuit si com je soloie,
 Et me dormoie mout forment.
 Si vi un songe en mon dormant
 Qui mout fu biaux et mout me plot. (vv. 23-27)

By describing the dream as situated directly before him, almost as if it were a theatrical representation, the lover insists upon a certain interpretive distance that separates himself from the dream. This renders the dream a stable object which he can objectively—and thus more accurately and confidently—observe and analyze.

²¹ Drawing attention to the conflicted relationship between dreams and truth present even in Biblical texts, in *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Steven Kruger says: “The Bible itself—in the Old Testament stories of Joseph and Daniel (Genesis, chapters 37, 40, 41; Daniel, chapters 2, 4, 7-8, 10-12) and in the appearances of God’s angel to the New Testament Joseph (Matthey 1:20-24, 2:13, 2:19-22)—validates the use of dreams as predictive tools. But the Bible also lends its authority to a distrust of the dream, at certain points strongly condemning the practice of dream divination” (7). With a focus on the representation of language, in *Language and the Declining World in Chaucer, Dante, and Jean de Meun*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, No. 63, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, John Fyler offers an original and detailed analysis of the Augustinian and biblical underpinnings of the *Roman de la Rose*.

His insistence upon a visual foundation and context of his dream has more than a double pertinence. The repeated emphasis given to the visual act, the Lover's later repetition of "Bien savez que," "Si sachiez que," and "Et sachiez que," (vv. 406; 424; 431), as well as his avowal of his own reliability as a narrator-witness—"Ces ymages bien avisé / Que si com je l'ai devisé [...]" (vv.463-4), are emphatic but nearly defensive as well.

Additionally, Lorris uses an intertextual tactic which links his dream to the dream-visions of the past which are esteemed and considered to have a more austere historical and philosophical credibility. The Lover cites Macrobius for example, and so doing he establishes a parallel between the dream-vision of which he writes and the "avision" of Scipio in reference to which Macrobius' comments are made:

Si em puis traire a garant
 Un auctor qui ot non Macrobes,
 Qui ne tint pas songes a lobes,
 Ançois escrit l'avision
 Qui avint au roi Scipion.
 Quiconques cuit ne qui que die
 Qu'il est folece et musardie
 De croire que songes aveigne,
 Qui ce voudra, par fol m'en teigne,
 Car androit moi ai ge creance
 Que songe sont senefiance
 Des biens au genz et des anuiz,
 Que li plusor songent de nuiz
 Maintes choses covertement
 Que l'en voit puis apertement. (vv. 10-20)

In regards to his contemporaries, through this association of the Lover to Macrobius, who "ne tint pas songes a lobes," the lover is also able to circumvent and frustrate any erroneous interpretation of his personal dream by the contemporaries whose opinion he has already discounted. Their beliefs are incorrect, as he opines; they seem to suffer from a metaphorical blindness that prevents them both from 'seeing' the value of dreams and from comprehending the many truths that lie within them. Moreover, theirs is a double darkness, so to speak. Since they are unable to read the meaning of their dreams, and since they lack access to the signs and clues offered by them, it naturally follows that they have more difficulty understanding their reality since the potential correlation between the hidden things dreamed "couvertement" and later seen "apertement" is broken.

Furthermore, and more than just highlighting intertextual thematic similarities, the Lover's mention of Macrobius and of Scipio's dream is a sly way to functionally associate himself with both the character and the dream of his predecessor, while imbuing his written account of his own dream with a certain credibility that he essentially siphons and redirects from Macrobius' commentary to

his own text (Brownlee, “Pygmalion” 201).²² The first footnote of Armand Strubel’s edition of the *Roman de la Rose* posits that the mention of Macrobius and the *Dream of Scipio* is dubious: “Macrobe fait partie des *auctores*, de ces anciens source de toute vérité, que l’on cite d’habitude pour ses définitions des types de songes. Ce n’est pas le *Songe de Scipion* qui lui est dû mais un *Commentaire* de cette œuvre. Cette référence est problématique, et ressemble à un détournement d’autorité” (43). Referencing “[t]he enigmatic position of Macrobius with regard to his posterity,” Hult similarly warns readers against passing too quickly over Lorris’ use of Macrobius as confirmation of the veracity and authority of his text, particularly since “Guillaume gives false information concerning his acknowledged *auctor*,” as textual history later proves (*Self-Fulfilling* 130-31).²³ This reference to Macrobius, while not any less problematic than Strubel and Hult ascertain that it is, purposefully accentuates textual coherences as well. It abets an understanding of the text’s strategic dependence upon intertextual references in order to lend credibility and authority to the poetic voice. Indeed, applying the “garant” that a lover would usually offer to confirm his passions and fidelity to his beloved, the narrator states that he is situating Macrobius and Macrobius’ faith in the veracity of dreams as a “garant” that confirms the fidelity and trustworthiness of his discussion of dreams.²⁴ In addition, the “garant” serves a narratological objective as

²² While Brownlee draws attention to the formative importance of the dream tradition to Lorris’s text by emphasizing “Guillaume de Lorris’s initial citation of classical *auctores* in support of his own poetics of dreams, truth, and interpretation: the *Ciceronian Somnium Scipionis* and the Commentary by Macrobius (11. 6- 10), which together constituted medieval France’s single most authoritative text on dream psychology and ‘metaphysics’” (201), he uses the textual example of Nature’s critique of the lover, and Nature’s critique of the inherent falsity of dream and visions to dispel the lover’s profession of singularity. Brownlee does this rather than focusing on Lorris’s complex and rather questionable citational practice that comprises his ‘misapplication’ of Macrobius (200-03).

²³ Like Strubel, Hult helpfully reminds readers that “Not only was Scipio not a king, but Macrobius did not write the dream of Scipio, Cicero did.” He emphasizes the literary reality that facilitated Lorris’s interpretation; modern readers now understand this as a flaw, but it is important to remember that Lorris’s contemporaries were not privy to this knowledge:

We remember that Cicero’s complete *De Re Publica* was lost for a period of several centuries, a nearly complete text having only been found in a palimpsest in the early nineteenth century. In fact, the only fragment of Cicero’s work available to the Middle Ages was the final section, the Dream of Scipio, preserved thanks to Macrobius’s commentary and its considerable success. Somewhat paradoxically, in this specific case, the commentator allowed for the preservation and, ultimately, the very existence of his primary text. For Guillaume, in a distinctly nonhistorical sense, Macrobius did write the Dream of Scipio.

Moreover, if we remember that Cicero is already imitating Plato’s Republic, which itself tells of a man (Er) telling a story, and that Macrobius, as we have seen, discusses the storytelling efficacy of both his forebears (myth versus dream), it is easy to see that a lineage of authorial begetting is implicit in Guillaume’s evocation of Macrobius, based on the writing, preserving, and rewriting of texts. (131)

²⁴ In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler’s response to Derrida’s famous analysis of repetition, citationality and iterability in “Signature Event Context,” which insists upon the importance of performativity to language and identity (*Bodies* 107), is a helpful tool to understanding the tensions and authorial challenges ubiquitous in the *Roman de la Rose*. Butler poses a series of questions that

well. It is the “base upon which the Narrator’s own discourse may rest and in which it may find its justification,” and its written form converts it into the tangible manifestation of an intangible dream (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 133, 130). In other words, following Lorris’ insistence upon the didactic function of his message, the “garant” serves as the assurance of the text’s vows.

Yet even this “garant,” which can be understood as a vow of credibility,²⁵ is presented in a vacillating way that opens space for contradiction. On the one hand, Macrobius’ analysis of Cicero’s text becomes a historicized, and therefore credible example of the dialogism Lorris carries out with previous texts, such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, from which he culls many of the details and stories that eventually figure into his own work, and which are later retrieved by Jean de Meun as well. In *Reading Dreams: The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare*, Peter Brooks highlights Macrobius’ foundational agency to the creation and structure of the dream narrative: “[...] medieval writers, following Macrobius, were also attentive to the similarities among dream imagery, narrative, and the vivid fables of the poets. Dream visions could thus undertake a defense of poetry at the same time as they reflected upon the relationship between natural and divine truth” (101). This is precisely the purpose of the brief mention of Macrobius in seventh line

assist in determining the status and originality of authors *qua* creator and the subsequent capacities of their texts:

To what extent does discourse gain the authority to bring about what it names through citing the linguistic conventions of authority, conventions that are themselves legacies of citation? Does a subject appear as the author of its discursive effects to the extent that the citational practice by which he/she is conditioned and mobilized remains unmarked? Indeed, could it be that the production of the subject as originator of his/her effects is precisely a consequence of this dissimulated citationality? (*Bodies* 13)

²⁵ In Chrétien de Troyes’s *Erec et Enide*, a reference to Macrobius’ authority is offered in nearly exact terms as those put forth by Lorris: “Si an trai a garant Macrobe”:

Lisant trovomes en l'estoire
La description de la robe,
Si en trai a garant Macrobe
Qui ou descrire mist s'entente,
Que l'en ne die que je ne mente.
Macrobe m'enseigne a descrivre,
Si co je l'ai trové el livre. (vv. 6727-34).

In this case, Macrobius similarly substantiates and brings credibility to discussions of just, faithful, and honest narratological representation. What is more, justice and fidelity articulated as a “garant,” also have martial and feudal connotations suggestive of the promise of unity between vassals and their lord, soldiers and their leader.

Peter Haidu, in *The Subject of Violence: The Song of Roland and the Birth of the State* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), offers a very useful discussion of the idea of a “garant,” as it manifests itself in the *Chanson de Roland* (99, 175). As Haidu sees it, the protective and community-fostering bonds that “garant” should suggest fail in the *Chanson*, when the death of so many Franks and their disorganized approach evince the absence of appropriate feudal leadership. On the “*auctoritas* that writing confers,” the trust-based relationship of reader/listener to author, and the different implications of “roman,” “livre,” “estoire,” etc., see Marie-Louise Ollier, “The Author in the Text: The Prologues of Chrétien de Troyes,” *Yale French Studies*, No. 51, *Approaches to Medieval Romance* (1974), pp. 26-41.

of the *Roman de la Rose*—he serves as a sort of procedural guide who stands in defense of poetry through his insistence upon truth. He promises that the didactic objective will be reached, and the didactic lesson obtained.

On the other hand, as Strubel suggests, the very mention of Macrobius is problematic, particularly since the comment is left relatively unqualified—Macrobius is named, but nothing more. Furthermore, as Patricia Cox Miller says in *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture*, “[b]y situating the ‘Dream of Scipio’ such that it is both a fictionally allegorical text and an actual person’s dream subject to several taxonomic categories, Macrobius both underscores the text’s semiotic profuseness and creates the space for his own interpretive intervention” (96). Finally, the association of his dream with the *Dream of Scipio*, also calls into question the authorial promise of Lorris, as well as the evidence the lover tries to provide in order to definitively prove the absolute singularity of his situation and his work.

As Douglas Kelly sees it, these contradictions and layerings are natural and purposeful: the text’s semiotic density facilitates a range of interpretations and encourages interpretive dissension: “[...] some texts not only divide scholars, they invite divisiveness. Such works go to the heart of personal convictions and tastes, posing moral and aesthetic problems that seem insoluble; they force issues that compel debate, yet are not susceptible of definitive solution. The *Roman de la rose* is one of those works” (*Internal* 3). The wealth of potential meanings and the role that personal interpretation play in the sequential dream narrative are in a tense relationship to questions of authorial control, fidelity, and truth. The text invites the reader to enter into an epistemological playing field, into a narrative realm and textual space that vibrates with polyphonic and authorial anxieties which are all fraught with their own fundamentally schizophrenic, nervous contradictions that trouble the bonds between author and reader.

All of the tensions surrounding the question of interpretation present in any literary work, are accentuated the most by the collocation of the *Roman de la Rose* inside a dream framework. Once combined with love, or rather, according to the narrator, with Love personified, the dream becomes the generator not only of the text itself, but even of the narrative drive and the explanatory, descriptive impulse which necessarily precede the text:

Au vuintieme an de mon aage,
Ou point qu’amors prent le peage
Des joenes genz, couchier m’aloie
Une nuit si com je soloie,
Et me dormoie mout forment.
[...]
Or vueil cest songe rimoier
Pour noz cuers faire aguissier,
Qu’amors le me prie et commande. (vv. 21-25, 31-33)

It initially appears that on the most literal level the Lover describes the generation of the narrative as due first to Love, which conveniently happens to coincide with

the act of dreaming. He states, then, that the narrative is subsequently propelled by just the dream itself, and finally, to complete the circle, the responsibility for the generative impulse is once again accorded to Love in very explicit language.

Indeed, the Lover reinforces this genealogy later in the text when he describes the specific task Love has put before him—a task which not only stresses the conversion of a dream into tangible material, but insists again upon the didactic purpose of the text while glossing the intended interpretive act the poem is supposed to effectuate:

Li dieus d'amors lors m'encharja
Tout ausi con vos orroiz ja
Mot a mot ses commandements:
Bien le devise cist romanz.
Car li romanz des or commande;
Des or le fet bon escouter,
S'il est qui le sache conter.
Car la fins dou songe est mout bele
Et la matiere en est nouvele
Qui dou songe la fin orra,
Je vos di bien que il porra
Des geus d'amors assez apenre,
Por quoi il veille tant attendre
Dou songe la senefiance
Et la vos dirai sanz grievance;
La verite qui est coverte
Vos en sera lors toute aperte,
Quant espondre m'orroiz le songe,
Car il n'i a mot de mesonge. (vv. 2055-2074)

Even though he claims the explanation of his dream is completely true, and refers to it as “la verite,” from the first mention he makes of this order of operations, the Lover’s credibility begins to be undermined by his own insistence upon the temporal relationship that binds his love to a dream, and his dream to the promised production of a text. The temporal confusion that complicates the order of operations as described by the lover conceals the direct genesis of the telling of the story, which is even further jumbled by the obsessive repetition of temporal indicators such as: “lors,” and “Avis m'estoit qu'il iere mays. / Il a ja bien .v. anz ou mais. / Qu'en may estoie ce sonjoie” (vv. 45-7).

Instead of reinforcing a temporal organization or order however, these disorienting repetitions only serve to palimpsestically layer time upon itself. This creates a temporal instability that impacts the rest of the scene, and all the more so given that different Lovers correspond to different moments in the narration. Moreover, by replicating the “songe / mesonge” rhyme in his description of the God of Love’s commandments, the Lover reminds readers of the incipit of the text. He reiterates too that “la fins dou songe est mout bele / et la matiere en est nouvele” and justifies the need for waiting and for having purposefully delayed the meaning

or “senefiance” of the text. Those who endure until the end his says, will profit from it: “Des geus d’amors assez apenre, / Por quoi il veille tant attendre / Dou songe la senefiance.”

Indeed, since the interpellation of the reader occurs in the present, with exhortative hopes foisted upon others directed towards the future (what they “will hear” and what the end “will facilitate”), the prophetic dream, paired with past events, and grammatically exhortative prayers contribute to temporal confusion. The narration “places the storyteller in the unique situation of living both after the completion of an event and before it” (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 142). It comes as no surprise, then, that at precisely this moment in the poem the narrator, as he commences his oneiric and physical journey, seems to be entirely outside of time altogether:

Quant tout rien d’amer s’esfroie,
Sonjai une nuit que j’estoie,
Lors m’iere avis en mon dormant
Que matins estoit durement (vv. 85-88).

As if recounting a dream which occurred more than five years before the narration began would not preemptively call into question the reliability of the narrator’s account already, the Lover describes the initial circumstances that led to his dream-journey as singular and suspicious. The dream he dreamt at night led him to wander alone,²⁶ outside of town and on the fringes of reality, on a beautiful spring day (Baumgartner 39).²⁷

The description of textual genesis, order, and temporality leads us to consider the order of operations stressed by the Lover because they too question his reliability as a narrator. Temporality seems to specifically become an issue for the Lover when he comes of age. This is a curious detail which paints the picture of a young man previously impervious or oblivious to the forces of love, a young man who describes himself as passive, to say the least, and also perhaps, as reluctant or unwilling to cede to Love. First, by making the Lover pay a toll, Love makes him

²⁶ The trope of wandering, which is hinted at only ever so slightly in the *Roman de la Rose* gestures proleptically to the potential violence that can come (and which does clearly come in Jean de Meun’s continuation) as it marries error and errance, again evocative of Ovid. This time Narcissus comes to mind, who, wandering alone, was led to an error in loving, that not only confused voice and temporality, or the same divide between image and reality, which are all at play in *Le Roman de la Rose*, but identity as well.

²⁷ As Emmanuelle Baumgartner, says in “L’absente de tous bouquets...”:

Mais, comme on le sait, le motif de la reverdie n’est pas une simple description. Il connote le désir qui s’empare du trouvère d’aimer, c’est-à-dire de composer un nouveau poème, de *renoveler* son chant. On remarquera cependant que, dans le texte de Guillaume, la double évocation de la nature et du chant des oiseaux n’appelle pas l’attitude exigeante de la *fin’amour* mais suscite tout au plus une disposition amoureuse que le texte qualifie de *gai*, de *joli*, d’*envoisié* etc., et qui est plus amour de l’amour que choix décisif de l’élue (42).

The rest of this article offers a detailed analysis of the troubadour influences found in Lorrís’s section of the *Rose*. (*Études sur le Roman de la Rose de Guillaume de Lorrís*, [Paris: Champion] 1984).

aware of a certain vulnerability and of the economic obligation he has, in regards both to Love as well as to the act of Loving: “[...] amors prent le peage /des joenes genz,” (vv. 22-3). The choice of a word like “peage” is a very apt: it encompasses the twofold nature of the narratological vow’s promised recompense while also signaling the indebtedness and obligation inherent to amorous vows, particularly in the context of *amour courtois* and a feudal culture oriented—even etymologically—around the concepts of service, benefits, and the transference of objects of value. As such, “peage” is a telling qualification not only of the Lover’s situation (or the situation of youths in love), but it can also be taken as a *clé de lecture* for the entire text.

The *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes [...]*, defines the term as a “droit sur les personnes, les animaux, les marchandises pour le passage sur un pont” and “sur un chemin” (Godefroy 301). Similarly, but with slightly less of an emphasis on the commodifying possibilities of the trajectory undertaken, or the “passage,” in the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, in both the Tobler-Lommatzsch edition and the Godefroy *Complément*, “péage” is described as “droit que l’on doit acquitter pour emprunter une voie de communication.”²⁸ In only one example, from the Baye *Journal*,²⁹ in which it is described as a “[d]roit perçu sur les usagers des voies publiques ou de certains ouvrages (ponts par exemple) pour en assurer l'entretien et garantir la sécurité des voyageurs,” does the definition of “peage” stress a characteristic geared slightly more to concern for the safety of the traveler, than solely to the purely monetary benefits which can be extracted from him in exchange for granting him a means of access to the path he wishes to follow.³⁰

²⁸ DMF : *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, <http://www.atilf.fr/dmf>, ATILF - CNRS & Nancy Université. “peage”

²⁹ BAYE (Nicolas de). *Journal*, 1400-1417. Texte complet, publ. par Alexandre Tuetey. Paris : Renouard, 1885, t. 1 (Société de l'histoire de France), in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*....

³⁰ Much like the frequent rhyme scheme based on different variations of “don” and the verb “donner,” “offre,” or the act of giving, has a direct link with the major principles of courtly love, and is indicative of the generosity of the giver while it also gestures towards the benevolence and openness it requires of the receiver as well. Focusing her argument in *Between Men* around the “don” and the “guerredon,” or gift and counter-gift, and the economic and sexual theories of gift-giving and exchange of critics such as Derrida, Irigaray and Lévi-Strauss, Raskolnikov offers a very helpful analysis of the “queerness of the gift economy” and of the role of women in the system of male-based desire in the *Rose* (53-56). See also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press. Revised Edition, 1985), from which Raskolnikov heavily draws; her chapter “Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles” provides a particularly useful exploration of the triangular dynamics of gendered relationships, and the relegation of women to a reified, exchangeable state (21-27). Gayle Rubin further elucidates the heavily gendered mechanism of gift transaction *qua* “confirmation,” or evidentiary proof of a “special relationship of trust, solidarity, and mutual aid” (171-73). See her “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” *Towards an Anthropology of Women*, Ed. Rayna Reiter. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975) 157-210.

The question of promises, debt, and obligation are an obsessive topos in the works of Chretien de Troyes as well, given the emphasis he also gives to “peage,” tolls, and passage, both literally and metaphorically.

Particularly in light of the fact that relatively early on in *Le Roman de la Rose* the reader is made aware of Love's peculiar nature, and the dastardly and even violent possibilities of Love who treacherously makes its followers suffer, it becomes much more difficult to understand the "peage" the lover in the *Rose* is made to pay in an overtly beneficial or positive way. The dominant position that love occupies emphasizes the passivity of the beleaguered Lover, left to suffer the whims and caprices of love, and forced to unquestionably obey love's rules³¹: "Au vuintieme an de mon aage, / Ou point qu'amors prent le peage / Des joenes genz" (vv. 21-3). Not only does the term "peage" first call attention to the Lover's subjection to Love which he goes on to describe in detail later—he essentially becomes Love's vassal—but it also highlights the linearity of the love-process. As such, it emphasizes a linear narrative process as well, which in turn, subtly calls into question the reliability of the narrator as well as the genuineness of both his feelings, his text, and his narratological promise.

That is to say, in order to proceed with both his love and his narrative, and in order to textually concretize his love, the Lover must first 'pay' for the rights he wishes to have. Then, already shown to be manipulative and sly, Love becomes seductive and cajoling as well, as it begs him and orders him to write. "[...A]mors le me prie et commande" (v.33). Like the lover in Ovid's *Amores*,³² only once the fee has been collected is the *Rose*'s lover able to progress and proceed. Only after payment can his love relationship (perhaps) come into fruition. More importantly, only then is he able to narrate, and only then is he permitted to metaphorically move forward in both his dream world and in literary time. Finally, both the literal

³¹ As the notes to Armand Strubel's edition of the text explain when they justify the choice to capitalize love "Amour" in the modern French translation, whether this mention of "amors" refers to love as a common or a personal noun is difficult to determine:

Elle est bien ambiguë, car elle recouvre aussi bien la personnification véritable—élaboration d'une figure humaine à partir d'un concept—que l'*'abstractum agens'*, simple usage d'un terme abstrait avec un verbe d'action concret. Même dans le cas présent où il n'y a pas, apparemment, d'équivoque (le 'dieu' Amour ne tardera pas à intervenir), on ne peut exclure une traduction : 'où l'amour prend le péage...' (43).

Nevertheless, though both interpretations have slightly different valences, the specific designation of the noun becomes rather irrelevant if we consider it on a larger scale. That is, since the use of a proper noun in this instance would serve to emphasize the prostration of the lover before the power that is L/love even more, the only difference in meaning that would come out of the use of the different types of nouns would be the perception of the degree to which the lover is made a passive subject, not a questioning of whether or not he is made to be a passive subject in the first place.

³² This awkward genesis and the difficulty with which one is able to determine the temporal order of operations, while present in the *Ars amatoria*, is nonetheless slightly less complicated in the *Amores*. The lover first complains about love, subsequently he is hit by one of Cupid's arrows, and only then is he able to write about the love, which, becomes both the generator of and the matter of his song:

Questus eram, pharetra cum protinus ille soluta
legit in exitium spicula facta meum,
lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum,
'quod' que 'canas, vates, accipe' dixit 'opus!'
Me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas.
uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor (I.I. vv. 21-6).

and metaphorical trajectories he is undertaking combine as his love and his text have the added benefit of forging a confraternal union or bond amongst other people in love. “Or vueil ce songe rimoier / Pour nos coeurs faire aguissier” (vv.34-35).³³ Offering an education, an indoctrination into love, and motivating encouragement for those already in love: the act of putting his dream into verse is indicative of the narrator’s desire that his text act as a catalyst and create rather mimetic aspirations for his collective audience. Once they become fully aware of his love story, this cognizance will also allow them to be moved to love. In other words, the Lover both intends and expects that the conflation of his love, dream and rhymes will elicit the same emotions he has felt in his readers.³⁴

Thus, the benefit that a collective unity of audience or lovers-encouraged-to-love that can come about as a result of the reading process is forged. It is the precise intercalation of the different subjectivities involved in paying a toll, loving, and writing, and the obligations founded therein, both in terms of love and of service, which are indicative of not only of a destabilizing identitary confusion, but which also announce to the potential occurrence of a future violent conflict, already suggested by the crassly economic nature of “garant,” and “peage.”³⁵

³³ Suggested with the communal “nos,” the idea of faith and trust and their relationship to confraternal establishment and collective, fraternal bonds needs to be explored more in depth given that the self-proclaimed singularity of the Lover suggests both originality and marginality, or exclusion. Obviously the term as mentioned here is in reference to the coming together of people who follow the same directives and have one united goal and a common purpose, while the idea of a “confrérie,” often repeated in works of the Middle Ages, is more intent upon creating a complicit unity among the audience, as one can clearly in François Villon, or Adam de la Halle, for example. The more institutional side of confraternities, i.e., religious confraternities, which “provided a suitable environment within which the layman could develop his love of the divine by encouraging him to deepen his piety” (Henderson 19) are also intensely connected to vows, this time of the religious sort. The theological bent that critics often read in the *Roman de la Rose*, could have an ironic meaning here since the encouragement of people to love can be deviating, as Raison warns, instead of divine.

³⁴ For more on the similarities between the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Divina Commedia*, see G. R. Strickland’s “Le Roman de la Rose,” *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1965 - 1966), pp. 183-187 (183-85); Michelangelo Picone, “Dante e il mito di Narciso: Dal ‘Roman de la Rose’ alla ‘Commedia,’” *Romanische Forschungen*, 89. Bd., H. 4 (1977) pp. 382-97; and Aldo S. Bernardo’s *Sex and Salvation in the Middle Ages: From the Romance of the Rose to the Divine Comedy*, *Itálica* 67 (1990), 305-318, which focuses in particular, on the “rose” in the *Roman de la Rose* and Dante’s “candida rosa,” as well as on the structural similarities of the two text. What the reader encounters at the start of the *Roman de la Rose* seems to be a young lover who in a dream comes across an enclosed garden whose contents intrigue him to the point of wanting to penetrate its interior in order to reach the area containing a particularly alluring rose that he sees reflected in a strange fountain shortly after entering. The *Divina Commedia* opens with a scene in which we see a man in mid-life struggling to escape from the dark wood in which he is lost that he is privileged, as a means of escape, to travel through the Christian Hell, Purgatory, and ultimately Paradise which is depicted in the form of a rose (305).

³⁵ It is also interesting to note that not much after the appearance of *Le Roman de la Rose*, Dante Alighieri, in the first canticle of his *Commedia*, *L’Inferno*, also writes of the ability of a text to move its readers to love. The slight nuance of violence present in Lorris’s text explodes in the fifth canto of *L’Inferno*, however, with the story of Paolo and Francesca. In a direct correlation with the description of the dominance of Love provided in *Le Roman de la Rose*, the punishment of Paolo and Francesca—

Given the intense directionality of the poem and the focalization of the narrative and the Lover's desires as he moves nearer and nearer to the seizure of the rose, many critics have mentioned that a chivalric quest-like system is the primary organizational structure in the *Roman de la Rose*.³⁶ While the import one might wish to give to such claims can vary,³⁷ an immediate albeit subtle example of

to be wildly blown about by the wind—is the first indication of the couple's passivity, which Francesca seconds by specifically citing the power that Love had over them, by making Love the subject of her sentences, and using the verbs “prendere” and “condurre” to illustrate how they were tricked by Love and “led” to act on their feelings:

Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende
 prese costui de la bella persona
 che mi fu tolta; e 'l modo ancor m'offende.
 Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona,
 mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
 che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.
 Amor condusse noi ad una morte (vv.100-106).

The terrible sonority of the anaphora Francesca uses, does nothing other than literally reiterate the culpability of Love. Moreover, as she mimics courtly discourse and reverses the optimism of the Lover of the *Roman de la Rose*, Francesca laments that it was their interest in reading courtly literature, which in and of itself was inextricably linked and dominated by love, which first directed them to love, and then to perdition:

Noi leggiavamo un giorno per diletto
 di Lancialotto come amor lo strinse;
 [...]
 Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse:
 quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante (vv.127-28; 137-38).

As Francesca describes the way in which a pleasurable action first deviates and then leads all too quickly to violence and grief, another similarity between the *Roman de la Rose* and *L'Inferno* becomes apparent from these lines. Lancelot, like the unfortunate Francesca and Paolo, and in similar fashion to Lorris's Lover, is painted as yet another one of Love's victims with the verb “stringere.” Moreover, “stringere” ties in with the “peage” the Lover must pay, since like the “toll,” it can be taken to mean physical, moral, and even financial constraint, submission and obligation. Instead of creating any type of felicitous community therefore, reading, in *L'Inferno* which is described as an action that contaminates by suggestion, fractures, destabilizes and leads to death. It foments the “dubbiosi disiri” that lead the souls to loss, and facilitates the realization of the same menace of violence which is present, but just slightly more hidden, in the *Roman de la Rose*.

³⁶ See, for example, Borrás Castanyer 21; Bernardo 305, and Marie-Luce Chénier's, *Le chevalier errant dans les romans arthuriens en vers des xne et xme siècles* (Paris: Droz), 1986. Still others also make mention of the referential system which at once has amorous, quest-related, and narratological importance (Baumgartner 51; Borrás Castanyer 21-7; Georgette Kamenetz, “La promenade d'Amant comme expérience mystique,” in *Études sur le Roman de la Rose*, ed., Jean Dufournet (Paris, Champion) 1984, pp. 83-104; Jean-Charles Payen, “Le Roman de la rose et la notion de carrefour idéologique,” *Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte / Cahiers d'histoire des littératures romanes* 1 (1977): 193-203 (131).

³⁷ Specifically, Borrás Castanyer emphasizes the didactic connection between the quest of the Lover and the process of reading and interpretation of the readers. The overarching structure of the poem, is after all, a heuristic challenge that calls readers to fill in the gaps of the love story of the dream, while also making them aware of the ways in which the path of interpretation they follow coincides with the more literal path the Lover claims the dream puts him on. And both, in essence, are quests. Borrás Castanyer describes the structure of the *Roman de la Rose* as “una mancança inicial seguida d'una *quête* emmig de tot un seguit d'obstacles. La novetat de Lorris és que ell fa coincidir aquesta

one of the first chivalric allusions of the poem is the “Pour nos coeurs faire aguissier” (v. 35) we have just examined. Let us briefly consider the double meaning of the verb “aguissier.” Defined as “aiguilloner,” “exciter,” and “aller en pointe,” in Godefroy’s *Lexique de l’ancien français*, and with the semantically similar “aguissement,” and “aguiseement,” respectively defined as “excitation, [...] ce qui est aiguë, sensation douloureuse, piquant, aiguë, rigueur du froid,” and “d’une manière aiguë, piquante” (14), “aguissier” seems to have been specifically utilized in order to evoke both an amorous and a chivalric code.³⁸ The piercing and sharpening of hearts as they are honed in Love’s vise confirm the violent undercurrent that troubles the promised recompense—the seizure of the rose—that is fundamental to the vow’s fulfillment, or “satisfaction” of readerly and narratological expectations.

estructura amb tot un projecte que és tan didactic com narratiu i en el qual la lírica és el teló de fons de la representació” (21). In turn, this need to fill in the gaps of the text coincides with both with Iser’s statement in *The Act of Reading* that texts are realized, “actualized” and “accomplished” by their readers, as well as in the argument of Stanley Fish in *Is There a Text in this Class?*, which similarly grants great agency to the readers (Fish 13-32; Iser 84-89).

³⁸ I would argue that “aguissier” has an explicitly rhetorical connotation that recalls the sharpening, honing and refinement in troubadour discussion of love. For example, Arnaut Daniel, in his famous poem “Ab so gai cundet et leri” puts the act of loving in conjunction with the writing process from the very first stanza. The ideas of honing and refinement are suggested in the alignment of the truthfulness of what the poet says and the desired truthfulness of his beloved:

Ab gai so cundet e leri
 fas motz e capus e doli,
 que seran verai e sert
 quan n'aurai passat la lima,
 qu'Amor marves plan e daura
 mon chantar que de lieis mueu
 cui Pretz manten e governa. (vv. 1-7)

Similar to the protasis of the *Rose*, by undermining the profession of poetic authority, the tensions present in the poem between natural states, and art and artificiality, combine to undermine the reader’s faith in the genuine nature of the vows of love that the poet claims to have made. Because of his love, the poet draws attention to his actantial, authoritative role in poetic creation; his poetic labor thus becomes both process and proof of his love. He writes the poem, however, his authorial power as poet is sharpened/potentialized by Love once the “lima” is refined. Moreover, Love is described not only as having a similar degree of agency and functionality to that of the poet-lover, but as possessing and being able to manage a power that has supremacy because it both activates and potentializes his verse. The parallelism is explicit: Arnaut “files” his words, while Love “smoothes” and gilds the language he has transformed into a honed and refined song—the song that every day he “melhur e esmeri” (v.8).

In similar fashion, the fusion of the two codes can also be seen through the inherent connection between “aguissier” and the act of being wounded by love, the act of being wounded in battle, or the act of being wounded in the battle that is love. This link is made clear by many authors like Vergil, Chrétien de Troyes, Dante and Petrarch among many others, but it is most overt in the works of Ovid, such as in the story of Diana and Actaeon, Narcissus, and the Lover in the *Ars amatoria*.

Et mihi cedet Amor, quamvis mea vulneret arcu
 Pectora, iactatas excutiatque faces.
 Quo me fixit Amor, quo me violentius ussit,
 Hoc melior facti vulneris ultor ero: (I. 21-4).

Furthermore, the physical and metaphorical implications of the allusion to arrows, which anticipate the actual moment in which the Lover is penetrated by the God of Love's weapon of choice, along with the mention of "peage" we have already considered, are both suggestive of a linear progression. They also reveal the text's specific aim and focalization. Indeed, a portal must be opened, a gate must be unlocked, and hearts must be refined and conditioned in order for the writer, and then later the audience, to have access to the rest of the imagined physical path, as well as to Jean de Meun's section of the *Rose*.

From Ovid to Jean de Meun: the 'Corruptibility' of Authorial Vows and Metamorphoses of Faith and Myth

The curious inclusion of various myths in both halves of the *Roman de la Rose*, both in Guillaume de Lorris' text, and in Jean de Meun's continuation, evinces the complex process of making authorial vows, upholding them, and interpreting them. As we have seen, both Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun put forth a narration posited as truthful despite the fact that fictional, often fantastical stories are used to illustrate it. Consequently, the many mythological metaphors and references reveal, yet again, the hermeneutic difficulties and the inherent contradiction regarding the implementation of allegedly truthful material that both Lorris and Jean de Meun put forth. From the story of Narcissus—the text's most important and most frequently studied myth—to the castration of Saturn, the love of Venus and Adonis, and the passions of Pygmalion, any reader of the *Rose* will certainly have noticed the often paradoxical function of these exempla. Indeed, when examined against the larger context of the development and plot of the story, they seem to simultaneously uphold authorial vows and professions of truth and disrupt them. Indeed, the way in which myths are presented and discussed is related to the way in which each of the *Rose*'s authors understands the authorial vows he has made, particularly because the myths are both directly and implicitly aligned with the author's self-representation.³⁹ Both Guillaume de Lorris' and Jean

³⁹ See Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and Jacob Burkhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, ed., S.G.C. Middlemore, (Penguin, 1990), J. Simpson, *Sciences and the Self in Medieval Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans., Willard Trask (London: Routledge, 1953), and R.W. Southern's *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Although its focus falls primarily upon the Iberian Peninsula, *Self-Fashioning and Assumptions of Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (The Netherlands: Brill, 2015) edited by Laura Delbrugge offers a comprehensive elaboration of Stephen Greenblatt's discussion of

de Meun's use of and relationship to exemplary texts naturally influences and shapes the method by which they rewrite the texts that precede them as well as the way in which they ideate and create their own. Jean de Meun's usage of these myths is particularly noteworthy because it exposes his critique of Lorrís, and Lorrís' 'failure' to keep his authorial promises and failure to continue his narrative.

Countless critics have pointed out the resemblance between the figure of the Narcissus story, the most highly prioritized myth of the first half of the *Roman de la Rose*, and that of the *Roman's* first author, Guillaume de Lorrís. In his portion of the *Rose*, Jean de Meun continues to suggest similarities between Lorrís and Narcissus, particularly given his description of the Narcissus myth as indicative of the protagonist's unproductive, vain folly, and his disparaging remarks towards the incompleteness and metaphorical sterility of the unfinished first part of the *Roman de la Rose*. Following Guillaume de Lorrís' privileged treatment and strategic positioning (Strubel 98) of the Narcissus exemplum in the first half of the *Rose*, the Pygmalion myth—an eristic favorite among critics—has a crucial role in Jean de Meun's second half of the work. Indeed, part of Jean de Meun's citational practice is to replace Guillaume de Lorrís' use of the Narcissus myth as a description for authorial representation with what he finds to be the more accurate myth of Pygmalion. His use of Pygmalion, and the correction of Lorrís' broken promise is thus of primary importance to his understanding of authorial intentionality. Finally, in parallel yet again to Narcissus as a figure for Lorrís, Jean de Meun's Pygmalion has often been interpreted as a figure for the author, or for any narrating voice.⁴⁰

In Guillaume de Lorrís's section, he aims to draw great attention to the Narcissus myth by presenting it at a crucial textual juncture. It comes about directly after he implicitly questions his narrative and interpretive capacities (thus wryly undermining his own authority), and directly before the Lover's loss of authority, which occurs as a result of his *innamoramento*—at least as the *innamoramento* unfolds within the oneiric framework. The emphasis he gives to his role in authorial construction comes about, when, as he grapples to describe a beautiful orchard that recodifies the pleasant ideals of biblical *locus amoenus* (Baumgartner 44) and inscribes them into the common place of *amour courtois*, he wonders if he should continue his story at all. He first reveals his hesitation

authorial self-fashioning and authorial self-representation in the Renaissance that reaches back to the Medieval period as well. See in particular Michael Harney's "Ludology and Entrepreneurial Masculinity in Iberian Novels of Chivalry," pp.144-166, and Wendell P. Smith's "Authorial Self-Fashioning and the Gender Debate in Fifteenth-Century Castile," pp. 127-201, for a historical overview of the construction of the self. Kevin Brownlee's "Ovide et le moi poétique "moderne" à la fin du Moyen Âge: Jean Froissart et Christine de Pizan," in *Modernité au Moyen Âge: le défi du passé*, ed. by Brigitte Cazelles and Charles Méla (Geneva: Droz, 1990), pp. 153-73, discusses transformations in poetic self-representation by way of Ovid.

⁴⁰ See for example, Silvia Huot's "Poetics of Pygmalion," Roger Dragonetti's "Pygmalion ou les pièges de la fiction dans le *Roman de la Rose*," *Mélanges de langue et de littérature médiévales [...]*. Eds, Georges Güntert, Marc-René Jung and Kurt Ringger, Berne, Francke, pp. 89-111 ; Douglas Kelly's *Internal Difference and Meanings in the Roman de la Rose* and Daniel Poirion's "Narcisse et Pygmalion dans Le Roman de la Rose," *Mélanges... L. Solano*, (Chapel Hill, 1970), pp. 153- 165.

through a rhetorical question that dramatizes the ineffability of the scene—"Qu'iroie je ci acontant?" (vv. 1358), which he then follows with an explicit mention of the insufficiencies of his narrative drive and ability:

Ne vos tanré pas longue fable
 Dou leu plesant et delitable:
 Orandroit m'en covenra taire
 Var je ne porroie retraire
 Dou vergier toute la biaute
 Ne la grant de delitablete. (vv. 1408-13).

Yet while this allusion to an ineffable experience signals mystical transformation and recalls the singularity and indescribability of descriptions of hagiographical transfiguration, which consequently could be read with a positive, ennobling valence, of course Lorris *does* succeed in finding the words with which he can continue his narrative.⁴¹ What he offers next is a succinct retelling of the Narcissus myth that follows the version Ovid writes in *Metamorphosis* quite closely:

Narcisus fu .i. damoisiaus
 Qu'amors mist en ses raiseaus
 Et tat le fist amors destreindre
 Qu'au darrenier le covinnt plaidre,
 Qu'il li covint a rendre l'ame [...]. (vv. 1436-40)

⁴¹ Although the beauty of one's lady is often indescribable, after much suffering and anguish lover is still able to describe her, just as he is able to describe the fleeting torrent of hyperbolic emotions that confound narration, and the beauty of the early paradise that often serves as a backdrop to the development of his *innamoramento*.

The description of the ineffable experience also explicitly corresponds to the troubadour and courtly love tradition, and thus conflates religious and secular experiences. Yet again emphasizing the divide between truth ("pour voir") and subjective experience ("je cuidai estre," "li leus [...] sembloit"), Lorris's lover explains his entry into the verger de Déduit in precisely these terms: "Et sachez que je cuidai estre / Pour voir en paradis terrestre; / Tant estoit li leus delitables, / Qui sembloit estre espiritables [...]" (vv. 635-38).

A prime example of this narration of the ineffable (despite the odds) of course is found in Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, when the lover, struck by the "colpi d'Amor" is only able to offer a fragmentary and disjointed description of his beloved (sonnets 3 and 5 are prime examples of this). More tellingly still, despite his struggles to put the ineffable experience of love into words, the heartbroken poet continues to be capable of narrating the impossible after a truly 'impossible' event which poses a veritable threat to his poetry does actually occur—the death of his beloved. Although her death occurs at the obsessively introspective canzone 264 "I'vo pensando," he definitively discloses it in poems 267 and 268. "Tempo è ben di morire, / ed ò tardato più ch'I non vorrei. / Madonna è morta et à seco il mio core, / et volendol seguire, / interromper conven quest'anni rei" (268. 2-6). Though he claims he can neither write nor continue to live in her wake, like Lorris, he continues to accomplish both feats.

On Petrarch's poetics of scattering and dispersal, see Nancy Vickers' seminal "Diana Described Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Writing and Sexual Difference (Winter, 1981), pp. 265-279, and John Freccero, "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics," *Diacritics* 5 (Spring 1975): 34-40. For a discussion of the theme of scattering as a means by which to achieve "integration," see Robert Durling, "Giovane donna sotto un verde lauro," *MLN* 86 (1971): 1-20, and "Introduction," in *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*. Trans; ed., Robert M. Durling. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Lorris goes on to describe how, since she was spurned by Narcissus, “eco une haute dame” pronounces a prayer upon dying that he be made to suffer just as she did, because of the damage and sorrow his “cuer volage” caused unto her. After a long and laborious day of hunting, Narcissus seeks to restore himself and quench his thirst by drinking from a fountain. It is then that he catches sight of his reflection, and it is in that precise moment when Love takes another victim: “Lors se sot bien amors vengier / Dou grant orgueil et dou dongier / Que Narcisus li ot mene” (vv.1486-88). So enamored is he of his reflection that he dies, receiving, in this fashion, the results that his own behavior and mistreatment of Eco effectuated: “Eissi si ot de la meschine / Qu’il avoit einssi escondite, / Son guerredon et sa merite” (vv. 1501-03). It seems, therefore, that the narrative voice condones the punishment that Narcissus receives; this judgment is corroborated all the more with the possessives that frame his “guerredon” and his “merite”; that is, his “paiage”—the payment, reimbursement, or compensation that he deserves.

As is frequent in retellings of the Narcissus myth, Lorris uses the exemplum as a “emblem of destructive self-love” (Minnis 22), and indeed, as one that designates the dangers of both love and writing: “[...] Guillaume semble surtout retenir l’idée des dangers de l’amour, que le jeune homme est en passe de découvrir à son corps défendant. Peut-être annonce-t-il le piège inevitable du désir, à jamais voué à l’insatisfaction et à l’inachèvement, comme son roman...” (Strubel 113). Yet a few curious and contradictory details divulge how Lorris’ presentation of this myth thwarts the very narratological vows that he has articulated, namely the fact that the moral of the myth is “tout à fait inattendue” (Strubel 117), and has “baffled many critics” (Hult *Self-Fulfilling*, 273). The question of course, is, why the myth featuring Narcissus and his reprehensible rejection of Echo despite her faithful devotion to him, in favor of his own vanity and self-sufficiency, is then presented as a threatening admonition to merciless women:

Dames, cest essemple aprenez,
 Qui vers vos amis mesprenez,
 Car se vous les laissez morir,
 Dieu le vos saura bien merir. (vv. 1504-07)

This ‘misapplication’ of the myth so vilifying towards women, serves the internal purpose of suggesting that the lover’s lady needs to be pliant and needs to reciprocate his love. If she does otherwise, she will be made to pay for this egregious fault by God himself.

Yet, as Hult puts it, the moral “is meant to point to the ladies in the audience (and thus obliquely to the Lady addressed in the prologue) but not to the male lovers” (*Self-Fulfilling* 273). The potential recalcitrance of the lady destabilizes the very function of the text itself and thwarts Lorris’ initial description about both the lady and the text constructed around her. As we must remember however, the lady is never once explicitly portrayed as the haughty, compassionless lady in the traditional stories of rejection of *amour courtois*. Exemplifying the destabilizing imperviousness that Lorris critiques, Alain Chartier’s *Cycle de la belle dame sans mercy* (1424) offers one of the clearest portrayals of resistant women and emerges

from a long tradition of amorous poetry that deals with the question of the fixity of vows. In addition to troubadour poetry, other prime examples that explicitly model the problem of fidelity and difficulties surrounding making and maintaining vows are: Dante's invectives against the stony woman's imperviousness to love in the *Rime petrose* (≈1296); Petrarch's *Canzoniere* (which Petrarch referred to as the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*) (1328-68); Guillaume de Machaut's *Livre du voir dit* (≈1361-65); and, of course, the *Roman de la Rose*. The connection between the *Belle dame sans mercy* and the *Rose* has yet to receive the attention it merits. Indeed, by expanding and building on the *Rose*'s assessment of vows, Chartier provides his own intricate portrayal of the complexities and tensions that besiege the subjects of his text as they struggle to negotiate the meaning and fixity of different types of promises. Emphasizing gender dynamics, the *Belle dame* specifically critiques the implicit promise of appropriate amorous and chivalric comportment that women are accused of breaking when they spurn those who love them.

When Chartier's belle dame justifies her disinterested skepticism towards her lover's professions of faith, she decries promissorial failure and the implication that she must facilitate the maintenance of vows that she has not made. Her remarks respond intertextually to the oblique moral of the Narcissus myth in the *Rose*:

-On me dit que je suis amee:
Se bien croire je le vouloye,
Me doibt il tenir pour blasmee
S'a son vouloir je ne souploie? (vv. 681-84)

While her rejection of the lover has its etiology in a desire to vindicate women, she also pronounces a linguistic critique predicated upon her mistrust of lovers' promises of devotion. Because she is jaded by experience and mistrustful of her current lover's words, she is unable—or at least unwilling—to accept his 'fabricated,' manipulative promises seriously:

-Dames ne sont mie si Lourdes,
Si mal entendans, ne si folles,
Que, pour ung poy de plaisans bourdes
Confites en belles paroles,
Dont vous aultres tenés escoles
Pour leur faire croire mereilles,
Elles changent si tost leurs colles:
A beau parler closes oreilles. (vv. 297-98).

"A beau parler closes oreilles": Chartier's lady's refusal to be so foolish or pliant so as to listen to the lover's professions of faith is the stance against which the moral of the Narcissus is angled. Indeed, similar to the Narcissus moral and the overall didactic promise of the *Rose*, Chartier's lady's resistance and the agency revealed therein represent a female voice that threatens male identity, thus 'meriting' punishment.

Yet Lorris' lady is no inimical belle dame. Rather, she is "cele qui tant a de pris," and "cele pour qui je l'ai [the "art d'amours"] empris" (vv. 38-39). Thus, her

compliance and the satisfaction of their relationship are proleptically guaranteed precisely because Lorriss has confirmed the ‘veracity’ of his dream, and as such, the veracity his text. More precisely, since he opens by promising readers that “en ce songe onques riens n’ot / Qui trestout avenue nesoit, / Si com li songes devisoit” (vv. 28-30), readers extrapolate from the pithiness of these statements that the lady for whom he wrote the text that he also positions to enjoin her, was/will receive and return his affections. If first, the dream is true, and second, we are to indeed believe Lorriss, why does the myth of Narcissus conclude with such a cautionary moral? The non sequitur decrying women’s inconstancy situated at the core of the myth’s moral “gives rise to doubt and suspicion” (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 188); this necessarily causes readers must to doubt the lady’s intentions, as well as those of the lover/Lorriss. As Hult explains, “[...] the blatantly unsatisfactory moral calls attention to our interpretative powers and defies our use of them. Our search for a content, or doctrine—that is, our unveiling of the allegory—is thwarted by the radical inconsistency of the materials” (Hult, *Self-Fulfilling* 188-89). Even when discussing fidelity, the the text betrays its initial representations and meaning.⁴²

Another specific example of the way in which Jean de Meun redeploys Lorriss’ Narcissus myth, casting it as a means by which to critique Lorriss’ failed promise and narratological nonfulfillment, is precisely when he uses Lorriss’ privileged example, which he “reflect[s] upon, rewrite[s], expand[s], and interrupt[s]” (Irvine 96), as an aperture for commentary on both Narcissus’s and Lorriss’s failures. As Minnis puts it, “Jean de Meun sets up Pygmalion as the antithesis of Narcissus, this being part and parcel of a systematic recapitulation and redirection of Guillaume’s major terms of reference...” (*Magister* 22). For instance, after describing Narcissus as an incredibly foolish lover, Jean de Meun’s Pygmalion struggles incoherently to understand the transformation that his statue has undergone.

Ne set se c’est mençonge ou voir,
 Arriers se trait, n’en set que faire,
 Ne s’ose mais pres de lui traire
 Qu’il a paour d’estre enchantez.
 ‘Qu’est ce, dist il, sui je tantez?
 Veille je pas? Nanil! Ainz songe!
 Mais ainc ne vi si apert songe.
 Songe Par foi, non faz, ainz veille!

Dont vient donques ceste merveille? (vv. 21144-54)

Rehabilitating a dream that earlier was directly aligned with lies and deceit by the *songe* / *mensonge* pairing, the language used to convey his deepest confusion overtly gestures towards Lorriss and Lorriss’ text. As we recall, Lorriss begins, of course, by

⁴² See also Erich Köhler, “Narcisse, la fontaine d’Amour et Guillaume de Lorriss,” in *L’Humanisme medieval dans les littératures romanes du XIIe au XIVe siècle*, ed. Anthime Fourrier (Paris, 1964) pp. 147-66; Frederick Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (Ithaca, 1967), pp. 52-59; Jean Rychner, “Le Mythe de la fontaine de Narcisse dans le Roman de la Rose de Guillaume de Lorriss,” in *Le Lieu et la formule: Hommage à Marc Eigeldinger* (Neuchâtel, 1978), pp. 33-46.

emphasizing the tensions and frequent indistinction between “songe,” “fable,” and “mençonge” thus gestures directly towards Lorris’ text:

Maintes genz cudent qu’en songe
N’ait se fable non at mençonge.
Mais on peut tel songe songier
Qui ne sont mie meçongier,
Ainz sont après bien aparant. (vv. 1-5)

Dramatized by his inability to distinguish between lies, truth, enchantments, distorting temptations, and dreams, Pygmalion’s confusion recalls the failure of the initial authorial concerns presented from the very first lines of Lorris’ *Rose*.

The aforementioned polyvalence of dreams, and more tellingly, the feelings of “approbation and suspicion,” “anxiety and fascination” (Kruger 7) that accompanied medieval readers’ fascination with dream narratives, are sentiments that Jean de Meun directly emphasizes in his critique of Lorris’ half of the *Roman de la Rose*. Though Lorris’ text may purport to convey one precise meaning, the unresolved conflation of “songe” and “mençonge” undermines it. Yet by continuing to insist on the “songe” / “mençonge” pairing, Jean de Meun points out that this conflict that challenges Lorris’ lover’s opening statement. Moreover, by using this precise vocabulary of dreams and lies to express Pygmalion’s epistemological uncertainty, Jean de Meun directly recalls Lorris’ description of Narcissus’s inability to discern between himself and the reflected image that he desires in order to dramatize how this myth is one of failure, not success. Jean de Meun also connects Narcissus’s identitary confusion to the confused incipit of Lorris’ text, in order to elucidate the failure of Lorris’ authorial promise and show that the dream presented in Lorris’ “art d’amour” is neither honest nor successfully realized.

In addition, however, the extent to which Jean de Meun’s interpretation of the myth departs from, elaborates on and revalorizes the version included in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, is yet another indication of the importance of the myth to the French author.⁴³ In both renditions, Pygmalion is a lonely artist who lives alone and makes himself a statue of a woman of such unrivaled beauty that he falls in love with his creation and begs the gods that she be made real. Particularly since the mirror imagery and metaphors presented in the first half of the *Rose* are constantly being reevaluated in the second half, the mere inclusion of the Pygmalion myth, full of reflecting and distorting intertextual references, draws attention to Jean de Meun’s very conspicuous association of depiction, reflection and artistry with the

⁴³ For a close examination of the specific departures Jean de Meun takes from Ovid’s story, see Kevin Brownlee’s “Orpheus’ Song Re-sung: Jean de Meun’s Reworking of *Metamorphoses* X” and “Pygmalion, Mimesis, and the Multiple Endings of the *Roman de la Rose*,” as well as “Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets,” by John Fleming. Roger Dragonetti’s articles, “Le ‘Singe de Nature’ dans le *Roman de la Rose*,” and “Pygmalion ou les pièges de la fiction dans le *Roman de la Rose*” are particularly useful for their consideration of Pygmalion’s creative capacities as an artist and by extension, of Jean de Meun’s ability as artistic creator of his text. See Simone Viarre’s “Pygmalion et Orphée chez Ovide, (Mét. X, 243-297),” and Douglas Bauer’s “The Function of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid” for comprehensive examinations of Ovid’s originality, the situation of the myth and its links to other pivotal moments of Ovid’s text.

problematic narratological process of Lorris and himself. More specifically, Jean de Meun's myth, with its explicit links both to his (relative) contemporary's text and to the myth as told in the classical author Ovid's tales, helps to elucidate the process Jean de Meun follows as a reader and as a writer. The Pygmalion myth thus aids and abets an understanding of the authorial intentions of Jean de Meun and puts on display his particular process of reading and interpreting both Ovid and Guillaume de Lorris' texts.

Though it may initially seem anachronistic to recall Harold Bloom's theories on the "anxiety of influence," Jean de Meun's acute awareness of intertextuality and his reliance upon and debt to previous texts, justifies brief mention here. These tensions are most overtly displayed in the two famous authorial passages of the *Rose*.⁴⁴ In Jean de Meun's section of the work, the authorial passages are universally considered to be: first, the references to Lorris' death and the god Amor's explicit introduction of Jean de Meun as "Jehan Clopinel," the "Jehans qui est a nestre," at the precise midpoint of the continuation of the *Roman de la Rose* text. This is found in verses 10560-10580. The second fundamental authorial display is the "apologia" passage, offered to the reader directly after a promise to "esclarcirai ce qui vous trouble / Quant le songe m'orrez espondre" (vv. 15150-51). The vindication offered in the passage is presented as a mea-culpa articulated in the first-person in verses 15158-15306. Indeed, Jean de Meun's use of citationality, and his awareness of the derivative nature of poetry and the obligation contemporary poets owe to their literary precursors, whose poetry simultaneously liberates and hinders them, instructs and yet imprison them in the past (Bloom xxiii), pervades his entire half of the *Rose*.⁴⁵ Bloom interprets the ramifications of

⁴⁴ Many critics have duly noted, like Cynthia Brown in, "Text, Image, and the Written Word," the "complex layering of subjectivities which proceed from a kind of external authoritative figure...to a more internal fictional one" (112). Both Stephen Nichols in "The Rhetoric of Sincerity in the Roman de la Rose," and David Hult in *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies* separate the lover from the voice that narrates the poem, and point to the paradoxical layering of conjoined authorial figures (Nichols 8-19; Hult 14-16).

Eva Martin's "Away from Self-Authorship: Multiplying the 'Author' in the Roman de la Rose," is noteworthy in that while she does perceive citationality and a rather palimpsestic authorial representation she takes care to definitively separate "Jean de Meun" (who for her is the "historical poet, exclusively), from "Jehan Clopinel" (who she takes as the fictionalized author, the allegorized character in Amor's discourse, and "the first person with a mantle of fiction," who is aligned not just with Jean de Meun qua author, but with the lover and dreamer of the *Roman* as well (3).

⁴⁵ For the most pertinent analyses of citationality in literary texts, see Derrida's response to J.H. Austin's *How To Do Things With Words* in "Signature Event Context"; Butler's response to Derrida in *Bodies That Matter*; Linda Hutcheon's idea of "transcontextualized repetition" in *A Theory of Parody*; and Vita Fortunati's response to her in "Intertestualità e citazione fra Modernismo e Postmodernismo." In his seminal work *The Light of Troy*, Thomas Greene also insists that any process of citation or "imitation" necessarily creates an inherent deviation from the original:

Heuristic imitations come to us announcing their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to *distance themselves* from the subtexts and force us to recognize the poetic distance traversed... [T]he informed reader notes the allusion but he notes simultaneously the gulf in the language, in sensibility, in cultural context, in world view, and in moral style (40).

these poetic tensions, which can only be quelled by metaphorically killing the father, in a Freudian manner, so to speak.

As Asha Varadharajan explains in “The Unsettling Legacy of Harold Bloom’s *Anxiety of Influence*,” an article on the reception and longevity of Bloom’s theory: “Bloom rewrites literary history and cultural tradition as a titanic struggle between forbidding patriarchs and their virile, if tormented, masculine progeny. The family romance is transfigured into a fight to the death, a tale of malcontent and usurpation in which the son emerges a bloodied victor” (461). As Bloom writes in *A Map of Misreading*, the family drama at the origin of all these tensions becomes particularly marked when it “involves two strong, authentic poets” (416):

Poetic influence [...] always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence . . . is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism. . . . (*A Map* 416).

While Jean de Meun’s interaction with and relationship to writers of the past is much less overt than a bloody, fatal battle, upon many occasions it nonetheless evidences his conflicted relationship to sources of “fruitful poetic influence,” while also revealing the anxious mixture of affiliation and imitation, reverence and violence that leads to a voluntarily destructive and often confused treatment of prior texts.⁴⁶ Instead of actively killing his most ancient “patriarchs” however, and as if to distance himself from them, Jean de Meun has an even more distanced narrator—the God of Love—contemplate their status only to describe them as already being long dead. He then makes the claim that their deaths, and the distance implicit therein, has caused them to lose all “contemporary” utility:

Gallus, Catillus et Ovides

Qui bien soient d’amours trestier,

Nous réussent or bien mestier.

Mais chascuns d’aus gist morz porriz! (vv.10526-10529)

As the God of Love explains, though the writing and presence of the classical authors “Gallus, Catillus et Ovides” could have been useful, and could have helped

⁴⁶ In “Between Men, Mourning Authorship, Love, and the Gift in the *Roman de la Rose*” for example, Masha Raskolnikov provocatively interprets the confused treatment of former texts in terms of mourning, desire and gift-giving. She views Jean de Meun’s treatment of Lorrin in a very positive light since it is only because of the second half of the *Rose* that one learns the identity of the author of the first half: “we know his [Guillaume’s] name only because Jean includes it. In fact, he does not merely include it; he enshrines Guillaume’s name at the center of his own work, his continuation of the poem (48). She goes on to describe the idealized system of reverence and exchange that is rapidly established between the two authors. In order to offer something to Lorrin in exchange for the wealth of material he offers up in the first half of the *Rose*, Raskolnikov sees “Jean’s continuation of Guillaume’s poem” as “a gift of preservation after death, a gift explicitly thematized in a passage that evokes Guillaume and offers love to him” (54). While extremely convincing, this argument stumbles only because of the vehemence with which Jean de Meun scoffs at incompleteness and insists that it is only because of the resuscitating, resurrecting process of a writer such as himself, that a writer of the past, (already relegated to a state of oblivion and inefficacy), can have any lasting utility and potential.

to console the mournful lot, they are dead and can offer nothing. As if the deaths of these authors were not enough, in order to explain their removal from the scene, and their inutility, which implicitly validates the utility of contemporary writers, he goes so far as to describe them as “porriz,”⁴⁷ that is, purulent, rotting, or corrupted.

Even more importantly, the relationship between Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun seems fraught with much more anxiety, at least as described by the God of Love:

Vez oi Guillaume de Lorriz
[...]
Qu'il est en peril de morir,
Se je ne pens del secorir.
[...]
Ci se reposera Guillaumes
Li cui tombliaus soit plains de baumes,
D'encens, de mire et d'aloué,
Tant m'a servi tant m'a loé.
Puis viendra Jehans Clopinel
[...]

Qui naistra sur Loire a Meun. (vv.10530; 10533-34; 10565-69; 10571)

Recalling the strategic rhetorical tactics of distancing and isolation that Lorris implements at the beginning of his section of the text, Jean de Meun often conceals and does not make reference to the influence that Lorris has on him qua direct predecessor in the second half of the *Roman de la Rose*. The obviousness of his many fundamental borrowings such as citing him directly, which he does upon occasion, corresponds even further to Bloom's theories on danger, self-consciousness and violence, primarily elaborated in *The Anxiety of Influence*. Less distanced from him temporally, Guillaume de Lorris' influence poses a much greater threat to Jean de Meun's claims of authority than do the long-dead authors of the past. Therefore, instead of being merely described as dead, Lorris literally 'dies' during the passage and then is buried in order to privilege and accentuate Jean de Meun's predominance and authority:

Cist avra le rommant si chier
Qu'il le vorra tout parfenir
Se tans et lieus l'en puet venir.
Car quant Guillaumes cessera,
Jehans le continuera. (vv. 10591-95)

Moreover, the detail given to Guillaume de Lorris' life and death in this brief passage that makes direct reference to him and recalls the need to “aguissier”—that is, to sharpen hearts and attentions—serves the purpose of valorizing the work of Jean de Meun, which is one of perfecting and refining. Indeed, the God of Love describes Jean de Meun's accomplishment as being able to “parfenir” and “traire a

⁴⁷ For previous discussions of this rhyme, see Peter Allen's *The Art of Love: Amatory Fiction From Ovid To The "Romance of The Rose"* (79-81) and Simon Gaunt's *Retelling The Tale* (104).

chief" a work he saw as lacking coherence and utility given that it lacked a proper conclusion.⁴⁸

These remarks on authority, though displaced in the mouth of the God of Love are quite revealing, particularly if one considers just how much material Jean de Meun does take from classical and contemporary authors. They are also revelatory in terms of the curious attempt to exculpate himself that he pronounces during his later "apologie," when he promises that he has done nothing but recite: "Je n'i fais riens fors reciter" (v. 15238). This tenuous relationship in which he cites and elaborates but also denies and rejects, his citationality, and finally, his self-consciously artificial fabrication of a literary persona are also revealed in his re-representation and handling of the Pygmalion myth.

Insisting upon Jean de Meun's use of ancient materials, both Nancy Regalado in "The Medieval Construction of the Modern Reader: Solomon's Ship and the Birth of Jean de Meun" and Ernest Langlois in his detailed *Origines et sources du Roman de la Rose*, examine his recourse to citation and analysis, the process of representing or reflecting and distorting which are apparent with his treatment of both contemporary and classical authors.⁴⁹ Comparing Jean de Meun's overt use of the ancient works to the obscurative way in which he handles the material of his contemporary authors, Langlois stresses the uneven handling which demonstrates a conscious decision on the part of Jean de Meun to shun his contemporary ties while embracing and even flaunting his connections to the "ancients":

Jean de Meun est très fier de connaître les auteurs de l'antiquité; il fait parade de cette érudition, et cherche même [...] à la faire paraître plus grande qu'elle n'est, en laissant entendre qu'il connaît aussi la littérature grecque. Toutes les fois qu'il peut placer un vers, une phrase d'un ancien, il s'empresse de le faire; souvent même il le fait sans en avoir trouvé l'occasion. [...]. L'empressement excessif de Jean de Meun à citer les noms des auteurs anciens toutes les fois que directement ou indirectement il leur fait le

⁴⁸ Commenting on the opinion of Jean de Meun's contemporaries as well as famous early critics of the Rose such as Gaston Paris and Langlois, in *Fortune's Faces: The Roman de la Rose and the poetics of contingency*, Daniel Heller-Roazen's historical examination of the reception of Jean de Meun's decision to bring Lorris's work to a conclusion highlights the paradox surrounding his text:

The very poem that [...] continued and completed the romance of Guillaume de Lorris appeared, in the works of the first modern critics of the *Roman de la Rose*, to accomplish precisely the contrary: the second part of the poem was understood as breaking the continuity of the first and, by virtue of its very form, as ruining the possibility of any coherence and closure for the romance in its entirety. Rendering the work less ordered than it ever was, Jean de Meun's continuation of Guillaume's poem would thus have consolidated the very fragmentation it sought to remedy. (3)

See also Sylvia Huot's study of medieval reception of the Rose in *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers*, and David Hult's analysis of the completion of the Rose in *Self-Fulfilling Prophecies*. The precipitous, violent, and not wholly satisfactory ending of Jean de Meun's continuation only adds to the sense of fragmentation and incompleteness.

⁴⁹ See also "Away from Self-Authorship: Multiplying the "Author" in Jean de Meun's "Roman de la Rose" by Eva Martin.

moindre emprunt, contraste avec le soin qu'il prend de dissimuler des dettes bien plus importantes contractées envers des auteurs modernes. (172-3)

As a result, the preeminence the Pygmalion myth exerts in Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Rose* can be read as a prime example of his critical and creative dexterity, a paradigm of his ability to reflect, uncover and elucidate, while simultaneously modify, obscure, and conceal.

To give but one example of this desire to modify while concealing, let us briefly examine the description given of Déduit's orchard and the "beles choses," which are "en ce biau parc encloses" (vv. 20373-4). Less favored and explicit than the authorial passage in which authors of the past are presented in terms of their lack of utility, and in which a mention of Guillaume de Lorris is rhymed with "porriz," this passage showcases the way in which Jean de Meun's use of images of death, growth and fruition can be read as a metaphor for his creative process, authorial tensions, and the impact he hoped to have on his readers. Contrasting his garden to Lorris' through the voice of Genius, Jean de Meun subtly sets up the many parallelisms between his text and the text of his predecessor, only to immediately undermine the comparison he has just made by insisting upon his own superiority. As Suzanne Akbari duly states in *Seeing through the Veil*:

Having redefined Guillaume's *somnium* as an *insomnium*, Jean goes on to have Genius make an unfavorable 'comparaison' between the two gardens and their contents, a contrast which parallels the comparison between Narcissus and Pygmalion appearing shortly afterward. Jean's garden is 'voir,' while Guillaume's is 'fable,' 'pardurable' while Guillaume's is 'corruptable.' (96-7)

Jean de Meun introduces the description of Déduit's garden with an insistence upon the ineffable beauty of the place that exceeds human capabilities and comprehension. So doing, he presents yet another proleptic allusion to the Pygmalion myth. Similar to the "unfavorable 'comparaison'" that initiates a discussion of the beauty of Pygmalion's statue, Déduit's orchard brings true happiness and joy to the barons, who, given the perfect marriage of rhetoric and imagination, are just as pleased by the descriptive, detailed imagery of the place, as they are by the sermon itself:

Si bon sermon veü n'avoient,
N'ainc puis qu'il furent conceü
Si grant pardon n'orent eü,
N'onques n'oïrent ensement
Si droit escommenient—
Pour ce que le pardon ne perdent,
Tuit a la sentence s'aerdent
Et responnent tost et viaz:
'Amen, amen, fiaz, fiaz!' (vv. 20690-98).

In this case, the joy of the barons moves them both to exhortation and action, and clearly contrasts with Narcissus's immobile stupefaction. Following the chiasmic repetition of "pardurables et veroies" and "veroies et pardurables," in an early

description of the orchard, Jean de Meun provides a double rejection of the deceptive and misleading garden, associated with bad faith, vanity, degradation and death:

Qui bien la verité regarde
Les choses ici contenues,
Ce sont truffles et fanffelues,
Ci n'a chose qui soit estable:

Quanqu'il i vit est corrompable. (vv. 20354-20358)

Highlighting once again the febrile vacillations between veracity and falsity, the deceit that the garden encloses—that is, the trifles, vanity, and corruptibility that are “contenues” within, echo yet reverse the metaphors of enclosure that are privileged elsewhere in the text. We must recall, of course, that the “romanz de la rose / ou l'art d'amours est toute enclose” (vv.37-38), and the amorous affections of the lover devoted to love are expressed with the same terminology of enclosure. Indeed, just like the barons must be careful and aware of their treacherous environs, and are instructed to “pren[dre] ci garde! (v. 203530), and carefully examine what is presented as truth, the degree of caution that the readers and the lovers must retain is suggested by association. Fomenting chiasmic vacillations once again, Genius then goes on to obsessively insist upon the positively valued material, metaphorical and salutary worth of the orchard redolent with “granz biautez” and “granz values,” and of which the “forme” and the “matire” exceed earthy paradise. Déduit's fountain thus has a productive value “tant est bele et tant profite / et garist” (vv. 20470-1) that inspires the actions of the barons, whereas Narcissus's fountain was only capable of bringing about tears, immobility and death. At the same time, as Donald Stone explains in “Hierarchies and Meaning in the ‘Roman de la Rose,’” “Genius' words open yet new horizons to the theme of human creation by indirectly equating the garden of Deduit with all the failings of such creation (instability, corruptibility, incapacity to rival the work of God)”(9).

As a result, by recalling both the sermon of Genius, and the discourse of La Vieille in particular, while also hinting towards the metaphorical sexual gratification to come when the rose is plucked, Jean de Meun uses Ovid's work as well as Lorris's as if together they constitute a fecund but rotting garden. He feels that he must rescue sense and meaning from a nearly defunct past, while making sure to translate meaning in such a way that the information offered by the two authors—or by any other defunct poet for that matter—can still be made useful and profitable for the readers of the present and of the future. His elaboration of the Pygmalion myth does precisely that, as its utility is not limited to an intertextual relationship with the Roman poet's product, but rather fits perfectly into its own network of meaning in the overall context of the *Roman de la rose*. Consequently, Jean de Meun's dramatization of the narratological failures of his ancient and contemporary predecessors serves to position his own text as the redeemer of their broken narratological vow.

“Je n’i fais riens fors reciter”: Fabrication, Creation, and Jean de Meun’s Feigned Claim of Passivity

Given the exaggerated emphasis Jean de Meun gives to Pygmalion’s status as a creator, as an artisan, and the many “interpretive dilemma[s]” (Henry 237) that surround him, a specific space for analyzing the centrality and textual pervasiveness of this rich example is necessary. Offered here is thus an attempt to bring to the surface the intertextual and paradoxical function of Jean de Meun’s application and manipulation of the Pygmalion myth. Jean de Meun presents his rendition of Pygmalion as a means by which to correct what he considers to be the faulty promises of Lorriss and the problematic example of Narcissus found in the first half of the *Rose*. Given the myth’s prioritization of an authorial figure, since Pygmalion is an artist, and since Ovid’s myth is told by Orpheus, who is an authorial figure *par excellence*, Jean de Meun uses his interpretation of the authorial properties of the exemplum to draw attention to the way in which he modifies and renegotiates authorial vows. His reformulation of myth implicitly emphasizes Narcissus’s lack of fulfillment as portrayed in Ovid and Lorriss, as well as the violent end that abruptly truncates Orpheus’s and Lorriss’s ability to narrate. That is, he situates the myth such that it provides the reader with a retrospective examination of Ovid’s and Lorriss’s texts, while always keeping a contemporary (and more importantly, future) audience in mind, whose interpretive expectations he is determined to satisfy.

Aside from the rhetorical devices used by Jean de Meun to forge an association between the figure of Pygmalion, the status of the lover, and his own authorial presence then, the privileged status of the Pygmalion myth in Jean de Meun’s text is initially revealed by the simple fact that he dedicates so much space and attention to it. While Ovid’s version in Book X of *Metamorphoses* consists of only 54 lines devoted to Pygmalion’s story, Jean de Meun stays faithful to the plot presented by his predecessor, but also drastically departs from it, as he creatively adorns his version with roughly 390 additional verses. Most notably, while Ovid provides a straight-forward non-digressive description of the Pygmalion tale set in the larger framework of songs that Orpheus sings, Jean de Meun’s version is not enclosed within a homodiegetic framework. He uses his tale specifically to draw comparisons between the lover of the *Rose* and Pygmalion, yet often turns to digressions and comparisons with other scenes of his text, all while providing many elaborate, meticulous details, and reporting direct speeches from Pygmalion and his “ymage.” The details that he adds also present a recodification of the character and motives of the exemplum’s protagonist; moreover, they are consciously fabricated to

add deeper metaphorical resonances and an even more extensive, structural coherence that can be seen throughout the entire *Rose*.

The situation of the Pygmalion example in Jean de Meun's section of the *Rose* is therefore of crucial importance. Last in a rather long line of exempla, the many moments of intertextual and extratextual citationality that parenthetically enclose the tale also highlight the attention given to its thematic and rhetorical centrality. Even a cursory analysis of the other myths would allow the reader to see that in no other story is the connection between the lover and the primary personage of the example so apparent. Moreover, Pygmalion's miraculous success at turning raw materials into art, and art into life, directly precedes the Lover's climactic conquest of the rose. Not only do Pygmalion's accomplishments anticipate the Lover's fulfillment and very felicitous final satisfaction, but the insertion of the story of Pygmalion into the poem at what almost seems to be a very inopportune moment, which purposefully leaves the reader in suspense, serves to draw even more attention to its status and presence in the text.

After a rousing sermon that moves the group of gathered barons to action, they themselves announce how they must attack the castle and liberate Bel Accueil without further delay:

Si com la chose ert en cel point,
N'i ot plus dou demorer point.
[...]
Dont crient en l'ost plus de .xx.:
'Ore a l'assaut sanz plus attendre!
Qui bien set la sentence entendre,
Mout sont nostre anemi grevé!
Lors se sont tuit en piez levé
Preez de continuer la guerre

Pour tout prendre et metre par terre. (vv. 20699-20700; 20708-20714)

Once the barons are about to attack however, though Venus's objective is also the liberation of Bel Accueil, her actions only draw attention to the rhetorical mechanism of delay. Although she is in motion and in a fury, with her arm cocked and her arrow ready to fly (vv. 20788-20800), readers are left in suspense and made to wait once more when the narrator becomes distracted by the silver pillars towards which she aims her arrow.⁵⁰ These pillars compose, in part "l'étrange

⁵⁰ Again recalling the text's insistence upon the need to "attendre," the suspension and displacement of heroic action is a dramatic rhetorical strategy, rendered all the more theatrical given that at this point readers are so close to reaching the end of the dream and the text. In this scene, the heroic suspension is mobilized in such a way that it draws attention to the delay that aligns itself with narrative incompleteness, and elicits more attention from the reader, while emphasizing the heroic components of the scene. Venus' raised arm seems almost to signal an *aristeia* that has bellicose and narratological properties, as it underscores the *tour de force* required to attack, and the *tour de force* required in the narration of the *cueillette* of the rose.

Though they discuss narrative deferment and delay in the *Orlando furioso*, many of the comments Daniel Javitch makes in his discussion of the "gaps between interruption and resumption" that leave "the outcome of the action [temporarily] unresolved," leaving the reader frustrated and

architecture du reliquaire qui se substitute à la rose” (Strubel 1075). Upon them is a beautiful statue, “[q]ui n’ert trop haut ne trop basse, trop grosse ne trop graisle, non pas...” (vv. 20804-5), with proportions are so exact and of such beauty that the author cannot help but compare it to the statue of Pygmalion:

Et se nus, disanz de raison,
 Voloit faire comparaison
 D’ymage a autre bien portraite,
 Autel la puet faire de ceste
 A l’ymage Pymalyon
 Comme de soriz a lyon. (vv. 20815-20820)

Even though the narrator insists that the statue of Pygmalion pales in comparison to the statue that houses the reliquary, the narrator is nonetheless willing to fully detail its beauty and speak at great length about it. Indeed, over four-hundred lines recount the Pygmalion myth, even despite the fact that it has just been cast as both inferior and a digression. While the myth proleptically announces the conquest of the rose, which is a pivotal moment of sexual and narrative satisfaction to which both Lorris’s and Jean de Meun’s texts have been leading; thus, its inclusion creates suspension, disrupting the barons’ battle, distracting from the lover’s desire, as well as delaying his satisfaction and the narrative climax one final time.⁵¹

Though Jean de Meun remains faithful to the major modifications Ovid made of the very first versions of the myth of Pygmalion—such as associating the protagonist with the arts instead of presenting him as a king, and having the idealized form after which the statue is modeled be that of a human woman rather than a goddess (Bauer 16)—perhaps the most important way in which he recharacterizes the Pygmalion story is by removing the negative valence that introduces the example in Ovid’s tale. Having been horrified by the depravity of the “obscene” Propoetides, the first prostitutes, and dismayed by their rejection of the cult of Venus, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* depicts Pygmalion as having voluntarily refused marriage. With a surprising awareness of his own vulnerability and his

yearning for completion are pertinent here (“Cantus” 70, 68; “Narrative” 52-56). He also elucidates how these mechanisms of delay affect the reader’s expectations” In general, what one remembers about the poet’s technique of interruption and resumption within cantos is certainly not the pleasure of deferred gratification but the aggravation of being stopped short, of being drawn into narratives only to be pulled out of them and left deprived” (“Cantus” 75). See both “Cantus Interruptus in the Orlando Furioso,” *MLN*, Vol. 95, No. 1, Italian Issue (Jan., 1980), pp. 66-80, and “Narrative discontinuity in the Orlando Furioso and its Sixteenth Century Critics,” *MLN*, Vol. 103, No. 1, Italian Issue: Perspectives on Ariosto’s Orlando Furioso (Jan., 1988) pp. 50-74. Daniela Delcorno Branca, in *L’Orlando Furioso e il romanzo cavalleresco medievale* (Firenze, 1973), pp. 30-51, also offers a solid analysis of the multifaceted strategic functions an author’s choice to pause action can have, such as using delay as a mnemonic device.

⁵¹ After attempting to grasp the rose in the first half of the text, this long period of delay, which effectively constitutes the bulk of the *Roman de la Rose*, gives great irony to the lover’s sudden sense of haste:

Que Dieus me garde d’estre escharniz
 Et destorbez par nulle chose
 Que je ne joïsse de la rose ! (vv. 21252-21254)

susceptibility to the will of others, Pygmalion avoids matrimony not only out of concern for self-protection, but also because of the intense mistrust of women that the prostitutes have instilled in him, and whose behavior led him to believe in the natural baseness of the entire female sex in the first place:

Quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis
viderat, offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti
femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs
vivebat thalamique diu consorte carebat. (vv. 243-6)

As if secondary, and thus subordinate to the natural perversity of women, Pygmalion's artistic abilities seem to come about in Ovid's text only because of his solitude resulting from lack,⁵² which is represented clearly by the sharp contrast between "vivebat" and "carebat." This is an opposition that parenthetically encloses and accentuates the periphrastic treatment of his loneliness. Since no real woman could ever be trusted, in his opinion, the only means by which he can successfully substitute his celibacy for companionship is by creating an artistic prosthesis to fill the emptiness of his life and bed. His prized creation, reified in the full sense of the word, becomes both an extension of himself and the plastic substitute of something real, the stone object upon which he can place all of his desires:

Interea niveum mira feliciter arte
Sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, qua femina nasci
nulla potest, operisque sui concepit amorem. (vv. 247-9)

While an obvious stress is placed upon the parallel between the impossible "birth" of the woman similar to the statue he produced, and the birth of his love, Pygmalion's artistic talents are first described in rather reductive terms, as if it is merely a happy coincidence that he has the ability to produce forms that so closely reproduce reality. Nevertheless, his art is so great and so capable of approximating a real, albeit highly aestheticized human form, that it instantly effectuates a change within him and inspires his love.

As I previously mentioned, the story of Narcissus, in both Ovid's and Guillaume de Lorris' versions has many specific parallels with the Pygmalion myth, such as the themes of speech and silence, folly, self-knowledge and desire, and requited versus unrequited love. In particular, Narcissus's self-deceit anticipates the Pygmalion myth in many ways. It primarily does so, in that as we recall, Narcissus does not know what he sees, doubts what he has before his eyes, and grasps for proof though he ultimately cannot seize it:

quid videat, nescit; sed quod videt, uritur illo,
atque oculos idem, qui decipit, incitat error.
credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?

⁵² In *Poetic Allusion and Poetic Embrace in Ovid and Virgil*, R.A. Smith draws attention to structural proof of the insignificance of Pygmalion's artistic abilities: "[...] Pygmalion, who has been called the greatest artist in the *Metamorphoses*, is in this story given a mere three lines to describe the act of his crafting the statue, only one and one-half of which (lines 247-48) actually refer to the artist and not the artwork" (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997) 65.

quod petis, est nusquam; quod amas, avertere, perdes!

ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est. (vv. 413-17)

Similar, then, to the figure of Narcissus who deceived himself because of failed of self-recognition,⁵³ Guillaume de Lorris does not understand what he has promised his reader. At this moment however, it is Pygmalion who deceives himself due to a problem of recognition. Conflating Narcissus's misprision, and Lorris's misunderstanding of his authorial vow, Pygmalion's error comes about because he is neither able to properly recognize what he has made, nor does he fully comprehend his role as creator. Foolishly believing that he has a real body in front of him and thus directly recalling Narcissus who "corpus *putat* esse, quod umbra est" (v. 417, my emphasis),⁵⁴ Pygmalion's passions lead him, as lover, to be deceived by the image in front of him. This also causes him as creator, to be easily deceived by his creation:

virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,

et, si non obstat reverentia, velle mo veri:

ars adeo latet arte sua. miratur et haurit

pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes. (vv. 250-53)

In addition, the importance of literal reflection and metaphorical self-reflexivity align Narcissus with the craft of artistic creation, be it through writing or through sculpting. So too does the detail that Narcissus, desiring his *own* image, loves a bodiless one—"[...] visae conreptus imagine formae / spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod unda est" (vv. 416-17)—and lies more still than a statue of Parian marble in order to gaze at the "image" of his desire: "adstupet ipse sibi vultuque inmotus eodem / haeret ut e Pario formatum marmore signum" (vv. 418-19). Furthermore, Parian marble is the same material Pygmalion uses to craft his statue, which emphasizes the link between belief, art, and beauty that draw the protagonists of both stories together once again.

⁵³ See *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-knowledge and the Gaze in Early Roman Empire*, by Shadi Bartsch for a useful examination of Narcissus's frustrated vision and confusion, particularly in regards to the line "ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est" (87), as well as Frederick Goldin's *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* for a comprehensive study of interpretations of Narcissus in the Middle Ages.

⁵⁴ In *Ovid Before Exile: Art and Punishment in the Metamorphoses*, Patricia Johnson takes Pygmalion's "sculptural 'success'" and his love for his own creation as a sign of "perversion" and "narcissistic misogyny" (117).

Similarly, Michel de Montaigne, in "De l'Affection des Pères aux Enfants," commenting upon the similarity between narcissistic love for oneself and narcissistic love for one's creations—be they artistic, poetic, or literal offspring, insists that the artistic and poetic creations, and the fevered passions they inspire, often take precedence over real children in the hearts of their creators, who are their sole progenitors and do not share paternity with another person:

Et, quant à ces passions vitieuses et furieuses qui ont eschauffé quelque fois les peres à l'amour de leurs filles, ou les meres envers leurs fils, encore s'en trouve il de pareilles en cette autre sorte de parenté: tesmoing ce que l'on recite de Pygmalion, qui, ayant basti une statue de femme de beauté singuliere, il devint si éperduement espris de l'amour forcené de ce sien ouvrage, qu'il falut qu'en faveur de sa rage les dieux la luy vivifiassent,

Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore / Subsedit digitis. (Montaigne)

As shown in this description of Pygmalion's tenuous grasp of reality and propensity to be deceived or confused, Ovid destabilizes Pygmalion's capabilities as an artist even more by first presenting his talents as derivative, as if they were the result of his rejection of women and the world, rather than existing in and of themselves as their own creative entity. "A refugee from the world of social realities" (Pelen 46), Pygmalion's artistry is further undermined by his silly naïveté and poor judgment. This is revealed in his rash and unfounded assessment of the prostitutes' comportment as indicative of the behavior of all women, as well as by his desperate loneliness, which conditions the gaze that falls on the object he has so lovingly created. In addition, while his scopophilia does lead him from lust to love, it is first suggestive of a state of folly, full of narcissistic implications, and subsequently of the melancholic pessimism, which initially facilitated his self-imposed isolation.

Though often overlooked by critics, what is most indicative of the preoccupying undertone that runs through Ovid's presentation of the Pygmalion myth, is the fact that the act of constructing the beautiful statue finds its preoccupying origin in the "shameful" behavior of the Propoetides much more than in Pygmalion's artistic skills and creative desires (Otis 162). Since artistic intentionality is only suggested, and not explicitly mentioned aside from the brief phrase "ars adeo latet arte sua" (v. 252), Pygmalion's desire to fabricate the statue of a woman is relegated to the temporal "meanwhile" of what happens *after* he has spent an excessively long time as a bachelor. The Propoetides's wanton behavior is what occasions Pygmalion's story and provides the background context, which gives potential to his art. Granted, this rather torturous trajectory does finally end up leading him to art and to love, but this satisfaction occurs only as an afterthought. This negative, generative association of an amorous relationship born of lascivious women and circumscribed by references to "crimen," "exilio," "poena" and "mors,"⁵⁵ heightens the sense of transgression, criminality, and non-normative behavior all the more; in turn, the deviation introduced by the Propoetides is judged even more explicitly by Venus' wrathful punishment of the prostitutes, whom she silences and turns into stone:

pro quo sua numinis ira
corpora cum fama primae vulgasse feruntur,

⁵⁵ Alan Gunn, in *The Mirror of Love: A Reinterpretation of the Romance of the Rose* interprets moments of change such as these transformations of Pygmalion's desire as part of an entelechy, as proof of Pygmalion's spiritual, emotion, and existential development:

The allegory of the Rose is the story of a lover who is at first under the spell of the mirror of Narcissus, that is, of his own selfish desire, but who eventually, under the impact of experience and the influence of his various teachers, comes to realize both the universal significance of his passion and the necessity that he and his beloved attain a mutual love.

The exemplum of the sculptor and his love has also for its theme the attainment of maturity, which involves and requires the overcoming of selfishness. (287-88)

Though many of Gunn's interpretations in are just, his refusal to consider any of the negative implications of Pygmalion's love, such as the guilt and shame that he feels, or the tragic end of his lineage, seriously undermine his argument.

utque pudor cessi, sanguisque induruit oris,
in rigidum parvo silicem discrimine versae. (vv. 239-42)

The damage wrought by the Propoetides has specific ramifications in terms of Pygmalion's amorous desires and development.⁵⁶ After being debased by the prostitutes, love and desire become negative, disgusting, and even abhorrent to Pygmalion. Unable to reconcile this aversion he feels towards women and their criminal and dirty love, Pygmalion feels he must reject it entirely. Yet as his story progresses, as his queer interactions with the statue become more passionate and intense, they eventually cause him to feel much differently about love and desire.

The fact that directionality is completely flipped since the second instance of "metamorphosis reverses the first" (Griffin 67)—Pygmalion's "simulacra" as many critics have mentioned, goes from stone, to wax, to flesh—first might seem to be indicative of difference and the eventual rehabilitation he finds in the transformative process of his statue. More specifically, this case of metamorphosis indicates the distance that separates the statue Pygmalion loves and the wanton women he loathes who go from flesh to stone. Nevertheless, despite the directionality that distances them, the correspondence of the stages of metamorphosis the women undergo, inherently forges a similitude between the fate of the Propoetides and the originary state of the statue. This transformation should thus pique Pygmalion's attention. So trusting of a statue which eventually becomes real and consequently runs the risk of falling into the ways of the prostitutes, the shared experience of metamorphosis that the Propoetides and the statue endure should alert Pygmalion to the possibility that perhaps he should be more wary of the woman he calls his wife. Even more perversely, the correlation between the shared stages of metamorphosis easily lends to the possibility that his wife may abuse her uxorious promise of fidelity, and he may end up abhorring her as well.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ See Paul Barolsky and Eva D'Ambra's "Pygmalion's Doll" for a riveting discussion of the suggestion of Pygmalion's developmental delays, as evidenced through the similarities between Ovid's description of his ivory statue and the jointed ivory dolls and trundles of doll-sized accessories that Roman children would play with: "For the sculptor, as he turns away from the sexuality of prostitutes, is as innocent as the maiden. Pygmalion is himself childlike as he plays with his statue, which he treats as if it were a doll, despite the difference in scale. Talking to his ivory figurine, bringing her gifts, dressing her up, Pygmalion brings to mind a child playing with such a doll" (*Arion*, Third Series, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2009), pp. 19-24) 20.

⁵⁷ Douglas Kelly, who interprets the Pygmalion example as a "love acceptable to Reason" (*Internal Difference* 76), perhaps exaggerates, and does not look far enough into the future when he regards Pygmalion's relationship as redemptive: "No 'bad love' uses the sex act for its original, 'natural purpose of procreation. It may, of course, be redeemed by it, as in Pygmalion's case" (70). Alan Griffin also views the second metamorphosis in a very positive light, pointing out that "the blood pulsing in her [the girl's] veins contrasts with the hardening of the blood in the faces of the shameless and unblushing Propoetides," and that "[t]he lips which Pygmalion kisses are *non falsa*; the expression implies that the lips are real and also that they are not deceitful" (67). Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the negative end that Pygmalion's love story will have.

Though the exemplum is purposefully ambiguous, given the subsequent tale of similarly unmeasured and unreasonable love presented in the text—the "malus ardor" of Myrrha, which leads to incest, exile, castration, and the violence that not only destroys happiness, but Pygmalion's entire lineage—"si sine prole fuisset, / inter felices Cinyras potuisset haberi"(vv. 298-99)—it facilitates an

One of the most important aspects of Ovid's text is the moment in which Pygmalion finally voices his desires by invoking the help of a higher power. In accordance with the folly so visible in Ovid's descriptions of his actions for example, the prayer that he offers to Venus further dramatizes his odd timidity, his weakness and his propensity to madness:

turaque fumabant, cum munere functus ad aras
constitit et timide "si, di, dare cuncta potestis,
sit coniunx, opto," non ausus "eburnea virgo"
dicere, Pygmalion "similis mea" dixit "eburnae."(vv.273-6)

Although these lines insist upon the centrality of speech and speech acts to Pygmalion's story, they also dramatize his inability to use language with dexterity, which becomes rather ironic since his hesitation, timidity and stammering are anchored by what could have been a peremptory "opto." Given that Pygmalion nervously speaks through wishful comparatives instead of assertively voicing his desires, the potential power that "opto" could have had fails, which only makes the question of what he really wants and the type of woman he truly desires all the more vague and elusive. That is, though there is nothing hypothetical about the simple condition Pygmalion uses, the politeness of the wording of his prayer—"If the gods are able..., I pray that..."—again reinforces not only the uncertainty of his desires, but also his awareness that being subjugated to the gods has left him with no type of real control over the situation.

Moreover, the way in which Ovid emphasizes Pygmalion's elliptical allusion to his desire makes the artist seem foolish and passive. Indeed, he does not dare admit that he loves the statue and can only bring himself to hint that he would like a wife similar to it. With his omission and his refusal to dare and expressly articulate his desires, Pygmalion negates the actancial effects of his role in creation and leaves everything up to chance, merely hoping that Venus will be able to give the right interpretation to the words he says, or rather, to the words he does *not* say. In his analysis of this scene, Kevin Brownlee effectively focuses on Pygmalion's "non-verbalized true intention," stressing the connection between verbal dexterity and the culmination of desire. "In Ovid's version, Venus intervenes only because she is able to read into Pygmalion's actions and feelings" (274-8). Pygmalion's timorous language and his inability to express himself properly therefore, only heighten the interpretive expertise demanded of Venus, while dramatizing Pygmalion's linguistic and promissorial failures.

It is on this linguistic level, and because of the dramatization of the protagonist's ability to effectuate action through assertive speech, that Jean de Meun's account becomes even more noteworthy. In difference to Ovid's telling of the myth, in the *Roman de la Rose*, the power to move through language is specifically granted to Pygmalion. In regards to the spoken words of Pygmalion and his beloved, as Brownlee has noted in "Orpheus' Song Re-sung: Jean de Meun's Reworking of

indubitably negative reading of the passage that weakens the prematurely positivist interpretation admissible if one examines only the homodiegetic level of the myth without weighing the consequences of its situation and larger context.

Metamorphoses X,” while Ovid’s version has Pygmalion speak in “one long passage of direct discourse,” Jean de Meun’s version accords Pygmalion a much greater textual space in which he is able to carry on a very extensive discourse comprised of different forms of verbal communication. “Structured with attention to detail and classical rhetorical models, Pygmalion’s speech can be broken down into four different parts: his lament [...], his address to the statue [...], his prayer to Venus, [...], and his reaction to the statue’s transformation [...] (Brownlee 274-8). This attribute, his newfound linguistic ability and control subsequently approximate him to the Lover, and even more directly, to the authorial voice.

Furthermore, to return to the linguistic level, without demonstrating any timidity, Pygmalion in the *Rose* immediately and unfalteringly acknowledges his passions for the statue and asks Venus for a miracle with remarkable rhetorical adroitness. He invokes the goddess, admits his faults, and demonstrates how his ability to mold and sculpt stone lends to his ability to craft, move, and manipulate language. After first interpellating, captivating and confessing, he subsequently begins to beg for forgiveness and assures Venus of his devotion by promising that he will behave well and faithfully in the future. He shows the seriousness of his pledge by going to the extent of verbalizing what will be the rather drastic consequences of any future infractions or disobedience:

Biau dieu, dist il, se tout pouez,
 S’il vous plaist, ma requeste ouez;
 [...]
 Et se de ce faire te hastes,
 Se je fu jamais trouvez chastes,
 J’otroi que je soie penduz
 Ou a granz haches porfenduz,
 Ou que dedenz sa gueule triblé
 Touz vis me transgloutisse et triblé
 Ou me lit en corde ou en fer
 Cerberus li portiers d’enfer! (vv. 21087-88; 21105-21112)

In terms of his ability to manipulate speech, it is only after he has given Venus more than good reason to listen to his wishes with benevolent ears—once he catches her attention by spurning Chastity, whom she views as a much loathed, personal enemy—does he bring up the metamorphosis he so ardently desires.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the annunciation of his desires, and more specifically, his requests to Venus, which are all of utmost importance, are preceded by his prayers to other gods, and the certainty with which he addresses the statue. These prayers are preparatory; not only do they set the stage for his prayers to Venus and allow him to rehearse what he will ask of her, they dramatize the process of setting events into motion linguistically. It is not only the fact that he unfailingly apostrophizes his anthropomorphized statue—never does he speak to her as if she were actually inanimate, but also, his invocation and pleas to other gods makes his words to Venus more than just an intimate request and more of a general appeal to multiple sources:

Bele douce, ci vous espous
 Et devieng vostres et vous moie.
 Ymeneüs et Juno m'oie,
 Que vueillent a nos noces estre.
 Je n'i quier plus ne clerc ne prestre
 Ne de prelaz mister ne croces,
 Car cist sont li vrai dieu des noces. (vv. 21018-24)

His appeal to Juno in particular, who is not invoked by Ovid's Orpheus, is likely an attempt to placate the rash goddess; since she was neglected by Orpheus, her archetypal wrath likely contributed to the tragic turn of the bard's marriage. Yet in terms of Pygmalion's multiple addressees, perhaps the benevolence of Juno and Hymeneus, the first gods he invokes, ultimately contributes to the pity Venus has towards him. The language that inspires movement and action, therefore, is yet another metamorphosis. On this occasion, it serves to proleptically announce that the statue will eventually turn into a human.

The Alchemical Properties of Promises and their Failure

With "si, di, dare cuncta potestis, / sit coniunx, opto," [...] / [...] "similis mea" [...] "eburnae," Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses*, as we have seen, merely asks for a wife "*similis*" to his statue" (Ovid vv.273-6). In other words, reduplicating yet reversing art and the artistic process, Ovid's Pygmalion asks for a living woman who will serve as a *copy* of his statue; he would be left with his wife, then, and with his 'original' statue. More specifically, he does not demand that his statue be activated. In yet another departure from Ovid, rather than displacing desire and conjuring up a real woman completely exterior to the situation whom he would like to take for a wife, Jean de Meun's Pygmalion explicitly requests that his specific statue be turned into his loyal partner. He wants his object of art to be transformed into his desired "loial amie" who will desire him also:

'Biau dieu, dist il, [...]
 Or m'en repent sanz plus d'eloignes
 Et pri que tu le me pardoinngnes.
 Si m'otroie par ta pitié,
 Par ta douceur, par t'amitié,
 Par couvent que m'en fuie eschif
 Se chastee des or n'eschif,
 Que la bele qui mon cuer amble
 —Qui si bien yvoire ressamble—
 Deviegne ma loial amie

Qui de fame ait cors, ame et vie. (vv. 21087 ; 21096-21104)⁵⁸

Not only does the assertiveness of his tone and the directness of his wishes suggest that his love is more genuine than the love displayed by Ovid's Pygmalion, it gives implicit value to the art object. Clearly he wishes that a transformation take place, but instead of rather crassly offering to substitute his statue for any random woman, be it out of nervousness, fickleness or even desperation, this Pygmalion requests only a transformation of "matiere." His focus and love remain unfailingly attached to one specific object; he wants Venus's miracle to allow his statue to take on enough human characteristics—"que de fame ait cors, ame et vie"—to be moved from stone to life, yet still remain essentially the same.

Thus, in the *Rose*, the primary, or rather, original agency is thus given to Pygmalion, rather than to Venus, who is more passively acted upon by Pygmalion's prayer.⁵⁹ She only needs to respond to his request in order to be able to effectuate his desires, not first interpret the obscure words he says in order to give them meaning. Consequently, hearing the prayer spurs her to action, and immediately brings the wish to fruition:

Venus, qui la priere oï,
Dou vallet formement s'esjoï
Pour ce que chastee lesoit
Et de li servir s'apressoit,
Com hons de bonne repentance
[...]
A l'ymage envie lors ame:
Si devint si tres bele dame

⁵⁸ This terrible punishment he proposes, vaguely recalls Orpheus's final, tragic end, which also occurs in Ovid's version of the myth, because of the life of "chastity"—or homosexuality?—Orpheus leads after Eurydice's death and because of his refusal to cede to the Maenads' advances. Believing that he is "nostri contemptor!," the Furies proceed to destroy Orpheus, tearing him apart:

ac primum attonitas etiamnum voce canentis
innumeras volucres anguesque agmenque ferarum
maenades Orphei titulum rapuere triumph;
inde cruentatis vertuntur in Orphea dextris
et coeunt ut aves, si quando luce vagantem
noctis avem cernunt, structoque utrimque theatro
ceu matutina cervus periturus harena
praeda canum est, vatemque petunt et fronde virentes
coniciunt thyrsos non haec in munera factos. (XI, 21-28)

⁵⁹ Though Sarah Kay's opinion of the role of Venus, as she explains "Venus in the Romance of the Rose," *Exemplaria* 9.1 (1997) differs from the argument sustained here, it offers a provocative alternative reading of Venus' scenes. In particular, she interprets the role of Venus as specifically associated with the power and realization of female desire, even though Venus is an extremely ambiguous character in terms of sexual difference (22; 26-31). See also Marilyn Desmond's *Ovid's Art and the Wife of Bath: the Ethics of Erotic Violence*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006) and Carolyn Dinshaw's "Quarrels, rivals and rape: Gower and Chaucer," in *A Wyf Ther Was: Essays in Honour of Panik Mertens Fonck*, ed. Juliette Dor (Liege, 1992), pp. 112-22, for a Girardian-based discussion of the mechanisms that lead to violence, competitive desire, and rivalry between male characters.

C'onques en toute la contree

N'avoit on si bele encontree. (vv. 21113-21117 ; 21121-24)

Since the artistic talents of Pygmalion fuse together the marvels of nature, the plastic arts and alchemy, which is “art veritable,” the negative interpretation of art as a miming, vapid ape that imitates nature and “mout voudroit faire oeuvre[s],” cannot be applied to Pygmalion. In fact, Pygmalion’s talents depart from the description of Art as subordinate to Nature. Though Pygmalion does need to be assisted by a higher power, his speech and rhetorical abilities allow him to definitively shed the constraints placed upon Art. Correspondingly, his own artistic talents—the statue that seems so real to his discerning eye—allow him to distinguish his creative process from the processes usually attributed to artistic creations. Art, entirely ineffective in its attempt to properly represent reality, cannot properly capture the ineffable yet important aspects of vitality, movement, emotions or speech:

Car ars, combien qu’ele se paine

Par grant estuide et par grant paine

De faire choses quels qu’il soient,

[...]

Ja pour figures ne pour traiz

Ne les fera par euls aler,

Vivre, mouvoir, sentire, parler. (vv. 16039-16041; 16066-69)

The insufficiency of art is sensed by its inability to move things into action, to give things speech and life. Immobility, as clearly seen in the death of Narcissus, the punishment of the Propoetides, and the originary state of Pygmalion’s statue is staunchly denigrated since it prevents fruition and life.

In addition, Pygmalion’s attempts to dress and adorn the statue in a pleasing way, show his concern with art and artistic trades, yet he never feels satisfied with the end result. In fact, his constantly changing emotional state (“Or aime, or het, or rit, or pleure [...]” [v. 20938]) seems to correspond perfectly with the many different fabrics, jewels and headdresses he desperately puts on the statue. Expanding on Ovid’s eleven lines dedicated to the statue’s accoutrements, Jean de Meun gives a lengthy description of the ways Pygmalion dresses the statue in verses 20940-21017⁶⁰: “Or se tormente, or se rapaise. / Puis li revest en maintes guises / Robes faites par granz devises” (vv. 20940-43). In this way, he shows Pygmalion’s commitment to artistry while also emphasizing thusly the dialectics of uncovering and revealing that are often used as metaphors in representations and discussions of allegory.

⁶⁰ See E. Jane Burns’ wonderfully original argument on sartorial matters such as fabric choice, origin, satisfaction and beauty in “Saracen Silk: Dolls, Idols, and Courtly Ladies,” in *Courtly Love Undressed: Reading through Clothes in Medieval French Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, (181-210), and Thomas Hill’s “Narcissus, Pygmalion, and the Castration of Saturn: Two Mythographical Themes in the ‘Roman de la Rose,’” *Studies in Philology*, Vol.71, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 404-426, for an analysis of the link between Pygmalion’s folly and his foolish dressing and redressing of the statue (408).

Just as Nature's ability to "forgier singulieres pieces / pour continuer les especes" (vv. 15901-2) is paramount to an understanding of the importance of her predominance, and is pivotal to Jean de Meun's section of the *Roman de la Rose*, the reader learns that because of the failures of art, "alquemie" is a much more appropriate designation for Pygmalion's "art":

Nepourquant c'est chose notable,
 Alquemie est art veritable.
 Qui sagement en ouvreroit,
 Granz merveilles i trouveroit;
 Car, comment qu'il aut des espieces,
 Au mains les singulieres pieces,
 En sensibles oevres souzmises,
 Sont muables en tant de guises
 Qu'el pueent leur complexions
 Par diverses digestions
 Si muer etr'euls, que cist changes
 Les met souz especes estranges
 Et leur tost l'espece premiere. (vv. 16087-16099)

Alchemy therefore, which can create life and give motion, emphasizes Pygmalion's extraordinary artistic and creative capabilities and highlights Pygmalion's erudition, application, and intelligence (Poirion, *Roman* 199). Similarly, the focus on mutability "en tant de guises" as a fundamental component of artistry has narratological implications. Indeed, the transformations that alchemy subsequently effectuates put into motion the all-important principles of profit, production, and generation so prized in the transformative telos that comes to define Jean de Meun's section of the *Roman de la Rose*.

While Ovid's Pygmalion is indeed granted what he truly desires in *Metamorphoses*, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge the linguistic temerity that could have jeopardized the execution of his wishes. Despite the hesitations that confound his artistic vows, he nevertheless seems to wield a certain linguistic privilege over the very narrative voice that tells his story. Pygmalion's story is recounted by the narrating character Orpheus in this work, and on an extratextual level, Pygmalion *qua* personage seems to have a strange preeminence over the famous bard who tells his tale, particularly given the similarities that unite them.⁶¹ Moreover, the fact that Orpheus can also easily be read as a figure for Ovid himself (Solodow 40), would lead one to expect that he might have more power and

⁶¹ In *Narciso e Pigmalione: Illusione e spettacolo nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio* (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1983), Gianpiero Rosati specifies that:

[e]ntrambi artisti, rigiutano entrambi la compagnia delle donne (sie pure per ragione diverse, e con diverse conseguenze), e grazie agli dèi realizzano ambedue un desiderio impossibile (Pigmalione la vita per la sua statua, Orfeo il ritorno alla vita per Euridice, poi nuovamente perduta. Sia nell'uno che nell'altro il rigiuto delle donne è determinato dall'incapacità di adeguarsi al mondo reale (in Orfeo a una realtà da cui sia esclusa l'amata Euridice, in Pigmalione è il rifiuto della natura femminile come tale, cui egli contrappone l'ideale perfezione della sua statua).(60)

narrative control than the very subject whose story he has promised to narrate.⁶² His speech—albeit only after an act of interpretation—succeeds in effectuating a process that ends up bringing a woman to life while Orpheus, tragically does not.

As Marc Pelen writes in *Latin Poetic Irony in the Roman de la Rose*, “[...] Pygmalion, artist and lover, may in Orpheus’s intention, be able to achieve what the narrator could not, namely to find lasting satisfaction of an unspecified nature with a woman created by art” (46). While Stephen Wheeler in *A Discourse of Wonders* interprets Ovid’s choice of Orpheus as an internal narrator for Pygmalion’s tale as primarily a means of “Romanizing” and decorating the originary Greek myth with his creative, contemporary details (202), he also acknowledges the completion, and sense of satisfaction Orpheus would obtain by narrating the story of Pygmalion’s happy union. Not only as a narrator, but as a narrator who suffers, since “Orpheus’s privileged audience is the figure Cyparissus, the cypress tree, who sympathizes with the poet’s predicament because he accidentally killed the stag that he loved and continually mourned his loss” (Wheeler 156). Accordingly, he becomes mired in the painful memory of his loss if he only repeats his own story, or narrates tragic stories similar to it.⁶³ “Orpheus, the author of this story, certainly has his motives for telling a story of wish-fulfillment. Caught in the loop of ‘repetition compulsion’ he attempts to master his loss of Eurydice by telling stories that repeat and vary the theme of bringing the dead back to life” (Wheeler 156). As Pygmalion’s narrator therefore, by telling a more successful story that otherwise parallels his own, he can, at the very least, obtain vicarious satisfaction.

The opening of *Metamorphoses*’s Book X paradoxically presents Orpheus primarily in terms of his rhetorical and musical failures. Though a relatively pithy description is given of the compassion and benevolence he elicits from the ghosts of the underworlds, the fleeting success that he occasionally manages to grasp gestures proleptically to the fidelity tests that he fails, and to his only fleeting reunion with his wife:

tunc primum lacrimis victarum carmine fama est
Eumenidum maduise genas, nec regia coniunx
Sustinet oranti nec, qui regit ima, negare,
Eurydicenque vocant. (vv. 45-48)

Indeed, their tragic relationship is also unfortunately couched in overt references to his failures. In sharp contrast to Venus’ compassion towards Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* and in the *Roman de la Rose*, *Metamorphoses*’s Book X opens with a description of Hymen’s indifference towards Orpheus. This indifference effectuates his subsequent inability, or disinterest, in rerouting the fatal course of his marriage:

Inde per inmensum croceo velatus amictu

⁶² As Alessandro Barchiesi notes in *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and other Latin Poets*, “[a]mong all the poem’s narrators, he [Orpheus] is the one who most evidently presents himself as a poet” (Ed., Trans., Matt Fox and Simone Marchesi. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2001) 50.

⁶³ See Robert Coleman’s “Structure and Intention in the *Metamorphoses*,” *Classical Quarterly* XXI (1971), pp. 461-476, for another examination of Orpheus’s function and role as a narrator (468-70).

aethera digreditur Ciconumque Hymenaeus ad oras
tendit et Orpheus nequiquam voce vocatur.
adfuit ille quidem, sed nec sollemnia verba
nec laetos vultus nec felix attulit omen.
[...]

exitus auspicio gravior: (vv. 1-5, 8)

The “auspicio gravior,” is a bad omen indeed, for in the span of just a few lines, vows and promises of fidelity are broken when Eurydice dies not only once, but twice. Her double death, which clearly demonstrates the ineffectiveness of Orpheus’s entreaty to Hymen, therefore signals the first reversal of the Pygmalion myth, since life is taken away rather than definitively granted. What is more, instead of ending with an assertion of the beloved’s tangible, living state as does the story of Pygmalion, when Orpheus turns to look at his wife and reaches for her, she is already described as air: “bracciaque intendens prendique et prendere certans / nil nisi cedentes infelix arripit auras” (vv. 58-9). What was once visible disappears. What was once tangible disintegrates. Similarly, the promise that Pygmalion vowed to bring to fruition in order to save her, fails.

Already recalling Narcissus’s tragic end due to his love for a fatally ephemeral form, Orpheus’s love—and by extension Pygmalion’s—corresponds with Narcissus’s emotions because of his constancy. Orpheus becomes additionally relatable to Narcissus’s plight when his love for Eurydice continues though her form is tragically changed. He too is subsequently described with the verb “stupire”; yet instead of being in love with a fatal object, he is immobilized by his fear and grief.⁶⁴ Indeed one must recall that all of the lovers: Orpheus and Pygmalion in both Ovid and Jean de Meun’s versions, in addition to Narcissus in Ovid and Guillaume de Lorris’s texts, as well as the protagonist-lover of the *Roman de la Rose*, are all described with some form of the verb “stupire” or “seurprendre.” These words aptly describe the conflicting passions of fear, love, and desire that often leave them immobilized and confused in the presence of the objects and images they love. Moreover, the verbs “stupire” and “seurprendre” have explicitly narratological implications as well, particularly in terms of discussions of the expectations of the reader. Given the attention granted to readers’ judgment, as evidenced with the use of verbs like “attendre” and the mechanism of delay, these gestures serve to create suspense and cull readerly interest, as we have already seen.

In particular, the frequently repeated element of surprise reveals much about the character of Pygmalion, in regards to his amorous as well as his artistic expectations. He can neither comprehend falling in love with a statue, nor can he

⁶⁴ The surprise and relative innocence of Pygmalion has led Garth Tissol, in *The Face of Nature: Wit, Narrative, and Cosmic Origins in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), to first call him the “artist rewarded” (4) and then go on to explain that more than an artistic genius, Pygmalion is just simply lucky: “only by special pleading can Pygmalion sustain his burden as archetypal artist: he is more like the lottery winner of modern times, who through pure accident receives a large reward for having made a poor investment” (80). At the same time however, both Pygmalion’s artistic talents and his “luck” have pushed him to perverse extremes.

comprehend having created a statue so beautiful that he himself could be deceived by it:

Las, que faz je, dist il, dor gié?
Maint ymage ai fait et forgié
C'on ne savoit prisier leur pris,
N'ainc d'euls amer ne fui seurpris! (vv. 20847-20850)

Finally, Pygmalion never truly expected that his love, which he describes as “si horrible /qu’el ne vient mie de nature” (vv. 20866-67), could be realized, even with the help of gods.

While these scenes alluding to surprise and astonishment that are tinged with grief, or even a sense of shock stemming from supernatural and horrific surprise that ends in frustration do not have a substantive presence in the *Roman de la Rose*, the instability and failure implicit in Ovid’s choice of Orpheus as a narrator for the Pygmalion story, is yet another one of the ways in which Jean de Meun reproduces, yet modifies, the Ovidian text. For example, instead of having the separate figures of poet and of artist, Pygmalion’s identity in the *Rose* is represented as the successful conflation of both. That Pygmalion does indeed possess the skills necessary to properly handle the exigencies of either profession is shown by his prayer to Venus, the richness and complexity of his interior monologues, as well as in the artful care with which he creates, dresses, and “adorns” the statue. While Tissol and others such as Brownlee, Kelly, and Griffin, have read innocence, approval, and justly merited reward in Pygmalion’s statue’s transformation, critics such as Hill and Stone emphasize perversion and “folie.” I view the surprising transformation as a humoristic moment that certainly points to Pygmalion’s “perverse” desires—accentuated all the more since his immediate story ends successfully though his lineage does not—but also calls attention to the dramatic relationship of any creator to the object that he creates. Given: the many parallels between Pygmalion and the figure of Narcissus; Pygmalion and Narcissus as foil for authorial figures; and Zeuxian desires of representation that rival reality through artistic representation, both Ovid, and Jean de Meun are slyly poking fun at the grandiosity of all creative desires. Similarly, they mock the ambition to mold and adorn one’s “text” in the best, most beautiful, and most alluring way. As a consequence of these elaborate and embellishing desires, both author, the text, and the author’s explicit authorial promises are situated farther from the truth.

Another major modification of Ovid’s tale is the degree of agential reciprocity that the statue is accorded in Jean de Meun’s text. As both the classical and French authors make sure to insist—and here I will cite both in succession—the relationship between artist and beloved work of art is finally requited and reciprocal, as evidenced by the growing responsiveness, heightened corporality, and more human physiognomy of the ‘statue’s’ body:

saepe manus operi *temptantes* admovet, an sit
corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur.
oscula dat reddique *putat* loquiturque tenetque

et credit tactis digitos insidere membris
et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus. (vv. 254-58)

Ne set s'ele est ou vive ou morte:

Soavet aus mains la detaste

Et croit, ainsi com se fus paste,

Que ce soit sa chars qui li fuie,

Mais c'est sa main qu'il i apuie! (vv. 20930-34, my emphasis)

As I have emphasized with the italicized words directly above, at this initial stage in the process of transformation Pygmalion is unable to fully believe that the metamorphosis for which he begged Venus has indeed taken place. Tellingly, both Ovid's and Jean de Meun's interpretations of the scene emphasize Pygmalion's conflicted passions and confused desires.

In his earlier rendition, Ovid stresses the artist's "*manus [...] temptantes*." As such, etymologically, his simultaneously tempted and tempting hands, are not just testing and probing the statue's body, but "*urging*." They are attempting to arouse her and incite her desire. At the same time, his "*saepe*" points to the frustration of his attempts to elicit a (sexual or amorous) response, while "*admove*," given the context of the epistemologically-oriented "*temptantes*," points to the persistence and thoroughness of his investigation of the statue's body. Simultaneously, they also gesture towards a desire for reconciliation ("*ad + moveō*" as a unifying attention or direction *towards*) that is paradoxically layered with a violent desire for possession ("*admoveō*" with "*manum, manus*" as an assault or attack). Taken together then, "*saepe [...] admove*" quite specifically points to frequently roving, always lustful, always inquisitive, and sometimes violent hands. If necessary, the sculptor's hands will forcefully demand a reconciliation between his body and that of the statue, as well as between his desires, and hers. Pygmalion tests and touches the statue's body "*often*," which reinforces his frustration—he must touch and test her often because she does not respond and because he doubts what he sees and has come to know.

This frequent testing, paired with verbs related to knowledge, cognition, and the proof-seeking process—"putat," "tenet" (in the sense of holding a belief to be factual and true), "credit," "insidere" (not just fixed, or seated upon, but in the more figurative sense of taking hold, and having possession of), and "metuit"—not only prefigure the epistemological curiosity and explorations so privileged during the early modern period, they again elucidate the conflict in which Pygmalion finds himself. Despite the fact that he has "*Maint ymage [...] fait et forgié*," Pygmalion has not fallen in love with them before, nor has he ever before demanded that they become responsive to him. Since his fingers, observations, and explorations have failed, and since he has doubts regarding Venus' activation of the statue, he still cannot bring himself to believe that what he has desired has finally started to come into effect. Recalling his initial resistance towards an amorous or eroticalliance with women, let alone in a marital context, and perversely anticipating the fidelity tests that often accompany troubled marital and romantic relationships, Pygmalion's doubt and his compulsive testing again reinforce the strength of his amorous

desires.⁶⁵ In addition, they also divulge his obsessive persistence and commitment to the lustful cause in which he does not fully believe.⁶⁶

Though Jean de Meun's Pygmalion's epistemologically difficult situation is similarly described with truth- and knowledge-based language—he “ne set s[i],” he “detaste” (that is “touches” but also “probes”), and he “croit”—the fear Ovid's Pygmalion had has lessened and the description of his uncertainty is truncated. Furthermore, instead of the deceitful, soft waxiness Pygmalion felt as his fingers pressed what he refuses to believe was stone despite his “frequent” frustrated confirmations that the statue is inanimate, in Jean de Meun's version the speech of Pygmalion's lady confirms her reciprocity. Indeed, while the statue remains completely silent in *Metamorphoses* even once turned into a living woman, in Jean de Meun's version, definitive proof of reciprocity—the reciprocity for which Pygmalion has yearned for so long—is provided when *she*⁶⁷ speaks. In the French text she proffers four lines of speech, all of which insist upon the newly and remarkably commensurable desires of artist and art, now more effectively rendered as husband and wife:

‘Douz amis, ainz sui vostre amie,
Preste de vostre compaignie
Recevoir, et m’amour vous offre,
S’il vous plaist recevoir tel offre.’(vv, 21159-64)

With warmth serving as validation and proof of reciprocal affections, as well as a corrective for Pygmalion's erstwhile coldness towards women, his mouth, no longer

⁶⁵ Cited earlier in this chapter, the way in which Pygmalion is initially presented in *Metamorphoses* is as a misogynist who both fears and abhors women:

Quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis
viderat, offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti
femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs
vivebat thalamique diu consorte carebat. (vv. 243-6)

Not only does this add a layer of nuance to his continued disbelief surrounding matters regarding his statue, it suggests how unfit and ill-prepared he is for an amorous “alliance.”

⁶⁶ Indeed, Pygmalion's rather hysterical reaction to the doubts that he harbors regarding his beloved's animation—that is, the reciprocity and harmony of ‘their’ relationship betrays a melancholic changeability that both recalls the ill-fated *innamoramento* of Lorris's Narcissus as well as the problematic manifestation of the doubts of suspicious husbands that eventually lead to fidelity tests and/or violence:

Ainsi Pymalyon strive
N’an son estrif n’a pais ne trive.
En .i. estat point ne demeure:
Ore aime, or het, or rit, or pleure,
Or est liez, or est mesaise,
Or se torment, or se rapaise. (vv. 20935-40)

⁶⁷ As in Ovid's version, in order to minimize the immobility and inanimateness, the statue is identified as a “she” by the narrative voice very early, as Colin Burrow explains in “Re-embodiment Ovid: Renaissance afterlives”:

[Ovid] teasingly makes readers participate in the transformation of the statue. The statue becomes grammatically ‘she’ when it acquires a feminine pronoun (hanc, Met. 10. 267); then Pygmalion gives it/her soft pillows *tamquam sensura*, as if she could feel them—but also as if *she* will, since *sensura* is a feminine future participle (Met.1-.269)” (310).

cold, finds comfort in the statue's increasingly warm mouth. Moreover, the affective "warmth" of his lady's speech, that is, her verbalized admission of reciprocal affection and the "offre" of reciprocity, love, and affection that she gives to Pygmalion, punctuated by warm kisses, serves to further reinforce the complicity that joins the two and the commensurability of their desires.

Moreover, while recodifying the economy of love and desire as presented in Reason and in La Vieille's speeches, to mention but two examples, the words of Pygmalion's lady dramatize the reciprocity of agency. Thus, they demonstrate that her relationship with the artist is based upon a system of perfect exchange. As Brownlee writes:

[...] Jean's two Ovidian lovers are shown to occupy simultaneously the positions of desiring subject and object of desire. Their actantial relationship is bidirectional: it is a question of mutual inter-action within the economy of desire. This thematic is first introduced by Galatea's⁶⁸ use of the term *compaignie* to characterize proleptically Pygmalion's desire for her. ("Pygmalion" 205)

A similar proleptic technique found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is again suggestive of Jean de Meun's strategic process of rewriting and reversal. Instead of anticipating the union of Pygmalion and the lady with the words "amie," "compaignie," and "offre" however, Ovid's depiction of the blushing, timid lady suggests that her nature is similar to Pygmalion's visible fragility. On a more linguistic level, Ovid's description of their union analeptically (and slightly more subtly than Jean de Meun's version) concludes with a description of the lady seeing her "amantem," and then having a wedding. As Ovid describes their coming together:

[...] oraque tandem
ore suo non falsa premit, dataque oscula virgo
sensit et erubuit timidumque ad lumina lumen
attollens pariter cum caelo vidit amantem.
coniugio, quod fecit, adest dea, iamque coactis
cornibus in plenum noviens lunaribus orbem
illa Paphon genuit, de qua tenet insula nomen. (vv. 291-7)

⁶⁸ Although the statue, once created, does have an immediate effect on Pygmalion, calling the relationship between Pygmalion and his object turned lover—which for reasons known only to himself Brownlee hastily, if not incorrectly refers to as Galatea—bidirectional, completely overlooks the dynamics of creation and the emphasis given to Pygmalion's artistic skills. Rather, I would stress that the mutuality is obtained *only* in this final stage.

In regards to appropriate appellation of the statue, in "Womanufacture" Sharrock refers to the statue as "Eburnea," in order to provide her with a stable personifying referent that also serves as a descriptive (42). Yet like Brownlee's anachronistic dubbing of her as "Galatea," Sharrock's "Eburnea" is problematic as well. See Helen Law's "The Name Galatea in the Pygmalion Myth" *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (Feb., 1932), pp. 337-342, for a compelling discussion of the highly flawed and anachronistic tendency in modern criticism to refer to the statue as "Galatea" and the problem of the statue's name. Meyer Reinhold's, "The Naming of Pygmalion's Animated Statue." *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Apr. - May, 1971), pp. 316-319, offers another important contribution on this topic.

Not only is Venus present at the wedding, but this relationship comes to fruition when the couple bears a child.⁶⁹

In Jean de Meun's version however, more than just enamored of one another, the final description of the couple insists upon the affinity produced by their perfectly matched union. The felicitous harmony of their union is demonstrated by placing the miraculous "paroles" of the lady at the origin of action. Moreover, her words are not only central; as catalysts that incite action they accord her the same type of ability to move others through her speech as Pygmalion was shown to possess in the course of his moving prayer to Venus:

A ces paroles s'entr'ailent,
De leur amour s'entremercient,
N'est joie qu'il ne s'entrefacent;
Par grant amour lors s'entr'embracent,
Com dui coulombel s'entrebaissent;
Mout s'entr'aiment, mout s'entreplaisent. (vv. 21169-74)

Furthermore, aside from the novel fact that Pygmalion's lady is granted the ability to speak, the context of what she says is of utmost importance. This importance is dramatized given the extent to which her words and actions modify and complete the words and actions that described their "relationship" before she had "ame" and "cors":

Mais ce ne'st pas de bonne escole
Quant .ij. personnes s'entrebaissent
Et li baisier as .ij. ne plaisent! (vv. 21066-68)

A subtle detail perhaps, yet Pygmalion's lady's brief speech, both in terms of her message and the fact that she even speaks at all, directly continues themes and terms used to describe a situation to which, being a veritable "sourd ymage," she was completely alien. Indeed, she was not even present in real flesh. This disparity not only insists upon the intertextual seamlessness that Jean de Meun maximizes in order to link her words with the rest of the story, but gives a new nuance to Pygmalion's initial, crazed desperation:

Puis la rembrace, si la couche,
Entre ses braz dedenz sa couche,
Et la rebaise et la racole :
[.]
Ainsi s'ocit, ainsi s'afole,
Seurpris en sa pensee fole,
Pymalion li deceüz,
Pour sa sourde ymage esmeüz. (vv. 21063-65 ; 21069-71)

What Pygmalion—and the reader—may have taken as her hermetic inanimateness despite his attempts, pleas, and protestations cannot so easily be read as such if her later actions and words specifically complete those that were left in suspension during her supposedly inanimate stage. Moreover, the curious yet rather reproving

⁶⁹ See Alan Griffin, "Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,'" *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Apr., 1977), pp. 57-70.

detail that she does not respond to Pygmalion's advances, flattery, gifts, pleas, desperation, or touch because she does not *want* to, is suggestive of a volition in conflict with her supposed inner deadness. Recalling the disruptive caveat presented as the moral to Lorris's Narcissus myth and which vilified hesitant women, Jean de Meun follows Lorris in suggesting that perhaps the lady is harboring other intentions than those the lover wants her to share with him. Yet again, this resistance hints at the possible destabilization of the entire project of the *Rose*, for if the rose were able to resist, neither the dream nor the text would achieve their objectives. Once her hesitation is 'corrected' and she does speak however, both Pygmalion's lady's words, and the narrative description of their union directly anticipate the simultaneously sexual and textual consummation—that is, the eventual physical culmination of their love, and the *Roman de la Rose's* treatment of their story.

As if yet another metamorphosis were taking place—this time between the “forme” and “matire,” which become human flesh—the mutuality of the relationship of Pygmalion and his beloved, their “alliance” so to speak, is predicated upon the gestures of reciprocity which suture together creator and creation, and which fuses together the bodies of lover and what originated as the beloved object. That is, though he can hardly believe his luck, or his eyes, his faith in his new relationship is solidified by the waning stone and increasing flesh that makes up the statue/ woman, and by the progression of his relationship towards carnal fruition. Before dismissing the story as a long-winded digression, the narrator details how their relationship will produce an heir:

Mais c'est trop loing de ma matire!

Pour ce est bien droiz k'arrier m'en tire.

[...]

Ne vous vueill or ci plus tenir:

A mon propose vueill revenir,

K'autre champ me couvient arer. (vv. 21215-6; 21219-21221)

Jean de Meun draws attention to this promise of fulfillment by linking the end of their story of metamorphosis with the metamorphic transformation that will lead to the definitive end of their line. Subsequently, though Pygmalion is more 'successful' than his predecessor who was similarly enamored of beauty, this frustration establishes yet another parallel with Guillaume de Lorris's example of Narcissus. Finally, Jean de Meun's dismissive treatment of the Pygmalion myth again recalls the trivializing perspective Lorris ultimately applies to his story of Narcissus. This occurs primarily since he exalts its importance only to follow his praise by minimization and an insistence upon moving on to other narrative issues.

Jean de Meun's reliance upon Guillaume de Lorris's text is most obvious in the concluding verses of the poem. In the final scenes, while subtly merging with the course of the poetic trajectory, Jean de Meun accentuates the arduous physical and metaphorical terrain that must be covered in order for the Lover to complete his voyage, fully realize his promises and his goals, and finally obtain what he desires:

Tant ai hurté que tout voie
 M'aperçui d'une estroite voie
 Par ou bien puis outré passer;
 Mais le paliz m'estuet quasser.
 Par la sentele que j'ai dite,
 Qui tant ert estroite et petite,
 Par ou le passage quis ai,
 Le paliz au bourdon brisai. (vv. 21637-21645)

In order to accomplish his feat and gain entry however, a staggering effort is necessary on the part of the Lover.

Although he has mentioned the terrific battle between Hercules and Cacus to emphasize his struggle, describing himself as “autant laissez / Com Hercules ou plus assez” (vv. 21635-6), the Lover's admission of his fatigue in no way determines the outcome of his course. Nor does it mitigate his relentless persistence, indomitable will, and desire to bring his quest to a close:

Sui moi dedenz l'archiere mis,
 Mais je n'i entrai pas demis
 Pesoit moi que plus n'i entroie,
 Mais outre pooir ne pooie.
 Mais pour riens nule ne laissasse
 Que le bourdon tout n'i passasse
 Outre l'ai passé sanz demeure (vv. 21645-51)

And just as Lorrís's use of the same type of expedition-related vocabulary recalls and corresponds to the trajectory charted in Jean de Meun's text, his use of a shockingly violent linguistic register in this presentation of the *cueillete* of the rose similarly correlates with the violence that subtextually runs through the opening section of the *Rose*. This injects a rather surprising sense of suspicion and aggression in a work that had initially attempted to pass itself off as a compendium of love:

Se bohourder m'i veïssiez,
 Pour coi bien garde i preïssiez,
 D'Ercules vous peüst member
 Quant il vost Cacus desmembrer!
 .Iij. foiz a sa porte assailli,
 .Iij. foiz hurta, .iij. foiz faille,
 .Iij. foiz s'assist en la vallee
 Touz las, pour ravoir s'alenee,
 Tant ot souffert paine et travail. (vv. 21623-21631)

In particular, the references to dismemberment and the Herculean force necessary for right of entry, the “paine et travail” that were exacted of the Lover dramatize the bellicose nature of this scene of ‘union.’ They also point to the ambiguity that alternatively portrays both the Lover, and his beloved as either innocent or culpable, victim or aggressor, thus accentuating the inconstancy that undermines

identity and vows, which is met with pain and ‘punishment.’⁷⁰ We remember of course, that a vivid description of the battle between Hercules and Cacus can be found in Book VIII of the *Aeneid*.⁷¹ Quite similarly to the seizure of the rose, the clash between the warrior and the monstrous giant comes about because of their conflicting and contentious desires for possession and penetration. Hercules seeks revenge after he discovers that Cacus stole his cattle; Hercules then charges the cave that Cacus calls home. Anticipating the lover’s frenzied charging of the castle and seizure of the rose, Hercules then manages to force entry into the cave, where he grabs Cacus by the throat and kills him.

non tulit Alcides animis, seque ipse per ignem
 praecipiti iecit saltu, qua plurimus undam
 fumus agit nebulaeque ingens specus aestuat atra.
 hic Cacus in tenebris incendia vana vomentem
 corripit in nodum complexus, et angit inhaerens
 elisos oculos et siccum sanguine guttur.
 panditur extemplo foribus domus atra revulsis
 abstractaeque boves abiurataeque rapinae
 caelo ostenduntur, pedibusque informe cadaver
 protrahitur. nequeunt expleri corda tuendo
 terribilis oculos, vultum villosaque saetis
 pectora semiferi atque exstinctos faucibus ignis. (vv. 256-67)

This Virgilian intertext⁷² is a violent story that is recalled in conjunction with the crescendo of violence and the intense and somewhat myopic focalization of the

⁷⁰ In *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), Elaine Scarry’s discussion of pain and suffering in the context of the “expressive potential of pain,” and the troubled linguistic dexterity required to acknowledge pain perceptually (though language ultimately retains just a “benign potential”) emphasizes the etymological connection between pain and punishment: “[...] the fact that the very word ‘pain’ has its etymological home in ‘poena’ or ‘punishment’ reminds us that even the elementary act of naming this most interior of events entails an immediate mental somersault of the body into the external social circumstances that can be pictured as having caused the hurt” (17). For an insightful discussion of pain, sacrifice, and language, see Ariel Glucklich’s discussion of the expressivity (or lack thereof) of pain in a religious context in: *Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), especially 63-77.

⁷¹ P. Virgilius Maro, *Bucolics, Aeneid, and Georgics Of Vergil*. Ed., J. B. Greenough. Boston. Ginn & Co. 1900. Online version, *Perseus Digital Library*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0055%3Abook%3D8%3Acard%3D219>

⁷² Cacus also appears in Livy’s *Ab urbe condita* (1.7.5-7) and Ovid’s *Fasti* (1.575-8). Livy draws attention to the arrogant faith Cacus has in his own brute strength and to the way in which his comrades fail to give him the aid he needs:

pastor accola eius loci, nomine Cacus, ferox viribus, captus pulchritudine boum cum avertere eam praedam vellet, quia, si agendo armentum in speluncam compulisset, ipsa vestigia quaerentem dominum eo deductura erant, aversos boves, eximium quemque pulchritudine, caudis in speluncam traxit. [...] inde cum actae boves quaedam ad desiderium, ut fit, relictarum mugissent, reddita inclusarum ex spelunca boum vox Herculem convertit. quem cum vadentem ad speluncam Cacus vi prohibere conatus esset, ictus clava fidem pastorum nequiquam invocans morte occubuit. (1.7.5, 7)

Lover's desires as he draws closer and closer to what he most ardently wishes and to what he understands as the promise of fulfillment—penetration and possession.⁷³ Subsequently, this violent rite of passage, if one could call it that, is then imbued with overtones that seem to subvert the very nature and purpose of love:

The interpretation of dreams is rarely answerable to either evidential or settled theoretical control. When the phantasms of the dreaming mind seem unaccountable, as they often do, they seem to belong to a mental world beyond the reach of historical, philosophical, or scientific analysis, a world for which the rules of methodological engagement seem inappropriate, rather than merely impossible to observe (Gabbey and Hall 651).

But is this horrific and rather inopportune mention of Cacus “unaccountable,” as Gabbey and Hall suggest? Rather, it seems as if the reference to Cacus and Hercules more likely serves only to vilify the already distanced “rose” (Trapp 58, 66-

Ovid draws attention to Cacus' monstrosity and evil nature—“Aventinae timor atque infamia silvae, / non leve finitimis hospitibusque malum” and to the deceitful strategies he turns to in battle:

prima movet Cacus conlata proelia dextra
remque ferox saxis stipitibusque gerit.
quis ubi nil agitur, patrias male fortis ad artes
confugit, et flammis ore sonante vomit; (vv. 569-72).

While he his recurrence to evil “artes” is suggestive of an intertextual relationship between Cacus and the lover, the violence of this contention between Hercules and Cacus again creates a questionable association between the classical warriors and the Lover and his beloved

⁷³ The story of Cacus later appears in the sixth circle of the first canticle Dante's *Commedia* (*Inf.* 25.16-33). Culpabilized for haven stolen Hercules' sheep he is one of the gaurds in the pit of thieves. Dante sees the “centauro pien di rabbia,” as Virgil explains what brought Cacus to hell,

Lo mio maestro disse: ‘Questi è Caco,
che, sotto 'l sasso di monte Aventino,
di sangue fece spesse volte laco.
Non va co' suoi fratei per un cammino
per lo furto che frodolente fece
del grande armento ch'elli ebbe a vicino;
onde cessar le sue opere bieche
sotto la mazza d'Ercule, che forse
gliene diè cento, e non sentì le diece’. (vv. 25-33)

As we will see in chapter 4 of this dissertation, reference to Cacus is also made in the *Ingengioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, in which he is presented as an illustrious and dastardly thief during the course of two distinct discussions of the meaning and limits of legitimate authorship, ownership, and possession: (1.2; 1.6). In the first instance, a dishonest innkeeper refers to himself as: “aunque [...] andaluz, y de los de la playa de Sanlúcar, no menos ladrón que Caco, ni menos maleante que estudiante o paje [...]” (I.2, p. 84). In the second instance, it is the priest, who, frustrated with the dishonest state of literature, calls the author of the *Espejo de caballerías*, and other authors writing in similar vein worse in their treachery and faithlessness than Cacus. In his estimation they are:

más ladrones que Caco, y los doce Pares, con el verdadero historiador Turpín; y en verdad que estoy por condenarlos no más que a destierro perpetuo, siquiera porque tienen parte de la invención del famoso Mateo Boyardo, de donde también tejíó su tela el cristiano poeta Ludovico Ariosto; al cual, si aquí le hallo, y que habla en otra lengua que la suya, no le guardaré respeto alguno; pero si habla en su idioma, le pondré sobre mi cabeza. (1.2.113)

83), since Cacus, a mad giant who feeds greedily on human flesh, also functions in the text as a comparison to the beloved.

Ostensibly, since the rose does indeed present a real threat, and since her potential resistance to the Lover's desires is menacing, her violent seizure is not only justified by the text, but, akin to a merited punishment. In other words, plucking the rose brings satisfaction only to the Lover, while it brings death to the Rose. Her death, then, it is presented as an end that is expected, warranted, and condoned. It brings closure to the toll the Lover originally was forced to pay, while facilitating the Lover's cry of victory:

Tant trouvai le passage estroit,
Car largement ne fu ce pas
Que je trespasasse le pas.
Et se bien l'estre du pas sé
Nus n'i avoit onques passé
Car g'i passai touz li premiers,
N'encor n'ere coustumiers
Li lieus de recevoir païage. (vv.21656-21663)

In conclusion, the subtle and sophisticated intertextual parallel Jean de Meun sets up between the story of his Lover and Pygmalion, and Ovid's Narcissus, Orpheus, and Pygmalion, reveals the superiority he grants to his own text. His example terminates in the perfect fusion of sexual, linguistic and poetic completion, while Ovid's myths do not. Ovid's discussion of Narcissus and Pygmalion both end in violence and frustrated desires, given that Pygmalion's future after the activation of his statue is bleak, and given that both the voices and intentions of Narcissus and Orpheus (as narrator) are brutally thwarted.

Similarly, much like the insufficiencies and decrepitude Jean de Meun reads in Guillaume de Lorris's unsatisfied narratological promise, he primarily uses his supplantation of Lorris's Narcissus myth with his Pygmalion to critique the same misleading and self-annihilating drive of failed promises and misplaced faith that the narrations of Ovid and Lorris narrations evidence. These differences are exemplified by the fragmentation and failure that combine in Narcissus's death, which are given a more felicitous turn in Jean de Meun's emphasis of Pygmalion's faith and ultimate gratification. Therefore, as if to mock Ovid's narrator, Lorris's failed narratological promise, and the benevolence of his own readerly audience, Jean de Meun ostentatiously draws attention to Pygmalion's artistic and creative talents. This privileged status serves to further dramatize the distance between the success his Pygmalion and Lover will both have, and the figures of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which are either weakened or fail. Finally, Jean de Meun's description of Pygmalion *qua* poet, alchemist and artist, not only emphasizes his character's creative and rhetorical abilities, but definitively disabuses readers of their faith in the *Rose's* original authorial promise that the didactic lesson on love offers is a trustworthy guide that readers can both emulate and in which they can have ultimate faith.

Recalling the idea of obligation, cost, and debt that have been presented throughout the two halves of the *Rose* both in terms of the suffering the Lover is made to endure on his quest, and the hermeneutic quest that readers must undertake, the “paiage” that the Lover again mentions in the final lines of the *Roman de la Rose* marks the satisfaction of the amorous endeavors that bring him gratification. “Paiage” also signals the promised seizure of the rose, and the satisfaction of Jean de Meun’s narratological promise which fulfills his vow to readers, while hopefully bringing them pleasure: “avant que je ne quitte la place où je serais encore resté volontiers, je cueillis plein d’allégresse la fleur du beau rosier euillu. C’est ainsi que j’eus la rose vermeille. Alors il fit jour et je me réveillai” (1121).

Paradoxically however, the promised seizure of the rose also fails. Just as Jean de Meun criticizes the death of Narcissus that shows the frustrations of love and fractures Lorris’s narratological promises, the harsh punishment of the Propoetides and the originary state of the statue also complicate ideas of continuance and fruition. Moreover, the seizure of the rose signals the perverse violence that underlies promises even when they are actually upheld and satisfied. Death is imminent once the rose is seized; moreover, her death signals the “rupture abrupte du songe” (Strubel 1121). Finally, the abrupt fracturation of the dream catalyzes the necessary truncation of the narration and fractures the Lover’s vows of enduring love.

CHAPTER TWO:
“Con gli occhi prima”: Doubt, Failure, and Visual Proof in the
Orlando furioso

REY: *Pues decidme;
para tantas prevenciones,
Gutierre, ¿qué es lo que visteis?*

GUTIERRE: *Nada; que hombres como yo
no ven. Basta que imaginen,
que sospechen, que prevengan,
que recelen, que adivinen,
que... no sé como lo diga;
que no hay voz que signifique
una cosa, que no sea
un átomo invisible.*

**-Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El médico de su honra*.
3.1.**

OTHELLO: *Make me to see 't, or at the least so prove it
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!
[...]
Would were I satisfied! (3.3. 374-76; 400)*

IAGO: *[...] What then? How then?
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation and strong circumstances
Which lead directly to the door of truth
Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.*

-William Shakespeare, *Othello*: 3.3.410-18.

The sense of contention and uncertainty that circumscribes the vow in medieval literature acquires a new force during the early modern period. Indeed, as

we examined in the previous chapter, the medieval authors of the *Roman de la Rose* increasingly gave attention to the idea of the violability and absence of vows, particularly as this was evidenced through myth. Guillaume de Lorris used broken vows to emphasize the fickleness of faith-based interactions, while Jean de Meun positioned them as the climactic, but ultimately frustrated point to which his section of the *Rose* was hurtling. Following these notions of mistrust and frustration, this chapter of my dissertation will explore the haziness that conditions the notion of vows, their maintenance, and the violent ramifications of broken promises in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532). Inspired and spurred by tensions that were boiling prior to and during the Counter Reformation, broken vows and vows made poorly or in bad faith further undermine the fractured systems of belief, revealing a burgeoning mutation in the understanding of how the concepts of knowledge, credence, fidelity, and faith profoundly affected the individual and the empire (Leone 101).

In this poem, which builds off Matteo Maria Boiardo's unfinished *Orlando innamorato* (1495), Ariosto situates fragmented and absent vows at the crux of his text, yet gives even greater consideration to the process by which vows are made and broken. In particular, the *Furioso* explores how the vacillating definition of "beneficial" hinges precariously upon the problematic status of vows that are either upheld, and thus constructive, or vows that are broken, and thus detrimental to the maker of the vow and to the character unto whom the vow is made. In this sense, vows that are maintained have salubrious, restorative, and purifying properties, while broken vows legitimize the sacrifices that must be made in order to rectify the corrupt nature of the state, the family, and the soul. However, it is not as simple as that. The elusiveness of truth and the difficulty of the act of discernment stand as constant impediments to the vow-making process and to the maintenance of vows.

By taking into consideration heterodiegetic and self-reflexive comments and analyzing the *Furioso*'s examination of vows, this section will study the importance of vows to spiritual, moral, and bodily integrity as well as Ariosto's obsessive concern with correcting and completing Boiardo's truncated text as a means by which to dramatize the necessity of maintaining vows. As many critics have noted, the *Furioso*'s poetic voice continually promises yet usually defers fulfillment and (narrative) completion. Indeed, it does so while playing with the notion of the curative properties of various textual examples of restored vows, and the curative potential of the narration itself. Akin to physical sacrifice, vows that are made to uphold imperial standards so as to foment political and religious enterprises and a cohesive identity eventually fail. Similarly, vows that initially seem binding (such as vows between emperor and paladin, marriage vows, or vows between friends) serve only as a limited, temporary panacea. Given this condition of disorder, contradiction, and absence created by the vow itself, not only is the mere possibility of keeping vows called into question, but the restorative qualities and healing potential of literature and literary exempla are repeatedly problematized as well.

Though the *Furioso* has often been described as a “version of the comic mirror” (Hanning 185), and is often taken as a highly ludic text,¹ it nonetheless reveals a startling pessimism borne precisely of the difficulties of discernment that stand as obstacles to truth and faith. While relatively few critics focus on the latent cynicism that permeates the text, I argue that the “darkening of tone” of the *Furioso* is perceptible precisely in the way in which Ariosto aligns vows with crisis and chaos, and thus with failure.² Moreover, while critics have historically viewed broken vows as an isolated detail, or as a fleeting symptom of fragmentation or deferral, they actually comprise a constitutive part of Ariosto’s ideological enterprise. Yet the position of the vows themselves is not fixed. Closer consideration reveals that interpersonal accords are consistently described with terms that interrogate and test the vows that have been made, as well as the very validity of vows themselves. More often than not, the language with which vows and ‘truth’ are articulated and discussed actually undermines or negates promises by drawing attention to the fact that at best they are deferred, interrupted, or damaged, and at worst—and more frequently—they are entirely absent.

From the vertiginous flight of Angelica, the princess of Cathay, which sets the machine of the *Furioso* in motion, to introductory adventures highlighting epistemological instability and a perilous dependence upon others that further destabilizes one’s own relationship to the self, the impossibility of believing the words of others establishes itself as the prime matter of intrigue quite early in the *Furioso*, and it continues to be such for the rest of the work. As the discussion in this chapter will show, the *Furioso* is replete with episodes that illustrate the complicated nature of vows, and the problematic act of vow-making. It is difficult and risky to fully trust the words and promises of others, and the search for the elusive ideals of “truth” and “proof” is often futile. Frustrating individual integrity and encouraging an inclination towards fragmentation therefore, the tenuous grasp individual characters have of themselves undermines any facility they might have with trusting, understanding, and “knowing” others. Indeed, presented in countless examples, nearly every amorous or marital relationship, and nearly every relationship between couples in the *Furioso* illustrates the thorny and often frustrated connection between vows, belief, knowledge, punishment, and integrity—from the difficult and delayed formation of the foundational marriage of

¹ Robert Hanning, in his chapter on Ariosto in *Serious Play: Desire and Authority in the Poetry of Ovid, Chaucer*, (Columbia: Columbia University Press), 2010 situates the hermeneutic confusion Ariosto purposefully creates at the crux of the work’s comedy. This is similar to the attention C.P. Brand gives to the systematic creation of confusion as a rhetorical and structural device, though his focus is less on the ludic properties of confusion (*Ludovico Ariosto* 129).

² For a helpful discussion of Ariosto’s increasing pessimism, his “darkening of tone,” and the specific cultural and historical events that explain his awareness of a profound crisis, see Ita MacCarthy, “Ariosto the Traveler,” *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), pp. 397-409 (401). See also Walter Moretti, *L’ultimo Ariosto* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1977), Giorgio Padoan, “L’Orlando furioso e la crisi del Rinascimento,” *Lettere italiane*, 27 (1975), and Albert Ascoli, “Ariosto and the ‘Fier Pastor’: Form and History in *Orlando Furioso*,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer, 2001) pp. 487-522.

Bradamante and Ruggiero to the frustrated affairs of minor characters such as Isabella and Zerbino, and Cloridano and Medoro. In this chapter, I will be focusing on the Christian paladin Rinaldo (cousin to the title character Orlando), and his developing awareness of the ambiguity and malleability of vows throughout the *Furioso*; indeed, nearly all of Ariosto's characters struggle to determine whether or not the promises of others should be trusted. If these characters are unable to reason correctly, they end up facing destabilizing and disastrous results.

The *Furioso* presents the failure of vows by repeatedly dramatizing the inconstancy and ambiguity that pathologically afflict the entire text. Due to the instability of the fractured self,³ interpersonal relationships are situated as the foundation for all problems of faith, given the immense risk of trusting, or even being close to others. Though the attention of critics most often falls to Orlando, who, “per amor venne in furore e matto” (1.2.3), and whose deviation and descent into madness is centrally located in the *Furioso*'s discussion of reasoned judgment versus folly, or to characters such as Bradamante and Ruggiero who play an integral role in the founding of the d'Este family since they must overcome a substantial breach of faith in order to join together in the text's only fully sanctioned and felicitous marriage, Rinaldo's crucial role throughout the *Furioso* merits greater attention. Indeed, from his first appearance in the text when he struggles to reconcile his wishes with the chivalric vows he has taken, it is Rinaldo, more than any of the poem's other characters, who most explicitly grapples with the crisis of doubt and proof. As such, his presence in the *Furioso* is intensely bound to the text's most important scenes of vow-making and breaking. Rinaldo's struggle with vows is pivotal in discerning the degree to which broken vows are the norm and kept vows the exception. His evolution over the course of the poem also accentuates the reader's awareness of the growing pessimism that metastasizes as the plot goes on, only coming to an end in a pessimistic and ultimately fatalistic way.

This chapter will be structured around the following episodes that feature Rinaldo, in the order that they appear in the text: Charlemagne's originary broken vow to Rinaldo and Orlando that inaugurates the text's obsession with faulty vows and broken promises; the promise and doubt-ridden episode of Ginevra and Ariodante that Rinaldo must resolve, and which is the first exploit in which he is

³ In *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, Elizabeth Bellamy insists that the sense of fragmentation the characters experience is pervasive, yet perhaps excludes Charlemagne—“Virtually every character (with the possible exception of the aloof, distant superego Charlemagne) seems driven simply either to look for a lost object or to seek to identify with it” (88).

I would like to insist, however, that Charlemagne suffers to the same degree—if not more—as do his paladins. While Charlemagne is not necessarily as fixated on lost or absent objects and ladies as his knights are, for him loss comes with every clash with the Pagan troops that the Christians do not win, and every time that he perceives a loss in political power and political integrity due to the wayward and unchivalric behavior of his knights. Indeed, since the *Furioso* stages countless examples of the assaults Charlemagne is made to endure, I do not believe the emperor can be so “distant” or inured to the violences that are continually waged against him.

an active chivalric participant arbitrating on behalf of someone else; and finally, the obstructed foundational marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero that Rinaldo must promote in order for one of the text's most crucial promises to hold fast. All three of these episodes demonstrate how Rinaldo becomes increasingly skeptical and wise to the propensity of vows to fail throughout the *Furioso*.

Much critical attention has already been given to Rinaldo's involvement in fidelity tests; however, the connection of the fidelity tests to the aforementioned episodes needs further examination. Depicting Rinaldo's struggle with the difficult decision of whether or not he should take advantage of having the opportunity to definitively test his wife's fidelity, these doubt-driven episodes conclude by giving many husbands the heartbreaking confirmation that their wives are unfaithful. As such, they showcase the negative effects that having faith in untrustworthy partners can bring. Often considered to be the canto most indicative of the text's problematic negotiation of vows, due to the fact that it explicitly stages a fidelity test, canto 43 tantalizes Rinaldo with the promise of confirmation. Yet deciding that he has much to lose and far too little to gain, Rinaldo resists temptation and refuses to put his wife's chastity to the test. At first, this might seem to confirm his faith in his partner's fidelity.

As Rinaldo ultimately refuses to give credence to fidelity tests, his decision is one that prepares both him and the reader for his verbal commitment to the most important union of the *Furioso*—Bradamante and Ruggiero's marriage. Paradoxically however, the solidity of Rinaldo's faith in his wife is undermined when he muses that his wife, like most women, is likely unfaithful. As such, he bases his resistance to the test on having a desire to prevent his tears from being confirmed—an ambiguous stance indeed. Moreover, these less frequently studied episodes treating Rinaldo's struggle with vows—Charlemagne's broken vow to Rinaldo, Rinaldo's resolution of Ginevra's plight, and his arbitration to preserve the vow that he has made to marry his sister Bradamante to Ruggiero—can be read as less ambiguous junctures in his educational process. Taken together, these scenes elucidate Ariosto's increasingly pessimistic understanding of vows by staging Rinaldo's hard-won lesson about what it means to make and break vows, and the dire consequences one suffers when they fail.

Finally, it becomes apparent that after Rinaldo's turbulent indoctrination into the systemic failure of vows in the early canti of the *Furioso*, his mounting reticence to actively participate in exchanges of vows and his resistance towards a participatory relationship with belief is most closely aligned with the pessimistic stance towards vows and belief that Ariosto acknowledges in his asides as Rinaldo grapples with issues that reflect the poetic voice's own amorous problems and arduous compositional laments. Indeed, nearly all of Rinaldo's faith-testing escapades demonstrate how his character exemplifies the negative light in which Ariosto views the problem of faith. Ariosto dramatizes this fatalism by having Rinaldo and many other characters articulate time and time again that the truth (that is, the absolute quality and veracity of truth) does not matter—for example, “Sia vero o falso [...] io non riguardo a questo”(4.64.1-2); “o sia vero o bugia”

(8.42.4).⁴ Instead, conviction and reason are of utmost importance. What matters is whether or not one has either unshakable faith or the capacity to evaluate correctly, though constancy and fixity—when accurate—are prized above all. While Castiglione famously insisted that what is important is that individuals have the ability to discern properly,⁵ Ariosto's portrayal of the difficulties of discernment emphasizes the frivolity of making any type of vow and reiterates the pessimistic rationale underlying the *Furioso's* preponderance of ideas and imagery related to failure, negation, and absence. Vows become empty articulations that signal the inconstancy of words and the fragility of belief. This correlation vividly dramatizes the connection between broken promises and the fracturation of the empire and the individual; moreover, it leads to a heightened awareness of the most definitive form of negation of all—the expenditure of time that causes Ariosto to hurtle towards death and stands as a metaphor for (in)completion. As he laboriously decries in his amorous complaints and poetical asides—all he needs is a guarantee of time that will be sufficient enough to allow him to satisfy his promises and debts. Recalling the verses with which Boiardo 'ends' his *Orlando innamorato*: "Un'altra fiata, se mi fia concesso, / Racontarovi il tutto per espresso" (*OI*, 3.9.26), Ariosto reclaims Boiardo's final commentary and initiates his own with the same terminology that emphasizes concession and fulfillment, promises and their satisfaction: "me ne sarà però tanto concesso, /che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso" (*OF*, 1.2.7-8).

Assessing Errant Judgment: A Critical Perspective on Distraction and Error

Almost as if it were a *Bildungsroman* avant la lettre, much of the *Furioso* reads as a corrective. Many critics interpret it as a narrative of education focused on Ruggiero's situation as the hero of "an exemplary story of moral education and

⁴ Although there are countless representations of this admission of the paradoxical arbitrariness of truth, two prime examples are found in Angelica's lament: "Mi nuoce, ahimè! ch'io son giovane, e sono / tenuta bella, o sia vero o bugia" (8.42.4), and in the distich the pagan Sacripante proffers as he deliberates over Angelica's virginity: "Forse era ver, ma non però credibile" (1.56.1).

⁵ Though the *Libro del cortegiano* was only published in 1528, Ariosto would have been quite familiar with it during the composition of all three editions of the *Furioso* as Castiglione's work was in circulation nearly a decade prior to its publication. See Peter Burke's *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1995) and Eduardo Saccone, "Grazia, Sprezzatura, Affettazione in the Courtier," in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, eds. Robert W. Hanning and David Rosand (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 54-58. For a comparison of the philosophies of Castiglione and Ariosto, see Valeria Finucci's *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

formation of character” (Scaglione 267), given his “instruction in moral virtue” (Cavallo, *Romance Epics* 150) and the situation of the *Furioso* as a “fight both for and within Ruggiero’s soul” (Quint, *Epic* 38).⁶ In addition, he is of course the character whose name is first mentioned in the *Furioso*, which draws even more attention to his privileged position. Since Ruggiero’s ethical and religious development then culminates with his conversion and subsequent marriage to Bradamante, more focus has fallen on his “progression” than it has on the evolution of other knights. When attention is cast elsewhere, it often addresses romantic interludes that distract from chivalric exploits, or falls to other models of deferral and deviance—for example, Astolfo’s seduction by magic and the defaming madness that combine to take him on tangential otherworldly adventures, or the brutish Saracen warrior Rodomonte’s near failure to learn anything at all, since he makes progression “neither [through] example nor experience nor his particular brand of reasoning” (Cavallo, “Pathway” 305).

Despite Rinaldo’s crucial position in the Matter of France going as far back as the *chanson de geste*, the *Quatre fils Aymon*, for example, critics of the *Furioso* frequently regard him as just another of the “frustrated lover-heroes of the poem” (Bernard 293). I contend, however, that the *Furioso* distinguishes Rinaldo by giving such meticulous attention to his thorny progression from naivety to perspicacity that subsequently showcases his long and laborious indoctrination into an understanding of the faulty and contradictory nature of vows.⁷ His difficult maturation over time is first introduced in the text in the context of a broken vow that has very grave amorous and political implications. This destabilizing vow, with which the *Furioso* opens, is the failed promise that the Christian emperor Charlemagne makes in an attempt to quell the contention between Rinaldo and his cousin Orlando. Disappointed by the unfitting opposition of two knights who should be united but are put at odds because of their equally passionate desire for Angelica, Charlemagne tries to quash their animosity by promising the beautiful maiden for whom both men have “d’amoroso disio l’anima calda” (1.8.3-4) to whichever of them displays more vim in battle:

Carlo, che non avea tal lite cara,
che gli rendea l'aiuto lor men saldo,
questa donzella, che la causa n'era,
tolse, e diè in mano al duca di Bavera;

⁶ In his discussion of this scene, Scaglione—who aligns Ruggiero’s moral development with that of Perceval—acknowledges Ludovico Dolce’s complaint that Ruggiero was not given a more central role. “As early as 1535, Ludovico Dolce ‘apologized’ for Ariosto’s not having named his poem after Ruggiero as the precedent of the Aeneid would have demanded, since the title was imposed on him by his predecessor, who had not planned on Ruggiero as a central character before publishing his Book Two” (*Knights at Court* 267). See also Ita Mac Carthy, “Ariosto’s Grace: the View from Lodovico Dolce,” *Modern Language Notes*, 129.3 (2014): 45, and Melinda Gough, “Tasso’s Enchantress, Tasso’s Captive Woman,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol 54, No. 2 (Summer, 2001) pp. 532-52 (especially 546-48), and Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*.

⁷ On Orlando’s centrality and Rinaldo as an essential counterpart or alternative, consult Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony* (pp. 330-349).

in premio promettendola a quel d'essi,
ch'in quel conflitto, in quella gran giornata,
degli infideli più copia uccidessi,
e di sua man prestasse opra più grata. (1.8. 5-8; 9. 1-4).

Though the stage for a didactic, formative experience has already been set in the *Innamorato*, as Bartlett Giamatti, Cavallo, and many others have noted,⁸ the germination of Rinaldo's corrective education in the *Furioso* begins both with the promise that Charlemagne makes, and with the way in which he frames that promise. By "promettendola" "in premio" to the most vicious combatant of the "infideli," Charlemagne situates Angelica not just as the booty of a battle, but codes her body as one that is intricately and irrevocably linked to a political and a religious enterprise. Given the circumstances, the King's promise is rather understandable and just, as is his focalization on the distracting female body that needs to be controlled and contained.⁹ As Rinaldo and Orlando have allowed their desire for the "bella donna" to catalyze a discord that severs familial, political, and religious ties, Charlemagne not only acutely feels the effects of their "gara," he knows that Angelica is indubitably the "causa" and subsequently perceives the distraction she generates as a political threat. Her disrupting presence has directly weakened the bond between two of his most important soldiers by rendering them enemies when they should be the closest of allies; she is thus a debilitating, not to say castrating entity, since, in Charlemagne's eyes, she directly renders the help they could have brought to the Christian troops "men saldo."

Disruption is particularly concentrated in Angelica. As a consequence, she is irrevocably bound to this first moment of the *Furioso*'s obsessive preoccupation with dissolution, and specifically, with the multi-faceted and multi-layered dissolution of promises, vows, and male identity that occurs when the desired referent is removed from the scene. Indeed, Charlemagne's response to Angelica's incursive presence evidences an underlying yet pervasive political inconstancy, and is suggestive of the menace of imperial failure due to the difficulty he has articulating, negotiating, and maintaining vows. Although Charlemagne is described as a "savio," and although his intervention between Rinaldo and Orlando is intended to placate and quell passions since he wants to "estinguere [...] / un gran incendio," we quickly learn that his decision is not only criticized by both of the knights in question, but by the poetic voice as well. Indeed, the poetic voice laments the idea of error that leads people to faulty judgments and caustically critiques the nature of the injustice that

⁸ Marinelli finds however, that Ariosto is "notably reticent about his decision to renovate and reinspirit the *Innamorato*" ("Shaping" 31).

⁹ See Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers, eds, *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Peter Stallybrass's article "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed" in that same volume is particularly illuminating. See also Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); on the circulation of female bodies see Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex"; on circulation and the "appropriative power" of male family members over the female body see Luce Irigaray: *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1977).

was committed by Charlemagne. When Orlando happens upon the scene directly before the conflict between the two cousins is described, for example, his arrival is famously punctuated by the narrator's dramatic critique of human judgment, so prone to fault and error:

E così Orlando arrivò quivi a punto:
ma tosto si pentì d'esservi giunto:
Che vi fu tolta la sua donna poi:
ecco il giudicio uman come spesso erra!
Quella che dagli esperi ai liti eoi
avea difesa con sì lunga guerra,
or tolta gli è fra tanti amici suoi,
senza spada adoprar, ne la sua terra. (1.6.7-8; 7.1-6)

The denunciation "Ecco il giudicio uman come spesso erra!" has wide repercussions throughout the entire text, as many have noted. As I argue, it very purposefully introduces the specific failure of Charlemagne's promise and proleptically announces the portrayal of failed vows throughout the entire *Furioso*. As we shall see, a lamentation regarding faulty human judgment that so easily applies to Orlando's misplaced affections is also an acerbic and direct critique of Charlemagne's mismanaged judgment, Ariosto's questionable authorial choices, and the reader's inevitable hermeneutic errors.

Various critics have convincingly argued for the *Furioso*'s multipartite focus, and most emphasize its staging of dramatic conflicts, crisis, and error that contributes to a rather chaotic world. Quoted in Vincent Cuccaro's *The Humanism of Ludovico Ariosto From the 'Satire' to the 'Furioso'*, Raffaele Ramat argues that the "entire plot of the *Furioso* [...] rests on a triple hypostasis: the epic war between the Christians and the Pagans; love, which affects all of the characters and occupies the greater part of the narrative; the concept of dynasty, the foundation of the Este family" (Cuccaro 138-39).¹⁰ The "triple hypostasis" he mentions is one that is constantly destabilized yet self-sustaining: the Christians and Pagans are in conflict with each other; love creates conflict and often leads to war; the dynasty, in turn, is continually undermined by these layered and interconnected clashes. Some years later, in *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance*, Ascoli argues that "there are three versions of crisis to which the *Furioso* may be referred: crises of an historical epoch (whether political, cultural, or religious), crises of the Self caught in its temporal predicament, and crises of the process of reference itself"—a view to which he has since added the crisis of form that the text reveals (15).

Encapsulating these various strands, "Ecco il giudicio uman come spesso erra" therefore becomes a pivotal key to understanding the *Furioso*. While I would like to insist on the pessimism latent in the motto, "l'indimenticabile monito" (Garcez Ghirardi, "In margine") has often been taken by critics to rather playfully straddle the binaries separating multiple genres. D. Carne-Ross understands it, for instance, as a "comic formula" that emphasizes the poem's "central failure of

¹⁰ *Per la Storia dello Stile Rinascimentale* (Messina : D'Anna, 1953), p. 21.

expectation” (163), while Peter Marinelli sees it as an intense dramatization of the “fallacious proposals of the appetitive human will” (“Shaping” 35). Sergio Zatti positions the discussion of error as a critique that is “central in a poem that makes it the necessary link between love and madness (“L’inchiesta” 25).¹¹ When situated as the leitmotif of the poem, the critique of the failure of human judgment is commonly understood as standing for Orlando in particular, since it reinforces the association of this “furious” knight with delinquency and punishment that hearken back to the *Innamorato* and force him to undergo “direct punitive intervention” (Tylus “The Curse,” 159-60). As I would argue, however, ‘errant human judgment’ cannot solely be referring to Orlando. Both context and grammar suggest otherwise, as does the fact that this statement is imbricated in a list of references to various other characters who, in one way or another, have also exhibited faulty judgment themselves. In fact, by deictically referencing a judgment and reasoning that the text insists is absent—Orlando’s judgment is faulty and inconstant; Charlemagne’s promise is evacuated of meaning; Charlemagne judges poorly, and *his* absent vow accelerates much of the strife the paladins experience—Ariosto is drawing attention to the value of absence that circumscribes the frustrated articulation and frustrated maintenance of vows in the *Furioso*.

Hanning also notes this ambiguity and provides a useful list of the primary characters to whom flawed judgment could be ascribed: “But, we are entitled to ask, whose judgment in fact erred? Orlando’s in returning to support his feudal lord? Charlemagne, in taking Angelica away from Orlando in order to make him fight the Saracens all the more fiercely to win her back? (The outcome of the battle opens that strategy to serious doubt.) Or Orlando’s friends, in not sticking up for him?” (206). Accordingly, as he puts it, “The operative line is not clearly linked to any of these possible culprits, leaving the reader with a vague and troubling sense that in any given situation, errant judgment may be the one characteristic shared by all its participants” (206). By the text’s “participants,” of course, Hanning is referring to characters, readers, and author alike.

Indeed, Ariosto’s critique of “erring” human judgment is an authorial stance that distinguishes itself from Boiardo’s culpabilization of the “gesti smisurati”—that is, the imbalance that occurs at the gestural stage of actions¹² and gives new

¹¹ Zatti explains that along with the theme of madness, “il principio dell’erranza,” is the motivating force behind “la *quête* fisica dei cavalieri,” combining, as it does, “gli esiti talora tragici dell’errore nell’ordine intellettuale, in un intreccio che, fin dal primo canto, accoppia le vane esplorazioni nella selva agli errori di valutazione concettuale” (“L’inchiesta” 16).

¹² While “smisurati” has both positive and negative connotations, it still indicates a world that is out of balance, although, I would argue, Boiardo’s world does seem less imbalanced than Ariosto’s “mondo alla rovescia.” A. Bartlett Giamatti views Boiardo’s “gesti smisurati” as primarily negative, describing them as “those excessive, destructive deeds that are done for love,” and revealing, through the disorder they foment, Boiardo’s “great themes,” “the destructiveness of passion” and “the life-enhancing quality of cool control” (52). Situating the “bella istoria” or the “vera istoria,” at the crux of what is important in the poem, Maristella de Panizza Lorch specifies that the “gesti smisurati” constitute a “paradigmatic expression of a powerful vitality which creates the story. Amor provides the tension for life, if we understand it metaphorically” (99; 103-4).

attention to the errors that occur on an epistemological and linguistic level.¹³ While A. Bartlett Giamatti sees the “gesti” as a critique of love’s destructive capacity (51-53), Scaglione sees it as the demonstration of an ethical valuation (“Amori” 2-3). Ariosto’s deprecation of errancy “thematizes the fallacy of human judgment” (MacPhail, n.13, 45) by specifically critiquing Orlando’s error, which led him to fall in love with Angelica. However, all of Orlando’s efforts fail, and though he fights for her and follows her around the world, his trajectory only makes him “tosto” “pent[irsi] d’esservi giunto”(1.6.8), which marks his arrival with disappointment and failure.

At the same time however, most scholars would not hesitate to grant this motto a wider heterodiegetic application, which binds author and reader in a Jaussian literary game that tests expectations while also critiquing the degree to which humans are prone to error. In “Poesia e Locura no *Orlando Furioso*,” Garcez Ghirardi comments on the literary tradition of madness to which Ariosto ascribes, and which has clear Augustinian and Petrarchan resonances, given the way in which the topos of error is situated as both cause of and reason for an essential identitary transformation through which many of the protagonists must pass. He insists that it is precisely this highly literary dramatization of the facile “reversibility” of reason and madness that constitutes Ariosto’s poetical trajectory and captures the general tenor of Renaissance sentiment: “o jogo de reversibilidade das razões da loucura e das loucuras da razão acaba por ser o fulcro do *Furioso*, como expressão maior da atitude renascentista” (17).

Among many others, critics such as Marinelli and François Rigolot also insist on the line’s crucial pertinence to the world outside of the *Furioso*. Marinelli reads Ariosto’s motto as a personal assessment, as a self-reflexive authorial evaluation, indicative of the “crisis of the epic poet’s life” (“Shaping” 31), and as such, as a crisis or problem with a long literary legacy (Rigolot 1225-29). On an extradiegetic level, whether the error can bring about a didactic or felicitous resolution or not, it is directly related to the words that the author uses to express his uniquely conceptualized *captatio benevolentia* and plea for clemency and time despite his clear and manifold personal and authorial insufficiencies:

Dirò d'Orlando in un medesimo tratto
cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima:
che per amor venne in furore e matto,
d'uom che sì saggio era stimato prima;

¹³ Analyzing the relationship between Boiardo and Medieval chivalric romances, Scaglione isolates “smisura” and “dismisura” as two of the “key terms of courtly ethics,” particularly given the preponderance of the terms and their variants in the early cantos of the *Innamorato* (3-4). According to his calculations, “The first twelve cantos of the *Orlando Innamorato* have no fewer than fifteen cases of smisura or dismisura, occurring three to four times per canto in cantos 6-12, and usually meaning ‘extraordinary,’ as in the very first octave, ‘i gesti smisurati...che fece...Orlando per amore,’ but sometimes implying a negative value judgment”(4). “Simsura” and “dismisura” are suggestive of the idea that a type of education is necessary for redirection and reorientation, as Jo Ann Cavallo explains in *Boiardo’s Orlando Innamorato: An Ethics of Desire*. See also Scaglione’s “Amori e dolori in the *Orlando innamorato*” (4-6).

se da colei che tal quasi m'ha fatto,
che 'l poco ingegno ad or ad or mi lima,
me ne sarà però tanto concesso,
che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso. (1.2.1-8)

Rather than a perfunctory and rhetorical request for benevolence with little genuineness, in this appeal Ariosto offers a presumably heartfelt acknowledgement of a need for the creative and historical novelty. Despite his confession of waning sanity and his rather Boiardian admission that he is in a race against time, he hopes he will gain enough inspiration to be able to effectively express crucial political panegyrics. Moreover, he emphasizes the reader's hermeneutical obligations and interpretive stance by expecting his reader to take his confession at face value in spite of his propensity to err.¹⁴ As Rigolot explains,

[...] for the Renaissance writer error can be identified as a regrettable mistake, an unforgivable faux pas; or, on the contrary, something he or she should be proud of, because it signals another order of truth, one that the common reader might not have grasped if it had been couched in the straightforward language of truth. This duplicitous level of meaning powerfully exemplifies the conflicting status of an important cognitive category that, in Early Modern times, triggers an ambiguous attitude, both of rejection and appropriation, condemnation and condonation, and prosecution and propitiation. (1219)

At the same time however, as Ascoli specifies, this authorial posturing has even greater literary implications. It is indicative of Ariosto's humanist stance, "which proves itself negatively by a sage recognition of human limits" and subsequently "seem[s] to protect the poet from the accusation of humanistic titanism" (*Bitter* 96).¹⁵ On an authorial level, "Ecco il giudizio uman come spesso erra" then also encompasses a certain self-reflexivity akin to Dante's "smarrimento" "nel mezzo del cammin," Boccaccio's "io," who fights for truth against the "tenebroso intelletto" and goes "puerilmente errando" in the incipit of the *Filostrato*; or Petrarch's famously disappointing "primo giovenile errore," that he laments in both the *Canzoniere* and in his Latin writings.

By calling attention to the temporal distance between "spesso" and an adverb like "sempre," however, and suggesting the starkly different connotations they convey in terms of the realization of an action, Hart follows De Blasi, albeit less convincingly, by rejecting the latent cynicism in Ariosto's admission of pervasive human error in favor of man's potential for discernment: "Man's situation is not hopeless, because he possesses what Ariosto calls the light of reason, '[i]l lume del

¹⁴ See Robert Durling's seminal *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* for the most in-depth analysis of the poet's self and authorial representation. See also Daniel Javitch's, "Cantus Interruptus in the *Orlando Furioso*," *MLN*, Vol. 95, No. 1, Italian Issue (Jan., 1980), pp. 66-80, and Ascoli's "The Poetry of Crisis" in *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony*.

¹⁵ In *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1977). Leo Bersani helpfully discusses the difficulty individuals can have in their attempt to "accommodate" themselves "to a field of reality" in which the satisfaction of one's needs and desires are not easily—or fully—obtained (8).

discorso”(7.2.4). [...] Though Ariosto recognizes the futility of the constant struggle for happiness that engages all his characters, he does not despise them but on the contrary loves them precisely because they are deluded and inconstant” (Hart 14).¹⁶

Putting the oblique and rather fundamentally misguided question of affection for one’s own characters aside, a recognition of “futility” and an acknowledgment of a “constant struggle” that leaves characters “deluded and inconstant” is a damning admission of the impotence of the human capacity for sustained, accurate judgment. While Ariosto does leave open the possibility that occasionally judgment will *not* err given the aperture that “spesso” offers, since the faulty system of oppressive juridical precepts and broken vows that pepper the *Furioso* do continuously falter, the “lume del discorso” that Hart idealizes must necessarily be highly susceptible to failure as well. The poem’s characters are indeed portrayed as having occasional access to the “freedom to make proper use of [their] reason” as Hart and De Blasi contend (Hart 14). However, given the destabilized state of these ‘beloved’ characters, coupled with the protagonist Orlando’s immediate fall from grace (that is, his quick transition from highly esteemed and “sì saggio” to “in furore e matto”), and the increasingly eroding wits of the poet,¹⁷ the poetic voice is arguing that man does not frequently have the ability to use his reason well.

The emphasis Ariosto’s poetic voice gives to the subtle wearing away of his intellect qua poet, and the plea that he be granted enough wits and time to carry out his authorial intent situates “ad or ad or mi lima” as a confession of emotional and epistemological insecurity. This subsequently complicates his presentation of the writing process, and the ideas he puts forth concerning lucidity, madness, and inspiration all the more. In Ariosto’s application, “lima” points both to the attrition of sanity and the suffering that the poet is made to endure, as well as to labor and the passage of time that whiles away the poet’s life as he struggles to write despite his emotional turmoil. Moreover, Ariosto uses “limar,” the prized verb of troubadour poets, to highlight the double valence that simultaneously points to the obsessive

¹⁶ In his assessment, Ascoli critiques Giorgio DeBlasi’s rapprochement of Pico della Mirandola’s and Ariosto’s understandings of humanism, particularly since Ariosto’s does distance himself from “humanistic titanism” by admitting a greater possibility for human error, and demonstrating a greater awareness of the limits that are set to man, and the fallibility to which he is prone. Finally, as quoted by Hart, DeBlasi surprisingly perceives no pessimism in Ariosto’s proclamation at all; rather, for him, Ariosto is “by no means a pessimist about life, for all his awareness of the errors of human desire” (335)

¹⁷ In terms of honing, refinement, and amorous and artistic intent, recall for example, Arnaut Daniel’s “Tan m’abellis” or “Ab gai so cundet e leri.” These cansos put the act of loving in conjunction with the writing process from the first stanzas : “Ab gai so cundet e leri / fas motz e capus e doli, / que seran verai e sert / quan n’aurai passat la lima, / qu’Amor marves plan e daura / mon chantar que de lieis m’ueu / cui Pretz manten e governa (vv. 1-7). Similarly to the underlying intentions of Ariosto’s desire to treat “cosa non detta,” though Arnaut makes “motz e capus e doli” that he insists are “verai e sert,” he has no qualms about acknowledging that the veracity of his words is not sufficient for proper communication of the devotion he feels. The refinement of his words is not only a creational process that he must undertake as poet, but also a procedure that he must share with Love. He toils similarly in “Canso do’ill mot son plan et prim,” as he tries to “obre e lim / motz de valor / ab art d’Amor.”

experience of *innamoramento* and to the suffering that comes with the all-consuming desire that catalyzes the erosion of the poet's sanity, or what little sanity the poet might have once had. The verb also has an explicitly poetic resonance as well. It conveys the difficulties of the poetic enterprise and the challenge to verbally communicate the full magnitude of the poet's expression of desire or love, as well as the desire to polish and file the words that are employed, making them beautiful, honed, and refined.

Finally, exercising reason appropriately and effectively ultimately boils down to a question of faith, as Saccone has signaled in his *Il Soggetto del "Furioso."*¹⁸ Given the propensity of human judgment to error, human faculties that are already destabilized, and the challenges of faith, "ecco il giudizio uman" fast becomes the "emblematic declaration of the pervasiveness of human fallibility" (Nissen 47). Consequently, it opens the question of whether or not faulty judgment can ever be avoided entirely, or if error will inevitably always condition, temper, and frustrate human understanding while undermining vows and access to faith. In Ariosto therefore, the idea of error straddles both sides of the speech act in the sense that the primary subjectival positions involved in speech, and particularly vow-making—from the promisor/speaker, to the auditor, interpreter, and abstractly, the judge—all have a propensity to "err" in their communication and understanding of the vow.

Directly anticipating what we will see later in regards to the specific problem of the vow, the idea of "error" is problematic both on the enunciatory and on the interpretive levels. The implications of error and wandering subsumed in "Ecco il giudizio uman [...]" should be considered to be even more troubling and ambiguous given the motto's resonance on multiple levels of the text and the frequency with which similar statements are echoed at other pivotal or climactic moments. For example, one of the closest echoes is: "Oh sommo Dio, come i giudicii umani / spesso offuscati son da un nembo oscuro" (10.15.1-2), which hearkens directly from another discussion of faulty judgment, misplaced trust and belief, and fraudulent manipulations that reinforce one's propensity to err—the tragically imbalanced relationship of Olympia and Bireno.¹⁹ Anchored around the idea of error as well,

¹⁸ In addition from Ascoli, who offers the most sustained treatment of the theme both in *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony* and in *"Faith" as Cover-Up: An Ethical Fable from Early Modern Italy*, see Durling's *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* and Zatti's *Il Furioso tra 'epos' e 'romanzo'*, among many others.

¹⁹ This description of the falsity of Bireno's actions and the incommensurability between what he does and what he says is presented as an unfortunate lesson from which others must learn. Indeed, decrying the web of manipulative lies that lusty males use to persuade their (momentarily desired) lady to cede to their advances, the narrator offers a passionate caveat to women, hoping that they will learn to steel themselves against false promises:

E poi che nota l'impietà vi fia,
che di tanta bontà fu a lei mercede,
donne, alcuna di voi mai più non sia,
ch'a parole d'amante abbia a dar fede.
L'amante, per aver quel che desia,
senza guardar che Dio tutto ode e vede,
aviluppa promesse e giuramenti,

much like Orlando, Rinaldo, and the frustrated narrator who have all misplaced their affections and trust, the epistemological error that leads to a miscarriage of faith in Olympia's story is both systematic and pervasive. Yet in her case, poor judgment, false pretenses, and false and misleading vows affect not just the individual, but the collective—that is, it is not just Olympia who fails to trust well, but most lovers, and most humans:

Oh sommo Dio, come i giudici umani
spesso offuscati son da un nembo oscuro!
i modi di Bireno empì e profane,
pietosi e santi reputati furo. (10.15.1-4)

While Bireno's ignoble actions impact Olympia most directly, his wickedness affected the implicit trust he had from his community, when he proved both his reputation and their judgment wrong. As these critiques of "i giudicii umani" demonstrate, the *Furioso* casts broken accords as a verbal and epistemological problem that fully encompasses this early example of "human error" that seems so tightly bound to Orlando's reasoning and comportment, but also embraces the errors and failures of others.

che tutti spargon poi per l'aria i venti.
I giuramenti e le promesse vanno
dai venti in aria disipate e sparse,
tosto che tratta questi amanti s'hanno
l'avida sete che gli accese ed arse.
Siate a' prieghi ed a' pianti che vi fanno,
per questo esempio, a credere più scarse.
Bene è felice quel, donne mie care,
ch'essere accorto all'altrui spese impare (10.5-6)

The narrator recurs to the *spargamos* topos—"aviluppa," "spargon [...] per l'aria i venti," "vanno / dai venti in aria dissipate e sparse" "credere più scarse"—to illustrate how dastardly the effect that lies have on the trusting lover is. Recalling Petrarch, 'scattered words,' in this case, lies, incite the spiritual, corporeal, and psychic breakdown of the lover and the fragmentation of heuristic systems of belief. As such, "promesse e giuramenti" "disipate e sparse" are directly linked to the Petrarchan idea of vanity—both the vanity of believing what one wants to believe (the promises of a false lover), and vanity in terms of the shame and futility from a failed amorous enterprise. Moreover, they are directly linked to a holistic fracturing and scattering of belief systems, since what the women need to do is become "a credere più scarse." Paradoxically, becoming "a credere più scarse," is precisely the lesson that Rinaldo must learn once Charlemagne's promise to him fails.

Learning to Be “A Credere Più Scarse”: Charlemagne’s Lesson on Rebellion and Theft

After the *Furioso*’s presentation of the propensity of humans to err, Orlando’s folly is the next error explicitly mentioned in the text. Directly linked to Rinaldo’s less apparent epistemological uncertainty, Orlando’s faulty judgment is inextricably connected to the empire and to Charlemagne, both of which are situated as the catalyst of his suffering and madness and Rinaldo’s heartache and confusion. The fact that the errors so pervasive throughout the rest of the *Furioso* are inaugurated by the King’s problems with judgment and truth, has not received sufficient consideration. Similarly to Orlando, Charlemagne’s own foolishness and defective judgment are revealed when he is presented as having made an enunciatory error by articulating a vow over which he could not possibly have complete control and which he did not even realize was susceptible to circumstance and Fortune. Just like Charlemagne’s paladins, many of whom are wayward and rebel against their leader, since Fortune is described as explicitly “rubella / [...] alla cristiana fede” (1.10.5-6), it too is cast as mutinous and inimical to Charlemagne’s imperial and religious project. Fortune’s rebellion, then, intensifies the perception and gravity of the assault launched against the Christian troops by waging its very own war against Charlemagne.²⁰ Even without the deviating influence of his soldiers, Charlemagne independently made a series of gross interpretive errors that

²⁰ Etymologically, “rubella,” and its more common variant “ribella,” communicates the notion not just of waging war, but of waging war *again* (*re* + *bellō*, *rebellāre*), which intensifies perceptions of the inimical world that besieges Charlemagne and his court. Indeed, the emperor is not just being attacked by his Pagan adversaries, he suffers assaults from his own troops as well as grave affronts from Fortune. Given all of this strife, Charlemagne should be more prepared and wary about the many dangers lurking in his environs. In its detailed overview of the term, the *Enciclopedia Dantesca* (1970) defines “ribella” as:

[p]ropriamente "che è in stato di ribellione," "che rifiuta obbedienza all'autorità." [...] il valore dell'aggettivo va ricollegato alla sua etimologia (rebellare): dal senso di " che rinnova la guerra " si passa infatti al senso più vasto e generico di "ostile," "nemico," "avversario." Bertram dal Bornio, istigando Enrico il giovane contro il padre Enrico II, fece il padre e 'l figlio in sé ribelli. [...] L'espressione vale evidentemente "nemici l'un dell'altro (Torraca), in quanto "di qualunque guerra può dirsi... che l'un nemico contro l'altro è ribelle." (Tommaseo)

Here I would like to insist on the explicitly political nuance that *Il Lombardi* reveals in defining “ribello” “[...] propriamente...il suddito che si solleva contra il Principato” and that of the *Treccano Dictionary*, which defines “*rubella/ribelle*” as: “Che si ribella insorgendo armato contro l’autorità.”

While Christian knights do fight against each other in a painfully shameful and embarrassing way in the *Innamorato*, and one that recalls the traditional stance that drawing one’s sword in front of the king as criminal treacherousness, in the *Furioso*, resistance to authority is demonstrated in a slightly more subtle way—from overt crimes to the refusal of many of the Christian knights to wholeheartedly Charlemagne’s enterprise and support his orders in action and belief.

parenthetically enclose his vow-making process and contribute to the failure of the promises that he articulates. For instance, although he does correctly position Angelica as the cause for internecine strife, the battle in which he assumes the Christians will be such dominant victors is nothing other than the start of a long period of chaotic disappointment for his troops:

Contrari ai voti poi furo i successi;
ch'in fuga andò la gente battezzata,
e con molti altri fu 'l duca prigioniero,
e restò abbandonato il padiglione. (1.9.5-8)

Indeed, after some of the drama surrounding his faulty vows has quelled, in the very next instance in which Charlemagne and his army are mentioned, he is painted as withdrawn and much subdued (“re Carlo, rotto e mal condotto, /con le reliquie sue s'era ridotto” [1.2.7-8]). This description of fracture and fragmentation mired in destruction show to what extent Charlemagne must undertake a corrective and rehabilitative process; he must regroup, strategize, reroute, and correct his faulty judgment before he and his troops can attempt to launch a successful attack.

Yet as I would like to illustrate by emphasizing the emperor's general confusion and semantic inconsistencies, Charlemagne's error is not just his flawed reasoning, but how his inability to keep his promise contributes to the failure of the vows that are subsequently broken in the text. Indeed, while Orlando, Rinaldo, and the poetic voice have already been cast from the protasis of the poem as having questionable judgment due to their misguided trust and love, the King quickly shows that he too suffers from the same faulty judgment as do his knights. In fact, perhaps he suffers even more than they do, since it is his error in judgment and his broken promise that mount additional discord on the “lite” erupting between Orlando and Rinaldo. Furthermore, far more serious than an inopportune squabble between cousins, Charlemagne's broken word incites a serious political loss for his Christian soldiers. Rather than quelling a tense situation, Charlemagne's intervention exacerbates it; both his actions and his word are ultimately ineffective. They do nothing to uphold and contribute to the vows he has made to himself or to others. Given even just this early propensity to error, the *Furioso's* description of a “savio” King quickly becomes ironic and is turned on its head when his actions, intended to protect the empire and foment the integrity of the imperial enterprise, are obsessively codified as illicit acts that amount to a betrayal of chivalric code.

Describing his attempt to manage Angelica's uncontrollable presence, for example, the verb “togliere” is used four times in rapid succession, and this obsessive repetition serves to suggest and then reiterate the criminality and villainy of Charlemagne's actions. In its first occurrence, the condemning word describes the rapidity with which Angelica was stripped from Orlando, since, immediately upon his return to the West, “vi fu *tolta* la sua donna *poi*.” This dramatic rendering of the connection between the loss of Angelica and the locale in which it occurred serves to situate Charlemagne's empire as the very seat of this criminal injustice. Next, although Orlando has labored to defend Angelica “con sì lunga guerra,” once he is back on his own land where he should have the most friendship, protection, and

support of all places, he is divisively separated from his beloved : “or *tolta* gli è fra tanti amici suoi, / senza spada adoperar, ne la sua terra” (1.6.4-6). Again, reinforcing the connection to Charlemagne, the fact that this “robbery” occurs “ne la sua terra” intensifies the sting of the affront. Finally, the culpability of the “savio imperator” as agent of the robbery is conclusively established since he is blamed for being the person who “fu che gli la *tolse*,” and then directly blamed again: “Carlo [...] / questa donzella [...] / *tolse*, e diè in mano al duca di Bavera” (1.8.5, 7-8).

Meanwhile, Orlando’s lament that Angelica is taken from him “senza spada adoperar” accentuates the idea of unfairness and perpetuates the notion that Charlemagne’s court is not the model of chivalric comportment that it is supposed to be. On the one hand, “senza spada adoperar” is a critique of how Orlando’s intentions are thwarted by the king; Orlando truly feels that Angelica was unfairly stolen from him since he was never given the opportunity to prove by sword what he felt was his rightful ‘ownership’ of her (that is, according to what should have been considered requisite chivalric protocol). On the other hand, “senza spada adoperar” also reflects negatively upon Charlemagne, as it supports the argument that Angelica was lifted from Orlando by a sleight of hand or robbery. The affront is massive: under Charlemagne’s watch and in a place where Orlando should have had no need to be *en garde*, she was unfairly “tolta” by a type of conduct that falls well outside the realm of normalized and appropriate chivalric etiquette. Since Rinaldo feels that Angelica is his, and since he was similarly deprived of the opportunity to fight for her as Charlemagne promised, readers know that he too shares Orlando’s perspective and perceives Charlemagne’s betrayal just as acutely as does his cousin.

An Intertextual Approach to Charlemagne’s Broken Vows: Betrayal in Pulci and Boiardo

Due to the negative implications of the first ignominious action of the *Furioso*—what essentially amounts to a “furto,” that is—and the connection between “togliere” and criminality, the culpabilized Charlemagne who is presented in this first canto of the *Furioso* is thus quite different from the idea of the more stable and more lauded king presented in fundamental intertexts such as Pulci’s *Morgante* (1478), the *Orlando innamorato*, and the *Chanson de Roland* (c. 1100). Indeed, the beginning of each of the texts provides detailed information regarding Charlemagne’s habits, moods, and outlook, as his humor and his skills often condition the ambience and abilities of his empire and his men. An examination of these intertexts elucidates the novelty of Ariosto’s interpretation, as well as the

particular emphasis that he gives to the broken promise at the heart of the relationship between Charlemagne and his paladins.²¹

While I will address the *Innamorato* and the *Chanson* at greater length, it is important to note that Pulci's *Morgante* is a far too-often overlooked intertext of the *Furioso* that explicitly references the traditional literary portrayals of Charlemagne and his behavior in a hilarious and revelatory manner. After aligning his narratological project with the biblical creation of the world (Langer 30), what the poetic voice offers in the *exordium* of the *Morgante*, for instance, is a rehabilitation of the flawed way in which Charlemagne has been understood:

quand'io varai la mia barchetta prima
per obedir chi sempre obedir debbe
la mente, e faticarsi in prosa e in rima,
e del mio Carlo imperador m'increbbe;
ché so quanti la penna ha posti in cima,
che tutti la sua gloria prevarrebbe:
è stata questa istoria, a quel ch'io veggio,
di Carlo, male intesa e scritta peggio. (1.4.1-8)

Whereas the poet does make claims of his own insufficiencies by alluding to his exhaustion when he toils away “in prosa e in rima,” or by describing his creative vessel with the diminutive “barchetta”²² he does not beg for pity and benevolence for himself. Rather, he implicitly requests compassion for his “imperador.” This is a reversal of the traditional dynamics of a *captatio benevolentia*, and paints Charlemagne as an even more pathetic and sorry figure since he has been “male intesa e scritta peggio”—that is, misunderstood and maligned. The poet sustains that the reason for which Charlemagne is not commonly perceived as the great man that he was is due to the errors and insufficiencies of writers, who have not understood his merit. Therefore, the poet is singular and special, as he is uniquely in possession of these perspicacious interpretive skills:

Diceva Leonardo già Aretino
che s'egli avessi avuto scrittor degno,
com'egli ebbe un Ormanno e 'l suo Turpino,

²¹ See Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Terence Cave, “The Mimesis of Reading in the Renaissance,” in *Mimesis: Mirror to Method*, ed. John D. Lyons and Stephen D. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), and his *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), which is helpful for its discussion of imitation, authenticity, exemplarity, and copia as abundance versus copia as copy.

²² Similar to references to a “libellum,” a “navicella,” or a “piccioletta barca,” Pulci's reference to his “barchetta” “*Cui dono lepidum novum libellum?*”: *Dedicating Latin Works and Motets in the Sixteenth Century*, provides a wide-ranging study of rhetorical strategies used in dedications throughout Europe. See, in particular, Harm-Jan van Dam, “Vobis pagina nostra dedicatur”: Dedication in Classical literature” (13-34); Nele Gabriëls, “Reading (Between) the Lines: What Dedications Can Tell Us” (65-80); and, Jan Bloemendal, “‘To the Benevolent Reader...’: Dedications Attached to Editions to Neo-Latin Plays...” (109-26)

ch'avessi diligenza avuto e ingegno,
sarebbe Carlo Magno un uom divino,
però ch'egli ebbe gran vittorie e regno,
e fece per la Chiesa e per la Fede
certo assai più che non si dice o crede. (1.5.1-8)

Distancing himself from Ormanno and Turpino, whom he critiques, Pulci aligns himself with Aretino (Leonardo Bruni), suggesting that they are both the “scrittore[i]” from whom Charlemagne would have benefitted since they would have portrayed him far more favorably.

Yet the fact that of all authors in whom he might find a similar appreciation of Charlemagne is Aretino—the author, most notably of *De primo bello punico* and *Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII*—and that together he and Aretino can restore to Charlemagne the divine glory he deserves, is a deeply satirical and performative position indeed. Not only was Aretino considered to be a rather dry though comprehensive historian and biographer, his secularizing insistence upon the rigid temporal division of Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Modern facilitated a tripartite understanding of historical figures that used historical perspective to foment contradictory representations. Moreover, Pulci was using his self-alignment with Aretino to vilify two well-reputed historians; he then used this comparison to point towards the crux of one of the most enormous debates of the late medieval and early modern period—the dispute surrounding Charlemagne’s achievements and worth. Sardonic and skeptical to the core, however, Pulci anticipates that his readers will be opposed to his perspective and recodification of Charlemagne. Like the failures of Ariosto’s “giudicio uman” that hinder accurate interpretation, since the “mondo cieco e ignorante non prezza / le sue virtù,” Pulci is faced with quite the rehabilitative task since he must contradict what esteemed authors have written. This is similar to the rehabilitative task that Ariosto must undertake, though he presents a far more ambiguous (and far more critical) interpretation of Charlemagne. Moreover, though subtle compared to other recodifications of epic tradition, Ariosto’s traduction of Charlemagne prepares the reader for his unique perspective regarding the failure of vows, the difficulty of trusting others, and the connection of both to the instability of the empire. The uniqueness of Ariosto’s approach reveals that *his* Charlemagne is a very different emperor than the character presented in his closest literary models.

In Boiardo’s *Innamorato*, Charlemagne is portrayed in the first *canti* as a rather jocund figure. In addition to his cheer, he is an authorial figure firmly seated in a position of power, and he is a staunch and confident representative of the Christian faith. The first stanza of the protasis culminates dramatically with “nel tempo di Re Carlo / imperatore,” a direct assertion of Charlemagne’s authority, and his spatial, temporal, and even linguistic dominance, though the laxness and frivolity he reveals will later be presented as problematic. Nonetheless, the sense of optimism and celebration reigns over the opening *canti*, countered only by a slight menace of disruption that is not confirmed until canto 3, when Charlemagne

mistakenly imprisons one of his paladins due to an obvious lapse in judgment that subsequently incites the errors upon which Ariosto will later expand.²³

In the *Innamorato*'s incipit, however, the ambiance at court is pleasant and rather innocuous. Boiardo's Charlemagne convenes both Christians and Pagans for a Pentecostal celebration, and his primary concerns align more with the frivolous; he preoccupies himself with superb plates of food, regales intricate enameled goblets to his knights, and seems to give far less attention to the political and religious implications of this convening. For instance, although he is described as having "disprezz[o]" for "tutta la genta pagana," he is offering the sumptuous banquet and joust for both Christians and Pagans, thus fomenting a commingling that could have possibly had a lasting positive effect if only he were more attentive to political concerns:

Erano in corte tutti i paladini
Per onorar quella festa gradita,
E da ogni parte, da tutti i confini
Era in Parigi una gente infinita.
Eranvi ancora molti Saracini,
Perché corte reale era bandita,
Ed era ciascaduno assicurato,
Che non sia traditore o rinegato. (1.9.1-8)

In the *Innamorato*, essentially everyone "da ogni parte, da tutti i confini" is welcome in Charlemagne's kingdom due to his tolerance; he is happy to host as long as there are no "traitors" or "renegades" in the mix. Yet the text immediately questions his faith and assessment of the Pagans' worth by challenging his uncomplicated admission of them into a relatively intimate domain. For example, "[...] era ciascaduno assicurato, / che non sia traditore o rinegato" signals that a certain process of evaluation must take place in order for Charlemagne to determine who is "assicurato" and distinguish that fellow from the treacherous and betraying Other. However, momentarily preoccupied with less vital concerns, Charlemagne does not seem to be engaging in this process of evaluation at all. Furthermore, his problematically placed trust is critiqued just a few stanzas later, when Rainaldo, feeling offended because of his sartorial inferiority (a prideful concern that again is suggestive of the vanity and frivolity that prevail in *this* Charlemagne's court) calls

²³ Drawing attention to how the Charlemagne presented in the first book of the *Innamorato* (a flawed ruler easily "falling for Angelica's charm, cursing at his knights, imprisoning Astolfo unjustly") is quite different than the Charlemagne presented in Book Two, whose "image is rehabilitated" (40), Cavallo offers a helpful and meticulous analysis of Charlemagne's mistaken attribution of blame for his fighting knights to Astolfo, when the dastardly Gano should have really been blamed:

When Charlemagne notices the unseemly conflict among his subjects, he instantly wants to assign blame [...]. The emperor, however, makes a false assessment when the injured Grifone di Maganza takes the initiative and paints Astolfo as the culprit and the Gano clan as innocent victims. Astolfo, genuinely offended, cannot control his anger and is subsequently imprisoned by Charlemagne. Fooled by the slick talking of the traitors, the emperor punishes the wrong man, and the reader's indignation only finds a release four cantos later when Astolfo is let out of prison. (*Romance Epics* 189)

the pagans “traditori.” In this way he offers a direct denunciation of Charlemagne’s permissiveness, which can be read as political, militaristic, and chivalric imprudence:

Re Carlo Magno con faccia ioconda
Sopra una sedia d'ôr tra' paladini
Se fu posato alla mensa ritonda:
Alla sua fronte fôrno e Saracini,
Che non volsero usar banco né sponda,
Anzi sterno a giacer come mastini
Sopra a tapeti, come è lor usanza,
Sprezando seco il costume di Franza. (1.13.1-8)

By encouraging a curious and somewhat problematic fraternization of Christians and Pagans in his own court, particularly since he is so permissive and even gracious towards the very pagans who have scorn for him, Charlemagne’s negligence has clear political implications that Ariosto later takes pains to exaggerate. Imperial weakness, fragmentation, and this sense of political failure are rendered all the more evident when couched within the necromancer Malagise’s conjuring of demons. Heightening his distress and his awareness of his failure to wield power and maintain control, these demons cause Charlemagne to suffer disquieting visions. As if he were alienated from himself even more, he sees “Re Carlo morto e sua corte deserta” (1.36.8), which leads to even more elaborate descriptions of his own fatalistic nightmares, and reveals his dark and troubled fragility.

Very tellingly, the Charlemagne of the *Innamorato*’s desire to reject a “traditore” or “rinegato” also seems to suggest that his preoccupation is not just the fixity of political vows and the threat of traitors or renegades to the empire. Rather, it is a rejection of the fixity of religious vows as well, since “rinegato” can also designate someone who has chosen to reject the promise of faith to which he had formerly been faithful. Understanding “rinegato” in this way admits an even more problematic sense of fluidity in terms of the religious and political foundation of Christian and Pagan identity. The prefix “ri-,” from the Old French and Latin for “anew,” “again,” and which also marks intensification, disorientation, and the ‘undoing of previous actions,’²⁴ introduces the fear, particularly pervasive during the time in which the *Innamorato* was written, of a blurring of barriers ultimately detrimental to the already destabilized Christian, European self. Indeed, it opens the possibility that those who have taken Christian vows could become Pagan, while those who present themselves as Pagan could become Christian (and back again). Despite the problems that identitary, political, and religious ambiguity pose, this (con)fusion poses a serious threat to Charlemagne’s imperial project. Not only does

²⁴ “renegade, n. and adj.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, January 2016. Web. 12 January 2016; “renegade, n. and adj.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2016. Web. 1 March 2016; “renegade, n.” *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Etymonline.com, December 2015. Web. 8 December 2015; “rinneare, v.tr” *Garzanti linguistica*, www.garzantilinguistica.it, March 2016. Web. 2 March 2016.

it blur the boundaries that separate different faiths, it implicitly blurs the division between supporters of Charlemagne and supporters of the pagan king by opening an ambiguous space through which the terrifyingly inconstant yet pervasive figure of the traitor or “rinegato” can easily fit. Gesturing towards this revelation of his own inconstancy, Charlemagne’s tellingly vitriolic words and his presumed intentions do not match his actions in any respect, as he gamely admits Pagans to his court. In fact, he remains relatively unperturbed by the threat of religious hybridity that poses a threat to the empire, focused as he is on his party and general cheer.

Another definitive moment in which Boiardo’s narrator comes down heavily on Charlemagne’s frivolity, is by calling the Saracens “dogs.” Though this canine epithet and any variation thereof is a much abused racist and (religiously bigoted) term that appeared frequently in the literary and historical documents of the medieval and Renaissance periods to designate a vague, amalgamated idea of ethnic and religious otherness—Turks, Pagans, or the Moslem *qua* ethnic other²⁵—here the term “mastini” is actually used to denigrate both the Pagans and their inappropriate conduct, as well as the Emperor’s inappropriate permissiveness. As such, letting these “dogs” “giacer” in front of him where they are so overtly “sprezando seco il costume di Franza” is a much graver fault than it originally seems. It does not solely indicate lassitude or oversight on Charlemagne’s part, but a shameful and dangerous religious and political error.²⁶

²⁵ As Timothy Hampton explains in “Turkish Dogs: Rabelais, Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Alterity,” the derogatory epithet is a “famous cliché used by everyone in the period from Erasmus to Luther to Petrarch” (67). While the insult is used throughout the *Innamorato* and the *Furioso*, it is usually introduced in the context of a general description of ferocity that does not have exclusively racist or bigoted connotations, though Boiardo does distinguish the Pagans, who are usually described as dogs, from the Christians, who are dogs only when behaving ignominiously or because of their animalistic strength.

For example, in the *Innamorato*, Boiardo’s rather obsessively recurs to “dogs” as an insult. “Fraudi cani,” and “Saracin cani” are his preferred way to describe the Pagan troops, though it comes up frequently in more general metaphors describing violence. When Brandimarte fights in 1.19, she is described as a boar surrounded by “can mastini,” while in one particularly gory scene, “è piena la foresta / di qualche gamba o qualche spalla tronca / E membri lacerate e pezzi strani, / Come di bocca tolti a lupi e a cani”(3.50.5-8). In the *Furioso*, as Orlando, Ferraù, and Sacripante are thwarted in their pursuit of Angelica, they are described as, “come il cane talor, se gli è intercetta / o lepre o volpe, a cui dava la caccia (12.36.1-4)

²⁶ While Pulci’s is definitely more complex, out of the *Furioso* and *Innamorato*, the vision of Charlemagne that Boiardo puts forth is perhaps the most nuanced. In Boiardo, in the scene to which I am referring, Astolfo huffily reprimands Charlemagne before leaving the court entirely because he is upset about being falsely accused by the emperor: ‘a torto me ponesti in la pregione / per far careze acasa di Magancia” (*OI*, 1.7.60). As Jo Ann Cavallo explains in her interpretation of the scene, Astolfo’s critique makes Charlemagne painfully aware of his fault: “When Astolfo leaves Paris having vindicated himself in deed and word, with a duly chastised Charlemagne begging him to stay, we see that the knight is ultimately free to serve the ruler or to set out autonomously in another direction, while the ruler is capable of recognizing his past faults and acknowledging his dependence on his supporters” (*Romance* 190). In regards to the rest of the *Innamorato*, Bartlett Giamatti offers a brilliant understanding of Boiardo’s obsession with death, decay, and diversity, which he juxtaposes to the ideology the *Innamorato*’s Charlemagne espouses:

In the *Furioso*, however, Ariosto builds from Boiardo's subtler critique of Charlemagne and challenges the emperor's decisions, words, and actions much more overtly. Indeed, instead of the complacent though naive Emperor of the *Innamorato*'s initial cantos whose imprudence is critiqued only later in the text—though the way in which the critique is delayed suggests that the emperor's permissiveness is not a major fault at all—the Charlemagne of the *Furioso* initially seems to be wiser and much more wary, and he manages to articulate Angelica's presence as a threat much more effectively than does the Charlemagne of the *Innamorato*, who is much more susceptible to her charms. The latter is not only enthralled by Angelica: he burns for her, just as his paladins do (“Ma a che dir più parole? Ogni barone / Di lei si accese, ed anco il re Carlone” [*OI*. 1.32.7-8]), and he goes to the extreme of granting all of her requests and promising to protect her. In contrast, the former is shrewder and immediately sees the effects that Angelica's distracting presence can bring. Indeed, in the *Furioso*, Charlemagne's initial demonstration of sagacity is explicitly linked to his decision to remove Angelica from the scene so as to better manage the effects of her presence and mitigate the effects of the “lite” that she incited. As we have already seen, “Il savio imperator, ch'estinguer volse / un grave incendio, fu che gli la tolse” (*OF*. 1.7.7-8).

Given this direct preoccupation with the pacification and the unification of his troops, Ariosto's Charlemagne, therefore, seems to bear more of a traditional Charlemagne's gravitas, like that of the Charlemagne in the *Chanson de Roland*. Yet while Charlemagne is presented as the paragon of virtue, honesty, and faith in the French text—indeed, he is a perfectly virtuous man, his only fault being the minimal question of his advanced age, which brings with it a certain weariness and lassitude—in the *Furioso*, Ariosto destabilizes this idea of Charlemagne's nobility and virtue by using it to take a decisive step to differentiate himself even more from his principle literary models.

From Muslim Inconstancy to Imperial Error: Ariosto's 'Translation' of Charlemagne's Failures and the Broken Vows of the *Chanson de Roland*

One of the most explicit ways in which Ariosto distinguishes his Charlemagne from the prototypical Emperor presented in other epics, and

“A briglie abbandonate”—Charlemagne urges release, ‘sfrenatura,’ upon his cavaliers. He urges them to do precisely what the poet has been warning the reader against—to court excess as a means to restraint, expanding toward death as a way of retaining a hold on life. Boiardo's Charlemagne expresses Pulci's vision, that one asserts control by exploiting the energy of decay. Boiardo's Charlemagne courts chaos because he believes in God's ordering hand. (56)

particularly from the *Chanson de Roland*'s presentation of Charlemagne, is with his situation of Charlemagne's broken vow as fundamental to the action of his poem. Ariosto emphasizes this all the more with his portrayal of the complexities surrounding his emperor's pathetic maintenance of verbally binding accords. Taking an initial cue from the French tradition perhaps, a broken vow is also featured in the beginning verses of the *Chanson de Roland*. However, the way in which the anonymous author of the *Chanson* handles the contention created by that broken vow helps to evidence just how different is the approach that Ariosto takes when he tackles the question of false promises, failed accords, and abuses of faith.

While the *Furioso* opens with scenes that present Charlemagne disparagingly and critique his inconstancy and poor judgement, the *Chanson* has starkly different and less shameful beginnings, at least from a Christian perspective. Rather than being disgracefully attributed to the great Christian emperor, the *Chanson*'s broken vow belongs to the deceitful Muslim king Marsilie, whose consequent vilification is much less problematic than the *Furioso*'s vilification of the supposedly virtuous leader of the entire Christian world. In a last attempt to hold fast against the Christian army, Marsilie has come upon a plan to send Charlemagne a messenger bearing valuable treasures and the promise that he himself will come to Aix and convert to Christianity if the Franks retreat rather than penetrate deeper towards Zaragoza. As Charlemagne relays to his barons, in exchange for the excessive load of monetary and material gifts that Marsilie has brought to him, Marsilie wants him to complete certain tasks:

[...] il me mandet que en France m'en alge:
 Il me sivat ad Aís, a mun estage,
 Si recevrat la nostre lei plus salve
 Chrestiens ert, de mei tendrat ses marches;
 Mais jo ne sai quels en est sis curages. (13.180-91)

Though Charlemagne could never fully know what is in Marsilie's mind, his very admission that he "ne sai quels en est sis curages," reinforces an already clear indication of his prudence and sensibility. Indeed, Marsilie immediately confirms that he has no intention of keeping his word²⁷; the text simultaneously reveals a religious inconstancy that subsequently signals his identity instability and, so doing, reinforces the inconstancy of his word. While he is certainly deceitful on numerous levels, Marsilie's (feigned) willingness to swap one set of religious beliefs for another is suggestive of a dangerous hybridity and his treacherous ability to willfully refashion himself in accordance with his often transitory whims and needs.²⁸

²⁷ In a true demonstration of his egocentrism, Marsile's only concern is saving himself and his own reputation, which seem to take priority over winning the battle: "Cunseilez mei cume mi savie hume, / Si m(e) guarisez e de mort et de hunte" (2. 20-21).

²⁸ On self-directed agency and identity during the Renaissance, see Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) and Thomas Greene, "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature," in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). See also Victoria Kahn's *the Future of Illusion: Political Theology and Early Modern Texts* for a discussion of the centrality of self-

In fact, Marsilie is described in the text as if he were a “rinegato,” or likely to become one; rather than being represented as a staunch Muslim, he seems to be a very confused polytheist who actually falsifies his worship of Mohammed by revering Apollo as well: “Li reis Marsilie [...], ki Deu nen aiment; / Mahumet sert e Apollin recleimet: / Nes poet guarder que mals ne l'i ateignet” (1.7-8). Fully emphasizing his potential to become a “rinegato,” the description that Marsilie, “Nes poet guarder que mals ne l'i ateignet” (1.7-8), alludes to the double sense in the reference to the “mals” that ‘could reach him *there*.’ On the most obvious level, it refers both to Charlemagne’s growing dominance of the Iberian Peninsula as his troops are encroaching upon the only stronghold Marsilie has left. On a more subtle level, “nes poet guarder que mals ne l'i ateignet” again offers a veiled critique of Marsilie’s highly problematic faith of which Charlemagne must be very wary. In addition to the use of “i” as a prepositional adverb of space, the conceptual valence of “i” can also grammatically refer to Marsilie’s false religion—his confused worship of Mohammed and Apollo, with the “mals,” the problem or evil that will befall him given that he follows two religions improperly.²⁹

Charlemagne proves his interpretive shrewdness all the more with the acuity he demonstrates given how well-attuned he is to the possibility of betrayal and how naturally he regards what the Pagan says with merited suspicion from a linguistic level. As Margaret Jewett Burland aptly notes, “Charlemagne’s speech models an essential aspect of responsible audience reception at which most of the Franks do not excel: questioning a speaker’s motives” (47). What distinguishes Charlemagne from the rest of the troops while reinforcing his well-merited supremacy and virtue, is his “implicit recognition here of the folly of making absolute statements about future outcomes” (47).³⁰ Indeed, the sage King admits that despite not knowing

fashioning and self-determination and Jesse Goldhammer’s *The Headless Republic* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005), for a discussion of leadership and self-actualization during periods of political discord and strife.

²⁹ This identity inconstancy, which promotes a fluidity that can be very dangerous if one’s new vows do not fully override the prior vows that were held, is a damning but traditional critique of religious diversity and tolerance. To take just three brief examples, it sets up the problematic commonplace of the fluidity between Christians and Pagans in: Ariosto’s “Oh gran bontà degli cavallieri antiqui! /eran rivali, eran di fé diversi”; it reveals itself in the concern that Ferraù is truly a “marano” and thus lacks a fixed religious identity, and it also shows itself in Tasso’s fraudulent and confused Ismeno, whose conflicted beliefs incite Aladino’s violence, propensity for error, and ultimate failure in the *Liberata*, as we will examine in the following chapter.

³⁰ As Jewett Burland puts it, the grammatical choices that Charlemagne uses to relay Marsilie’s message show to what extent “[t]he reliability of discourse is itself the central issue of the first Frankish council [...]” (180). She continues, interpreting the disaccord between what Charlemagne says in terms of grammatical temporality as a sign of his awareness of the difficulties that will face him if he does make an agreement with the Pagan King:

Charlemagne uses four future-tense verbs to describe what Marsilie is offering to do [...]. The grammatical choice on Charlemagne’s part suggests the inevitability of these four actions, yet in reality those four verbs are out of Charlemagne’s control, while the first two verbs [rendered in the subjunctive] are completely within his control. This meeting is all about the discrepancy between the actions that Charlemagne conveys in the subjunctive and future respectively: Charlemagne can refuse to leave for France until Marsilie hands over the

what Marsilie is actually thinking—and thus, what he will actually do and whether or not he will keep his word—he is wise to the possibility that Marsilie harbors dishonest machinations that will cause his promise to fail. Charlemagne shows his perspicacity as a reader of Marsilie’s intentionality by making it clear that he understands that Marsilie is strategizing. He acknowledges the hint of manipulation and duplicity that the spokesperson of his pagan adversary reveals by using the verb “mander” to introduce the order that he is supposed to carry out and the conditions Marsilie wants him to follow: “il *me mandet* que en France m'en alge” (13.180, emphasis mine). The *Chanson*’s Charlemagne then demonstrates even further prudence by carefully discussing and seeking counsel from the rest of the Franks to determine how their troops should respond.

Though his solicitation of advice leads to “a heated debate in which sharply divergent views are being expressed by strong-willed personages” (Brault 131), Charlemagne’s patient and benevolent audition again shows his meticulous deliberation. His vigilant methods are highly juridical, even at his own French Council. Additionally, the vocabulary he utilizes recalls the “legal discourse of ‘feudal society,’” with its insistence upon the need to carefully deliberate over the question of faith, or *fides*. Robert M. Stein explains in his discussion of Marsilie’s manipulative conduct and his verbal promise to provide hostages as guarantees of his word, that internal signs, verbal *sfumature*, and lacunae are intimately connected to evaluations of the ephemerality of the question of faith, which thwart one’s natural desire for external evidential signs and tangible proof. As he puts it, “*Fides* creates a public contract that is absolutely dependent on an interior state that the ritual of homage and the words of fealty both represent and substitute for, while the gestures and words also provide a perfect cover for the absence of intention in the performance of the act” (205). One of the prime ways in which the question of *fides* is complicated is because the decision of whether or not to have faith calls for a highly rational assessment and evaluation of something that has not yet been substantiated, something that is verbal, unseen, symbolic, or even entirely absent.

Peter Haidu, in *The Subject of Violence: The Song of Roland and the Birth of the State* also corroborates the significance of Charlemagne’s deliberation over Marsilie’s promise of *fides* and highlights the shrewdness of his desire for visible

promised payment, but once he has withdrawn with his army it will become very difficult for him to enforce Marsilie’s promised subsequent actions. Immediately after recounting Marsilie’s promised actions in the future tense, Charlemagne recognizes this very problem in his closing statement, ‘Mais jo ne sai quels e nest sis curages’ (v. 192). (47)

I would argue however, that given the different implications of verbs presented in the subjunctive versus those in the future, Charlemagne’s use of future tense is just as binding regarding the necessary actions Marsilie must take, as it is to what Jewett Burland reads as a greater constriction placed on Charlemagne’s actions. The logistics of returning to Spain when he and his troops have departed would of course be complicated, but Charlemagne’s use of the future tense emphasizes the fixity of their promised agreement (if they indeed go through with it), while also suggesting that if Marsilie does not uphold his part of the accord, Charlemagne will still steadfastly hold him to their agreement, or will make him pay dearly for his failure.

and physical support for the claims that the pagan king makes: “As the court’s presiding officer, Charles takes his time, asks for guarantees of verbal offers, and points out that an offer of future performance is not automatically to be trusted” (93). Ultimately, following Charlemagne in terms of his reticence to believe, nearly all of the Franks agree that they should be wary of the Muslims (“Dient Franceis: ‘Il nus i cuvent garde!’” [13.180-92]), as they find them naturally prone to lying and to breaking their vows: “De sa parole ne fut mie hastifs: / Sa custume est qu’il parolet a leisír” (10.140-1). It is not only that the Muslims “parolet a leisír”—that is, that they lie habitually; the description of lying as their “custume” conveys with it a clear and very biased understanding of ethnic and religious difference: one that essentially insists, “All Muslims lie.” Moreover, the extremely cautious Roland also reiterates this sentiment by insisting upon what they have all learned from empirical experience and reminding the King that the Muslims have even made the very same promise before, and yet did not maintain it:

Il dist al rei: “Ja mar crerez Marsilie.
Set anz [ad] pleins, que en Espagne venimes;
Li reis Marsilie i fist mult que traître:
De ses pai[ens il vus] enveiat quinze,
Cha(n)cuns portout une branche d'olive;
Nuncerent vos cez paroles meïsme.” (14.201-204)³¹

Despite carrying signs of peace and articulating an apparently well-rehearsed promise of peace, Marsilie was worse than a traitor, as Roland insists. Roland’s heuristic abilities and his skepticism towards the words offered by the Pagan king who has so very much to lose in the *Chanson*, are later directly taken up in one of the *Furioso*’s poetological asides, to which we will now turn.

Implicitly decrying the lack of fixity that promises have “now,” versus “dagli antiqui,” Ariosto’s poetic voice insists that promises should ubiquitously be held and maintained on their own. They should not need external limits or conditions as enforcement or support, as these just serve to weaken the given promise’s effect:

La fede unqua non debbe esser corrotta,
o data a un solo, o data insieme a mille;
e così in una selva, in una grotta,
lontan da le cittadi e da le ville,
come dinanzi a tribunali, in frotta

³¹ See Joseph Duggan’s *The Song of Roland: Formulaic Style and Poetic Craft*, for an in-depth discussion of the various strategies that different speakers use to report Marsilie’s speech according to their own desires and assessment of his trustworthiness:

The message conveyed by Ganelon as a reply from Charlemagne to Marsile is also repeated textually [...] but when Ganelon attempts to deliver the message to Marsile, he is interrupted by the pagan king, who threatens him with his spear because of the insolence of Ganelon’s phraseology. After Marsile’s anger has abated, Ganelon insists on speaking the message again, as if he had not been able to finish the first time. His second delivery, more highly embellished than the first adds only one element of substance, that Roland will share sovereignty over Spain with Marsile if the latter agrees to terms, a revision which is perhaps of Ganelon’s own fabrication. (133)

di testimon, di scritti e di postille,
senza giurare o segno altro più espresso,
basti una volta che s'abbia promesso. (21.1.1-8)

Although it is hard to obtain, by insisting on the desired incorruptibility and ubiquity of faith, Ariosto insists that no variance in location, no alteration of format, and no change in addressee or objective should limit or alter a promise once it has been made. Moreover, a promise does not need to be articulated in front of a judge or in front of a tribunal in order to be considered legally binding. As if it were a maxim, “Basti una volta che s’abbia promesso” indubitably situates the moment of articulation as binding and irrevocable. Therefore, guarantees and “external signs,” such as those that Marsilie is perfidiously offering in the *Chanson de Roland* are not necessary—they are mere appendages, false professions masquerading as truthful. By swearing to provide hostages as a “segno [...] più espresso” of his promise to Charlemagne, Marsilie is attempting to manipulate the emperor by giving him what he claims is “ocular proof,” though the signs he offers are superficial and have no connection to his real intentions. Furthermore, by barely veiling his new promise’s direct similarity to the precise terms of an old promise that he had broken in the past without even a modicum of repentance or shame, anyone who hears this promise, as Roland maintains, should already be wise to Marsilie’s ways.

While the *Chanson*’s Charlemagne is depicted as extremely prudent, given that he deliberates at great length before forming an opinion, speaks slowly and thoughtfully, carefully weighs words and their symbolic and literal meanings, and is not afraid to humble himself by seeking the advice of others, the *Furioso*’s Charlemagne is hot-headed and rash.³² Indeed, the imprudence of the *Furioso*’s Charlemagne is partially blamed for the fact that he breaks his word, which is an inauspicious start to the text’s intrigue, particularly when combined with the violent and negative associations of the repeated verb “togliere.” As we have seen, “togliere” is a caustic and telling rendering of the emperor’s criminalized act that transgresses appropriate knightly protocol and manages to unchivalrically offend both of the knights enamored of Angelica. Charlemagne’s affront, his “tanta ingiuria,” as Orlando puts it, is rendered even more offensive since the Emperor is incompetent and powerless where Rinaldo and Orlando ostensibly would not have

³² Just like the representation of Rinaldo, Orlando, and Ferraù as seething and impulsive, in the aftermath of the disaster with Angelica, Charlemagne becomes furious so with Orlando’s defection (which he calls an “error”) and that he is completely unable to control his rage:

Con suo gran dispiacer s'avede Carlo
che partito la notte è 'l suo nipote,
quando esser dovea seco e più aiutarlo;
e ritener la colera non puote (8.87.1-3)

We will shortly see how Charlemagne’s hot-headed nature is not just in parallel with that of his paladins and their Pagan counterpart, but how it is what sparks their disorderly recklessness in the first place.

been.³³ Not only is Charlemagne unable to keep Angelica safe on his own, he misguidedly entrusts her to someone who was similarly unable to maintain control over her or prevent her flight when along with “molti altri” he is imprisoned, which leaves the Christian pavilion “abbandonato,” facilitating Angelica’s flight³⁴

Complaining about Charlemagne’s instability to protect and keep his word that led him to his own confused, shameful, and sorry state, in canto 8 of the text, Orlando realizes that if had he stood up to Charlemagne’s unfair treatment of him, the situation would have been much different:

Non aveva ragione io di scusarmi?
e Carlo non m'avria forse disdettose
pur disdetto, e chi potea sforzarmi?
chi ti mi volea torre al mio dispetto?
non poteva io venir più tosto all'arme?
lasciar più tosto trarmi il cor del petto?
Ma né Carlo né tutta la sua gente
di tormiti per forza era possente. (8.74.1-8)

Though Orlando is already showing his propensity for madness with his histrionic ravings, and largely blaming himself for not taking a stand against the injustice that Charlemagne’s actions and broken promise create, he cannot even believe that Charlemagne’s actions were articulated and carried out in good faith. He essentially accuses the Emperor of losing Angelica on purpose, as if he harbored ill intentions and merely wanted the knights to suffer. While Orlando was originally only angered by the unfairness of Charlemagne’s decisions, his doubt regarding even the intentionality behind the Emperor’s actions is an acerbic critique of both Charlemagne’s failed military attack and his failed word:

Almen l'avesse posta in guardia buona
dentro a Parigi o in qualche rocca forte.
Che l'abbia data a Namo mi consona,
sol perché a perder l'abbia a questa sorte.
Chi la dovea guardar meglio persona
di me? ch'io dovea farlo fino a morte;
guardarla più che 'l cor, che gli occhi miei:

³³ The insult and the affront are well balanced. Both paladins and emperor are essentially accusing each other of a similar crime, since Charlemagne’s “tanta ingiuria” (8.73.8) is put in conjunction with Orlando’s “tanto error” (1.87.8). That is, what Charlemagne’s paladins are most directly accused of, their “tanto error” (1.87.8), is directly related to the fault they see in their emperor, while his “tanta ingiuria” is the mismanagement of Angelica and his word. “Tanta ingiuria” comes up six other times in the text: (6.14.7); (18.95.2); (18.115.7); (24.34.1); (28.40.4), most often in political scenes that illustrate the fragility of the empire.

³⁴ The fact that Namo is not able to keep Angelica safe despite his traditional utility to the Emperor points again to a certain fatalism that works against the integrity and power that Charlemagne desires, while revealing the chaos and disruption present in his court. In the *Chanson de Roland*, Namo is one of Charlemagne’s prized and sage advisors; similarly, in Pulci’s *Morgante* he is usually referred to with the epithet “savio” (“il savio Namo,” “il savio Namo di Baviera”) and in Boiardo’s *Innamorato* he is presented as a more responsible and protective figure than Ariosto’s negligent duke.

e dovea e potea farlo, e pur nol fei. (8.75.1-8)³⁵

With his “almen l’avesse,” Orlando reveals his blame and scorn for Charlemagne by despectively mentioning the minimum of reactivity and guidance that he expects from the leader. In other words, in addition to the promise that Orlando knows has failed, he suspects the Emperor himself of a vile betrayal. Thus, Orlando doubts the actions of the person in whom he should have the utmost trust and towards whom he should feel the greatest sense of fidelity; he also doubts the motivations behind his actions.

Moreover, while broken vows are so dastardly they are aligned with pagan misconduct in the *Chanson*, and while a laxity of vows is associated with the depiction of Charlemagne as rather ineffective and too credulous in the *Innamorato*, Ariosto makes the decisive move to align the originary broken promise in the *Furioso* with Charlemagne’s misconduct. In fact, while his paladins are distracted from their vows due to their attraction to Angelica, Ariosto still transfers the fault of what I call the text’s “foundational broken promise” to Charlemagne himself. This culpabilization of the Emperor dramatizes the negative impact of the ramifications that his failure to keep his word has on his paladins.

Despite his promise that Angelica would belong to the most gregarious and violent of the two cousins, the elements that cause Charlemagne to break his word show, like Marsilie’s duplicitous nature, what little fixity his word has, and what paltry control he has over the world around him—“Contrari ai voti poi furo i successi / ch’in fuga andò la gente battezzata” (1.9.5-8). After a “hyperbolic build-up” and promises of clear dominance over the Pagan troops, what amounts to a passive, “two-line account of the battle is as anticlimactic as its outcome is disastrous”

³⁵ As we shall see, Orlando’s complaint that Charlemagne’s promise to protect Angelica failed and lament that she was not safeguarded in “in qualche rocca forte” directly aligns itself with another pivotal textual moment that discusses the failure of vows—the drama surrounding Bradamante’s and Ruggiero’s threatened marital vows (and consequently, Rinaldo’s promise that the two can marry, and the perverted parental promises) in the *Furioso*’s final canti. Recalling Charlemagne’s “theft” (togliere) of Agelica, in order to prevent Bradamante from marrying Ruggiero, Bradamante’s parents behave ignomiosly, and steal her away: “la levaro con fraude de la corte, / e la menaron seco a Roccaforte” (44.72), with “con fraude” pairing up directly with the criminalized “togliere,” and Orlando’s complaint that he was not given the opportunity to “adoperar” with his “spada.” Though Roccaforte in the later episode is the actual castle of Bradamante’s father rather than a generically referenced stronghold of any type, such as the one of which Orlando makes mention, they mutually reference each other, as they are both areas designed to control, hide, and “protect,” the female body they enclose within.

Though he considers “mechanisms of social control,” and female and uxorial agency in Renaissance England more generally, Peter Stallybrass’s article “Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed,” offers an excellent discussion of “normative women’s” desired function within discursive practices as one of enclosure, containment, and silence, which subsequently contributes to her reification and classification as the property of the men who rule or control her: “This ‘Woman,’ like Bakhtin’s classical body, is rigidly ‘finished’: her signs are the enclosed body, the closed mouth, the locked house. In the process, ‘woman,’ unlike man, is produced as a property category” (127). On containment as demonstrated through dilation, delation, secrets, and accusations—all themes that are in vigor in the Roccaforte episodes—see Patricia Parker’s brilliant “Othello and Hamlet: Dilation, Spying, and the ‘Secret Place’ of Women” (especially 60-63).

(Hanning 190). Indeed, Charlemagne's impotence is further accentuated by the imprecision and passivity with which the obstacles he is supposed to face are rendered. Though he made binding vows, vague events (to which the text elliptically refers as "successi"), took place that were beyond his control and dismantled his promises. Though the text quickly glosses over what amounted to a Pagan military victory, Charlemagne's estimation of his troops' valor is proven to be misplaced. In this instance, then, his assumption that the Christians would win is a dramatic miscarriage of faith since they end up being so sorely routed by the Pagans. Particularly since Charlemagne does not even consider other possible outcomes—as the Charlemagne of the *Chanson* so carefully does—his misplaced faith leaves his promise to Orlando and Rinaldo and the status of the rest of the Christian troops in a frustrated and politically precarious position.

Additionally, the failure of Charlemagne's vow to Orlando and Rinaldo is rendered all the more glaringly since it is one that he articulates within the confines of specific temporal restraints. He does not promise Angelica to the warrior who is more powerful *generally*, or to the one who has the more lasting dominance, or who is consistently the most aggressive and victorious in battle, but to "quel d'essi, /ch'in quel conflitto, in quella gran giornata, / degli infideli più copia uccidessi, /e di sua man prestasse opra più grata. (1.9.1-4). Technically speaking, since the attention only falls on "quella gran giornata," Orlando or Rinaldo would have still been able to lend measurable assistance to Charlemagne, regardless of whether or not their efforts ultimately were in vain and whether or not the Christians were victorious. Nevertheless, because of the Pagan onslaught that forces the Christians to quickly disperse, Orlando's and Rinaldo's valor and strength cannot properly be gauged. This thwarts Charlemagne's proposal to determine which—if either—of them had the advantage. Overriding Charlemagne's intentions and articulated promise all the more, Namo, the very person to whom Charlemagne entrusts Angelica is himself captured, making it even easier for her to flee:

Dove, poi che rimase la donzella
 ch'esser dovea del vincitor mercede,
 inanzi al caso era salita in sella,
 e quando bisognò le spalle diede,
 presaga che quel giorno esser rubella
 dovea Fortuna alla cristiana fede: (1.10.1-6)

Angelica's flight—that is, her forgotten agency, her relative autonomy, and her ability to act without Charlemagne's consent—depotentializes Charlemagne's vow once more while revealing the complete susceptibility of his words to external circumstances. Perspicacious and accurate where Charlemagne is not, Angelica acts "inanzi al caso" and "presaga"; she is easily able to assess the conditions that surround her and take action accordingly ("e quando *bisognò* le spalle diede," emphasis mine). Although one of the main problems from which most of the characters in the *Furioso* suffer is, as Gian Paolo Giudicetti puts it, the

“imprevedibilità del reale” that makes taking action difficult,³⁶ the fact that the interpretive capacities of a young pagan girl wholly outstrip those of the man who is

³⁶ As Giudicetti explains in *Mandricardo e la melanconia: discorsi diretti e sproloqui nell'Orlando Furioso*, the chaos of the homodiegetic world is primarily due to the indiscernibility of the “reale,” that is, the signs, codes, and words, which frustrate interpretation as well as action: “La vacuità di molte azioni compiute nel mondo ariotesco è provocata anche dall'imprevedibilità del reale. È difficile agire, perché lo è prevedere le conseguenze dei propri atti. Il mondo sembra caotico e i valori sono spesso capovolti” (39). Interestingly enough, Angelica is the character in the *Furioso* who most successfully manages read the signs around her and to suss out reality—or at least the probability of outcomes based on empirical experience and thoughtful deliberation.

In addition to the foresight that helps her take precautions and ‘turn her back’ when necessary, Angelica is also frequently portrayed as being in a state of constant surveillance and quickly able to identify those around her (“Poi rivolgendo a caso gli occhi, mira / venir sonando d'arme un gran pedone. / [...] / che conosce il figliuol del duca Amone” [1.77.1-2, 4]). She is also frequently described as being able to translate visual signs into essential information that conditions her actions and response to external stimuli (“Quando vide la timida donzella / dal fiero colpo uscir tanta ruina, / Né le par che vi sia da tardar, s'ella / non vuol di quell Rinaldo esser rapina [2.11.1-2, 5-6]). Angelica's perspicacity and visual and interpretive acuity anticipates that of Tasso's Erminia, whose startling, quasi-divine ability to identify and classify the bodies of others grants her an undeniable status within the confused, epistemologically blind of the *Liberata*. While vision is not a privileged topic amongst critics of the *Furioso*, many have discussed the connection between visual power (particularly in regards to scopophilia and the male gaze) in relation to the *Liberata*. For more on vision, the directionality of gazes and the panopticon in Italian Epic, see Tobias Gregory's “Tasso's God: Divine Action in ‘Gerusalemme Liberata,’” Thomas Greene's *The Descent from Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity*, or Marilyn Migiel's “Tasso's Erminia: Telling an Alternate Story” for a specific treatment of Erminia's visual power in similar circumstances.

³⁶ In *Translations of Power*, Bellamy uses the helpful example of Gradasso to elucidate the “cost” of desiring an elusive object, and what one stands to lose if the desired object is not obtained. This concern is made clear from the beginning of Boiardo's first canto, to which Ariosto makes reference in 31.91: “E sì come egli avviene a' gran signori, / Che pur quel voglion che non ponno avere, / E quanto son difficoltà maggiori / La desiata cosa ad ottenere, / Pongono il regno spesso in grandi errori, / Né posson quel che voglion possedere” (*OI*, I.1.5.1-6). Gradasso's struggle therefore, is that of the “aggressive pursuer of lost objects whose fragmentation is threatening his identity” (Bellamy 102-104), and it is precisely this threat that frustrates the identity integrity of the majority of Ariosto's Christian paladins.

The idea of cost and benefit directly follow to the articulation of the power dynamics in amorous relationships in Chrétien's oeuvre (“don,” “guerredon” “pretz,” etc.). In turn, it is also aligned with the authorial representation of sacrifice, creativity and the idea of cost and debt that quite literally often fuels narrations commissioned by another. He begins the *Chevalier de la Charrette* by citing his passivity and subjugation to Marie de Champagne's control and desires: “Puis que ma dame de Chanpaigne, / Vialt que romans a feire anpraigue, / Je l'anprendrai molt volentiers / Come cil qui est suens antiers, / De quanqu'il puet el monde feire / [...] / Comance Crestiens son livre, / Matiere et san li done et livre / La contesse et il s'antremet / De panser que gueres n'i met / Fors sa painne et s'antancion” (vv. 1-6; 25-29). Chrétien's critique of the subjugation of authors to their benefactors is seen even more vividly in what has been taken by critics as his refusal to comply with—and refusal to write—the salacious material (defaming towards Queen Guinevere) that Marie de Champagne expected of him (Keppner 55-57; Noble 534-35; Krueger, “The Author's Voice,” 115-121). For opposing interpretations, see Douglas Kelly, *Sens et Conjointure*, 71, and Evelyn Mullaly, “The Artist and his Work,” 118-120. See Eugene Vance, “Chretien's Yvain and the Ideologies of Change and Exchange,” *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986): 42-62, for a discussion of cost, benefit, obligation, and exchange in *Yvain, ou Le Chevalier au lion*.

supposed to be the wisest and the most stalwart leader of the Christian empire, is a vicious critique indeed. It is not just a question of ingenuity, misplaced trust and convictions, or a poorly articulated vow; Charlemagne's failed vow in the incipit of the *Furioso* is suggestive of his failure as King.

Deferring the Promise of Possession: The Vows and "Fé Diversi" of Rinaldo and Ferrau

Given the *Furioso's* initial presentation of Charlemagne as a figure intimately linked to failure, Charlemagne's inability to properly manage and sustain the oath he has made to his most valuable paladins reveals a pervasive weakness that trickles down to his Christian troops. For Rinaldo in particular, in many respects, the King's broken promise both sparks and metaphorizes his unease with the outside world, while giving him an explicit lesson—the first of many that he will receive over the course of the *Furioso*—in the importance of vows and their maintenance. Yet, despite his initiation into the world of broken promises and the arbitrariness of words when Charlemagne's promise to him fails, as if he has learned nothing at all Rinaldo immediately enters into a binding oath with one of

A preoccupation with power dynamics, cost, and obligation is one of the obsessions of Guillaume de Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse* (1361), in which a lowly poet gains more and more of the prince's favor, until his status rivals almost that of the prince. The poem begins with a description of the indebtedness he has towards his patron, which melds with his subjugation to love that leaves his "cuer" as "bon gage," and his body "en ostage": "Si commenceray sans delay,/ Mais qu'aie nommé a deliver / Celui pour qui je fais ce livre, / Et mon nom aussi, car sans faille, / Il n'est pas raison qu'a ce faille, / Car j'y sui contreins et tenus / Et oubligiez trop plus que nus" (vv.30-36). Machaut's obsession with cost and proper compensation, is prevalent in all of his works, but especially in *Le Livre du voir dit*. Cost and obligation serve as apt metaphors for amorous relationships, and for devotion between friends he thanks his friend, essentially a go-between, for his labor: "Et dou travail qu'avez eü, / Dont je n'ay pas fait mon deü / Envers vous si com je deüsse / Et combine que tenus y fusse, / Je vous en merci humblement / Et vous jure par mon ser[e]ment / Que vous me poez commander / Et tout penre sans demander, / Mon corps et quanque j'ay vaillant, / Et tant com j'aurai un vaillant" (vv. 328-37).

See also *The Question of the Gift: Essays across Disciplines*, ed. Mark Osteen (New York: Routledge, 2002) and Douglas Kelly, "The Genius of the Patron: The Prince, the Poet, and Fourteenth-Century Inventions," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 20 (1987): 77; Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1987), 242-301; On Machaut specifically, see Deborah McGrady, "Tout son païs m'abandonna': Reinventing Patronage in Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse*," in *Meaning and its Objects: Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance France*, eds., Margaret Burland, and Andrea Tarnowski (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2006, p.19-31, and Kevin Brownlee, *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

the knights who is least deserving of his trust—the Pagan knight Ferraù, who is just as madly besotted with Angelica as he is.

The brief clash that culminates in their oath occurs because Ferraù sees Angelica fleeing from Rinaldo and promptly intervenes in an attempt to save her from the Christian paladin's clutches. As both warriors rain violent blows against the other without any noticeable gain, Rinaldo suggests to the Pagan that they temporarily stay their aggression. His premise is that in addition to physical wounds, their "crudel battaglia" is creating a delay that defeats the very purpose for which they are fighting by granting the fleeting object of their desire a greater opportunity for escape:

Disse al pagan: - Me sol creduto avrai,
e pur avrai te meco ancora offeso:
se questo avvien perché i fulgenti rai
del nuovo sol t'abbino il petto acceso,
di farmi qui tardar che guadagno hai?
che quando ancor tu m'abbi morto o preso,
non però tua la bella donna fia;
che, mentre noi tardiam, se ne va via.

Quanto fia meglio, amandola tu ancora,
che tu le venga a traversar la strada,
a ritenerla e farle far dimora,
prima che più lontana se ne vada!
Come l'avremo in potestate, allora
di chi esser de' si provi con la spada:
non so altrimenti, dopo un lungo affanno,
che possa riuscirci altro che danno. (1.19.1-8; 20.1-8)

Harmful to them both and equally frustrating to their amorous enterprise, Rinaldo's argument is essentially built around the binary tensions between: profit, benefit, and gain; and loss, detriment, and harm. These are pressures that accompany the majority of the vows that are made in the *Furioso*, and particularly those which directly anticipate Tasso's primary authorial preoccupations. Nevertheless, they also point to a problematic obsession with materialism and profit that adds even more stress to the frustrated interpersonal relationships the text portrays. Given the difficulties of possessing desired people and objects, when one individual has something to gain in the *Furioso*, it often directly triggers a loss that another is made to endure. As such, each drama of possession comes at great "cost" to at least one party involved.³⁷

³⁷ Not only does the idea of cost and benefit directly follow to the articulation of the power dynamics in amorous relationships in Chrétien's oeuvre ("don," "guerredon" "pretz," etc.), metaphors such as these are then frequently aligned with the authorial representation of sacrifice, creativity and the idea of cost and debt that often quite literally fuels a narration commissioned by another (as seen in Machaut's obsession with not receiving a "guerredon," for example, or Chrétien's discussions of his patrons and subjugation to their wishes).

In *Translations of Power*, Bellamy uses the helpful example of Gradasso to elucidate the "cost" of desiring an elusive object, and what one stands to lose if the desired object is not obtained.

Presenting the reader with a rare moment of stasis, in this case, as both Christian knight and Pagan warrior are so equally matched in terms of strength, Rinaldo insists that is of no benefit to either of them to “s’affaticar [...] invano,” since fighting delays their pursuit of Angelica and allows her to cover an even greater distance as she flees. If they truly love her, they must try to stop her; there is no advantage, no “guadagno,” or gain to be had for either of them if she eludes them both. Moreover, they each love her so dearly, the “cost” of losing her would be immense. Rinaldo is able to reason so effectively for Ferraù and arbitrate on both of their behalves because they are in precisely the same position, and because he has learned how much he stands to lose from his earlier dispute with Orlando. Given the mutuality of their enterprise, Ferraù easily agrees to Rinaldo’s proposal:

Al pagan la proposta non dispiacque:
 così fu differita la tenzone;
 e tal tregua tra lor subito nacque,
 sì l'odio e l'ira va in obliuione,
 che 'l pagano al partir da le fresche acque
 non lasciò a piedi il buon figliuol d'Amone:
 con preghi invita, ed al fin toglie in groppa,
 e per l'orme d'Angelica galoppa. (1.21.1-8)

The vocabulary employed in this stanza draws attention to the meaning of this unexpected union of enemies. Indeed, Ariosto uses literary terminology, such as: “proposta,” “differita,” “tenzone,” “preghi” “invita,” “fin,” which is suggestive of a textual debate or vacillation between his and Boiardo’s renditions of this scene. This literary lexicon also acerbically critiques what he perceives as Boiardo’s major poetological failures. His language also clearly recalls his poetical promise to Ercule d’Este and to his readers at large whose expectations he insists he will meet by actually completing his poem and by satisfying his promise to carry out his story where Boiardo could not.

As Ariosto obsessively promises throughout the *Furioso*, though he might often recur to deferral and delay, he will realize his narration where his predecessor abandoned his reader. He uses a rhetoric constructed around the idea of completion, of satisfying debts and promises, insisting that *he* will “finir quanto h[a] promesso” and ‘scogliere’ *his* vows by arriving at the promised “porto” (1.2.8). So doing, he believes that he will be able to satisfy his pecuniary promise to his benefactor as well. Much like the desires of his paladins who yearn to have prize-worthy people and objects “in potestate” to be the exclusive holders of what they believe they deserve and are owed, Ariosto concerns himself with straightening out thorny contentions for possession. He thus shows himself to be of more sagacious and just

This concern is made clear from the beginning of Boiardo’s first canto, to which Ariosto makes reference in 31.91: “E sì come egli avviene a’ gran signori, / Che pur quel voglion che non ponno avere, / E quanto son difficoltà maggiori / La desiata cosa ad ottenere, / Pongono il regno spesso in grandi errori, / Né posson quel che voglion possedere”(OI, I.1.5.1-6). Gradasso’s struggle therefore, is that of the “aggressive pursuer of lost objects whose fragmentation is threatening his identity” (Bellamy 102-104), and it is precisely this threat that frustrates the identity integrity of the majority of Ariosto’s Christian paladins.

mien than Charlemagne. However, since he is in debt, it is he who must restore and repay to Ercule's "generosa [...] prole" as much as he possibly can: "Quel ch'io vi debbo, posso di parole pagare in parte e d'opera d'inchostro; / né che poco io vi dia da imputar sono / che quanto io posso dar, tutto vi dono" (1.3.5-8). Finally, Ariosto orchestrates his discussion of the debt and obligation that he will satisfy by completing his book to emphasize that he is owed a generous appreciation and benevolent reaction.³⁸

To return to canto 2 more specifically, as Rinaldo and Ferraù grapple with their expectations to have Angelica in their "potestate" they negotiate more successfully than Charlemagne. The use of words like "dispiacque," "subito nacque," "oblivione," and "fresche acque" adds a new valence to the legendary moment of *innamoramento*, usually between a lover and his lady, but here reworked exclusively between male combatants. In Ariosto's rather homoerotic version of this scene, we do have after all, a certain joining of the spirits and hearts of Rinaldo and Ferraù, which offsets the legendary amorous upheavals and reversals that occur around the problematic waters of the Ardennes. Though momentary, their union provides a stark contrast to "ingiustissimo Amor," and "il discorde voler" of "due cor" that Love brings about more often than not (2.1.1-4). Indeed, distinct from the discordant lovers the text usually portrays, the new-found harmonious concordance between Christian and Pagan is so perfect that more than just agreeing to Rinaldo's suggestion, Ferraù so fully identifies with him that he does not hesitate to assist his fallen 'comrade'—essentially a mirrored version of himself—and generously invites Rinaldo to mount his very own horse so he too can partake in chasing the object of their mutual amorous and erotic pursuit!

After the important portrayal of fleeting unity in an otherwise inimical world consistently fraught with discord and strife, an aside that appears to reinforce the positive value of their newfound harmony interrupts the narration of the characters' actions. As soon as they ride off together, the poetic voice proclaims:

Oh gran bontà de' cavallieri antiqui!
 Eran rivali, eran di fé diversi,
 e si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui
 per tutta la persona anco dolersi;
 e pur per selve oscure e calli obliqui
 insieme van senza sospetto aversi. (1.22.1-6)

This stanza perhaps showcases the triumph of love over war; the knights' ability to have faith in their former adversaries. Indeed, their ability to have faith overrides any doubts and suspicions they might have about the other despite the fact that their bodies are suffering "anco," and still bear the physical proof of their recent battle.

³⁸ On the implications of anticipating readerly reactions through hypothetical statements, see Langer, "The Free Reader," 38-40.

By the same token however, while this proclamation reads in Ariosto like “un chiaro segnale di ‘mondo alla rovescia’” (Picchio 114)³⁹ given the anachronistic praise that is offered, it also elucidates the eulogizing and almost sentimental interpretation that prioritizes Ariosto’s ironic nostalgia for a forgotten tradition. “[T]ra i più celebrati del poema,” these verses “esprimono nostalgia per l’antico mondo cavalleresco che non c’è più, oltre a una certa ironia sul conto di questi due cavalieri ‘rivali’ e ‘di fè diversi’ che si accordano per spartirsi il bottino” (Picchio 113). In *Le Fonti Dell'Orlando Furioso: Ricerche E Studii*, a seminal study of Ariosto’s sources, Pio Rajna also invokes Ariosto’s sentimental benevolence and favor for the world of the “cavallieri antiqui.” Rajna finds that the “parole ammirative” the author uses constitute the nostalgic statement, yet he acknowledges that it is “un’ammirazione sotto cui non è difficile scorgere un sorriso malizioso” (63). Like Picchio, he perceives a certain irony, an almost Pirandellian smile, in Ariosto’s “ammirazione” for this forgotten ideal.

Some recent critics have understood this proclamation even more positively. Alberto Casadei, for example, acknowledges the natural and necessary distance in terms of military strategies, science, technology, and heuristic developments that almost incommensurably separate the novelty of Ariosto’s time from the vestiges of the past in which he sets the *Furioso*.⁴⁰ This temporal gap both depends on and facilitates anachronisms, which helps to elucidate the peculiarity of the clearly mocking yet nostalgic retrovision towards the “cavallieri antiqui,” and which serves to differentiate, as Lina Bolzoni puts it, “the ‘then’ of the tale from the ‘now’ of wars” (Bolzoni 277; Casadei)—a useful distinction that eulogizes the past yet recognizes the need to adapt to one’s time.⁴¹ In “Shaping the Ore: Image and Design in Canto 1 of *Orlando Furioso*,” Marinelli references “the narrator’s giddy marveling at the suddenly established concord of former foes [...]” (46). Indeed, it is also a pivotal coming together of opponents that showcases a rare moment of ethnic and religious tolerance, albeit one that is motivated by a shared sexual desire. Similarly,

³⁹ In *Ariosto E Bacco Due: Apocalisse E Nuova Religione Nel Furioso*. Cosenza: Luigi Pellegrini Editore, 2007.

⁴⁰ See also Bellamy’s discussion of the relationship between weapons, epic history, and self-alienation in *Translations of Power*, specifically, “The armour of an alienating identity” (94-96). Daniela Delcorno Branca’s chapter, “Il tema delle armi come fattore di ‘entrelacement,’ in *L’Orlando furioso’ e il romanzo cavalleresco medievale*, provides an especially useful analysis of the material weapons themselves in order to elucidate how they were utilized to determine the structure and shape of the plot.

⁴¹ Also citing the important contribution of Casadei, in “The War in Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*” Matteo Valleriani directly connects this to the way in which Ariosto portrays warfare, which, I would argue, has its foundation in this first explicitly laudatory treatment of ancient chevaliers, given that they are, after all, the principle representatives of the old order:

More recently, Casadei pointed out that the form of the epic poem perished when a new scientific worldview was definitively imposed, according to which the ‘marvel’ was perceived as being wrong or even anachronistic. If Casadei’s concept of ‘marvel’ refers to the ludic character of the war in the *Orlando furioso*, it can be deduced that the same Ariosto increasingly experienced a change of principles according to which he observed and analyzed the reality surrounding him: from a marvelous epic to a modern rational condemnation. (388)

following Zatti, Robert Adams, in “Ariosto: Less Is More” gives attention to the exchangeability and mutuality of Christian and Pagan, citing their ability to function together in a synergistic fashion: “there isn’t a great deal of operational difference between Christians and Saracens: they all act in very much the same way and, with a few exceptions, share the same values....they seek the lady collaboratively...Ariosto vigorously approves of this behavior, and says so in a famous passage of direct editorializing” (96). Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that reading “vigorous approval” in Ariosto’s “O gran bontà!” seems to overlook the fact that the irony evidenced in this retrospective gesture is far more mournful and pessimistic than blithe or ludic. Indeed, even from a purely etymological standpoint, “nostalgia” references absence—a desire for a time and a place that are no longer easily accessible, or perhaps which no longer even exist.

In addition to a perception of absence brought about because of temporal, nostalgic distance, the characteristics of the knights themselves are very distanced from the ancient values of ancient knights. Both Peter De Sa Wiggins and David Marsh emphasize the ironic tone of the seemingly positive proclamation “oh gran bontà de’ cavallieri antiqui” (De Sa Wiggins, “Third” 53), by also pointing out how it also serves as a rather acerbic critique that signals precisely what “contemporary” knights very problematically lack. As Marsh explains in “Ruggiero and Leone: Revision and Resolution in Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*,” Ariosto is “ironically laud[ing]” the presumed goodness of these knights since their pact actually forces them away from normative and appropriate chivalric conduct and draws attention to their deviating affections and their problematic prioritization of love over empire: “Their readiness to cease fighting in fact demonstrates not the generous courtesy of knighthood, but the magnitude of their amorous folly” (Marsh 148). The association of these “cavallieri antiqui” with foolishness, and a poorly executed chivalric mission is also conveyed lexically since this noun-adjective pair directly recalls another that is obsessively articulated in the first half of the text: the “cavallieri erranti.” The many mentions of the “cavallieri erranti,” which doubly references wayward knights and the esteemed “cavallieri antiqui” of chivalric tradition, conflates the distinction between the terms. The implicit question couched in the resonance between the two designations implicitly asks whether or not error is only bound to the folly of ‘contemporary’ “cavallieri erranti,” or whether the knights of yore similarly suffered from bouts of deviance and error. Indeed, first introduced in canto 4 and repeated in eight distinct episodes until the midpoint of the text at canto 24,⁴² each mention the

⁴² The eight other instances in which the term comes up, it is used either to dramatize binary oppositions—for example, in 4.52.1: the enterprises, honor, and valor of true “cavallieri erranti” such as Tristan, Lancelot, and the like, are offset by the failed enterprises of men without “gran valor” : (“che dove cerca onor, morte guadagna”; or, in 9.19-20, used to set a chivalric standard (“che nessun altro cavallier, ch’arriva o per terra o per mare a questa foce, / di ragionar con la donzella schiva, / per consigliarla in un suo caso atroce”). In 18.99.7, knights errant provide the litmus tests against which Marfisa tests herself in her quest to make herself “immortale e gloriosa”; while in 18.111.8, a tournament goes awry when Marfisa’s rush to recuperate her lost weapons offends a king and sparks a violent conflict that emphasizes the difference between the “cavallieri erranti” and the “popol.” In 21.11.8, at the incipit of the story of Gabrina’s dastardly deeds, and after a rearticulation of the

Furioso makes of “cavallieri erranti” points to the need for re-direction, correction, and re-education, since the knights are both wandering and lost, and morally or epistemologically flawed. Moreover, the absence of this term emphasizing waywardness from the rest of the text is also telling in that it suggests that correction and redirection have started to take place as the text slowly begins to head towards its final unification.

To return briefly to criticism, Marinelli comments on the uniqueness of the bond that unites two knights of “fè diversi,” who, rather than sustaining their contentious relationship “are bound together in carnal hope of possessing Angelica,” with their “common fleshliness [...] emblemized in the single vehicle they so courteously’ adopt for the chase”(46). Taking a similar line of approach as Marinelli, Kasey Evans convincingly argues in “Misreading and Misogyny: Ariosto, Spenser, and Shakespeare,” that the fraternal allegiance erected between chivalric warriors, shows to what extent Angelica is actually displaced even in a triangulated relationship that seems to situate her at the apex. As Evans contends, theoretically following Girard and Sedgwick,⁴³ since Rinaldo and Ferraù are united towards one common goal, their union ultimately gives much greater attention and valorization to their bond, than to the bond they have with ‘their’ lady:

Despite the ostensible importance of chastity in this plot, the narrative takes pains to establish interactions among men as its primary interest. In fact, opportunistic fraternal alliances characterize allegedly chivalric conduct from the outset of the *Furioso*. In canto 1, Charlemagne's knight Rinaldo forgets his political fealty and suggests joining forces with the Saracen knight Ferraù to capture the fleeing maiden Angelica. Rinaldo suggests abandoning their literal swords for their phallic counterparts, turning their spade not against each other but against Angelica. Their common sexual agenda trumps their

importance of keeping one's word, as Zerbino has done—“La fede unqua non debbe esser corrotta/ [...] basti una volta che s'abbia promesso”(21. 2.1,8) Zerbino is lauded by Ermonide as putting forth the semblance of being “fior de' cavallieri erranti”; In 22.53.8 a quartet of knights is unfairly captured by the dastardly Pinabello, who feigns kindness “con sembiante assai cortese” but then extracts from them the promise, made by force that they would “stariano quivi, e spogliarebbon quanti / vi capitasson cavallieri erranti.”

A clear perversion of chivalric code, mention was just recently made in the text that promises made as a result of coercion are exempt from fixity and should not be respected: “che fatto per timor, nullo è il contratto”(21. 43.2). In 24.42. 4, the importance of keeping one's word is again discussed in the continuation of the story of Zerbino and Gabrina, as Zerbino has Odorico make a “giuramento forte” that he will guard Gabrina as penance for a crime that he committed; with her being such an odious crone, Odorico can only but expect that “non senza liti / potrà passar de' cavallieri erranti,” yet this is most likely precisely the reason for which Odorico's promise fails (“che / per torsi Odorico quello impaccio, / contra ogni patto ed ogni fede data”)—a failure of faith which ultimately costs him his life “ch'indi a un anno (ma non dice il loco) / Almonio a lui fece il medesimo giuco” (24.45)

⁴³ See discussions of triangulated desire and mimetic desire qua ontological sickness in René Girard's *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* and *Le bouc émissaire*, and, despite her emphasis on English literature, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. See also Judith Butler's *Undoing Gender* (particularly, 132-151). Girard's *La violence et le sacré* (Paris: B. Grasset 1972), is of course a seminal study of desire, rivalry, and violence.

divisive militaristic one, and masculine confraternity precedes and enables both sexual and martial virility. Whether we read the planned gang rape as a heterosexual encounter or a mediated homosexual one, the opportunistic union of Rinaldo and Ferraù effaces the possibility - or, here, the actuality - of female resistance. Singularly unconcerned with preserving female chastity, the knights instead forge a fraternal alliance dedicated to the plucking of Angelica's legendary rose. (263)

While her assessment is cogent and extremely persuasive, Evans nonetheless overlooks an important element in the accord between the two knights—the fact that their surprising alliance ultimately represents yet another affront, one that works towards dismantling Charlemagne's power and control. While the text initially seems to extol the singularity of their bond and cast their unification—despite-the-odds in a positive light, as if it were a rare and priceless remnant of a forgotten age, “Oh gran bontà de' cavallieri antiqui!” also sardonically describes an alliance that is extremely problematic and does not portend well, neither for individual knights nor for the entire empire.

Firstly, on the most obvious level, but one that still necessitates analysis, Rinaldo and Ferraù's unification is directly at odds with Charlemagne's enterprise. In her analysis of a similar scene between a Turk and a Christian in Miguel de Cervantes's “El Amante liberal,” Barbara Fuchs views this type of amity as a union that “substantively undermines any sense of essential enmity”; it evidences “the hero's connection to a sympathetic other much like the Christian self” (*Passing* 67).⁴⁴ Similarly, John Donnelly understands this connection as an important gesture towards the tolerance of ethnic Others, since “Ariosto shows the least prejudice” and his racial “bias seems a mere vestige of that [chanson de geste] tradition (166-67). However, the temporary quelling of racial and religious tensions is far less significant than what the momentary lack of animosity between Rinaldo and Ferraù heralds. Moreover, the connection between the two confirms how intensely linked to the idea of error their union is. Indeed, particularly after the Christians's recent loss to the Pagans, and after Charlemagne's concern that his warriors would become less effective, and “men saldo” due to Angelica's presence, this unification between Christian and Pagan comes at an entirely unpropitious moment.

⁴⁴ The *novela* in question features a renegade and Ricardo, a “cautivo cristiano.” Like the Furioso's narrator's exaltation of the harmonious accord between Rinaldo and Ferraù, the language used in Cervantes's episode highlights the fraternal commensurability between the renegade and Ricardo (“Apostaría yo, Ricardo amigo,” and “¡O Mahamut hermano!” [Fol. 39r; Fol. 47r]). See Fuchs's *Passing for Spain: Cervantes and the Fictions of Identity*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003) pp. 65-68 (67), and William Clamurro's “El amante liberal de Cervantes y las fronteras de la identidad,” *AIH. Actas XI* (1992): 193-200. Consult also Fuchs's *Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), for its meticulous indagation of the mimetic processes by which the barriers between Christian and Morisco were blurred, dispelled, and erected again as the Moriscos' “deep and conflictive desires for inclusion within the state that ostracized them” fostered their crafted, mimetic reproduction of Spanish identity, polity, and power (10; 33-35).

Moreover, the manner in which Ariosto treats this episode is a direct yet ironizing departure from a nearly identical conflict that occurs between Orlando and Ferraù in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, which resoundingly insists that a Christian-Pagan union such as theirs is not merely inopportune, but intolerable. The Boiardian Orlando appeals to Ferraù asking him to agree to momentarily delay this "maggior battaglia / Che mai più fosse tra duo cavallieri" (3. 77. 1) so that they can capture Angelica, whose flight directly harms them both. Orlando requests,

Cavallier, per cortesia
Indugia la battaglia nel presente,
E lasciarmi seguir la dama mia,
Ch'io ti serò tenuto al mio vivente;
E certo io stimo che sia gran folia
Far cotal guerra insieme per niente
Coei ne è gita, che ci fa ferire:
Lascia, per Dio! ch'io la possa seguire. (*OI.* 3.79.1-8)

While he uses highly stereotyped language that seems to suggest his fidelity to chivalric codes of comportment, Orlando's ostentatious linguistic performance is nothing more than that. Though Boiardo's Ferraù takes a more inimical stance than Ariosto's in the sense that he unswervingly turns down Orlando's request, his resistance actually reveals his prioritization and great respect for the chivalric enterprise—a respect that both Boiardo's Orlando, and Ariosto's pair of battling knights lack. In contrast to the *Furioso*, this Ferraù denies Orlando's request and insists that they must fight to the death:

Stu vôi che la battaglia tra nui resta,
Convienti quella dama abandonare.
Io te fo certo che in questa foresta
Un sol de noi la converrà cercare;
E s'io te vinco, serà mio mestiero:
Se tu me occidi, a te lascio il pensiero. (*OI.* 3. 80.3-8)

Much more in line with the code of comportment of traditional knights from the French Arthurian cycles, not only does the Boiardian Ferraù's understanding of chivalric code differ vastly from that of Ariosto's knight errants, it dramatically reveals the re-prioritization of author and characters alike by presenting a blurring of barriers and fusion of competing desires that imperil both the self and the empire. While Antonio Franceschetti in "The *Orlando innamorato* and the Genesis of the *Furioso*" deems Ariosto's recodification a "sad parody," he directly connects it to the historical imperative of Ariosto's time, which, since he "has no illusion about the goodness of those 'cavallieri antiqui,'" renders his false praise of the "gran bontà" of old knights all the more of an acerbic critique (43).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ As Franceschetti explains, "For the reader of the *Innamoramento*, the situation of the *Furioso* becomes a sad parody; the rivals in love become friends at the moment they see how useful and profitable the common pursuit might become. [...] According to Ariosto, two enemies may become allies the moment they see a common advantage, waiting to resume their fight later on. The history of Italian and European states during this period proves that he was absolutely right" (42).

Secondly, and slightly more subtly, Rinaldo's suggestion in the *Furioso* that once he and Ferraù have Angelica "in potestate" they then need to decide "di chi esser de" by means of "la spada," is yet another not-so-veiled critique of the Charlemagne's unchivalric comportment, and the unfairness of the affront he was made to endure when Charlemagne prevented him from fighting for what was 'properly his' by lifting Angelica from him "senza spada adoperar." While "senza spada adoperar" could suggest that Angelica's removal from the scene occurred peacefully, with no resistance from either Rinaldo or Orlando, it also suggests that chivalric protocol was unfairly thwarted precisely because neither knight was allowed to demonstrate his valiance by fighting to prove his 'rightful' ownership of the lady.

Finally, and even more subtly still, Charlemagne's authority is so damaged and dismantled that it is replaced, at least momentarily, by another more imperious power—Angelica herself. From Plato to the contemporary period, celestial metaphors have commonly been applied to descriptions of political power and control, and employed in order to emphasize the singularity and quasi-divinity of the ruling entity.⁴⁶ Given Charlemagne's popularity and status as the astute and savvy "military and political head of Christendom" (Hanning 187), his reign, as assessed in the work of his famous coevals, like the historical account of Einhard in the *Vita Karoli Magni*, and the anecdotal account of Notker, *De Carolo Magno*, was particularly articulated with panegyric and eulogizing language, often focused on the religious and mystical connotations of the heavens, as well as the physical celestial sphere.⁴⁷ In this episode however, Charlemagne's celestial light has

⁴⁶ One of the primary figures of the Counter-Enlightenment, Joseph Le Maistre, insisted in many of his works upon the value of a hierarchical system of governance, while insisting upon the direct connection between a King's position and authority and the divine and celestial nature that he naturally possessed. See particularly his *Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques et des autres institutions humaines*, and *Considérations sur la France*, for a discussion of divinity, authority, and the relationship of both to the capacity and limits of human reason. See also Goldhammer's *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought* for a detailed analysis of the *corpus mysticum*, violence, and the various rituals and sacred rites that were aligned with monarchical rule, particularly in terms of the rites, rituals, and sacred bonds that came to define the relationship between ruler and populace. John Fortescue's *The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy* for a helpful and foundational discussion of the body politic and the corporal singularity of a ruler.

⁴⁷ Charlemagne's role in the shaping and construction of European identity has been widely studied. See Anne Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2013) for a sustained discussion of "Charles as the *pharus Europae*" (especially pages 50-20); Rosamund McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Donald Maddox, *Fictions of Identity in Medieval France*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On iconography, reputation, and social representations of the ruler's body, see: Jeffrey Merrick: "The Body Politics of French Absolutism" and *The Desacralization of the French Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Annie Duprat, "La Dégradation de l'image royale dans la caricature révolutionnaire," *Les Images de la Révolution française*, ed. Michel Vovelle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 168-75; George Armstrong Kelly, "Mortal Man, Immortal Society: Political Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century France," in *Political Theory* 14 (1986): 5-29; and

dimmed; he has been stripped of power while the pagan princess, described by Rinaldo as representative of “i fulgenti rai / del nuovo sol,” has dethroned and eclipsed the Emperor with the force and pull of her beauty. Metaphor for light and movement, and cast as the “new sun,” Angelica’s presence suggests the inauguration of a new order, the start of a new regime, so to speak. The *Furioso*’s irreverent substitution of a pagan girl for the leader of the Holy Roman Empire is yet another demonstration of the destabilization and complete upheaval of Charlemagne’s government, all occasioned by the Emperor’s broken vow.

Possession “Con Più Onore”: An Early Critique of Faith

Despite seeming to understand how much Charlemagne’s broken vow has affected him, Rinaldo still puts forth a remarkable display of faith in others when he suggests the pact with Ferraù of his own volition. Since Rinaldo agrees to take Ferraù at his word and extends his in return, the reader must assume that the Christian knight either has an indefatigable sense of faith in others or a surprisingly positive outlook given the predicament in which he is in. Once the reader comes across the text’s explicit critique of Rinaldo’s faulty trust, however, it becomes apparent that Rinaldo has simply not yet fully come to terms with what Charlemagne’s broken vow represents, though indeed he is learning that perhaps he made an error in judgement as well. As we shall see, in multiple instances in the next scene of the canto, the text calls attention to Rinaldo’s misplaced trust and judgment, and to the failed lesson he could have learned but chose to ignore.

First of all, the text reveals that Ferraù is “non men de’ dui cugini il petto caldo” (1.16.2). This initially might seem to evidence his suitability as an adversary given his similar temperament to that of Rinaldo and Orlando, since they too are described as ‘rash’ and ‘hotheaded.’ Despite this negative comparison that casts slight aspersions on the two cousins’ virtue, yoking all three under the fault of impulsiveness, Ferraù’s irascibility and imprudence should still also serve as clear signs that Rinaldo should *not* have trusted his Pagan opponent. More problematically, of course, is that Rinaldo also learns that the faith he had in Charlemagne was misplaced as well. The excessive rashness that unites Rinaldo and Orlando with Ferraù directly recalls the criticism the text offers of Charlemagne’s recklessness and profligacy, and bridges the gap between Pagan and Christians yet again.⁴⁸ By making hasty and rash decisions and being unable to

Stephen L. Collins, *From Divine Cosmos to Sovereign State: An Intellectual History of Consciousness and the Idea of Order in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ As we saw, in the *Chanson de Roland* the Emperor is extremely thoughtful and his actions are subsequently very deliberate. He reflects at length before he makes a decision; he listens attentively

“ritener” his anger, Charlemagne is just like his error-prone knights and their redoubtable yet flawed Pagan adversary. By aligning the common hotheadedness of Christians and Pagans with broken faith then, the text obliquely suggests that not just Rinaldo’s and Orlando’s word, but the word Charlemagne claims to offer in good faith should not be so easily trusted either. Turning the unity seemingly extolled in the proclamation “o gran bontà...” on its head yet again, a pervasive failure of vows and identitary inconstancy suggest that it has become even more difficult to trust others.

A second indication that Rinaldo erred in placing faith in Ferraù occurs by the physical separation that immediately “corrects” their momentary unification. Nearly as soon as the two knights come to their unusual agreement and are both mounted on the same horse, representative of their combined lustful cravings, their arrival at a crossroads, “ove una strada in due si dipartiva”(1.22.8), causes them to take different paths in order to maximize their chances of finding Angelica:

E come quei che non sapean se l'una
o l'altra via facesse la donzella

[...]

si messero ad arbitrio di fortuna,

Rinaldo a questa, il Saracino a quella (1.23.1-2, 5-6)

Their necessary separation and self-abandonment to the caprices of Fortune suggest that Rinaldo and Ferraù’s unity and the problematic drama of unfulfilled desire and frustrated possession that led them to be able to travel “insieme” and “senza sospetto aversi” cannot actually be tolerated in Ariosto’s chivalric world.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the idea of the divided road itself hearkens back to classical and medieval exempla of travelers and knights at crossroads who are forced to make a crucial decision.

In terms of the crossroads, metaphor for an epistemological crux, the way that Ariosto differentiates himself from tradition—and the point on which he ironizes—is precisely the fact that in the situation with which Rinaldo and Ferraù are faced there is not a better choice to be made. There is no Dantean “altra strada,” so to speak, which clearly differentiates right from wrong, honesty from corruption. Similarly, while Hercules must choose between Virtue and Vice in the oft-cited fable Sophocles retells from Prodicus for example,⁵⁰ or Lancelot between action and

to the interpretation of others. Similarly, in *Orlando innamorato*, he is much more prudent, at least initially, than is the Charlemagne of the *Furioso*.

⁴⁹ Hercules is most likely the most direct predecessor, but also Oedipus in the classical period, and Lancelot, Perceval, and Erec in Chrétien’s *oeuvre* similarly showcase this type of deliberative struggle. For more on the crossroads and its relationship to licit or illicit behavior, see Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Boston: Brill Publishing, 1992).

⁵⁰ In “Wrestling with Orlando: Chivalric Pastoral in Shakespeare,” Ascoli elucidates the recurrence to the myth of Hercules (and Hercules’s choice) during the Renaissance, and its connection to discussion of the polarized extremes bound up in the myth, such as vice and virtue, furor and sanity, criminality and heroism:

As the myth of Hercules and Antaeus was widely known and used in the Renaissance, typically to figure the triumph of virtue over vice, and, since the literal story requires

inaction as he deliberates over mounting in the cart to find Guenièvre in *Le chevalier de la charrette*, in this scene, Ariosto pessimistically recodifies the traditional valence of the crossroads by not granting to his juncture any of the polarized extremes it should traditionally offer.

While Marinelli reads lightness in Ariosto's "humorous concern with crossroads and 'calli obliqui'" ("Shaping" 41), I find Ariosto's unique recodification that situates both paths as equally unpropitious to be an intensely negative stance. For example, perhaps to anticipate the difficulties and uniqueness of the situation Rinaldo will be in, when, in subsequent episodes he has to decide whether or not to trust when a better choice actually *is* available to him, Ariosto's pessimism in this episode is suggestive of the chaos and pervasiveness of the "crisis" that besieges the knights.⁵¹ It also demonstrates both the capacity man has to exercise human will, and the propensity of human will to err or end in failure. Indeed, confronted with a crossroads and with their senses already proven to be unstable, judgment is rendered useless when neither Rinaldo nor Ferraù is able to locate Angelica directly, and when neither of them is granted the ability to choose the "right" path. Since a proper choice cannot be made, proper judgment is of no use, and neither reason nor empirical experience mean anything; it is simply a question of an arbitrarily grounded ideal of conviction and faith, and the vagaries of chance. Indeed, both knights passively deliver themselves up "ad arbitrio di fortuna"; yet Fortune, inimical to both, continues to thwart their desires.

A third, and often overlooked detail that serves to critique Rinaldo and Ferraù's bond, while evidencing the poor judgment that Rinaldo puts forth by

Hercules to go beyond his incomparable strength by the strategic use of his wits, it also symbolizes the combination of *fortitudo* with *sapientia*, strength with wisdom, which is the time-honored possession of the true hero, and in particular of the chivalric hero. [...] Already in the Ariostan doubling of Hercules as madman and Hercules as personification of virtue we can see the by now familiar problematization of chivalric heroism at work. But it seems particularly significant in this context that both Ruggiero and Orlando are identified at crucial moments with both actors in the Hercules versus Antaeus drama. (300)

For more on the crucial situation of the crossroads, see also John Fitch's introduction to Hercules in *Seneca's Hercules Furens*, pp. 13-52; Justina Gregory, "The Encounter at the Crossroads in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*"; on Ariosto and the crossroads, see William Kennedy, "Ariosto's Ironic Allegory," (pages 52-53 in particular); and Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony* 46-60. See also Lucienne Carasso-Bulow, *The Merveilleux in Chrétien de Troyes' Romances* (p.45); L.T. Topsfield, *Chrétien de Troyes: A Study of the Arthurian Romances* (120-22); and more generally, Christopher Braider, *Baroque Self-Invention and Historical Truth: Hercules at the Crossroads* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004).

⁵¹ See Ascoli's discussion of Piconian humanism as well as Braider's discussion of the epistemological implications of the crossroads as fundamental examples of the human will, and how "a crisis in the concept of the will is a 'crisis of crisis,' since, as mentioned earlier, 'crisis' implies a point of reintegrating choice or judgment as well as a destabilizing split" (*Bitter* 76).

Though focused on Boiardo, Kathleen Egan's "On the Indignity of Man: The Quarrel between Boiardo and Pico della Mirandola," offers an illuminating analysis of the 'quarrelsome' yet intimate relationship between Boiardo and Pico, who happened to be cousins (237). Indeed, this is a relationship that necessarily provides a model for Ariosto's Piconian moorings and bent. *Fortune and Romance: Boiardo in America*, ed. Jo Ann Cavallo and Charles S. Ross (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 237-57.

trusting the pagan arises immediately after he and Ferraù part ways. Unfortunate events befall each of the knights simultaneously, which suggests that the harmonious mutuality they found in the brief duration of their former union is now being corrected and replaced by a certain mutuality of castigation. Furthermore, the corrective punishments they each endure as they embark upon different paths, serve to decisively sever their ultimately ill-assorted alliance. In addition to losing other objects—Ferraù his helmet, Rinaldo his horse—since both knights are also unsuccessful in pursuing Angelica, what initially seemed like their felicitous union is amended and even further punished by the text given the frustration and the degree of absence that immediately hinders their wishes.

In another demonstration of his chronic inefficacy, Ferraù attempts to follow Angelica, but his quest is thwarted as he is unable to even advance spatially. “Pel bosco Ferraù molto s’avvolse, / e ritrovossi al fine onde si tolse” (1.23.7-8)—he ends up in exactly the same place from whence he started. His frustrated trajectory and his resulting spatial confusion are so distressing that they cause him to ‘lose hope’ of ever finding her. Once again, the distraction and disorientation that Angelica catalyzes are emphasized by the text’s ironic repetition of the verb “ritrovar,” particularly since Ferraù’s problem is precisely that he cannot find Angelica and *her* trajectory continues to elude him. After being spatially disoriented and “wrapped up” in the woods, “ritrovar” pairs Ferraù’s disorientation at the side of a river where he is near, but not near enough, to his lost helmet (“Pur *si ritrova* ancor su la rivera”), with his loss of hope in finding Angelica (“Poi che la donna *ritrovar* non spera”). Once again, the use of the verb “togliere,” though this time used in the reflexive “si tolse,” recalls the deep wound that Charlemagne inflicted upon his knights with his mismanagement of both his vow and Angelica’s body, the result of which caused her to be unfairly “tolto” from those who love her.

Then, as if Ferraù’s frustrated trajectory weren’t bad enough, he launches a failed attempt to recover the helmet that he lost only to be interrupted by a knight “d’aspetto fiero,” who speaks “come adirato,” and emerges from the depths of the river, holding the very helmet “che cercato / da Ferraù fu lungamente *invano*” (1.26.4, emphasis mine). Inscribed into a “mammoth circulation of desired objects” (Hanning 206), Ferraù’s unobtainable helmet is yet another indication that his desires are continually thwarted, and that his efforts continue to be made in vain. Yet this sense of frustration and loss is not at all unique to Ferraù, nor, as we have seen (given the desire so many knights have for Angelica), is it limited to inanimate objects. For Elizabeth Bellamy in *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History*, the elusiveness of desired objects and their “ineffable quality of never quite being ‘there’ for appropriation” is suggestive, yet again, of how “purloined objects—and the entangling itinerary of their displacements—are the recurring theme of interest” (90). As she continues, “there is hardly any aspect of his narrative untouched by the theft without return” (92). What the *Furioso* is staging then, is not just that objects are “taken,” but that they simply cannot be “kept” (90-94). For Ferraù in particular, since what he stole is brusquely taken back from him,

and does happen to be an object inscribed in a long intertextual legacy of theft,⁵² the double loss he has incurred of cherished lady and cherished helmet is a scathing critique of his errant desires. Moreover, while the difficulty and vanity of this attempt to take (re)possession of a beloved object directly recalls his struggle to take possession of his reified and idealized version of Angelica, the accusatory words the spirit uses with Ferraù provide a telling commentary on the nature of the vow and implicitly critique the faith a far too easily trusting Rinaldo put in his pagan adversary.

The spirit, who turns out to be Argalia, Angelica's brother, bases his harangue around the fact that Ferraù promised to surrender the helmet and other weapons to him, but broke his word:

[...] Ah mancator di fé, marano!
 perché di lasciar l'elmo anche t'aggrevi,
 che render già gran tempo mi dovevi?
 Ricordati, pagan, quando uccidesti
 d'Angelica il fratel (che son quell'io),
 dietro all'altr'arme tu mi promettesti
 gittar fra pochi di l'elmo nel rio. (1.26, 6-8; 27.1-4)

Chastising Ferraù for his faithlessness, Argalia cites Fortune as the agent that is serving to rectify Ferraù's villainous actions, and as such, the agent which, through punishment mobilized as a corrective and rehabilitative agent, restores and brings the promise that Ferraù brazenly fails to uphold:

Or se Fortuna (quel che non volesti
 far tu) pone ad effetto il voler mio,
 non ti turbare; e se turbar ti déi,
 turbati che di fé mancato sei. (1.27.5-8)

Given that Ferraù killed Argalia, one might think that Argalia would harbor animosity towards his assassin for this very reason; however, Argalia only references his own murder in a relative clause and casually rendered parenthetical statement, which evidences that his death is not his primary concern. By situating the gravest of the affronts he was made to endure as that of a broken promise, not a loss of life,⁵³ the text dramatizes the way in which Argalia's rage is directed only

⁵² See Peter De Sa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); and Ascoli's *Bitter Harmony* for a discussion of poem as a "long series of chivalric contests revolving around possession of essentially arbitrary emblems of heroic identity" (217).

⁵³ Calling this episode "a kind of theft *with* return," Bellamy explains the vast application that Ferraù's missing helmet has in the larger plot. Like Bartlett Giamatti in "Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen" (33-75), Bellamy also emphasizes the theme of headlessness that the lost helmet represents, evocative as it is of absent power, absent leadership, and I would add of the failed body politic that circumscribes Charlemagne's dominion and so much of the text:

The sudden tumbling of his helmet into the stream becomes synonymous with the 'losing one's head' and thus serves as a mimetic foreshadowing of Orlando's loss of his wits and subsequent madness. Indeed, it is Orlando (or, more accurately, Orlando's head) who becomes directly implicated in Ferraù's quest for a new helmet when the pagan vows to win Orlando's helmet as his replacement. (98)

towards his helmet and the promise that Ferraù made to him but callously decided to break—a faithlessness that he cannot tolerate, and which, he insists, should also “turbar” Ferraù profoundly.

As for Ferraù, he takes the spirit’s admonition that if he wants to have a similar helmet he should “abbil con più onore,” as so extremely shaming and embarrassing that he finds himself unable to speak or offer any explanation in way of an excuse for his criminal behavior. Argalia’s critique of chivalric protocol is akin to Orlando’s complaint that Charlemagne has taken Angelica from him “senza spada adoperar”; similarly, the intense shame that Ferraù experiences draws even more attention to Charlemagne’s ignoble actions. Moreover, though Argalia is—or was—a Pagan, the fact that he calls Ferraù a “marano” and a “mancator di fede”⁵⁴ initially seems to be a literal and rather innocuous critique of his failure to keep his promise. Paired together as they are, however, these terms offer a telling understanding of the underlying biting critique of ethnic and religious difference, his palimpsestic insult then adds yet another layer of nuance to the pessimism latent in the seemingly felicitous proclamation “oh gran bontà de’ cavallieri antiqui! / Eran rivali, eran di fé diversi,” as animosity and diversity are both indicative of a problematic lack of constancy in terms of religious, cultural, and ethnic identity, here manifested as a temporal and ethical divide.

Charlemagne’s broken vow in the first canto of the *Furioso*, which ultimately forced the reified Angelica into the position of the text’s first absent object has thus occasioned a multi-layered loss that puts her pursuers in the singular position of continually experiencing loss, as if to demonstrate that the ineluctability of desire and the inevitable fracture of socially binding accords, lead to total chaos when the vows that order the world are not upheld. While Argalia seems but a minor

On the circulation of magical objects in the *Furioso* see Julia Kisacky’s “Magic and Enchanted Armaments: Moral Considerations in Boiardo and Ariosto.” See also Ernst Kantorowicz’s *King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), and Goldhammer’s *The Headless Republic*, for discussions of headlessness in the context of political chaos and political failure (42-89).

⁵⁴ While this is the text’s only recurrence to the insult “marano,” “mancator di fede,” a piercing insult in its own right comes about in a pivotal exchange between Bradamante and Ruggiero, when, after defeating Sacripante, Bradamante sends Fiordiligi a message to give to Ruggiero, reminding him of the necessity of keeping his word:

Voglio ch’a punto tu gli dica questo:
 - Un cavallier che di provar si crede,
 e fare a tutto 'l mondo manifesto
 che contra lui sei mancator di fede;
 acciò ti trovi apparecchiato e presto,
 questo destrier, perch’io tel dia, mi diede.
 Dice che trovi tua piastra e tua maglia,
 e che l’aspetti a far teco battaglia. – (35.63.1-8)

Left “confuso e in pensier grande” Ruggiero cannot even conceive of someone calling him “senza fede.” I will discuss the meaning of this letter and Ruggiero’s self-perception in the third chapter of this section, as it is fundamental to understanding the major tenets of his relationship with Bradamante and the criminalized political, racial, and religious implications of being a “marano,” “rinegato,” or “mancator di fede.”

character, the contention surrounding his helmet and his indictment of Ferrau's behavior critiques Rinaldo's misplaced trust. However, it also gestures towards the maturation or change in approach that Rinaldo will ultimately adopt to correct his earlier behavior when he is made to quickly "confront the loss of another beloved object" (Bellamy 98)—that of his horse Baiardo, which compounds losing Angelica.

Just like suffering the loss of Angelica, and just like Ferrau's "lost" helmet, Rinaldo's missing horse accentuates the frustration that has profoundly affected his understanding of the power of the words and promises of others. Despite this early lesson, before Rinaldo can fully embark on his path of reeducation, however, he is still described as a character completely at odds with the world around him. His charge, for example, is a rather indomitable horse, Baiardo, whose sudden escape is directly interwoven with Angelica's departure. The text is quick to suggest that Baiardo's escape is apparently unusual behavior for the horse; the fact that he is "uscito [...] di mano" is a "strano caso" that serves to heighten the theatricality and drama of Angelica's sudden flight. Moreover, Baiardo's frenzied course both incites Rinaldo's rage because of disobedience, and stands as metaphor for the knight's uncontrollable passions (Bartlett Giamatti 39; Marinelli, 45-9).⁵⁵

Non molto va Rinaldo, che si vede
saltare inanzi il suo destrier feroce:
- Ferma, Baiardo mio, deh, ferma il piede!
che l'esser senza te troppo mi nuoce. -
Per questo il destrier sordo, a lui non riede
anzi più se ne va sempre veloce.
Segue Rinaldo, e d'ira si distrugge:
ma seguitiamo Angelica che fugge. (1.32.1-8)

Yet again metaphorizing the uncontrollable nature of his passions and also granting more attention to the frustrated drama of possession (here, the objectification of woman as horse) that motivates so much of the *Furioso's* plot, while his complaint seems focused on his steed, it applies to Angelica as well. Indeed, the fateful sip from the water of the Ardennes causes Angelica, who now loathes him, to flee from him just like Baiardo does, and applies bestial metaphors to him, likening him to a "crudel," "empia fera," ready to devour her (1.33; 34.5,8). Just as Rinaldo's affections for Angelica have been encroached upon by another, the wayward Baiardo is now not simply lost, but has been stolen from him by the Pagan

⁵⁵ See Hanning who discusses the relationship to "error" and "furor" to the "desire in action, primarily erotic" that affects the objects that populate the *Furioso* (183). Rather than granting priority to desire as Hanning does, however, Elizabeth Bellamy instead finds that "the *furor* of aggression is just as prominent as erotic desire in motivating the poem's 'diverse acts' [...]" (87).

In *Exile and change*, A. Bartlett Giamatti offers a lengthy discussion of passionate frenzy and horses, giving particular attention to the idea of the headless horseman as metaphor for uncontrollable desires (42). Similarly, Ascoli, in "Fier Pastor," traces this traditional association of horse and man: "The symbolically charged imagery of 'cavalleria' and horsemanship (Giamatti; Dalla Palma) is subtended by the classical myth of Hippolytus, with its thematics of blind desire and mad violence (Ascoli, 1987, 382-89). Ariosto's procedure of fusing classical myths and contemporary persons with the poem's characters is described in Ceserani" (485, 510).

Sacripante, who, to increase the degree of injury also happens to be in the company of his beloved Angelica:

Rinaldo al Saracin con molto orgoglio
gridò: - Scendi, ladron, del mio cavallo!
Che mi sia tolto il mio, patir non soglio,
ma ben fo, a chi lo vuol, caro costallo:
e levar questa donna anco ti voglio;
che sarebbe a lasciartela gran fallo.
Sì perfetto destrier, donna sì degna
un ladron non mi par che si convegna. (2.3.1-8)

Rinaldo's admonition to Sacripante perfectly summarizes the febrile control he has over the objects he wants to possess. The words with which he critiques Sacripante are precisely in line with: Charlemagne's failed vow that occasions his first grave loss; his and Ferraù's subsequent failure to find Angelica; Ferraù's lost helmet; and now, Rinaldo's horse and beloved lady. Moreover, though he assertively confirms his ownership of the horse "che mi sia tolto il mio, patir non soglio," as he reworks typical Petrarchan metaphors usually directed towards a lady accused of stealing her beloved's heart, his use of "ladron" to parenthetically contain his threats as well as "togliere," and "gran fallo," are explicit evocations of the *Furioso's* opening episodes and the "error" subsumed in the rampant problems in Charlemagne's court.

In a modification of the earlier clash between Rinaldo and Ferraù, while Rinaldo is detained by fighting with Sacripante, the ever-elusive Angelica again slips away until a friar, who "sapea negromanzia," sends a spirit to interrupt and delay them, facilitating her escape. Incidentally, the spirit insists on the same reasonable argument treating "benefit" and "gain," and questions what has worth and merit, and what lacks both with the same words that Rinaldo had articulated to Ferraù. However, the spirit introduces the additional menace (though it is a lie) of Orlando's successful partnering with Angelica. Directly recalling Rinaldo's injunction to Ferraù from a stylistic standpoint, the spirit also employs a mocking, and highly stylized courtly vocabulary in his appeal to both knights:

- Per cortesia (disse), un di voi mi mostre,
quando anco uccida l'altro, che gli vaglia:
che merto avrete alle fatiche vostre,
finita che tra voi sia la battaglia
'l conte Orlando, senza liti o giostre,
e senza pur aver rotta una maglia,
verso Parigi mena la donzella
che v'ha condotti a questa pugna fella?
Vicino un miglio ho ritrovato Orlando
che ne va con Angelica a Parigi,
di voi ridendo insieme, e motteggiando
che senza frutto alcun siate in litigi.
Il meglio forse vi sarebbe, or quando

non son più lungi, a seguir lor vestigi; (2.16; 17.1-6)

Though he is propelled by his desire and rage—rather dubious motivations that reiterate his rashness once again—Rinaldo does seem to have learned at least one lesson from his troubles with Charlemagne and his interrupted fight with Ferraù that he applies to his encounter with Sacripante. From the coyly stylized courtly language the spirit uses, to the development of his argument, the false words that the magician tells him are nearly a direct echo of the words that Rinaldo spoke to Ferraù when he convinced him to abandon their battle.

This parallelism—at least if unity with a Pagan were still a value of Rinaldo's—suggests that the Christian-Pagan unity he obtained with Ferraù could actually be maintained, though it would now just be transferred to a new Pagan adversary. Indeed, the magician's words directly pave the way for this precise scenario. However, rather than sharing the same opinion he held before, and following Ruggiero in his generosity, Rinaldo wants none of the harmony extolled with the text's praise of his and Ferraù's anachronistic courtesy. In this instance, he gives no regard whatsoever to the Pagan's plight, and makes no attempt to even temporarily encourage unity through an accord based on deferral or reconciliation. Focused only on himself and his individual pursuit of Angelica, Rinaldo abandons Sacripante on the spot, and leaves so that he can pursue her, reversing his earlier experience, as the text is quick to point out:

E dove aspetta il suo Baiardo, passa,
e sopra vi si lancia, e via galoppa,
né al cavallier, ch'a piè nel bosco lassa,
pur dice a Dio, non che lo 'nviti in groppa. (2.19.1-4)

Exactly reversing Ferraù's generous "con preghi invita, /ed al fin toglie in groppa" (1.21.7), Rinaldo does not invite Sacripante "in groppa," enraged as he is by the spirit's false words.

Compounding the drama that affects Rinaldo on this personal level, and the added affront of what he believes to be Orlando's happy possession of Angelica, his arrogant rage flares and continues to mount against Charlemagne and his duties to the Christian enterprise. "D'ira e d'amor caldo," Rinaldo is so distracted by "parole vane / del messagier del cauto negromante" in which he mistakenly "tanto ha creduto," that he cannot even focus on his imperial duties. Unfortunately, while the corrective he has started to undergo has already started to modify some of his behavior and his approach to managing encounters born of adversity, Rinaldo is still described as stubborn, haughty, and reluctant to do Charlemagne's bidding.

Reeling from his initial defeat and hoping to launch a more successful attack, Charlemagne wants to "ritentar la sorte de la guerra" and orders Rinaldo to Britain to do so. Rinaldo is begrudging and quite distressed about having to comply with Charlemagne's order, though he does remain unfailingly obedient to his leader. The prioritization shown in the exaltation of the Christian-Pagan unity of the "cavallieri antiqui" is no longer appreciated or admissible. As such, it is no longer a value that either Rinaldo, or the text, encourage:

Ben de l'andata il paladin si lagna:

non ch'abbia così in odio quella terra;
ma perché Carlo il manda allora allora,
né pur lo lascia un giorno far dimora.

Rinaldo mai di ciò non fece meno
volentier cosa; poi che fu distolto
di gir cercando il bel viso sereno
che gli avea il cor di mezzo il petto tolto:
ma, per ubidir Carlo, nondimeno
a quella via si fu subito volto [...]. (2.26.5-8; 27.1-6)

Once again, since Rinaldo's duties and responsibility to the king interfere with his pursuit of the lady he loves, he is torn between obligation and desire, between his explicit vow to his leader, and to the subtler but equally binding vows he has made to his lady. Finally, his inability to focus exclusively on his chivalric duties perpetuates the conflict of interest that spurs his rash comportment. His desires and distraction then imperil the empire and become a crime for which he is punished, and one from which he takes his most definitive and formative lesson, as his behavior and understanding of vows and faith throughout the rest of the *Furioso* proves.

Imperial Chaos, Individual Failures, and Manipulated Speech

Given that Charlemagne's broken vow caused disorientation, distraction, and discord in his court, and subsequently catalyzed the difficulties that his knights had following vows of their own, the situation of Charlemagne's infidelity as precursor to the staging of other instances of infidelity is explicit. Just as Charlemagne receives "correction" for his foolhardy and ignoble behavior by losing a battle he believed he was slated to win and breaking a promise he was supposed to keep, so do his paladins. It is their imbrication in a world founded on broken promises that propels their frequent mismanagement of vows and conditions Ariosto's insistence upon their need for correction. Though Rinaldo has made some progress towards a better understanding of vows, and more specifically, in what type of people he should put his faith, the conflict between his desire for Angelica and the fidelity he owes to Charlemagne leaves the status of the vows he has made to both in peril, as seen with his continued encounters with Pagan adversaries.

Once Charlemagne sends Rinaldo away, Rinaldo must decide whether or not he should follow the emperor's orders or the commands of his own heart, which encourage him to pursue Angelica although she flees him. These conflicting

devotions and inherently contradictory vows are still being corrected when we encounter him again in canto 2. In his attempt to find Angelica, he has wandered in vain—“già più giorni ha seguitato invano (2.203),” and though he has finally recuperated his horse Baiardo who had escaped him, he is still in search of his lady. In a renegotiation of pathetic fallacy, as if to intensify the attention accorded to Rinaldo’s imperiled emotional and political state, the elements tellingly rise up against him when his uncontrollable desire—his “gran desir”—foolishly propels him to set sail in inimical conditions:

entrò nel mar ch'era turbato e fiero,
e gran procella minacciar pareo.
Il Vento si sdegnò, che da l'altiero
sprezzar si vide; e con tempesta rea
sollevò il mar intorno, e con tal rabbia,
che gli mandò a bagnar sino alla gabbia.

Calano tosto i marinari accorti
le maggior vele, e pensano dar volta,
e ritornar ne li medesmi porti
dove in mal punto avean la nave sciolta. (2.28.3-8; 29.1-4)

The shipwreck that Rinaldo is made to endure, and the difficulty that he has arriving at port clearly portray the difficulties he has with the vow and show how essential his progress as a paladin is to the development of the plot. It also showcases his excessive imprudence, at least at this early stage, since the conditions are not propitious to undertake such a voyage and since “ogni nocchiero” is in opposition with his foolhardy undertaking.

As occurred in canto I, the opposition Rinaldo is experiencing is that of a political enterprise in conflict with his amorous exploits, since his responsibilities to the king interfere with his pursuit of his lady. Rinaldo’s hard-won obedience to Charlemagne, and the way in which he musters up the resolve to defer his personal wishes in order to fulfil his chivalric promise, are an early dramatization of his understanding that vows should be kept. Though Rinaldo does prioritize the empire in terms of action, his reluctance to do so remains problematic. On many levels, in fact, he is actually refusing to prioritize well; he carries out his duties to Charlemagne in a mechanical, perfunctory way, while his attention and interests remain steadfastly on Angelica, who has complete control of his heart. What essentially amounts to a conflict of interest forces him to behave imprudently, which is why he follows Charlemagne’s orders so blindly that he gives absolutely no consideration to the self-evident atmospheric conditions that are rendering travel so perilous.⁵⁶ The other sailors, the “marinai accorti,” are well aware of the danger, but

⁵⁶ The primary and most meticulous studies of travel in the *Furioso* are: Ita Mac Carthy, “Ariosto the Traveller,” *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), pp. 397-409; Michele Vernero, *La geografia nell’“Orlando furioso,”* (Turin: Tipografia Palatina di Bonis e Rossi, 1913); Giovanna Barlusconi, ‘L’Orlando furioso poema dello spazio’, in *Studi su Ariosto*, ed. by Enzo Noè Girardi (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1977), pp. 39-130; Theodore Cachey, ‘An Italian Literary History of Travel’, in *L’odeporica/Hodeporics: On Travel Literature*, ed. by Luigi Monga, *Annali d’italianistica*, 14 (Chapel Hill: Annali d’italianistica, 1996), pp. 55-64; and Jo Ann Cavallo’s

Rinaldo pushes them onward still. Ultimately, the rashness of his pride, recalls the prideful folly of Dante's Ulysses in *Inferno* XXVI and endangers the empire. This impetuousness becomes a crime for which he is punished since he becomes such a poor guide to others when shipwreck nearly leads him and the sailors reluctantly following him to their deaths.

One of the most remarkable cantos of the first canticle of Dante's *Commedia*, *Inferno* XXVI vividly portrays Ulysses' unfortunate desire for knowledge that propels him to sail him past the columns of Hercules and thus to perdition. Although the flames that contain Ulysses blaze with such intensity that they recall the epic destruction of Troy,⁵⁷ and emphasize his new immobility as he burns—"[...] Dentro dai fuochi son li spirti; / catun si fascia di quel ch'elli è inceso" (vv. 47-8)—they are in ironic juxtaposition to Ulysses' connection to the infamous "alto mar aperto" (v. 100) and the waters that end up entombing him and his men. The devastation of the near shipwreck that befalls Rinaldo has many similarities to the tragedy that destroys Ulysses and his "vecchi e tardi" crew. Much like Rinaldo's difficulties arriving at port, the unlucky "esperienza" of Ulysses' damned sailors, is consistently marked with impediments and mentions of "distanza" and delay, except for the precise moment in which Ulysses' unfortunate and rash speech act literally precipitates the sinister "folle volo" that leads to their perdition, as he confesses:

"O frati", dissi "[...]
Considerate la vostra semenza:
fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza".
Li miei compagni fec'io sì aguti,
con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,
che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti;
e volta nostra poppa nel mattino,
de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo,
sempre acquistando dal lato mancino. (vv.112; 118-126)

Contrasting to the "ngeno" that Dante takes care to "affren[are]" "perché non corra che virtù nol guidi," (v. 21-22), Ulysses's words, meant to encourage and inspire, tragically perform the precise meaning of misguidance. Only in the most negative of senses therefore, is motion quick in this canto of the *Inferno*; the link between occasion, or the "experience" of their voyage and the "occaso" of the sun, quickly leads the sailors not only to the "occidente" in directional terms, but to their fall, their deaths. In similar vein, the repetition of the verb "fare" insists upon Ulysses' responsibility as motivator and agitator, while ironizing upon the perversity of the

extraordinary *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2013).

⁵⁷ As Durling and Martinez write in their notes to the canto "The Italian *inceso* [fired within] (cf.22.18) is, like *invola* [steals away], line 42, compounded with the preposition 'in'; it is derived from Latin *incensus*, used repeatedly by Virgil to describe the burning of Troy (*Aen.* 2.327, 353, 374, 555, and 764; cf. *ardeo*, *ardere*, used of warriors: *Aen.* 2.316, 475, 529, and 575)" (408).

“orazion picciola” that incites the old and slow men to unnatural movement, unnatural speed, and unnatural desire. “Fare” therefore marks the change of state Ulysses occasions within his companions by verbally inciting their ‘sharpness’ (“fec’io sì aguti”), while also signaling their tragic change from a state of reason to literal and metaphorical unbridled speed and acumination as he incites them to action (“facemmo ali al folle volo”).

Recalling the act of fabrication and refinement—the “obre e lim” that troubadours, Dante, and Ariosto valorize as metaphors for their poetical processes—Ulysses’ manipulation of language and words takes on a perverse twist as it warps both his men and his meaning. Similarly, the semantic and thematic continuity of the shared emotional register of Ulysses and his crew, with that of Rinaldo’s “marinai accorti” is ruptured and overturned by the rhetorical dissonance that inverts and separates their feelings, establishing a chiasmic relationship between the texts. The short-lived happiness of the Greeks: “Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto” (v.136), is contrasted to Rinaldo’s wiser crew. His “marinai accorti” are cognizant of the foolhardy nature of their voyage, yet he is able to persuade them just as Ulysses’s did with his perverse “orazion picciola,” and his manipulative “O frati.” Though Rinaldo is ultimately able to save himself, the metaphor of a “folle volo” remains just as applicable and pertinent, and poses a similar threat to the bonds of empire and, faith, and the directives of Charlemagne.

Since Rinaldo’s voyage does not end in total tragedy, then, the difficulties that he endures while navigating through the cataclysmic storm as he attempts to reconcile his desire of Angelica and his obligations to Charlemagne stand as a lesson from which, yet again, he will learn something about vows and their management. Furthermore, the significance of this scene is emphasized by the way in which the challenges Rinaldo encounters arriving at port mirror Ariosto’s prime authorial concerns: the many difficulties he is made to face in his quest to obtain artistic patronage and the love of his lady. Modeling what will later be replicated during Don Quijote’s failed sallies, Rinaldo is largely ineffective. He is lost in the woods; set adrift and tempest-tossed; frustrated on his amorous quests, disoriented; and battered by the winds and harsh blows of Fortune until he rejoins us again in canto 4.

A Forest of Deceit: Rinaldo’s Assessment of Vows versus Laws

One might think that the famous Caledonian forest “dove [...] spesso fra gli antique ombrosi cerri/ s’ode sonar di bellicosi ferri” (4.51.7-8), and where the bravest and most exemplary “cavallieri erranti, / incliti in arme” such as, Tristan, Lancelot, Galahaut, Arthur, Gawain, “de la nuova / e de la vecchia Tavola famosi” (4. 52, 1-2)

achieve their great feats would be a most propitious spot for Rinaldo to prove his chivalric prowess. In search of adventures where he can “in qualche fatto egregio / l'uom dimostrar, se merta biasmo o pregio,” Rinaldo, at least, certainly believes that this forest will lead him to victorious adventures and allow him to prove his mettle. However, as we have already seen, the layered and somewhat contradictory connotations of “cavallieri antiqui,”—the knights cited in the description of those who have proved their worth and their reference to errancy and error with the mention of “cavallieri erranti” suggests otherwise. Indeed, the *Furioso*'s second invoking of the terms “cavallieri erranti,” which recalls the judgment of humans who “spesso erra”—implies yet again, that Rinaldo's judgment has led him astray. Moreover, it, suggests that the collapse of the barriers between knights of yore and the contemporary “cavallieri erranti” is something that only the most supreme of the knights can escape. Serving as an even more direct corrective of Rinaldo's flawed judgment and the value he has mistakenly ascribed to the Caldonian forest, a group of abbots and monks give him an explicit correction. Making reference to wandering and error with their citation of the verb “errare,” they tell Rinaldo that not only is his chosen location problematic, the motivating impulse that drives him to seek adventure needs correction as well⁵⁸:

Risposongli ch'errando in quelli boschi,
trovar potria strane aventure e molte:
ma come i luoghi, i fatti ancor son foschi;
che non se n'ha notizia le più volte. (4. 56. 1-4)

Correcting his motivations and realigning his quest, the monks advise him against another error of judgment. They point him away from the forest and to the kingdom of the king of Scotland, where far more fame-worthy and ready-made exploits await:

Cerca (diceano) andar dove conoschi
che l'opre tue non restino sepolte,
acciò dietro al periglio e alla fatica
segua la fama, e il debito ne dica.
E se del tuo valor cerchi far prova,
t'è preparata la più degna impresa
che ne l'antiqua etade o ne la nova
giamai da cavallier sia stata presa. (4.56.5-8; 57.1-4)

As the monks explain, if Rinaldo wants “proof” of his valor, he needs a more famous and worthy adventure. Scotland is a fitting place, as its “cruel and pitiless law” orders that any woman accused of any type of extramarital relationship be put to death. In this case, Guinevere, the king's own daughter has been accused of sexual

⁵⁸ Hanning, whose text I consulted only after writing this chapter largely agrees: “Wishing to follow in the footsteps of these famous knights errant, Rinaldo soon becomes an exemplar of the Ariostan ur-quibble: when he takes shelter for the night in an abbey within the forest, the monks tell him that he is committing an error in judgment; they warn him that while he can find adventures in the forest, they will not be noticed. He should go instead to where his deeds will win him fame, to the royal court where Ginevra is condemned to death under the *aspra legge* and the king, devastated by the prospect, is offering his daughter's hand in marriage to anyone brave enough to save her. This, the monks counsel, is an adventure worth pursuing” (221).

profligacy. Unless a knight comes to her defense, she will be put to death. The abbot and monks vigorously enjoin Rinaldo to put his attentions on gaining “onor e fama” by helping the king to “vendicar di tanto tradimento / costei, che per commune opinione, / di vera pudicizia è un paragone” (4.62.7-8). While the monks insist upon Ginevra’s unblemished honor, calling her “innocente e di morire indegna,” and substantiating their assessment with the estimation of the *vox populi* that she is a “veritable exemplar of true chastity, Rinaldo’s response signals a pivotal turn in his understanding of promises and oaths, and offers a unique perspective regarding both. Minimizing the importance of the testimonies that he has heard regarding her innocence, Rinaldo distances himself from a role of judgment:

Sia vero o falso che Ginevra tolto
s'abbia il suo amante, io non riguardo a questo:
d'averlo fatto la loderei molto,
quando non fosse stato manifesto.
Ho in sua difesa ogni pensier rivolto:
datemi pur un che mi guidi presto,
e dove sia l'accusator mi mene;
ch'io spero in Dio Ginevra trar di pene. (4.64.1-8)

The common people—a collective—are in agreement about Ginevra’s innocence; more importantly, the abbot and monks staunchly promise that she is. Given the religious vows that bind them to honesty, their word should be even more heavily weighed and Rinaldo should be convinced, or at least inclined towards her innocence. Nevertheless, he spurns the judgment of both groups, finding it irrelevant, as if the question of her innocence or guilt were simply beside the point. He explains that rather than his faith, what he will offer is protection and a hope to “trar [Ginevra] di pene.” In fact, while he lauds the transgression that corresponds with her ability to love (which starkly contrasts to his beloved yet resistant Angelica)—“d’averlo fatto la loderi molto,”—he blames her for the predicament in which she finds herself since she loved too overtly when she allowed her relationship to become “manifesto.” As he sees it, her derelict and punishable action was not ceding to an adulterous affair, but failing to be secretive enough to conceal her relationship from the public eye. Nonetheless, he will dedicate his “ogni pensier,” to her protection because he has promised to do so.

As Rinaldo and his squire traverse the “dour” forest pondering the pervasive legal failure of Scotland, the screams of a damsel suddenly fill the “bosco orribilmente fiero.” Following the sound of her desperate cries, they happen upon a terrifying scene with just enough time to save the girl from being savagely killed by two villains who, with their swords already drawn, were just about to tinge the grass with her blood. After saving the damsel who ends up revealing herself as Dalinda, Rinaldo presses her to tell her story. She immediately discloses the details of her secret love affair with Polinesso, the duke of Albany to him. This affair ended poorly, however, and Dalinda found herself ostracized and abandoned by Polinesso, who never really loved her to begin with, despite the many promises and pleas that he made to her in profession of his love. Because she was so enamored of him while

also fearful of losing his affection, Dalinda ended up inadvertently betraying her lady, who was none other than the princess of Scotland, Ginevra—the very subject of the abbot and monks’ concern and the woman Rinaldo was seeking. Finally, Dalinda’s naïve and confused involvement in Polinesso’s evil plans nearly results in her being put to death by villains he hired to silence and kill her—and who would have succeeded had it not been for Rinaldo’s timely intervention. Although Rinaldo does not verbally interrupt during Dalinda’s lengthy narration, we must remember that despite his silence, he is listening carefully, as Dalinda’s and Ginevra’s relationships, honor, and lives and the vows that he has taken to protect them depend upon it.

In her long lament to Rinaldo, Dalinda insists that she fell completely in love with Polinesso, and therefore, fully trusted him. Her confession is a sad declaration of misplaced faith with which Rinaldo can certainly identify. As it was for him, her naive credulity only served to facilitate her state of victimhood and Polinesso’s ability to manipulate her. Following the frequent lamentations of the narrator who also finds himself shunned by fortune, Dalinda immediately casts herself as a deceived lover, the double victim of Polinesso’s malevolent wiles and “*crudele Amor*”’s proverbial blow:

Crudele Amore, al mio stato invidendo,
fe’ che seguace, ah! lassa! gli divenni:
fe’ d’ogni cavalier, d’ogni donzello
parermi il duca d’Albania più bello. (5.7.5-8)

Perché egli mostrò amarmi più che molto,
io ad amar lui con tutto il cor mi mossi.
Ben s’ode il ragionar, si vede il volto,
ma dentro il petto mal giudicar possi. (5.8.1-4) ⁵⁹

Dalinda’s story might initially appear to be a simple tale of an enamored and naively trusting lady’s frustrated affair and misguided devotion to an unmeritorious, dishonest man. Indeed, she describes what befell her in detached and almost nonchalant terms:

Credendo, amando, non cessai che tolto
l’ebbi nel letto, e non guardai ch’io fossi
di tutte le real camere in quella
che più secreta avea Ginevra bella;
dove tenea le sue cose più care,

⁵⁹ This is, in large part, the same complaint the narrator repeatedly articulates when he regrets the lack of commensurability between lovers and the object of their affections:

Ingiustissimo Amor, perché sì raro
corrispondenti fai nostri desiri?
onde, perfido, avvien che t’è sì caro
il discorde voler ch’in duo cor miri?
Gir non mi lasci al facil guado e chiaro,
e nel più cieco e maggior fondo tiri:
da chi disia il mio amor tu mi richiami,
e chi m’ha in odio vuoi ch’adori ed ami. (2.1.1-8)

e dove le più volte ella dormia. (5.8.5-8; 9.1-2).

Nevertheless, by describing her deception's etiology as evolving from the perilous crux of "credendo" and "amando," or belief and love, Dalinda reveals that the situation in which she found herself was dangerous and problematic. It was so not just due to her easy penetration into Dalinda's chamber and infringement of her privacy, but also due to the treacherous, ignoble nature of Polinesso, whose only desire was to use her as a facilitator of the relationship he was actually trying to orchestrate with Ginevra. Similarly, Dalinda's deception was not only due to her misplaced trust, therefore, but as she explains, it came about because of her inability to interpret properly, and because of her failures as a reader of signs.⁶⁰

Already grappling with the difficult incommensurability between signs and semblances, between external appearance and interior truth, and more specifically, between Polinesso's actions and his true intentions, Dalinda reads the objects and people around her only superficially. Enjoying his words, or reasoning, which have nothing to do with the true intent behind his actions, taking pleasure in gazing on his face, which accentuates a misguided importance given to superficiality, Dalinda's language is clear on the point that Polinesso is deceitful, despite his promises—and her desires—to the contrary. Rather than loving her, he offers a mere monstrosity of love, which throws her highly devoted affection for him with

⁶⁰ In very similar fashion to the major preoccupations of the *Furioso*'s Ginevra-Dalinda episode, Tasso deftly structures the dramatic intrigue of *Re Torrismondo* around the failure or success of his characters to read the signs around them. Throughout the play, the delayed revelation and concealment of secrets, forces the reader /spectator to identify with the epistemological crises of the main characters through a sort of mimetic enactment of their situation. That is, the reader / spectator is first made to feel the disorienting effect of failed and contradictory hermeneutic systems, such as vision, rhetoric, the proto-rhetoric of dreams, and truth, etc. Yet interpretation is always delayed if provided at all, which artificially heightens the sense of suspense natural to tragedies and causes greater dis-ease. The reader / spectator longs to solve the tragic riddle of the text both out of interest and concern for the characters' fate, as well as to mark his or her own interpretive victory over the many rhetorical constraints and obstacles thrown out by the playwright. While the illumination of dark enigmas and the uncovering of secrets are crucial to understanding, since the act of interpretation is often thwarted through dissimulation and concealment, suspense accumulates because of a frustrated desire for knowledge.

In a reversal of the *Furioso*, Tasso's Nurse is the sole character who is able to navigate this frustrated, secret, and ailing world. While Alvida, the main female protagonist, is described as afflicted by a 'mysterious illness' that is indecipherable to others, the Nurse alone is able to understand that the emotional and physical ailments from which her charge suffers. Though they employ the same terminology, unlike Ariosto's Dalinda, the Nurse is able to read the physical manifestation of Alvida's preoccupations on her face: "Deh qual cagione ascosa, alta regina, / sì per tempo vi sveglia? Ed or che l'alba / nel lucido oriente a pena è desta, / dove ite frettelosa? E quai vestige / di timore in un tempo e di desio / veggio nel vostro volto e ne la fronte?" (1.1-6). Alvida denies this suggestion of malaise, but the Nurse remains confident that she has read the signs appropriately: "A me, che per etate / e per officio, e per fedele amore / vi sono in vece di pietosa madre, / e serva per volere e per fortuna, / il pensier sì molesto omai si scopra / ché nulla sì celato o sì riposto / dee rinchiude giamai ch'a me l'asconda" (1. 9-15). By repeatedly insisting on the dialectical tensions between what is visible or known, or concealed or ignored, therefore, the Nurse charts a clear path of interpretation for the reader / spectator of Tasso's play.

“tutto il cor” even more out of balance. Moreover, Polinesso’s intentions are impenetrable. Dalinda cannot “guidicar” “dentro il petto,” and she admits that she “non guardai”; or in other words, that she was both negligent and blind. Indeed, her initial interpretive failure is so profound that it symptomatically renders her sightless and results in her inability to understand even the most obvious of signs as their affair continues:

Continuò per molti giorni e mesi
tra noi secreto l'amoroso gioco:
sempre crebbe l'amore; e sì m'accesi,
che tutta dentro io mi sentia di foco:
e cieca ne fui sì, ch'io non compresi
ch'egli fingeva molto, e amava poco;
ancor che li suo' inganni scoperti
esser doveanmi a mille segni certi. (5.11.1-8)

This semiotic failure, that is, Dalinda’s blindness despite the “mille segni certi,” combined with Polinesso’s brazen disregard for her feelings and his dexterous ability to manipulate language and symbols leads to a myriad of other interpretive problems. In fact, Dalinda’s hermeneutic difficulties, of which Polinesso is quite aware, and the way in which she willfully chooses to ignore how and when his “nuovo amore” for the princess came about—(“[...]Io non so appunto / s'allora cominciasse, o pur inante / de l'amor mio, n'avesse il cor già punto” [vv. 2-4])—only serve to facilitate his easy exploitation of signs and their meanings, and a highly metatheatrical game of “rappresentando” and “fingendo” begins.⁶¹

Though she has just claimed that Polinesso “fingeva molto” and hid his “inganni” from her, rather than concealing and being blatantly deceitful by pretending to be other than he is, he actually reveals tactically deceitful intentions to her (“mi scoperse”) in a surprisingly clear manner. First he asks for her assistance in seducing a “nuovo amore.” He then explicitly confirms his evil intentions by telling Dalinda that he is not truly in love with Ginevra, he just wants to “simulate” affection for her, and pretend that he is enamored of her, so that he can marry as well as possible:

Ben mi dicea ch'uguale al mio non era,
né vero amor quel ch'egli avea a costei;
ma simulando esserne acceso, spera

⁶¹ For a rigorous and insightful discussion of vision and its literal and metaphorical connection to error, see Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, pp. 16-53 and Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), pp. 27-32. James Mirollo’s “On the Significant Acoustics of Ariosto’s Noisy Poem” similarly offers a very helpful analysis of other sensorial and acoustic effects in the *Furioso*; indeed, in many ways production of (and the consequences of) the extremes of stunned silence and cacophony on the aural register parallel blindness and bedazzlement in the visual sphere. See Saccone’s “Figures of Silence in the *Orlando Furioso*” (36-45), and Ascoli’s discussion of *armonia* and discordance in *Bitter Harmony*, particularly chapter 1, “Orlando Furioso and the Poetry of Crisis” (3-43). In *Lo spirito e l’arte dell’Orlando Furioso*, Giuseppe Rainiòlo aptly refers to the “immensa sinfonia marziale” that is created from the Furioso’s “impeto eroico”(189).

celebrarne i legittimi imenei.
Dal re ottenerla fia cosa leggiera,
qualor vi sia la volontà di lei;
che di sangue e di stato in tutto il regno
non era, dopo il re, di lu' il più degno. (5.8.1-8)

Marrying well, of course, is marrying the princess, not the princess's nursemaid, yet Dalinda again ignores this vital detail. Furthermore, awkwardly pairing feint and legitimacy, Polinesso specifically invokes the law by acknowledging how his marriage with the princess would be a legitimate one that is sanctioned and approved by a hierarchical courtly code. With this, however, he not only gestures towards the frangibility of marital law, but once again creates an explicit distinction between what he prizes and desires, and what he does not. The aspects that he values from his desired legally binding relationship with the princess, dramatize all the more that he views his relationship with Dalinda as denigrated and worthless (since she has little to offer him), and as illicit and of no real value (since he situates his involvement with her as outside the law).

Polinesso's metatheatrical and duplicitous performance of "pretending to be enflamed by love" and the dialectic of secrets, concealment and disclosure, suppression and discovery, should serve as a sure "sign" to Dalinda that he has great facility with simulation, but she remains oblivious, believing, as he claims, that his seduction of the princess has only practical, political, and economic motivations, and does not admit any amorous or erotic impetus whatsoever. Even in the best of scenarios however, more than a hint of Polinesso's perfidious nature would have been revealed in his clearly false seduction of the princess and obsession with economic and socio-political gain. The more dastardly possibility would be that Polinesso is deceiving both of them, or even worse, given that it is her pathetic voice that narrates the story, that he is deceiving Dalinda most of all. As she understands it, he is simply focused on the power he would be able to obtain by marrying the king's daughter. If she helps his cause then, not only would he always be grateful for her valuable aid, he would love her even more, and always prefer her to his wife: "ch'alla moglie e ch'ad ogni altro inante / mi porrebbe egli in sempre essermi amante" (5.14.7-8).

Yet despite his careful machinations and the easy control he is able to obtain over Dalinda, Polinesso forgets to take into consideration, or rather—misunderstands—the limits of his power. Though he implies that the affections he feels towards Ginevra will automatically be reciprocated because of his value and station at court, he also states that if her feelings do happen to be contrary to his, his power will easily allow him to override and disregard Ginevra's will, "qualor vi sia la volontà di lei" (5.13.6).

Dal re ottenerla fia cosa leggiera,
qualor vi sia la volontà di lei;
che di sangue e di stato in tutto il regno
non era, dopo il re, di lu' il più degno. (5.13.5-8)

Tha villain's callous "qualor vi sia la volontà di lei" draws attention to the frequent incommensurability between one's intentions and the actions that result. Together, these perspectives heighten the reader's awareness of the reified status of women in the *Furioso*, who are mere objects of exchange in a male-dominated economy, or objects of pursuit in a male-charted trajectory.

At the same time however, Polinesso's disregard of Ginevra's will also signals a slight differentiation that has begun to take place in regards to Rinaldo's understanding of volition and action. Rinaldo again insists, for example, that he will defend Ginevra "whether she is innocent or not," which again puts emphasis on the defense that he can offer her rather than on the intentions that underlie her actions. Moreover, they also proleptically gesture towards his negotiation of the theme of adultery that will later affect him on a personal level. Though the stakes will continually grow higher and more personal, Rinaldo's refusal to engage with deliberations over the innocence, fidelity, or goodness of another, pessimistically suggest that this is simply too great and too difficult of a question to answer. It also reiterates the concern that the answer sought can far too easily run the risk of being inimical to a lover's wishes—a lesson which Rinaldo will definitively uphold when he is offered the chance to investigate his wife's faithfulness. Finally, the ease with which Polinesso disregards Ginevra's volition proleptically announces the tensions between legality and failed vows that circumscribe the *Furioso's* final negotiation of vows and their fixity—the marriage between Bradamante and Ruggiero. This negotiation occurs since Bradamante's parents are determined to force her nuptials "voglia ella or non voglia" (43.74.7) with Leone, the son of Emperor Constantine, despite Bradamante's affections and the vows that both she and her brother Rinaldo made to Ruggiero.

Ocular Proof, Epistemic Doubt, and "Fraude Pur Troppo Evidente"

When Dalinda's efforts to persuade Ginevra fail and the princess steadfastly refuses to cede to Polinesso's lascivious persuasion, it frustrates Polinesso's desires, both literally and figuratively. When he discovers that her resistance is largely due to the fact that she prefers another to him—the Italian knight, Ariodante, who came to Scotland with his brother Lucranio—not only does his perception of the princess and his understanding of her will fail, but his self-perception is also challenged and eventually fractures. Since he bases her obligation to love him entirely upon the way in which he sees himself and the fact that he believes himself to be second only to the king in terms of both his power and virtue, he is unable to rationalize her disinterest, which creates a situation quite akin to the desire for lost, forbidden, or otherwise unattainable objects that we have seen so many of the other male

characters struggle with as well. Moreover, since Polinesso views himself as second to the king, the triangulation of desire filters through Ginevra, but also, in Polinesso's mind, through the king. What Polinesso most desires is not just possession of the lady, but the lady as means of political power, the lady as a means by which he can effectuate a sort of royal rapprochement and thus draw nearer to the king. When he does not immediately get what he deserves, and learns how much the king loves Ariodante, he believes that the bonds that should unite him and the princess have been unfairly severed.

As a result, what he views as Ginevra's preference for Ariodante thus signals a simultaneously political, sexual, and interpretive defeat, and causes Polinesso to explode in a fit of rage. Moreover, his 'confirmed' frustration in love comes at this pivotal textual moment in which the villainous Polinesso is finally named outright—a dramatic appellation that highlights the connection between the pride from which all of the *Furioso's* frustrated lovers suffer, his immoderate rage ("furor"), and who he is: a villain adept at manipulating signs and aggravating his own moral errors by embroiling others:

Questo da me più volte Polinesso
(che così nome ha il duca) avendo udito,
e ben compreso e visto per se stesso
che molto male era il suo amor gradito;
non pur di tanto amor si fu rimesso,
ma di vedersi un altro preferito,
come superbo, così mal sofferse,
che tutto in ira e in odio si converse. (5.21.1-8)

Taking Ginevra's love for Ariodante as a grave assault to his personal identity and to his way of understanding and controlling the world around him, Polinesso turns to revenge and even further manipulation in response to his thwarted desire. Polinesso's secret hatred now takes over the attention that his secret "love" affair with Dalinda once held, and he schemes against Ginevra. He wants to make her suffer "tanta discordia e tanta lite" and "ignominia immensa." In other words, he wants to make her pay for thwarting his desires by remaining steadfast in her adherence to her own will and "volontà."

The highly meta-artistic language that Ariosto uses in this scene highlights the degree to which Polinesso's "conversion" from love to hatred—though the case could easily be made that he never loved Dalinda—is firmly predicated upon deception. Indeed, much like the classical valorization of the edifying potential of persuasion, and Ariosto's own narratological enterprise, the tactics of persuasion upon which Polinesso so heavily relies have now entirely melded with the art of composition. Using theatrical language that again emphasizes his attempts to orchestrate the actions of others and dramatizes his role as a "fabbro" or fabricator, in the full sense of the word, Polinesso manages to convince Dalinda to don the princess' attire in order to allow him to more easily imagine that he is actually with her, and that his nagging lascivious desires have been met. As he manipulatively explains,

E non lo bramo tanto per diletto,
quanto perché vorrei vincer la pruova;
e non possendo farlo con effetto,
s'io lo fo imaginando, anco mi giuova.

Come ella s'orna e come il crin dispone
studia imitarla, e cerca il più che sai
di parer dessa, [...]
Io verrò a te con imaginazione
che quella sii, di cui tu i panni avrai:
e così spero, me stesso ingannando,
venir in breve il mio desir sciemandò. (5.24.1-4; 25.1-3; 5-8)

The rationale that he provides to Dalinda is that he will be able to assuage any desire he has for Ginevra by satisfying himself through this slight of imagination and manipulation of visual evidence. By having Dalinda learn how to “studiously imitate,” and thus falsify reality, by manipulating his “imaginazione,” Dalinda narrates to Rinaldo that Polinesso had suggested that deceiving himself would be the key to remaining faithful to Dalinda—though of course this too was a lie.

With much emphasis in this episode of the *Furioso* given to “segni,” that is, to ocular proof and vision, Polinesso uses the language of “proof,” imagination, mimesis, and their ramifications, which recalls Herodotus’s preoccupation with the conflict between vision and imagination, and with the problem of interpretive failure in his retelling of the story of Gyges.⁶² In this scene, Polinesso further

⁶² Although the connection between Herodotus’s imprudent king and his desire for proof and knowledge, and the wife-test tradition is direct, critics have often regarded it as rather tangential, despite the fact that the parallels—such as the triangulated relationship and difficult negotiation of power between Gyges, Candaules, and the queen, and other trials of wives’ faith, as seen, for instance, in Boccaccio, many episodes of the *Furioso*, Othello’s obsession with infidelity and ocular proof, or the triangulated theatrical staging of the famous intercalated novel “El curioso impertinente,” for example—are direct and explicit.

At the very least there is Jo Ann Cavallo, who astutely reads Boiardo, (and by extension, I would argue, Ariosto, given that he was likely to be well familiar with Boiardo’s translation of Herodotus), against a Herodotan backdrop. She gives attention to one of the fundamental mechanics of the wife-test scenario that has a particular resonance in Herodotus with her discussion of Boiardo’s insistence upon the proximity of and connection between “prudence and wisdom” as virtues that permit one to discern properly and act appropriately and honestly: “Boiardo’s understanding of a close link between wisdom and prudence comes through in his translation of Herodotus in which he interchanges the terms ‘*vir sapiens*’ as ‘uno omo di estimate *prudencia*,’ thus conveying more forcefully the idea of knowledge related to correct action” (Cavallo, “Pathways” 306; 318n4).

Prevalent throughout the entire *Furioso*, particularly in the wife-testing episodes, the Herodotus intertext is especially relevant to Ariosto’s discussion of faith and deceit in Rinaldo’s and in Gabrina’s and Astolfo’s episodes. On Gabrina, see Ascoli. For an excellent discussion of Herodotus’s complex and contradictory reputation during the early modern period, which establishes many points of parallel with Ariosto’s compositional strategies and use, or rejection of history, see J.A.S. Evans, “Father of History or Father of Lies; The Reputation of Herodotus,” in *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Oct., 1968) pp. 11-17. Stewart Flory’s *The Archaic Smile of Herodotus* provides an excellent comprehensive study of Herodotus’ authorial voice and presentation of ‘historical’ information. Of particular relevance to this chapter is his study of the gendered relationships and gender-oriented negotiation of power and control in the story of Gyges (27-38).

complicates the already fragile dialectic between exterior signs and actions, and interior emotions by highlighting the importance of the imagination, which in this case, serves to bridge the gap between both. Dalinda wants to help her lover manipulate “evidence” so as to (better) “vincer la pruova.” Thus, she must pretend, through careful study, imitation, and an astute understanding of who Ginevra appears to be, and how she presents herself to others, that she is Ginevra in order to help Polinesso deceive himself.⁶³

Thus, as if he were a dramaturge, Polinesso strategically manipulates Dalinda’s garb and performance of deceit by forcing her to deceive others and herself. Indeed, Dalinda’s admission that she was so enamored of Polinesso that she “non posi mente,” and had no doubts about what Polinesso was directing her to do, which caused her to ignore the “fraude pur troppo evidente,” further reinforces the dichotomous relationship between exterior (signs) and interior (reality) that Polinesso also describes. Instead of being able to bridge the gap through the process of “imaginando” and “ingannando” however, Dalinda’s inability to reconcile exteriority and interiority leaves her “divisa e sevrà.” Ironically, this fragmented state is exactly the same self-alienated position Polinesso *pretends* to be in because of his unrequited desire. Yet despite his claims that he will use his imagination to fool himself, the rest of Dalinda’s story reveals that his intent was never to deceive himself, only to deceive others.

Since his primary goal, now that he harbors such hatred towards Ginevra because of her refusal of him is to use deceptive acts to engender even more deception and bring about her ruin, Polinesso plots her downfall by insisting to Ariodante that he, not Ariodante, is the princess’s true beloved. Using the same rhetoric of simulation and dissimulation, closure and disclosure, and ocular metaphors hinging upon visual proof and evidence to which he obsessively recurs, and after swearing on the Bible that neither he nor Ariodante will reveal their “secret affairs” with Ginevra to anyone else, Polinesso “discloses” the “truth” of his affair with the ‘princess.’ Firstly, since swearing on the Bible has its “rules in *judicium dei*: divine judgment” Polinesso is essentially “calling God as witness.” This grants to the promise he made an “elevated status” and a “unique ability” to

⁶³ The “emotional labor” required of Dalinda as she strives to fulfill precisely what Polinesso ‘needs’ and what he requests of her is elucidated by Arlie Hochschild’s seminal and astute investigation of the posturing of self required of those who perform the labor that:

requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others [...]. This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling [...]. Beneath the difference between physical and emotional labor there lies a similarity in the possible cost of doing the work: the worker can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self—either the body or the martins of the soul—that is used to do the work. (7)

Neither the fact that Dalinda is part of Ginevra’s cortège and is her closest lady-in-waiting nor the fact that she is ‘employed’ by Polinisso, should be overlooked in considerations of the strategic posturing of self that Dalinda must perform in order to satisfy her promise to Polinesso. See *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

offer “simultaneous comfort and fear” (Farid 556),⁶⁴ which also implies that he will be punished by man as well as God if he is not speaking the truth.

Inclined to believe that Ginevra is an honest woman who loves him faithfully, Ariodante initially protests that he does not believe Polinesso. He believes his rival to have “composed” or fabricated the story, particularly since Ginevra has sworn to him both verbally *and in writing* that she would never marry another:

Non ti vo' creder questo (gli rispose
Ariodante), e certo so che menti;
e composto fra te t'hai queste cose,
acciò che da l'impresa io mi spaventi: (5.29.1-4)

While Rinaldo has already made it clear that he will defend Ginevra whether she is virtuous or not since the factual matter of her innocence doesn't concern him, Ariodante is yet another character perilously pinned between desire and belief. In his case, however, his confusion arises from the conflict between what he believes or says he believes (“certo so...”), and what he thinks, or does not want to think (“non ti vo' creder questo”). Despite his desire not to believe, Ariodante is assailed by the beginnings of doubt the moment in which Polinesso says he will make his affair with Ginevra “manifesto,” by forcing the “proof” of their union “inanzi agli occhi”:

Resta smarrito Ariodante a questo,
e per l'ossa un tremor freddo gli scorre;
e se creduto ben gli avesse a pieno,
venìa sua vita allora allora meno. (5.40.5-8)

Reversing the stance towards belief, doubt, and sight expressed by Herodotus's Gyges, in this case, the torturous vacillation between *partial* doubt and *partial* belief only becomes further complicated when Ariodante ultimately cedes to Polinesso's persuasion and admits that he must see the visual proof for himself if he is to fully believe what his rival has told him: “ma ch'io tel voglia creder non far stima, / s'io non lo veggio con questi occhi prima” (5.41.7-8). Unaware as he is of Polinesso's ability to manipulate signs, the visual register, and an undeniable scopophilic impetus, Ariodante equates “creder” and “veder,” that is, sight and belief, or what he sees and what he knows (Mulvey 19-24).

By glibly perverting the integrity of visual proof, Polinesso's careful orchestration would have it that he goes to meet Dalinda dressed as Ginevra, while Ariodante observes in horror. Meanwhile, having ceded to Polinesso's manipulative requests to don the princess's clothes without fully understanding the weight of what he is asking from her, Dalinda imperils her lady's reputation and life when her nighttime dalliance with Polinesso is interpreted by Ariodante and his brother as “la fraude sua”—or more precisely, as definitive proof of Ginevra's betrayal. As

⁶⁴ “An oath is, at heart, the calling of God as witness; thus the oath's elevated status and its unique ability to endow us with simultaneous comfort and fear. [...] In a court of law, an oath brings weight to a witness's testimony. It is to serve for the witness as reminder of both the gravity of the undertaking and the penalty associated with dishonesty during the course of that undertaking. [...] Thus, the oath is entrenched as a vehicle for the relay of truth,” from Nadine Farid, “Oath and Affirmation in the Court: Thoughts on the Power of a Sworn Promise.” *New England Law Review*, Vol. 40: pp. 555-62 (556-67).

Lucranio advises his brother, the crime that they have seen with their own eyes is proof of an infidelity that merits punishment by death; instead of directing his sorrow and rage inwardly, he should directly address and extirpate the source of his distress—Ginevra:

Cerca far morir lei, che morir merta,
e serva a più tuo onor tu la tua morte.
Fu d'amar lei, quando non t'era aperta
la fraude sua: or è da odiar ben forte,
poi che con gli occhi tuoi tu vedi certa,
quanto sia meretrice, e di che sorte. (5.54.1-6)

Basing his argument around what he believes is ocular, incontrovertible evidence that he believes can be seen “certa,” Lucranio puts forth an interesting perspective on Ginevra’s culpability. While clearly his allegiance would be with his brother, not only does he believe without any doubt that Ginevra is unfaithful, he believes that he has enough evidence to determine that rather than one indiscretion, hers is a longstanding fault. He establishes a censorious temporality “*fu d’amar lei, quando non t’era aperta / la fraude sua: or è da odiar [...]*” (my emphasis), which exacerbates the duration, and thus the magnitude, of her (now) longstanding fault.

Given the connotations of the names of all of the characters in this intrigue, one might reflect here that Ginevra’s name in particular, is carefully chosen to recall that of the adulterous queen of the Arthurian cycle, particularly due to the way in which Ariosto subtly but continually manipulates the reader’s expectations throughout the course of the episode. Indeed, Ariosto is teasing the reader by making his use of Ginevra as an exemplary figure cause the reader to fall into the same trap of (mis)recognition and (mis)understanding as do the innocent players implicated in Polinesso’s malevolent plot. In other words, by naming the lady of this episode Ginevra as if by antonomasia, Ariosto suggests that she is akin to the adulterous woman. Thus, he is implicitly, and not so innocently casting aspersions on the presumed innocence of *his* Ginevra. Moreover, Ginevra’s identity as an adulterous lady is again gestured towards much later, in canto 43’s famous fidelity testing episode, in which the unfaithful behavior suggested through Ginevra’s name in the *Furioso*’s early cantos, is linked explicitly to the historical and literary figure accused of adulterous dalliances.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Indeed, in canto 43 when a doubtful husband wonders how he can prove his wife’s fidelity, the sorceress Melissa tells him that she can give him the famous chalice of the wife-test. As she explains the process, she casts the legendary Ginevra as a negative example by referencing her “fallo.” This vilifies the Queen all the more, since she is situated as the perfidious motivating force that sparked the creation of the terrible, wife-tasting chalice in the first place:

Chi la moglie ha pudica, bee con quello:
ma non vi può già ber chi l’ha puttana;
che ’l vin, quando lo crede in bocca porre,
tutto si sparge, e fuor nel petto scorre. (43.28.1-8)

Given the infamy of her “fallo,” her demotion from “virtuous queen and “moglie [...] pudica” to “puttana,” and her (resulting) legendary status as the adulteress *par excellence*, this statement makes the text’s last reference to Ginevra an explicitly negative one. Moreover, the denigrated status Ginevra is granted in canto 43 echoes Lucranio’s initial (and erroneous) assessment of the Scottish

A similar reversal is at play in Dalinda's inadvertent betrayal of her lady.⁶⁶ That is, if Ginevra becomes approximated to the adulterous Arthurian queen, then Dalinda is immediately cast as the stereotypical perfidious nurse or *mezzana* figure, who incites her lady to lascivious deeds. Moreover, though Ariodante's beloved

Ginevra's fall as one that caused her to devolve from "amante" to "meretrice." This correspondence reveals that even the *Furioso's* contradictory early references to the Scottish Ginevra, proleptically justify this later obsession with finding accurate methods by which to gauge and test the fidelity of wives.

⁶⁶ In the period following the *Furioso*, characters named Dalinda continue to be cast in a rather ambiguous, if not unfavorable light. In John Dryden's *Love Triumphant, Or Nature will prevail* (1694), Dalinda is portrayed as lascivious but intelligent, and perhaps because of this, she is skeptical about the harmonious potential of marriage particularly when it is arranged between ill-sorted parties. Her conclusion, then, is that marriage between unequal parties is best, when a smart wife has a fool's riches to gain:

Two Married Wits, no quiet can enjoy:
Two Fools together wou'd the House destroy.
But Providence, to level Humane Life,
Made the Fool Husband, for the Witty Wife. (2.2.205-8)

Dalinda successfully arbitrates for what she wants; as such, she is presented as a beautiful yet treacherous woman who betrays others. Her future husband likens her to the treacherous biblical Delilah, who betrays Samson by seducing and then betraying him for money, though he loved her faithfully (Judges: 13-18): "Oh Dalinda! no more Dalinda, but Daliah the Philistine: Cou'd you find none but me to practice on?" (5.1). In the Epilogue, aspersions continue to be cast upon her honor, this time through extrapolation:

For him that weds a puss, who kept her first,
I say but little, but I doubt the worst.
The wife, that was a cat, may mind her house,
And prove an honest, and a careful spouse;
But 'faith I would not trust her with a mouse. (vv. 88-92)

In *Eliza Haywood's The Masqueraders, or Fatal Curiosity* (1724), Dalinda is a pathetic widow who is seduced by a libertine only to subsequently find herself mercilessly betrayed by her best friend, with whom she has a passionately homoerotic relationship. Many see this work as a feminist manifesto *avant la lettre*. They read a portrayal of "female agency and a form of female empowerment through the masquerades, disguises and semi-epistolary narrative form of her proto-feminist, amatory fiction" destined for a growing number of female readers (Ghosh 1) and thus laud Haywood for her dismantling of gendered hierarchies and her valorization of love "between women," to apply Sedgwick's terminology (especially 1-4; 21-27). After the dissolution of her relationship with her lover and her best friend, Dalinda is not only isolated, but she turns her wrath towards other women. The fact remains then, that Dalinda is unable to empower herself, and that the tale is angled such that it can also be read as a cautionary tale—"whether for the merits of verbal over physical sexual expression or against female confidantes who turn rivalrous" (Lanser 499). Indeed, given her marginalized position, she is aligned with the warning Ariosto's Dalinda provides to other credulous and naively trusting women.

In Haywood's *Dalinda: or, The Double Marriage* (1749), the title alone underscores Dalinda's situation outside of socially appropriate mores and her fracturation of standard marriage arrangements. In the novel, Dalinda (whose name Haywood changes from Elizabeth to Dalinda), is painted as a woman of questionable virtues, who "was trained up from her Infancy to love Money above all Things, and had besides, a Tincture of Avarice in her Nature" (62). Inspired of a real account, and thus, aligned with scandal literature, Haywood's novel reveals her "Jacobite sympathies because of its interest in broken vows and oaths," and investigation into the process of "acquiring empirical knowledge," versus what is more passively and erroneously taken as fact (Wilputte 122).

Ginevra is entirely innocent, since her body is easily misrecognized even by those who love her dearly, her identitary uncertainty itself threatens notions of her innocence all the more, making her seem undeniably guilty when in fact she is not, and furnishing other characters with what they mistakenly believe is “proof” of her adulterous nature. Ariosto’s “deceitful” use of Ginevra’s name is quite similar then—and purposefully so—to Dalinda’s donning of Ginevra’s robes. Both acts, deceitful in and of themselves since they purposefully imitate what they are not, are strategically employed to encourage deception since the very deceitful image they put forth, is not even what it seems to be. The first time that Ginevra is mentioned in the context of this episode, however, is when news that she could be put to death first reaches Rinaldo in canto 4, and he makes it clear that he will defend her. In fact, just like his disinterest in the nuances surrounding the question of Dalinda’s innocence, whether or not she is a faithful wife is no weighty concern to him—he simply wishes to defend her against the Scottish laws that are so hostile to love:

- Una donzella dunque dè' morire
 perché lasciò sfogar ne l'amorose
 sue braccia al suo amator tanto desire?
 Sia maladetto chi tal legge pose,
 e maladetto chi la può patire!
 Debitamente muore una crudele,
 non chi dà vita al suo amator fedele. (4.63.2-8)

Waxing poetic about the unfairness of the laws—a welcome change to the usual lament about the unfairness of love—Rinaldo cannot suffer to let her be punished for satisfying the primary wish of so many of the *Furioso*’s lovers: that their desires be satisfied.

Recalling what he said at the opening of canto 4 on the lack of importance that Ginevra’s fidelity had for him, Rinaldo reiterates that does not want to proclaim her innocence, since “nol sappendo, il falso dir potrei” (4.65.1). What he is indeed willing to say, however, is that her actions—which he seems to presume she *has* taken—should not have led to such drastic forms of punishment:

Non vo' già dir ch'ella non l'abbia fatto;
 che nol sappiendo, il falso dir potrei:
 dirò ben che non de' per simil atto
 punizion cadere alcuna in lei;
 e dirò che fu ingiusto o che fu matto
 chi fece prima gli statuti rei;
 e come iniqui rivocar si denno,
 e nuova legge far con miglior senno. (4.65)

Moreover, Rinaldo lauds Ginevra’s potential transgression because he takes it to be a sign that she is a pliant lover, who has opened her heart to love. This appreciation for her possible libidinousness reverses the type of condemnation that a prototypical *belle dame sans mercy* would usually receive, and which he critiques. In fact, his language seems to take for granted that Ginevra is indeed unfaithful, for, aside from the “aspra,” “empia e severa” laws of Scotland (4.59), his critique, as I

mentioned previously, falls only on his assumption that Ginevra was not discrete enough in terms of her actions when she entertained her illicit lover.

Since these unjust laws state that any woman who is unfaithful to her lover will be put to death unless a knight fights on her behalf, Ginevra is in grave danger. The degree to which her life is in peril is further accentuated by the fact that she is abandoned to the law. For example, though her father the king does not believe that his daughter would have ever behaved so dishonestly, he regretfully acknowledges that the laws of the kingdom must be applied to his daughter just as they would to anyone else. With this critical assessment of the Scottish judicial system, Ariosto is offering a critique of the organizing principle involving inherently flawed laws. Indeed, this judicial system is represented in such a rigid and inflexible manner that it only discommodates and oppresses—it is a system that is universally critiqued yet blindly obeyed by all.

L'aspra legge di Scozia, empia e severa,
vuol ch'ogni donna, e di ciascuna sorte,
ch'ad uomo si giunga, e non gli sia mogliera,
s'accusata ne viene, abbia la morte (4.59.1-4)

The laws do not concern themselves with whether or not the woman is innocent. Rather, a mere accusation against her honor is enough to presume her guilty and justify her death. The systematic failure of an ostensibly well-organized (though not well-appreciated and not very logical) political system imperils the Scottish court, introducing tension.⁶⁷ This again shows the problematic attribution of blame to an

⁶⁷ The ubication of the Dalinda-Ginevra episode in Scotland merits further exploration. Factors such as Ariosto's aversion to travel despite his extensive literary exploration of diverse geographical regions and the way in which Scotland is specifically used as an example of a faulty and derision-worthy juridical system draw even more attention to the precarity and senselessness of its laws. Indeed, with the exception of the villainous Polinesso, nearly all of the characters involved in the episode make derisive statements regarding "the indiscriminate cruelty of Scotland's law" (Wiggins, *Figures* 25). Perhaps these slightly oblique comments are due to Ariosto's awareness of Scotland's thorny and rather arbitrary treatment of laws, at least in the period leading up to the Reformation of 1560; regardless, and investigation of the relationship between Renaissance Italy and Renaissance Scotland, particularly from a legal perspective would elucidate the degree of mockery that accompanies this episode.

Humanism in Renaissance Scotland, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1990), edited by John MacQueen, offers a comprehensive study of the intellectual, academic, and cultural developments in Scotland during the period in question. See in particular "Legal humanism and the history of Scots law," by John Cairns, T. David Fergus, and Hector MacQueen, and "Philosophy in Renaissance Scotland," by Alexander Broadie. Though focused on a courtier, Carol Edington's, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lindsay of the Mount (1486-1555)*, East Linton: Tuckwell Press. 1995, details the expansive and lively courtly, economical, and political climate during the reigns of James IV (1488-1513), and James V (1513-42). See Roger A. Mason's collection of essays, *Kingship and the Commonwealth: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland*. East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1998, for an exploration of relationships between kings, their subjects, and the people; the early ecclesiastical and juridical revitalization; royalist tendencies, and the bleakness occasioned by the Reformation of 1560. Mason's "Regnum et Imperium: Humanism and the Political Culture of Early Renaissance Scotland" (p.104-138), is particularly useful.

More useful still, is Andrew Mark Godfrey's *Civil Justice in Renaissance Scotland: The Origins of a Central Court*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009). He offers a detailed examination of the origins and

innocent victim that recalls the originary error in judgment occasioned by Charlemagne's broken promise to Orlando and Rinaldo, and his miscarriage of judgment and misattribution of blame to Astolfo in the opening cantos of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*. Moreover, this chaos provides a favorable environment for Polinesso, who takes his cruel manipulations of Dalinda to a new level when he has her abducted by the two villains Rinaldo later encounters. Polinesso wants Dalinda to be silenced in order to ensure that she will not speak up to save Ginevra; he also wants her to be killed, of course, in order to cover his tracks and conceal his involvement.

This early episode of the *Furioso*, which is parenthetically enclosed by the comments of various characters who decry the unjustness of laws and the impossibility of trusting others, signals a failure of the political structure that runs in parallel with the epistemological confusion that makes trusting anyone other than oneself into a dangerous risk. This trouble with faith and trust, and Rinaldo's desire to remove himself from actual deliberation in order to focus upon action is not only a privileging of deeds over words. Rather, it betrays a suspicion of words and vows that stems directly from his mistreatment at the hands of Charlemagne. After his trustful naivety proleptically announced the level of deception he felt when Charlemagne abused his promise to him, Rinaldo's skeptic stance on the words of others and to the deliberative process itself become all the more prevalent as one traces his subsequent adventures throughout the work. As a result, the episode of Dalinda and Ginevra, as Rinaldo understands it, must be read as a skeptical stance towards knowledge and truth, which translates to a pessimistic rejection of the quest for truth and ultimate knowledge in the Ariostan world. Broken vows, and even just the suspicion of broken vows, leads to explosions of confused and often misdirected violence. Consequently, a scapegoat is often selected as a way to obliterate, expiate, and eventually remedy the ills that are brought about because of a profoundly isolating and disorienting awareness not only of the inability to trust the words of others, but even, as the episode of Ginevra and Ariodante so clearly

history of juridical thought in Scotland, which eventually led to the formal establishment of a supreme civil court, the Court of Session. In the medieval period prior to this establishment, Godfrey emphasizes the amount of arbitrariness that differentiated Scotland from medieval England for example, where the law was more centralized. In his review of this work R.A. Houston emphasizes the poor state of the Scottish juridical system until the late Reformation period: "Scottish criminal justice was highly devolved and the state lacked a centrally supervised criminal court system until the late seventeenth century; the drive towards legal and therefore political centralisation came principally from demand for civil remedies (1514-15).

On the cultural development and transition from medieval to early modern Scotland, with a focus on diplomacy and law, see L. A. J. R Houwen, A. A. MacDonald and Sally Mapstone, *A Palace In the Wild: Essays On Vernacular Culture And Humanism In Late-medieval And Renaissance Scotland*. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000; on literature and literary and political relationships see: Alastair MacDonald and Kees Dekker, eds., *Rhetoric, Royalty, And Reality: Essays On the Literary Culture of Medieval And Early Modern Scotland*. Paris: Peeters, 2005, and Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood, *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, Tuckwell Press: East Lothian, 1998.

teaches Rinaldo, of the inability to trust one's own eyes, "visual proof," and even more problematically, oneself.

The Marriage Plot: Good Doubt, Bad Faith, and Betrayal as an Interpretive Framework

Although physical distance and the chivalric enterprises that knights are obliged to undertake frequently separate and divide couples that could otherwise be together, medieval and early modern perspectives on marriage unfailingly emphasize the importance of individual faith and the idea of marriage as a contract and vow. The reprioritization of the individual, or the "ripening of the concept of individual spirituality," as Massimo Leone puts it in his discussion of religious conversion in the chivalric context (101),⁶⁸ gained momentum during the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation. During this period, marriage was cast as one of the most insoluble interpersonal bonds, with indispensable religious, juridical, and social underpinnings, and Ariosto emphasizes the difficulties that can arise from the new agency granted to the individual, rather than a unified couple. As the foundational marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero is the crucial climax to which the entire *Furioso* directs itself, the text's highly ambiguous management of their union merits great attention.⁶⁹ Yet the *Furioso*'s problematic emphasis on the

⁶⁸ See Leone's "Converting Knights: A Semiotic Reading of Spiritual Change in Four Italian Chivalric Poems." Focusing primarily on Boiardo's representation of religion, Leone discusses the change in concepts of religiosity and faith as related to their historical evolution, particularly in regards to the concept of individual belief and spiritual passion, which, he maintains, are presented *in nuce* in Boiardo and developed more explicitly in Ariosto:

The Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation deeply modified the perception of religions and religiosities. The character of individual conviction that is currently associated with the idea of faith is partially a product of both the Protestant and the Catholic Reformations, which represented the reformulation of a past tradition as well as the attempt at reforming the Christian language of the soul. The ripening of the concept of individual spirituality is not uniquely a product of the Catholic Reformation and its dialectics with the Protestant denominations. On the contrary, as has been shown, Boiardo was able to describe the spiritual mutation of some of his characters in a detailed, articulated, and personal way. However, this praise for individuality remains, in Boiardo's epoch, hidden under the veil of religious skepticism. The capacity for representing spiritual individuality and the inclination to attribute it to an earnestly embraced faith will converge in the same literary creation only later, in Ariosto and especially in Tasso. (101)

⁶⁹ Though theirs is a relationship not often understood in the light of Orlando's folly and the difficult recuperation of his senses, both as a couple and individually, Bradamante and Ruggiero struggle greatly to differentiate veracity from falsehood, sanctity from error, and reason from madness. Indeed, as Vincent Cuccaro notes in *The Humanism of Ludovico Ariosto: From the 'Satire' to the*

fragility of spousal trust and the failures of proof and “knowledge” (as if in preparation for the introduction of the marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero), illustrates the difficulties of believing the words and promises of others. Much more than a pessimistic response to any truth-seeking quest, the dramatic staging of fidelity tests offers no resolution and only serves to exacerbate the discord, distance, severance, and lack of trust that are already latent in all relationships, while further destabilizing the individual who yearns and searches for trust.

Indeed, while nearly all of the relationships depicted in the *Furioso* showcase trials of faith as a necessary (though often problematic) means by which to test the goodness and fidelity of another, the prime fidelity-testing episodes occur in the arc of episodes related to canto 24, and in cantos 42 and 43. In the former, the pagan Rodomonte learns of the fickleness of his beloved Doralice in a painfully public way. His deception occurs directly after Orlando loses his wits in the preceding canto and falls into a “gran follia, sì orrenda, / che de la più non sarà mai ch’intenda” (23.133.7-8) because of what he interprets as proof, “sempre [...] più chiaro e piano” of the licentious betrayal of his beloved Angelica:

Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso:
quel ch’era Orlando è morto ed è sotterra;
la sua donna ingrattissima l’ha ucciso:
sì, mancando di fé, gli ha fatto guerra. (23.128.1-4)

Orlando’s complete estrangement from himself because of Angelica’s unfaithfulness, and the “odio, rabbia, ira e furore” that he feels prepare all the more for Rodomonte’s violent reaction to his wife’s betrayal. From a standpoint that prioritizes the faithfulness of spouses, the betrayal that Rodomonte suffers is far more problematic since it is his “sposa” Doralice who has cast him aside, instead of a damsel who wants nothing to do with him and who owes him nothing. Furthermore, while Angelica’s affective distance from Orlando removes her from blame and casts Orlando’s rash folly as unmeasured and out of line, Doralice is culpabilized in the text because she is an active agent in her separation from Rodomonte and has deceitfully—and willfully!—chosen another. As a means of protecting her new flame Manricardo and aligning herself with him, she even advises him of Rodomonte’s arrival and clearly articulates why her spouse has cause for such ire:

[...] mostrollo a Mandricardo,
dicendo: - Ecco il superbo Rodomonte,
se non m’inganna di lontan lo sguardo.
Per far teco battaglia cala il monte:
or ti potrà giovar l’esser gagliardo.
Perduta avermi a grande ingiuria tiene,
ch’era sua sposa, e a vendicar si viene. (24.95.2-8)

Although she wonders if sight is deceiving her, of course we know that the real “ingann[o]” is due to her inconstancy alone. The agency that Doralice has in

Furioso, “The constant oscillations between reason and madness in the love situation of Ruggiero and Bradamante continue throughout the *Furioso*” (204).

orchestrating her betrayal of Rodomonte, and her centrality to vows that are articulated is subsequently evidenced both in her negotiation of her battling lovers and in her negotiation of her amorous relationship(s) vis-à-vis larger imperial concerns. The similarities that abound between Rodomonte's struggle with vows and the *Furioso's* early portrayal of the contention between Orlando and Rinaldo as they fight for Angelica in the light of Charlemagne's promise, draw attention even more overtly to the importance of this episode. In this case however, Doralice—encouraged by a messenger—takes an authorial stance when she uses the love both men harbor for her to suspend their battle and redirect their attentions towards the Saracen camp:

Io vi comando,
per quanto so che mi portate amore,
che riserbiate a miglior uso il brando,
e ne vegnate subito in favore
del nostro campo saracino, (24.111.2-5)

Again like the original situation in canto 2, the warriors come to the agreement that they will temporarily lay aside “ogni veneno” in order to fight for the Saracen cause. As soon as they emerge victorious, however, they swear that they will resume their “crudel guerra e inimicizia ardente” in their fight for Doralice's hand—an oath, unsurprisingly, that they swear on Doralice's actual hand, since she “fece la sicurtà per amendue” (24.113.4, 7-8). Although Rodomonte seems not to immediately realize how fragile this “sicurtà” is, and into what peril his relationship falls as a result, the problems that this act of faith poses for him are numerous. Firstly, his wife has already been unfaithful to him, and her divided allegiances are metaphorized by the fact that she is allowed to serve as a guarantor for both of her suitors. Secondly, the fact that Rodomonte and Manricardo are equally strong and equally valiant in battle proleptically gestures towards how difficult it will be to untie the “knot,” that is, to “sciorre il nodo” that comprises their quarrel and sardonically emphasizes the suitability of both warriors as Doralice's lover. In other words, they are both strong enough to possess her, and indeed they both have. Thirdly, again demonstrating the conflicting desires of one's heart and one's lord, and just how difficult it seems to be to prioritize the empire over a tantalizing and distracting woman, neither of the warriors gives any heed to King Agramante's wishes. Agramante begs each warrior “da signor giusto e da fedel fratello” to listen to him, while histrionically running “di qua e di là più volte a questo e a quello” (27.103.2), as he attempts to convince them to resolve their dispute.

Given the fact that Agramante, much like Charlemagne, is unable to resolve Rodomonte and Manricardo's dispute, he decides that Doralice's volition must be the deciding factor: “che de la bella donna sia marito / l'uno de' duo, quel che vuole essa inanti; / e da quanto per lei sia stabilito, / più non si possa andar dietro né avanti” (27.104.3-6). Reversing the usual scorn and denigration of women's volition and agency in the *Furioso*, here the impasse can only be resolved by taking Doralice's wishes into consideration. As such, her desires are assumed to be rather straightforward and clear. Since Rodomonte loved Doralice “gran tempo prima”

than her relationship with Manricardo took root, and since she has treated him indulgently, offering him “ogni favor,” Rodomonte is sure that she will chose him, and he is not alone in these beliefs: “né egli avea questa credenza solo, / ma con lui tutto il barbaresco stuolo” (27.105.7-8). Paradoxically, even though the text does acknowledge Doralice’s independent desires and her unique access to agency, she is read incorrectly, both by the man who loves her so passionately, and by all of his supporters who understand what great sacrifices and feats he has accomplished in her honor:

Ognun sapea ciò ch’egli avea già fatto
per essa in giostre, in torneamenti, in guerra;
e che stia Manricardo a questo patto,
dicono tutti che vaneggia ed erra.
Ma quel che più fiate e più di piatto
con lei fu mentre il sol stava sotterra,
e sapea quanto avea di certo in mano,
ridea del popular giudicio vano. (27.106.1-8)

Perhaps the only character in the *Furioso* who fully understands the meaning of faith, Manricardo simply laughs when confronted by a *vox populi* who casts aspersions on the strength of his relationship with Doralice. He believes that Doralice loves him most of all; consequently, he is unperturbed by any worry or doubt that Doralice will prefer Rodomonte to him.

Nevertheless, the fact that everyone except for Manricardo is wrong in their assessment of the situation and judgment of Doralice’s amorous preferences serves not just as a critique of the perfidy of women and of Doralice’s rather surprising illicit desires. It also critiques the way in which others read her and understand her wishes. “Tutti” are so shocked by the lady’s unanticipated desires that they “restar maravigliosi,” while Rodomonte himself is “attonito e smarrito.” Indeed, this misreading by the public and by someone ostensibly close to Doralice emphasizes yet again the failures of human judgment and the fragility of trusting one’s own instincts and knowledge, let alone those of others. Once Rodomonte loses his standing as her lover, the unfortunate discovery of her true wishes cause him to lash out and cast blame. Only upon losing does he begin to blame what he considers to be the unfair terms of the pact he made with Manricardo. Next, he blames the failures of a woman, who, much like Ovid’s perfidious Medea who admits that her capacity to discern proper behavior simply cannot override her baser desires—“Video meliora proboque, / deteriora sequor” (*Metamorphoses* VII. 20-21)—is unable to arbitrate, discern, and comport herself properly.⁷⁰ Acerbically complaining about

⁷⁰ Also evoked in Boiardo’s *Orlando innamorato* (1.1.31), and in canto 9 of the *Furioso*:

Ma l'escuso io pur troppo, e mi rallegrò
nel mio difetto aver compagno tale;
ch'anch'io sono al mio ben languido et egro,
sano e gagliardo a seguire il male (9.2. 1-4),

the discussion of akratic desires directly recalls the disorientation, fragmentation, and failure that Petrarch claimed to have suffered because of his poor choice to give more favor to his obsession with Laura (and to writing about her) than to morally and spiritually edifying contemplation. Indeed, in

“l'arbitrio di femina lieve / che sempre inchina a quel che men far deve” (27.108.7-8), Rodomonte promptly sets off on a quest to try and discern if all women are inherently deceitful as he regrets both their fickleness and his own credulity:

Oh femminile ingegno (egli dicea),
come ti volgi e muti facilmente,
contrario oggetto proprio de la fede!
Oh infelice, oh miser chi ti crede! (27.117.5-8)

“I vo pensando, et nel penser m'assale,” Petrarch describes himself as being incapable of grasping anything properly: “ond'io, perché pavento / adunar sempre quel ch'un'ora sgombre, / vorre' l ver abbracciar, lassando l'ombre” (vv.70-72). On the wrong path at the wrong time, and with the wrong type of desires in his mind, the poet is incapable of successful possession. Not only does this frustrate his amorous desires, his poetic desires are hindered as well, which threatens the amorous and poetic vows he has made to properly commemorate Laura “in verso.”

Just like formulaic *carpe diem* poems that often end literally in “nothing,” for a poem that so emphatically attempts to stage a cognitive and physical trajectory, “I vo pensando” finishes in a surprising state of unproductive stasis that offers no resolution. Rather, the poem serves primarily to force Petrarch to realize that love is a vain enterprise. What is most important however, is that even though he is conscious of his folly and the risks of loving an unstable body he knows can never last, the poet knows just how dedicated he is to the “mortal cosa” he continues to love more than God. Instead of abandoning Laura, as the first and last poems of the *Canzoniere* initially might seem to suggest, what the poet subverts and finally abandons is actually the “spazio” that is promised for him in Heaven. His rejection of religion leads him to brazenly flout Death, since his pleasure in loving Laura is so great “ch'a patteggiar n'ardisce co la Morte” (264, vv. 125-26). Instead of avoiding, rejecting, and distancing himself from the “vane speranze e l van dolore” (I, v.6), or even instead of just passively accepting them, the poet admits in the envoy of “I vo pensando,” that he specifically goes in search of the fragmented, vain things. Vain things simultaneously define and constitute his “rime sparse,” even though he knows they will cause his spiritual perdition and precipitate his physical death while they break all of his vows:

Canzon, qui sono, ed ò l cor via piú freddo
de la paura che gelata neve,
sentendomi perir senz'alcun dubbio:
[...]
ché co la morte a lato
cerco del viver mio novo consiglio,
et veggio l meglio, et al peggior m'appiglio. (vv.127-29; 134-36)

Caught as he is between his religious and amorous vows, he is no longer content to vacillate wildly between these religious aspirations and his amorous and poetical desires. He ultimately makes the decision to irrevocably distance himself from the thoughts that lead him along the path to salvation. Yet even in this final gesture of defiance, he hesitates and undermines the new promises that he is making. Though he realizes that his relationship with Laura is nothing but vanity, and though he hears his admonishing thoughts and sees the benefits of “l meglio,” he cannot resist the masochistic impulses that manifest themselves as a perverse fidelity for the decaying things that scatter and disintegrate with time. He is aware of the “vera vita” and the felicities of salvation, but prefers fragmentations, ruins and the process of disintegration that anticipate death. The perfidious nature of the love of vanity that prevents him from doing what he believes is right is effectively rendered when he describes his desire to devote himself to better things. Nevertheless, ostensibly offered in good faith, even this confession—almost a deathbed admission since he is “co la morte a lato”—is undermined by his citation of Medea’s “Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.” Though he is aware of a good and safe trajectory, he chooses to embark upon the more risky path; though sees positive, surer, and better things, as he explains, he prefers to follow, chase and grasp for the worse.

Despite the specificity of his betrayal, his failed relationship makes him immediately view all women misogynistically. For him they are now like the “serpente rio,” among other base creatures. “Per pestilenza eterna al mondo nate, “ they are representative of poison, danger and contamination, and are “ importune, superbe, dispettose, / prive d’amor, di fede e di consiglio, / temerarie, crudeli, inique, ingrate”(27.121.5-8). When he arrives at an inn, still brooding and ashamed about Doralice’s ‘betrayal,’ the innkeeper refers to empirical experience and calls men who believe in the constancy of their wives fools who are “senza ragione” given their “falsa opinione” and the “sciocco credere” that dupes them into thinking that despite women’s lasciviousness, they alone are not being cuckolded.

Similarly, and even more tellingly, the poetic voice chimes in to add his perspective on this pressing question of women’s constancy. Distancing his experience from Rodomonte’s crisis, he insists that the Saracen’s judgment of women’s inherent vility is incorrect. Recalling Rinaldo’s early difficulties focusing and rerouting himself, and Orlando’s folly which nonetheless underscores that women serve as a catalyst for male “turbimento,” he recurs to metaphors of *smarrimento* and spatial disorientation to do so: “e certo da ragion si dipartiva; / che per una o per due che trovi ree, / che cento buone sien creder si dee” (27.122. 6-8). As if it were simply a question of misunderstanding and a need to bolster faith, the poetic voice insists that women cannot all be dishonorable, so, one must believe (“creder si dee”) that the majority is virtuous. Yet as he dismantles the importance of empirical evidence, and what he has learned “per prova,” the poetic voice regretfully admits that he has never personally experienced an example of female constancy himself. In fact, he too has struggled with the problem of female guile and untrustworthiness, and has suffered greatly because of it:

Se ben di quante io n’abbia fin qui amate,
non n’abbia mai trovata una fedele,
perfide tutte io non vo’ dir né ingrate,
ma darne colpa al mio destin crudele.
Molte or ne sono, e più già ne son state,
che non dan causa ad uom che si querele;
ma mia fortuna vuol che s’una ria
ne sia tra cento, io di lei preda sia. (27.123.1-8)

Though the poetic voice has apparently loved enough women to assemble them into one rather massive sample group, he has never encountered a lady who matches him in faithfulness. Rather than blaming the women themselves, he attacks the “destin crudele” and the “fortuna” that have situated him as the direct target of unmerited female aggression. Furthermore, he goes on to insist that exemplarity—and by extension, public opinion or the “giudicio uman”—works against women’s honesty, since the few women who behave badly draw far more attention for their scandalous behavior than women who are the very paradigm of honesty and do not behave in such questionable ways. Presenting himself as yet another rather sardonic model of Ariosto’s system of faith and belief, although he has never once been in a relationship with a virtuous woman, and lacks both the empirical evidence

and the theoretical proof that such a woman exists, he has not given up hope that he might one day encounter her:

Pur vo' tanto cercar prima ch'io mora,
anzi prima che 'l crin più mi s'imbianchi,
che forse dirò un dì, che per me ancora
alcuna sia che di sua fé non manchi.
Se questo avvien (che di speranza fuora
io non ne son), non fia mai ch'io mi stanchi
di farla, a mia possanza, gloriosa
con lingua e con inchiostro, e in verso e in prosa. (27.124.1-8)

By twice reiterating his indefatigable commitment to a virtuous ideal—"alcuna sia che di sua fé non manchi," and "che di speranza fuora / io non ne son"—the poetic voice demonstrates the fixity of his convictions and thus aligns himself with the primary articulations of ideal examples of the maintenance of faith throughout the *Furioso*. His resolve corresponds with the understanding that faith-based bonds must largely exist in absence, since even when their referent is not visible, nearby, or even born into existence, yet they must be maintained all the more. Similarly, the quality, fixity, and strength of these bonds are most overtly proven when they are challenged or tested. However, turning the conundrum of faith on its head once again, from a grammatical standpoint the poetic voice undermines his own convictions. Instead of emphasizing the fixity of his faith by saying 'when I find this lady' with a "quando" that presages the sure completion of a future action, he recurs instead to the hypothetical "forse" and "se questo avvien," which opens ample room for doubt, suggesting, as it does, that perhaps the poet's desires will never come to fruition. Perhaps he will never find this lady before he dies; perhaps she does not exist at all. At the very least however, he is not "di speranza fuora" just yet.

More pessimistically still, the pairing of his quest to find his virtuous lady with death is yet another misogynistic investment of women with the same perilous and deadly qualities with which Rodomonte's harangue saddled them, thus perpetuating a fear of the menace and dangers that women purportedly pose. The lengths to which the poet will need to go ("tanto cercar") in his likely vain amorous and poetic enterprise is folly; indeed it recalls the same rash and 'impertinent' desires that caused Rinaldo and Dante's Ulysses to test boundaries on their own excessive journeys. Although he insists that he will commemorate her in written form if he finds her, the associations of the poet's quest for a virtuous woman; the death that lies in wait and temporally limits the possibilities of finding such a rare lady; and ominous descriptions of the poet's growing lassitude, debility, and impending doom serve as reminders of the very high stakes and acute pressures of his artistic enterprise. Given that the association of praising his lady "in verso e in prosa" internally echoes the praise of his benefactor and his promise to narrate "cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima," the poetological implications of faith and keeping one's word are overt. He has promised to 'arrive at port' and 'finir' everything that he has promised to do. If he does not want to end up like the

villains who break their word, or like Boiardo, who carelessly and irreverently abandoned his story, he must complete his task.

The stakes and cost of Ariosto's convictions are very great however, which dramatizes the difficulties of keeping one's promise and having faith in others. Indeed, just as the "cost" of other faith-based relationships is often shown to be devastatingly high, the poet pays emotionally, physically, and artistically by wasting his body and sacrificing so much time.⁷¹ To use the terminology that is obsessively repeated by male lovers suffering from lovesickness, the (usually misguided) quest of these husbands to gauge the faithfulness of their wives and either corroborate their doubts or obtain proof of spousal fidelity "costs" them more than they would have ever imagined.⁷² Given the *Furioso's* many episodes that showcase explicit fidelity tests unfailingly presented as negative exempla when husbands undermine their own grasp on faith by attempting to investigate the fixity of their wives' promises, the poet's commitment to his elusive lady directly anticipates the problems over which Rinaldo must deliberate when he decides whether or not to test the faithfulness of his wife. While all of the other husbands were able, at least, to assuage their doubts by obtaining confirmation, they suffered much more for this hard-earned proof than they would have expected. Rinaldo also suffers when he perceives the logical fallacy at the heart of faith—to test it is to destroy it; but to have it is to blindly accept doubt.⁷³

Emphasizing the text's obsession with faith, reason, and epistemological failures, cantos 42 and 43 feature Rinaldo's negotiation of the fidelity test, his resistance of temptation and the odd emotional instability he feels upon resisting his curiosity. After being purged of his love for Angelica by drinking from a restorative spring that cures him of his lovesickness, breaking the "catena / che lungamente l'ha tenuto in pena" and lifting the shameful "giogo indegno" that he

⁷¹ He suffers emotionally "da colei che tal quasi m'ha fatto" since "ingiustissimo Amor "da chi disia il mio amor tu mi richiami, / e chi m'ha in odio vuoi ch'adori ed ami" (2.1.7-8); his body and mind show signs of wear: "Ma simile son fatto ad uno infermo, / che dopo molta pazienza e molta, / quando contra il dolor non ha più schermo, / cede alla rabbia e a bestemmiar si volta" (30.2.1-4), and he worries about his curved back, his whitening hair, and the "le corde rallentate" of his canto. Finally, if he even returns to port at all, he is afraid he will arrive with a wasted ship, describing himself as : "chi nel mar per tanta via m'ha scorto; / ove, o di non tornar col legno intero, / o d'errar sempre, ebbi già il viso smorto"(46.1.4-6).

⁷² In "Othello and Hamlet: Dilation, Spying, and the 'Secret Place' of Woman," Parker helpfully draws attention to one of the risky implications of the fidelity tests—the possibility that there might be public confirmation of the wife's infidelity, and thus, of the husband's dishonor. Analyzing early modern England, she specifies that "public confirmation was part of the obsession in early modern England with things done "privilie" or in secret, in the confessional, the "secret chamber" of the heart, or the "closet" of a monarch" (63).

⁷³ Rinaldo's refusal again recalls the story of Gyges, the King Candaules, and Candaules' wife, which Herodotus recounts in his *Histories*, particularly since Rinaldo seems to harbor some regrets about not having certitude (which corresponds with his paradoxical envy of men who were foolhardy enough to take the test, but then gained the ever-desired certitude). In his *Interpretazione dell'Orlando Furioso*, Franco Pool considers the failure to have epistemological certitude, and the *realization* that doubt cannot be eradicated as a frustration that incites "la curiosità gelosa, il sospetto che sorge irresistibile dall'incertezza" (226).

was saddled with in the *Furioso*'s first scene of *innamoramento*, Rinaldo feels healthy and free: "sano ha il cor da l'amorose angosce" (42.66.7-8). Full of scorn, he regrets the station that Angelica once held in his heart:

Gli fu nel primier odio ritornata
Angelica; e gli parve troppo indegna
d'esser, non che sì lungi seguitata,
ma che per lei pur mezza lega vegna. (42.67.1-4)

Not even a full day after this monumental reversal, Rinaldo's wife Clarice is introduced in the text. An ostensibly courteous knight approaches the paladin, asks if he has a wife and when Rinaldo responds that he is indeed bound to a wife—"Io son nel giugal nodo" (42.71.3)—the genteel knight offers Rinaldo lodging, promising that his has something very special for husbands to see: "ti farò veder cosa che debbe / ben volentieri veder chi ha moglie a lato" (42. 72.1-2). Rinaldo accepts the knight's hospitality, and after pressing him many times to deliver on "quanto avea promesso," the knight reveals to him that he has a magic chalice that can test his wife's fidelity that will help him "spiar se la sua donna l'ama; saper s'onore o biasmo ne riceve, / se per lei bestia o se pur uom si chiama" (42.100.2-4). Since one of the many problems of cuckoldry, or "l'incarico de le corna," is that the person being betrayed is rarely aware of 'his' betrayal, while "lo vede quasi tutta l'altra gente," the knight insists that his beautiful chalice will grant to Rinaldo a priceless gift—the surety that comes with visual proof. By thrice repeating the potential benefits that drinking from the chalice can put into motion—

Se tu sai che fedel la moglie sia,
hai di più amarla e d'onorar ragione,
che non ha quel che la conosce ria,
o quel che ne sta in dubbio e in passione. (42.101. 1-4),

Se vuoi saper se la tua sia pudica
(come io credo che credi, e creder déi;
ch'altrimente far credere è fatica,
se chiaro già per prova non ne sei),
tu per te stesso, senza ch'altri il dica,
te n'avvedrai, s'in questo vaso bei; (42.102.1-6),

And:

Se béi con questo, vedrai grande effetto;
che se porti il cimier di Cornovaglia,
il vin ti spargerai tutto sul petto,
né gocciola sarà ch'in bocca saglia:
ma s'hai moglie fedel, tu berai netto. (42.103.1-5)

—the knight emphasizes the climactic and epic nature of the decision that Rinaldo must make, as he fixates his eyes on Rinaldo's chest to see if any drops do fall from the chalice.

Right as the canto draws to a close, since he is “presso di volere in prova porse” (42.104.4), Rinaldo reaches for the chalice. Yet despite having explicitly been offered this opportunity to test his wife’s honesty by sipping from a faith-testing chalice he contemplates “quanto fosse periglioso il caso” (42.104.5) and, resisting his curiosity, refuses to imbibe. After canto 43 opens with the poetic voice’s invective against the “mortifero veleno” of avarice and greed—“O esecrabile Avarizia, o ingorda / fame d’avere,” Rinaldo offers an explanation for his refusal centered on a discourse of satiety. He does not need to “tanto cercar” for something that he does not need—or want—to see; as such, he can content himself with the limited, untested knowledge he does have:

[....] Ben sarebbe folle
 chi quel che non vorria trovar, cercasse.
 Mia donna è donna, ed ogni donna è molle:
 lasciàn star mia credenza come stasse.
 Sin qui m’ha il creder mio giovato, e giova:
 che poss’io megliorar per farne prova? (43.6.3-8)

Rinaldo’s famous wife-testing exploit thus dramatizes the utility of discernment, along with his “saggezza scettica,” as Momigliano puts it (209). His rejection of the test is a refusal to obtain proof, and a refusal to obtain substantiation of his wife’s chastity “per prova.” He realizes that testing his lady cannot bring him the surety and tranquility he desires, and will do nothing to further the faith he has in her. Curiosity will force him to run the risk of finding precisely “quel che non vorria trovar.”⁷⁴

Paradoxically, his refusal is one that confirms his understanding of the fragility of faith and the hazards of faith-testing all the more. Faith is belief; by definition it should not need proof in order to be supported and maintained. It will do him well to trust his wife, and if he does, he will not run the risk of being shown what he fears. Like Ariodante’s insistence in the Dalinda-Ginevra episode of canto 5 that he needs to “veder certa” in order to have the assurance that his faith is appropriately attributed, Rinaldo’s refusal to drink is an explicit critic of the utility of this “ocular proof.” While ocular proof “appears” to be the more effective way to obtain corroboration and assurance, Rinaldo knows that evidence can be easily

⁷⁴ On the very important subject of curiosity during the early modern period—which corresponds of course, not just to the more literal takes on inquisitiveness expressed in Herodotus’s story of Gyges, Ovid’s ‘Cephalus and Procris,’ in Apuleius’s account of Cupid and Psyche,” and in Ariosto, but also to the curiosity related to an expanding world-view as a result of maritime exploration, technological advancement, and a new negotiation of the limits and liberties of the individual during the Age of Discovery, see: Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Hans Blumenberg, “Curiositas und Veritas” *Studia Patristica* 81 (1962): 294-302; and Peter Harrison, “Curiosity, Forbidden Knowledge, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England,” *Isis* 92 (2001): 265-90. Richard Neuhauser, in “Towards a History of Human Curiosity: A Prolegomenon to its Medieval Phase,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift* 56 (1982): 562-78, provides a very useful overview and history of curiosity. On wonder and the marvelous see: Douglas Biow, *Mirabile Dictu: Representations of the Marvelous in Medieval and Renaissance Epic*; James Biester, “Strange and Admirable: Style and Wonder in the Seventeenth Century” (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

manipulated. Moreover, rather than “ocular proof” itself, what one believes will more readily determine what is “vero” or “falso” than any external sign, for while tangible, or visible, external signs are far too susceptible to tampering and manipulation to be easily accepted as fact.

Rinaldo’s refusal to take the fidelity test is explicitly described as beneficial, as a good, albeit singular choice that he has made. Differentiating himself from the slew of unfortunate lovers who went before him—from all those luckless men who fell prey to their curiosity and mistrust of women—Rinaldo’s refusal to drink from the fidelity-proving chalice does not end up being detrimental to him, and neither does the search for truth coupled with unbridled curiosity end up ruining Rinaldo’s marriage, as it did for other lovers.⁷⁵ The question of faith, then, particularly since it draws the most attention when it is at its weakest, most threatened, or even absent (such as during the wife test, for example), is a problem that has dangerous repercussions in terms of the integrity of the empire, the couple, and the self.

Rinaldo’s rejection also gestures towards the harmful frivolity and the dangerous malleability of vows, destabilizing the question of faith yet again. Since he goes out of his way to reject knowledge and certitude, ignorance and faith implicitly become aligned. Paradoxically, his refusal to even attempt to imbibe and thus test the mettle and chastity of his wife forces him to accept the destabilizing effect of admitting his ignorance. However, he at least remains stable in his

⁷⁵ The fidelity-testing episodes are not just frivolous negotiations of knowledge, fidelity, and desire however. Rather, they evidence a theoretical investigation of the power and control granted to those privilege enough to obtain knowledge—as well as the containment and (often) ignorant satisfaction of those willing to live in an epistemologically uncertain state. Recalling Augustine’s warning against the relationship between the *libido sciendi* and pride in the *Confessions* X, Montaigne famously argues against curiosity, which he views as a vain, presumptuous, and prideful vice in many of the *Essais*, most notably perhaps, in: “De la présomption” (“La curiosité de connaître les choses a été donnée aux hommes pour fléau [...]” ; and in “C’est folie de rapporter le vrai et le faux à notre suffisance,” (“Que ne nous souvient il combien nous sentons de contradiction en nostre jugement mesmes ? combien de choses nous servoyent hier d’articles de foy, qui nous sont fables aujourd’huy ? La gloire et la curiosité sont les deux fleaux de nostre ame”).

A similar stance is articulated in Cervantes’s “Curioso impertinente,” which, along with Herodotus, uses Ariosto’s fidelity texts as a precisely chosen intertext. Moreover, to draw more attention to the exemplary status of the “Curioso impertinente,” and the denigration of curiosity, not only do other characters debate the story’s utility, the title of the novella alone ironizes on the idea of curiosity as a vain, fruitless enterprise, given the double meaning of “impertinence” (Wilson 10; Wardropper 598). The overly curious man Anselmo—a name purposefully chosen to recall the Ariostan intertext—is warned against the dangers of curiosity by his best friend: “Mira, pues, joh Anselmo!, al peligro que te pones en querer turbar el sosiego en que tu buena esposa vive; mira por cuán vana e impertinente curiosidad quieres revolver los humores que ahora están sosegados en el pecho de tu casta esposa; advierte que lo que aventuras a ganar es poco y que lo que perderás será tanto, que lo dejaré en su punto, porque me faltan palabras para encarecerlo.” The negative implications of curiosity—redered all the more negative, and often violent when coupled with fidelity tests, is also an issue extensively explored in Shakespeare (for example, in: *Othello*, based on Cinzio’s *Un capitano moro*; *Winter’s Tale*, *Cymbelline*, and even *Titus Andronicus*, more generally). See Diana de Armas Wilson 17, and Jane Tylus, “Imitating Othello: The Handkerchief, All’Italiana”: Renaissance Drama, New Series, Vol. 36/37, Italy in the Drama of Europe (2010), pp.237-260.

prioritization of staunch faith (with all of the religious implications implied therein), over all else: “lasciàn star mia credenza come stasse. / Sin qui m'ha il creder mio giovato, e giova: / che poss'io migliorar per farne prova? (43.6.6-8). In other words, knowledge can never be ascertained, it is only what one believes that matters:

Or questo vin dinanzi mi sia tolto:
sete non n'ho, né vo' che me ne vegna;
che tal certezza ha Dio più proibita,
ch'al primo padre l'arbor de la vita. (43.7.5-8)

In this sense, true faith has little to do with others. Rather, it has much more to do with the individual, who must decide whether to trust and have faith in the first place. It is this concern that then takes priority over any relationship with another, and this concern that is more pressing than any decision concerning in whom to place one's trust.

Potria poco giovare e nuocer molto;
che 'l tentar qualche volta Idio disdegna.
Non so s'in questo io mi sia saggio o stolto;
ma non vo' più saper, che mi convegna. (43.7.1-4).

In addition, since the ramifications of the test could be quite harmful, Rinaldo wants to avoid potential turbulence and leave what is unknown in God's hands, even though the prospect of having this knowledge is tempting. Rinaldo's peculiar reaction to this decision further grants an air of uncertainty to his refusal of the test. This corresponds with the twin, yet contradictory yearnings to know and to neglect, to see and to ignore, which Patricia Parker identifies as a type of epistemological pulsion that exacerbates the dangers of “bringing before the eye what otherwise would be lapped, folded, secret, hid” (“Othello” 66).

Though Rinaldo begins his period of hesitation and equivocation by assuming that verifying what he does not want to find would be “folle,” he then goes on to say that he is actually unsure of whether or not he is being “saggio o stolto.” Despite his uncertainty, he will stay committed to what he believes is the better option—the reason that has guided him up to that point: “Sin qui m'ha il creder mio giovato, e giova: / che poss'io migliorar per farne prova?” (43.6.7-8), even if his reason only serves to distance him from the danger of wanting to “tutto saper,” and the heartache of finding his fears confirmed: “[...] se de la moglie sua vuol l'uomo / tutto saper [...] / cade de l'allegrezze in pianti e in guai, / onde non può più rilevarsi mai” (43.8.5-8). As such, and particularly with the negative exemplary models of the biblical Adam and by extension, Ulysses, the episode seems to suggest that true faith consists of *not* ceding to curiosity. To have true faith, one must not question or test the vows of another, particularly since doubt alone is enough to fracture vows and destroy trust (Zatti, “L'inchiesta” 50-52, 55).

We must remember of course, that Rinaldo's preoccupation is primarily his struggle to understand the function and meaning of faith, much more than an attempt to discern whether or not his wife has been faithful to him. Indeed, Rinaldo's language thus suggests that his “credenza” is what determines his

understanding of reality, yet he does not really mean “credenza” in terms of his beliefs, but more of an “immaginazione”—that is, how he chooses to interpret reality. Moreover, making his understanding of faith even more problematic, Rinaldo’s faith consists of doubt and suspicion towards others. Quite misogynistically, rather than giving weight to his wife’s innocence, he shows that he shares the sentiment of the text’s many bitter invectives against women by taking for granted the suggestion that she is unfaithful, as all wives are. Veiled as a gesture of faith, his decision not to drink is an acceptance of ignorance. By resisting the test he refuses to see the “prova” that would evidence his wife’s fault. In other words, he can avoid receiving confirmation of the “fallo” that he does not want to see, and which, if it even did exist, he would prefer to ignore.

At the same time, Rinaldo’s hesitation, followed by the melancholy into which he falls after not drinking from the chalice, and the uncertain language that he uses serves to cloud what could have otherwise been an assertive stance evaluating any quest for knowledge and the manifold benefits of his definitive choice to not drink from the chalice.⁷⁶ Much like the narrator’s lament in Rodomonte’s episode that he has consistently ‘fallen prey’ to deceitful women since he has “mai trovata una fedele,” Rinaldo is very much aware of women’s inherently unfaithful nature. Given these circumstances, he reminds himself that he has quite a lot to lose if the wine ends up spilling and thus ascertains what he hopes is not true, but nonetheless fears. After hearing the tragic story of the Mantuan knight who was confounded by his desire for knowledge, Rinaldo is “da pietà vinto,” and critiques the poor advice the knight received from the magician Melissa that encouraged him to undertake the test:

- Mal consiglio ti diè Melissa in vero,
che d'attizzar le vespe ti propose;
e tu fusti a cercar poco avveduto
quel che tu avresti non trovar voluto.(43.47.5-8)

As Rinaldo sees it, this type of insatiable goading, this relentless desire for verification and proof can only spark explosive results. It is akin to poking the hornet’s nest or adding fuel to a nearly contained fire. He views this action as all the more dangerous since, as readers have seen time and again, virtuous women are so few.

As such, the rejection of the fidelity test can be read as a critique of testing knowledge and faith, and a denigration of proof. Quite different from faith, knowledge is based on factual evidence, it is substantiated by proof, so to speak. Faith on the other hand, particularly in the *Furioso*, must exist even when it is not corroborated by knowledge; and it needs to endure even when it is challenged by evidence to the contrary. Like Adam’s curiosity that drives his desire to “tutto

⁷⁶ Although his focus primarily falls on Ruggiero, James Lawrence Shulman, in “*The Pale Cast of Thought*”: *Hesitation and Decision in the Renaissance Epic*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998, adumbrates the explicit connection between hesitation and shame in chivalric contexts (23-55). This clarifies Rinaldo’s curiously melancholic reaction to refusing the test, even when his refusal is cast as a felicitous event and passionately lauded by his Mantuan host.

saper,” or Ulysses’ desire to search for knowledge past the *nec plus ultra* of the “colonne d’Ercule,” the promise of having doubt-eradicating evidence is surely seductive. For this reason, in addition to the Mantuan knight’s story of “non comparabile tormento,” Rinaldo is regaled with stories of many other men who have also searched for certainty only to be shown, via the “vaso da bere / [...] l’errore de la mogliere” (45.64.8). The negative exempla of other husbands aside, the pairing of “folle” and “molle” reinforces Rinaldo’s certainty of female infidelity and draws another connection between these scenes and the constant lament of the lovesick poet. Nevertheless, Rinaldo wishes to avoid finding himself in a comparable situation:

Gli è questo creder mio, come io l’avessi
ben certo, e poco accrescer lo potrei:
sì che, s’al paragon mi succedessi,
poco il meglio saria ch’io ne trarrei;
ma non già poco il mal, quando vedessi
quel di Clarice mia, ch’io non vorrei.
Metter saria mille contra uno a giuoco;
che perder si può molto, e acquistar poco. (43.66.1-8)

A highly skeptical standpoint that shuns investigation as well as the old scholastic worldview, Rinaldo turns away from knowledge and from the potential risk he could incur. Accordingly: since doubt undermines faith; since one has so much to lose by putting faith to the test; since testing faith will most bring forth results that are contrary to the inquisitor’s wishes; and finally, since the constancy of others is rare and fragile at best, a blind acceptance of one’s convictions is presented as better than a probing examination of knowledge and truth. As the disabused lovers state, in many regards, doubt and uncertainty are preferable to a knowledge of certain deception: “Quanto dovea parergli il dubio buono, / se pensava il dolor ch’avria del certo!” (43.120.1-2).

Finally, the prevalence in various episodes of fidelity tests and trials of faith in the *Furioso* serves to sardonically evaluate the faithfulness of wives while dramatizing the constant fear suspicious husbands have regarding the honesty of their partners—preoccupations which are all set within the context of the poetic voice’s own tortured relationship with his beloved as well as his tortured relationship to his own craft. Each of these examples is parenthetically enclosed within the narrator’s comments that he too struggles greatly because of his inability to trust his beloved, while evidencing, yet again, the problems of any faith-based relationship. While the concluding motto of the *Furioso* “pro bono malum” is often seen as an acerbic commentary on human (in)gratitude, it also has a very particular resonance given the context of the fidelity tests, as it essentially repeats what Rinaldo and the downtrodden negative exempla state—though their intentions were good, what their actions wrought was not. Together, they serve as the bleakest and most auspicious of harbingers to the viability—and sanctity—of the union of Ruggiero and Bradamante.

Conversion and Rehabilitation: Towards the Last Failure of Faith

After the majority of the chivalric enterprises are drawing to an end and the major battles and tensions have quelled, the explosive drama surrounding the marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero comes at a pivotal textual moment—at the very end of the *Furioso*, after being deferred for 45 canti. The extent to which their marriage is delayed dramatizes the vulnerability of the many vows made both homodiegetically and heterodiegetically. Indeed, the promised union almost seems to be conspired against given how it continues to be rather pathologically deferred. Moreover, the text purposefully situates the nearly failed marriage such that it elucidates the preponderance with which vows are threatened and broken: damaged vows are cast as the norm, while maintained vows are situated as the outlier. It comes as no surprise then, that after a proliferation of episodes featuring wandering, dalliance, and unfaithfulness, when Bradamante and Ruggiero are finally on the verge of being united and being able to legally confirm their union, their marriage is hindered yet again, and in the most dramatic of ways.

To this end, deferral, temporal delay, and the intricate setup of threatening events is quite telling. As we have just seen, canto 43, begins with the dramatic presentation of a marital-fidelity test as yet another exploit that Rinaldo must assess and battle appropriately. This challenge ultimately casts his hesitating deliberation over taking the test (or not) as shameful, and ends with Rinaldo arriving too late at the Christian troops' "bloody and hard-won" victory at Lampedusa:

Muta ivi legno, e verso l'isoletta
di Lipadusa fa ratto levarsi;
quella che fu dai combattenti eletta,
et ove già stati erano a trovarsi.
Insta Rinaldo, e gli nocchieri affretta,
ch'a vela e a remi fan ciò che può farsi;
ma i venti avversi e per lui mal gagliardi,
lo fecer, ma di poco, arrivar tardi. (43.150.1-8)

Despite being understandably delayed by the inimical elements, arriving "tardi" is no minimal affront. To be sure, the motif of tardy arrivals is presented as one of the most vilified chivalric actions in Arthurian tradition. Recalling Chrétien de Troyes's emphasis on the shameful suspension of action when Lancelot hesitatingly pauses in front of the criminal's cage en route to his reunion with Guenièvre in the

Chevalier de la Charrette,⁷⁷ and the problems occasioned by Yvain's even more disgraceful delay in the *Chevalier au lion*, when he interrupts and ultimately breaks a binding promise he has made to his wife Laudine by returning to her "too late" and allowing the pursuit of heroic exploits and "aventures" to distract him for too long,⁷⁸ Rinaldo's lamentable tardiness inscribes him into a nearly criminal context in the *Furioso*. Moreover, belatedness yet again underscores Rinaldo's vital position as one of the characters who is most closely aligned with Ariosto as narrator, since Ariosto continually turns to deferral and delay as a narrative strategy to heighten drama and suspense. Finally, arriving late—even though it is just "di poco"—emphasizes the necessity of completion and of 'arriving well.' It accentuates the fundamental connection between this scene in which Rinaldo's exploits have nearly come to a close, and Ariosto's gradual and hard-won approximation to his desired port as the narrative begins to wind down.

Indeed, recalling Rinaldo's epistemological and atmospheric disorientation from canto 2 of the *Furioso* when "il Vento si sdegnò [...] e con tempesta rea / sollevò il mar intorno, e con tal rabbia" (28.2-3) due to the "venti avversi" that have prevented Rinaldo from arriving on time, a series of negative events have befallen the Christians. The tragedies they endure evidence the bleak prospects of victory and the gloomy emotional state that has aggrieved the Christian soldiers during Rinaldo's absence. In short, Rinaldo learns that the valiant warrior Brandimarte has been violently killed, his skull broken in two. This makes the most unyielding knights burst into passionate sobs and causes Brandimarte's lover Fiordiligi, who is "attrita da penitenza," to cloister herself like an anchorite (185), and devote what is left of her short life exclusively to Brandimarte's memory and to God. Her demise occurs very rapidly. "Stava ella nel sepulcro; e quivi attrita / da penitenza, orando giorno e notte, / non durò lunga età, che di sua vita / da la Parca le fur le fila rotte" (43.185.1-4). Other soldiers are physically afflicted as well. Olivier has suffered a crushed foot that causes him immense pain and imperils both his own life and that of the "tre guerrier di Francia," who are "afflitti e mesti" at the thought of having to leave their ailing companion behind (185). Though he needs a doctor, they cannot find one; instead—and tellingly—they are told that they "non denno dubitare" and are referred to a holy man, a hermit described as "servo del Signor del paradiso." Incidentally, this is the very same man "per cui le mani ebbe Ruggier battesimo" (190.1; 189, 8). He miraculously saves Olivier's 'life' as well—"Oh virtù che dà Cristo

⁷⁷ Embarrassed and disoriented, confused and nearly suicidal because of the brusque and humiliating reaction of the Queen, who had made it clear that she did not wish to entertain Lancelot, though he had sacrificed so much for her, Lancelot asks her what crime, what "foret," and "mesfet" did he commit to earn such recompense. It was his shameful delay, she replies: "Comant? Don n'eüstes vos honte / De la charrete et si dotastes? / Molt a grant enviz i montastes, / Quant vos demorasts .II. pas. / Por ce, voir, ne vos vos je pas / Ne aresnier ne esgarder" (vv. 4484-89).

⁷⁸ Just as epistemologically disoriented as Rinaldo in the incipit of the *Furioso* as he searches for Angelica but cannot find her, in *Le Chevalier au lion*, Yvain is similarly frustrated on his quest, and similarly fails to understand how to obtain what he wants: "Je sui, çou vois, uns chevaliers / Qui quier che que trouver ne puis; / Assés ai quis et riens ne truis" and only know that he is looking for "Aventures pour esprouver/ Ma proeche et mon hardement" (vv. 326-58; 360-61).

a chi gli crede!”(194.4)—without using any tools other than those of prayer: “Né d'unguento trovandosi provisto, / né d'altra umana medicina instrutto, / andò alla chiesa, et orò al Salvatore” (191.5-7). His divine entreaty restores Olivier, whose foot is then rendered “più fermo e più espedito che mai fosse” (192.7).

Also languishing, the pagan Sobrino witnesses the effect that Christ's restorative power has on Olivier. Upon seeing “il miracolo grande e evidente” (193.1-4) with his own eyes, he decides that he too will convert to the Christian faith, as Ruggiero did before him: “si dispon di lasciar Macon da canto, / e Cristo confessar vivo e potente: / e domanda con cor di fede attrito, / d'iniciarsi al nostro sacro rito” (193.5-8). After making this decision, Sobrino is then able to make a dramatic conversion and recovery himself. Finally, ever full of “faith and devotion” since his own conversion, Ruggiero's new religious fervor increases all the more when he sees both Oliver's rehabilitation and Sobrino's felicitous transformation; it is at this moment in which he is “riconosciuto finalmente” by Rinaldo, Olivier, and Orlando as a Christian:

e sapendosi già ch'era cristiano,
tutti con lieta e con serena faccia
vengono a lui: chi gli tocca la mano,
e chi lo bacia, e chi lo stringe e abbraccia. (199.1-4)

The twin strands of religious fervor and social promises of love entwine to form one. From Ruggiero and Sobrino's conversions to Christianity, Flordiligi's promise of love and devotion, and socially binding vows that hinge on recognition and acceptance, the complex nature of vows is uniquely presented in a cohesive and positive manner that shows a series—albeit brief—of successfully upheld vows. What is more, the felicitous rehabilitation of Brandimarte's tragic death through unity and religious conversion ultimately results in two worthy additions to the Christian camp, and serves even more to offset the surprising amount of strife that the promise of Bradamante and Ruggiero's potential marriage sparks.

Once all of the aforementioned obstacles seem to have been eliminated, and the resulting tensions repaired, an even more specific impediment arises: Bradamante and Rinaldo's parents firmly oppose their daughter's marriage to Ruggiero. In fact, although her marriage has already been officially contracted, they forbid it.⁷⁹ So doing, they clash violently with their son Rinaldo, who has come to

⁷⁹ Acknowledged as an effective and very persuasive orator, “il qual sapea molto ben dire”(46.61.1), it is the emperor Constantine's son Leone in particular, who manages to convince Bradamante's father (as well as the rest of Charlemagne's court) that Bradamante should marry Leone and not him. He achieves this feat by revealing how Ruggiero was both a faithful friend and a faithful lover when he fought (and the sequence is rather complex): on Leone's behalf, against Bradamante, and for her hand in marriage, while remaining faithful to his vows to both of them throughout:

Oltre che di ragion, per lo tenore
del bando, non v'ha altr'uom da far disegno:
se s'ha da meritarsela per valore,
qual cavallier più di costui n'è degno?
s'aver la dee chi più le porta amore,
non è chi 'l passi o ch'arrivi al suo segno. (46.63.1-6)

understand vows in an entirely different way than do his parents. In addition, their resistance to the marriage forces a dismantling of vows that could undermine the unity of the entire text, and destabilize all of the text's faith-based relationships, if realized. Most importantly, as one of the principal narrative promises of the *Furioso*, given that the homodiegetic narrative promise is precisely to bring readers to the successful union of Bradamante and Ruggiero, the way in which their marriage is dramatically threatened is a vivid portrayal of the vulnerability of authorial, and of any articulated promise or faith-based relationship.

Rinaldo presents the news of his sister's marriage to his parents in an assertive and straight-forward manner in canto 44. Having been particularly "cordial and respectful" to Ruggiero in canto 43, he continues his praise of the future groom by informing his father, Aymon, and his mother, Beatrice, that Bradamante and Ruggiero are perfectly suited for each other. As he articulates his case, he takes specific pains to emphasize Ruggiero's unparalleled nobility and valor. Furthermore, he lets his parents know that this is an officially contracted marriage; he has already promised Bradamante's hand, and a group of unified, supportive witnesses, who similarly value Ruggiero's worth, were present to hear and see him do so ⁸⁰:

Rinaldo un giorno al padre fe' sapere
che la sorella a Ruggier dar volea;
ch'in presenza d'Orlando per mogliere,
e d'Olivier, promessa glie l'avea;
li quali erano seco d'un parere,
che parentado far non si potea
per nobiltà di sangue e per valore,
che fosse a questo par, non che migliore. (44.35)

Despite Ruggiero's value that Rinaldo has carefully extolled, the reaction of his parents is far from amenable to his plans. Beginning with Rinaldo's most egregious affront, his father is offended that he operated on his behalf "senza conferirlo seco." Additionally, what irks him is that Rinaldo's plans conflict with the expectations that he has for his daughter and the very specific requirements that he has for her mate—"ch'abbi regno," for instance. On the other hand, Rinaldo's mother is even more chagrined by her son's arrogant initiative, and even more hysterically opposed to Bradamante and Ruggiero's marriage because of Ruggiero's lack of standing and wealth:

Ode Amone il figliuol con qualche sdegno,
[...] ch'esso ha disegno
che del figliuol di Costantin sia sposa,
non di Ruggier, il qual non ch'abbi regno,

⁸⁰ See J.L.Austin on felicity conditions and on how following "conventional procedures" with the invocation of "certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances" as authorizing and giving legitimacy to the union between two people only after specific linguistic protocol is followed. He uses the ceremony of marriage and the voicing of marital vows as a prime example of felicity conditions (14-15).

ma non può al mondo dir: questa è mia cosa;
né sa che nobiltà poco si prezza,
e men virtù, se non v'è ancor ricchezza.

Ma più d'Amon la moglie Beatrice
biasma il figliuolo e chiamalo arrogante;
e in segreto e in palese contradice
che di Ruggier sia moglie Bradamante:
a tutta sua possanza imperatrice
ha disegnato farla di Levante. (44.36; 37.1-6; 38)

The problem here is not solely that the wishes of both Bradamante and Rinaldo are thwarted, or that a moment prognosticating unification should lead to such public and private discord. What is most problematic for Rinaldo and for an understanding of how vows should ideally operate is that the opposition of Bradamante and Ruggiero's parents, if carried through, would effectuate a betrayal of chivalric code and would force Rinaldo to break an explicit promise he himself had articulated clearly to Ruggiero ("promessa glie avea"). Moreover, since others—Orlando, Olivier, and the "vecchio benedetto"—were present at the moment of articulation, in legal terms they are therefore situated as witnesses to the pronouncement of a fully socially and legally binding vow. Furthermore, the familial debate surrounding Bradamante's marriage grants even more attention to the binding nature of the promise of betrothal. It calls attention to the importance of the wedding for the health of the empire, and to the binding nature of promises and gifts given in relationships of social exchange by using legal terms: "parentare," "lignaggio," "(in)giusto," "giurare" "real fede," "pregio," "dono," "possedere" etc., which further dramatizes how ignoble it would be if Rinaldo's promise were to fail.

Both Rinaldo and Bradamante are horrified by their parents' forbiddance, in fact, which is in such drastic contrast to their compatible desires. Rinaldo's primary concern remains that he had given his word: "Sta Rinaldo ostinato che non vuole / che manchi un iota de le sue parole" (44.37.7-8). Bradamante's concerns, however, are the inverse corollary to his; she does not want to be forced under her mother's duress into verbally articulating a pledge to which she herself cannot honestly adhere: "terria gran difetto / se quell che non vuol far volesse dire" (44.39.5-6). Furthermore, again citing the recurrent motif of debt and (re)payment, though she is well-aware of her filial duties and knows "quanto / di buona figlia al debito conviensi" (43.1-2), she is a "serva d'Amore," and knows that she has been completely subjugated by love:

Figlia d'Amone e di Beatrice sono,
e son, misera me! serva d'Amore.
Dai genitori miei trovar perdono
spero e pietà, s'io caderò in errore: (44.44.1-4)

Divided as she is, and wretched in her subjugation, a subtle but still more contentious issue raised by this familial disharmony offers an even more damning understanding of the nature of vows and promises of the *Furioso*.

First of all, the fact that Bradamante articulates her concerns by echoing a familiar Petrarchan lament emphasizes the pivotal situation of Rinaldo's threatened—that is, potentially broken—promise as the catalyst of many other levels of turmoil. Yet rather than the burgeoning schism between who she was in the past and who she is in this scene, which corresponds to Petrarch's "altr'uom" so different from "quell ch'i sono," Bradamante's psychic breakdown, anchored in the present, stems from the great distance between who she is if she obeys her parents, and who she is if she instead obeys Love. The same tensions are found in the juxtaposition of the "nuova speranza," "desir nuovo," and the "nuovo amor" her parents are trying to force upon her, and the "bene," "gaudio," and "diletto" that Ruggiero has long represented—and continues to represent—for her. The disorder that being caught between the constraints her family puts on her love and her devotion to Ruggiero is further exemplified by Ariosto's emphasis on gloomy Petrarchan motifs and terminology. Just like Petrarch's experience of the spatial and emotional disorientation that leaves him suspended—"di pensier in pensier," or between the youthful "quei sospiri" that separate the forlorn poet from the man he "is now," as he describes in his first sonnet, the painful conflict of duty and love is precisely the situation in which Bradamante found herself in the opening canti of the *Furioso*. And just as she initially attempted to gather her bearings on her quest to find Ruggiero, but found herself "sospesa" "tra sì e no": "di voler ritornar dubita un poco: / quinci l'onore e il debito le pesa, / quindi l'incalza l'amoroso foco" (2.65.1-4), her intense confusion and disorientation in the last cantos of the *Furioso* are further exacerbated since it seems as though she has made no progress nor undergone any development at all.

Yet once Bradamante quashes her momentary doubts and overcomes her fear of disobeying her parents, the decision she makes is to follow her heart and Merlin's prophecy, and thus remain faithfully committed to Ruggiero. Indeed, Bradamante's faith is unfaltering, despite the fact that those around her attempt to weaken her trust through rumors and hypotheses that they pass off as the truth. A great deal of the discussion in canto 44 surrounding the marriage promise centers on hearsay, for example—from her mother's propensity to gossip "in segreto e in palese" to the fixity of the claims that Bradamante, Rinaldo, and Ruggiero each make—and consequently recalls Petrarch's rather embarrassed admission of guilt: "Ma ben veggio or sí come al popol tutto / favola fui gran tempo" (1.9-10). Indeed, Bradamante's mother's publicization of her daughter's disobedience grants her situation a visibility, and thus, ignominy, that both Rinaldo and Bradamante would have preferred to avoid.

Though Petrarch's desire is to find in the "vulgo" "chi per prova intenda amore," so as to "trovar pietà nonché perdono" for his "primo giovenile errore," Bradamante already anticipates the way in which she will eventually distance herself from her parents' desires: "Dai genitori miei trovar perdono / spero e pietà, s'io caderò in errore" (44.3-4). Although she uses a hypothetical clause of reality to emphasize the inevitability of eventually falling into "errore," she uses grammar in a contradictory fashion when she distances herself from hypothesis and steadfastly

insists that she is making no error in terms of her relationship with Ruggiero. However, just as one can read a certain irony in Ariosto's grammatically incongruent reference to "giudicio uman" that "spesso erra"; a certain level of disingenuity in Petrarch's claim that his error of loving is behind him; and see Ariosto's clear mockery of Petrarch's plight by inopportunately quoting him, even in this instance Bradamante is invoking the idea of "error" only to subsequently dismantle it:

ma s'io offenderò Amor, chi sarà buono
a schivarmi con prieghi il suo furore,
che sol voglia una di mie scuse udire,
e non mi faccia subito morire? (44.44.5-8)

Reversing the directionality of typical Petrarchan topoi, if Petrarch's error were loving, Bradamante makes it clear that for her the "fatal error" is not prioritizing love. As she goes on to explain, the idea of "errore" is one that has an origin far outside of her love for Ruggiero and rather, had only to do with his distance from the Christian faith and the problems that aligning herself with a pagan introduces. Thanks to his ultimate conversion, therefore, their union is removed from any nuance of fault at all. In fact, her influence has actually served as a corrective due to her immense efforts to precipitate Ruggiero's religious salvation. As Bradamante explains it, "con lunga et ostinata prova / ho cercato Ruggier trarre alla fede; / et hollo tratto al fin [...]" (44.45.1-3). Ruggiero's conversion subsequently transforms him into a more respectable founding member of the d'Este family, while implicitly justifying the preferences Ariosto has in his selection of a benefactor.

By inscribing their relationship into the context of his long-awaited religious transformation, Bradamante distances their love from the idea of error all the more. As a result, the only 'errors' that remain fall more heavily on her parents. Moreover, it is clear that their faulty understanding of worth and honor, their faulty understanding of the fixity of Rinaldo's promise, and their refusal to respect Rinaldo's vow will only catalyze subsequent errors if it is not corrected or overridden:

S'io non sarò al mio padre ubbidiente,
né alla mia madre, io sarò al mio fratello,
che molto e molto è più di lor prudente,
né gli ha la troppa età tolto il cervello.
E a questo che Rinaldo vuol, consente
Orlando ancora; e per me ho questo e quello:
li quali duo più onora il mondo e teme,
che l'altra nostra gente tutta insieme

Se questi il fior, se questi ognuno stima
la gloria e lo splendor di Chiaramonte;
[...]

perché debbo voler che di me prima
Amon disponga, che Rinaldo e 'l conte?
Voler nol debbo, tanto men, che messa
in dubbio al Greco, e a Ruggier fui promessa. (44.46.1-8; 47.1-2, 5-8)

Also circumscribed by a discussion of errors, an acute sentiment of injustice and deep disappointment concerning a broken vow, Bradamante's struggle to determine to whom she should be obedient, or rather, how to justify her disobedience to her parents both structurally and thematically, recalls Orlando's early monologue in canto 8 in which he regrets Charlemagne's faulty judgment and what he considers to have been his shameful and coerced obedience to Charlemagne's wishes. Just as Orlando scorns the authority the emperor has in favor of his greater physical strength, Bradamante discounts parental bonds and the authority that age can bring with it, preferring instead a hierarchy based on the brute strength and militaristic support one can lend to chivalric enterprises.

The most problematic aspect of her parental unit's opposition to her relationship with Ruggiero, however, and their negligent treatment of Rinaldo's promise, is the fact that the oath that Bradamante has made to Ruggiero is imperiled. Although she continues to lament how oppressively she feels the weight of her parent's opposition, the text addresses her multiple times as "figlia d'Amone (e di Beatrice)," ⁸¹ and continues to reiterate, for example, that she is faithful, "modesta," and "ubbidiente sotto il freno / del padre" (74.1.5-6). Yet even after her parents kidnap her and hide her away in Roccaforte so that a physical distance stands as an impediment to her marriage to Ruggiero, her priority is always love—that is, Ruggiero. Again recalling the divisiveness that broken vows cause, and the suffering occasioned because of Charlemagne's inconstancy that forced Orlando's and Rinaldo's initial separation from Angelica, mention of the castle Roccaforte correlates inversely to Orlando's early complaint that Charlemagne failed to keep his word since Angelica, after all, was *not* kept safe in "qualche rocca forte."⁸²

Following Orlando in terms of his devotion in love and much like any forlorn troubadour, since Bradamante remains steadfastly enamored of Ruggiero, she stilnovistically follows only the words that Love dictates in her heart, ("s'Amor [...]

⁸¹ "[...] era più bella la figlia d'Amone" (32.98.6); "Ma tornar voglio alla figlia d'Amone" (35.56.8); "[...] nel campo la figlia d'Amone / con palpitante cor Ruggiero aspetta (36.17, 2-3); "Figlia d'Amone e di Beatrice sono, / e son, misera me! serva d'Amore" (44.44.1-2). It is Bradamante who includes her mother in the parental order.

⁸² We remember that Ruggiero and Orlando's primary grievance is that Charlemagne failed to entrust Angelica to someone capable of keeping her safe and she escapes. Describing his darkly jealous love for her with references to imprisonment, burial, and death, Orlando knows that he alone would have been able to keep her "in guardia buona," i.e., locked away under his covetous eyes:

Almen l'avesse posta in guardia buona
dentro a Parigi o in qualche rocca forte.
Che l'abbia data a Namò mi consona,
sol perché a perder l'abbia a questa sorte.
Chi la dovea guardar meglio persona di me?
ch'io dovea farlo fino a morte; guardarla più che 'l cor,
che gli occhi miei: e dovea e potea farlo, e pur nol fei. (8.75)

The description of Roccaforte also recalls Bradamante's early negotiations with Brunello in canto four and her attempts to devise a strategy to liberate Ruggiero from the "bella rocca," in which Brunello has imprisoned her beloved. The malevolent dwarf tells her that he has imprisoned Ruggiero "per tenervi [...] sicuramente, / che preso fu da me, come sperai / che fossi oggi tu preso similmente" (4.31.1-3).

né lassa ch'io disponga, né ch'io pensi / di me dispor, se non quanto a lui piaccia, / e sol, quanto egli detti, io dica e faccia”[44.43.7-8]),⁸³ and she describes herself as belonging to her beloved with binding language—“a Ruggiero fui promessa” (47.8). Though her language occasionally reveals a slight hint of uncertainty, and since she is usually so deferent to her parents’ demands, her admission of the priority she gives to Ruggiero makes it clear that she prefers to die rather than take a single action that would betray his trust or thwart their union. Thus, she confirms that the external pressure of her parents does not threaten her vows in any substantial way: “Ma vo' prima morir, che mai sia vero, / ch'io pigli altro marito, che Ruggiero (44.45.7-8).

Once Bradamante discounts these parental stresses, the negligent way in which vows are articulated is revealed yet again when Ruggiero’s inability to trust Bradamante causes him to doubt her even after such extensive trails of her faith. His doubts are what actually serves to menace their union yet again. In fact, when Ruggiero learns of Bradamante’s parents’ opposition and grapples with understanding how others can “disrespect the promise” made to him (“s’alla promessa non avrà rispetto” [44.53.3]), he uses delay as fodder for suspicion. Quite perfidiously, out of all people’s faith, he questions Bradamante’s and admits that he harbors doubts regarding her fidelity:

Può esser, vita mia, che non ti doglia
lasciare il tuo Ruggier per questo Greco?
Potrà tuo padre far che tu lo toglia,
ancor ch'avesse i tuoi fratelli seco?
Ma sto in timor, ch'abbi più tosto voglia
d'esser d'accordo con Amon, che meco;
e che ti paia assai miglior partito

Cesare aver, ch'un privato uom marito. (44.57.1-8)

While Ruggiero does seem to understand that Bradamante is being pulled in two directions because of the opposing wills of her father and her brother, and understands how dependent she is upon her brother to protect the promise that was made, he evidences his faulty and contradictory judgment by continuing to blame her for the way in which their union has been deferred and threatened. Ruggiero claims that they are both being assailed on all fronts—by her parents, by the absence of her brother, by others’ disregard of a binding promise, and finally, by the incursive presence of “Leone Augusto” and his “padre ingiusto.” Despite this admission however, Ruggiero continues to doubt Bradamante’s honesty. Misogynistically, like the frustrated husbands who stoop to testing their wives’ fidelity, he culpabilizes her by accentuating carefully chosen intertextual relationships that link her with women traditionally understood as perfidious or inconstant, and he inscribes her in a line of legendary women who, through their

⁸³ This recalls of course, Bonagiunta da Lucca’s description of the pens of the stilnovisti that directly follow the commandments of Love in Dante’s *Purgatorio* 24: “Io veggio ben come le vostre penne / di retro al dittator sen vanno strette” (vv. 58-9).

fickleness, caused great harm to the unfortunate men who were so naïve and loving as to trust them.

“Fear” of Betrayal and Bradamante’s Vilification—Doubt by Intertextual Association

In contrast to Ariosto’s careful tracing of origins in order to ultimately grant heroism and nobility to an illustrious family, and much like the Boccaccio’s *Corbaccio*, of which the sole purpose is to vilify women, Ruggiero vilifies Bradamante, rendering her guilty by her association with infamous women. For example, in his accusation of his beloved, he references the failed relationship of Helen of Troy and Paris and the failed exemplary relationship between Proserpina and Pirithous: “Elena bella all’amator di Troia / non costò sì né a tempo più vetusto / Proserpina a Piritoo” (44.56.5-7). While Ruggiero recalls metaphors of expenditure, cost, and repayment to express his desire that Constantine and his son’s interference in his relationship “cost” them dearly, if Rinaldo’s broken promise forces him to lose his “ben,” and highly valued “pregio,” the negative association of Bradamante with Helen and Proserpina reveal Ruggiero’s “timor” that *he* actually will be the one who is made to “pay” the greatest price for a broken vow.

Though she is often portrayed in a highly contradictory way,⁸⁴ Helen, as recounted in Ovid, Colluthus, and others, is, par excellence, an unfaithful woman at worst, or a fickle victim, taken against her will at best.⁸⁵ She is depicted as demonstrating both political and uxorial inconstancy, either because of her lustful treachery or because of her helplessness. Proserpina, who is a much less incendiary figure, is perhaps best known for her problematic passivity more than anything else since she is carried to the Underworld against her will. Though Plato in the *Republic* exonerates Theseus and Pirithous from the crimes of rapture and rape and leaves the question of Proserpina’s ubication in the Underworld relatively unaddressed in comparison to the blame that falls on Helen,⁸⁶ much less doubt surrounds the volition and intentions of Proserpina in Hesiod, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Hyginus, for example.⁸⁷ She is regarded as a passive figure in all texts, and as

⁸⁴ See Roland Martinez, “Two Odysseys: Rinaldo’s Po Journey and the Poet’s Homecoming in Orlando Furioso” in *Renaissance Transactions* for a discussion of Trojan intertexts in Ariosto (17-55), and Bellamy’s Athens/Rome/Troy: The City Not Seen” and “A Disturbance of Memory in Carthage” in *Translations of Power* (38-81).

⁸⁵ Colluthus, *The Rape of Helen*. Oppian, Colluthus and Tryphiodorus. Translated by Mair, A. W. Loeb Classical Library Volume 219. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.

⁸⁶ Plato, *Republic* 391c-d (trans. Shorey).

⁸⁷ See the presentation of Proserpina /Persephone in the following classical authors: Hesiod, *Theogony* 349ff / 768 ff (trans. M.L. West), Oxford 1966; Homer, *Homeric Hymns* (trans. Evelyn

such, her association with Bradamante calls attention to the question of Bradamante's agency, volition, and involvement in the contracting of a second marriage. It also highlights the degree of frustration that circumscribes her relationships with others. Correspondingly, Ruggiero's implicit association with Paris and Pirithous puts him in the position of the frustrated lover and portends poorly for his desired marriage with Bradamante. Subsequently, this link perpetuates the idea that Ruggiero's relationship with Bradamante is an illicit one, in the full etymological sense of the word, while Rinaldo's need to arbitrate in order to sort out the confusion that is threatening marital vows is brought to the fore.⁸⁸

To briefly address the most salient aspects of the intertextual underpinnings of Bradamante's and Ruggiero's marriage, as told in: Homer's *Odyssey*; Cicero's *De amicitia*; Virgil's *Aeneid*; Horace's *Odes*; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Ars amatoria*; Statius' *Teseida*, and Petrarch's letters, among many other examples,⁸⁹ both Paris and Pirithous attempt to steal the women they love with relatively little success. Paris is faced with the Trojan War in response to his ignoble actions; this distances him from Helen and eventually causes him to be spurned by his first wife when he desperately needs her help to save his life. Pirithous is considered to be prideful and greedy as he makes a pact with his best friend Theseus to steal the god of the Underworld's wife,⁹⁰ since he deems himself to be worthy of her. Punished for his great affront and immoderate pride, he ends up being bound to a stone in the underworld for eternity.⁹¹ The intertextual parallel created with this reference to

White), Loeb Classical Library, 1914; Virgil, *Aeneid* (trans. Robert Fagles), Penguin: New York, 27-28, 152, 187-90; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* V, The Latin Library, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/ovid/ovid.met5.shtml>; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, CXLVI (trans. Mary Grant), Theoi Online Library. See also Bernard Frischer in "Horace and the Monuments: A New Interpretation of the Archytas *Ode*," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1984, pp. 71-102, for a careful and helpful study of the epithets—many of which are contradictory—most frequently used to describe Proserpina (88-90).

⁸⁸ To my knowledge, Dennis Looney in *Compromising the Classics: Romance Epic Narrative in the Italian Renaissance* is the only scholar who has given attention to Pirithous. However, Looney only mentions Pirithous tangentially while discussing the connection between Theseus and Orlando in the context of the Isabella story (110-16).

⁸⁹ Homer, *Odyssey* (11, 631; 21.295-305); Cicero, *De amicitia*, Virgil *Aeneid* (6,393); Horace, *Odes* (4,7); Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (12.218), and *Ars amatoria* (I); Statius, *Teseida* (1.130), and Petrarca, *Epistolae familiares*.

⁹⁰ Incidentally, in the various myths and stories in which he is discussed, Pirithous is often mentioned in an explicit relationship to oaths: the oath he contracted with his friend; his and his friend's resulting determination to steal Helen and Proserpina; the problems that would result if this oath was not upheld. In the *Ars amatoria* for example, Pirithous is used exemplarily to "rebut Ovid's advice not to trust a friend when you are in love" (John Grant 58).

⁹¹ A punishing critique of Pirithous also comes up in part 2, chapter 40 of Cervantes's *Don Quijote*, in which Sancho encounters a bearded woman, La Dolorida, who he asks to tell him the name of a magical horse. The horse ends up being called Clavileño, but in her periphrastic response to Sancho's question that names two of the *Furioso*'s horses, La Dolorida mentions that the horse is *not* named Pirithous. "'El nombre,' respondió la Dolorida 'no es como el caballo de Belerofonte, que se llamaba Pegaso, ni como el del Magno Alejandro, llamado Bucéfalo, ni como el del furioso Orlando, cuyo nombre fue Brilladoro, ni menos Bayarte, que fue el de Reinaldos de Montalbán, ni Frontino, como el de Rugero, ni Bootes ni Pirítoo, como dicen que se llaman los del Sol [...].'"(2.40). Her equine

Pirithous both critiques Ruggiero's behavior and substantiates his fear over losing Bradamante. Firstly, his exemplar never even comes near to possessing the woman he desires. Secondly, Pirithous' arrogance corresponds directly to Ruggiero's excessive pride, and his immobility is suggestive of the impasse that will arise if Ruggiero is unable to reroute his loss of faith:

Di tutti gli altri beni, o che concede
Natura al mondo, o proprio studio acquista,
aver tanta e tal parte egli si vede,
qual e quanta altri aver mai s'abbia vista;
ch'a sua bellezza ogni bellezza cede,
ch'a sua possanza è raro chi resista:
di magnanimità, di splendor region
a nessun, più ch'a lui, si debbe il pregio. (44.49.1-8)

Ruggiero's Pirithian egocentrism and superciliousness—faults that are continually punished in the *Furioso* and which recall the *Innamorato*'s critique of the “gesti smisurati” that lead to failure—further intensify his discomfiture and rage. Indeed, he is incensed precisely because others do not believe him to be worthy of marrying Bradamante.

Additionally, the relationship between both Pirithous and Paris to Helen, and Helen to Bradamante further emphasizes the risk of being frustrated in love that Ruggiero is running. The oath of friendship Pirithous made with Theseus certainly concerned Helen, since the first element of their pact was a promise to steal her from her father for Theseus (a theft they were able to realize successfully). The second half of their pact was their unsuccessful rapture of Proserpina (which was meant to benefit Pirithous). In parallel with the drama that causes Ruggiero so much strife in the *Furioso*, the Trojan War had at its origin an oath that was articulated by Helen's father, and by which her husband and her other suitors abided, since they understood it as binding and irrevocable. Indeed, Helen's separation from her husband Menelaus, whether due to abduction or a change of heart then caused her to be sought by Greek soldiers who were rallied because of their vow to protect her rightful husband's control of her. Given the violent threats that Ruggiero is making against Constantine, Leone, and Bradamante's parents because they do not have “rispetto” for Rinaldo's original promise, Ruggiero vows that the destruction he will mete out as he expends his rage will rival the devastation caused by the Trojan War. This evocation of Troy is a poignant, for not only is Ruggiero a direct descendant of Hector and Astynax, two famous Trojan

identification of Pirithous is incorrect of course, which signals another way in which Cervantes is turning tradition on its head and mocking it. Rather than King (albeit one who has legendary fame as a sinner and tortured lover) and famous friend to Theseus, Pirithous has been demoted to a horse. Moreover, La Dolorida's confusion of Pirithous with a horse is also a way to mock his shameful blood connection with the centaurs, which intensifies the reader's increasing awareness of “la degradación del universo caballeresco” (Redondo 186) and the fatalism that will lead Quijote to his death.

See also: the association of Pirithous to an equine origin Dante's *Commedia* canto 9, and Faetano Cipolla in “Labyrinthine Imagery in Petrarch.” *Italica*, Vol. 54, No. 2. Dante-Petrarca (Summer, 1977), pp.263-8.

heroes who somewhat validate his heroic presentation in the *Furioso*, it marks the rupture and failure of the oaths that circumscribe the violent quest for possession of female bodies by any means necessary. In addition, it elucidates how this struggle to understand vows and possession directly leads to familial tensions and political clashes and the many tumultuous “lite” of the *Furioso*.

This emphasis on oaths and their difficult maintenance is present in the Pritihious example as well. In fact, Prithous is often regarded as dishonorably forcing—even exhorting—his best friend to uphold “unlawful” vows that should not have been made.⁹² Described as suffering from “rash ardour” in Statius’s *Thebaid*,⁹³ and designated as a “madcap suitor” in Seneca’s *Phaedra*, these two references among many others can be understood not only as a commentary on Pirithous’s illicit and covetous desires, but on the impulsive and deviating desires of the lovers of the *Furioso*’s opening canti and Charlemagne’s problematic management of the vows he himself makes. Specifically then, broken vows mark the failed enterprises of both Paris and Pirithous, and by extension, intertextually suggest the failure of Ruggiero’s promised union as well.

Finally, given this bellicose violence and the menace of miscarriage, Ruggiero’s rage is as acute as it is due to the affront he believes he will endure because of a broken promise. Particularly since Bradamante is intertextually associated with two women who have little control over themselves and who have questionable intentions in terms of their amorous liaisons, he unfairly blames her and slanders her. Whether “consciously” or not, and poorly assessing “qualor sia la volontà di lei” as so many of the principal male paladins habitually do, Ruggiero further admits his fear that Bradamante has betrayed him by jealously suggesting that she prefers “Cesare” to him. Ruggiero is doing far more than accusing her of suffering from the same materialism that afflicts her mother. Much like Andromache’s harsh criticism of Helen in Seneca’s *Troades*,⁹⁴ by crassly suggesting that she “paia assai miglior partito / Cesare aver, ch’un private uom marito,” Ruggiero is not just referencing Cesar’s unfair advantage in terms of status as a way to emphasize how profoundly he has been slighted, he is complicating their

⁹² Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 4. 5 (trans. Wilson)

⁹³ “The rash ardor of Pirithous provoked me [Haides], and Theseus, sworn comrade of his daring friend [the pair attempted to abduct Persephone].” Statius, *Thebaid* 8. 53 ff (trans. Mozley).

⁹⁴ Commenting on how Helen’s perfidy has caused the seeds of plague and strife to ‘scatter’ throughout Troy, Andromache complains:

Pestis exitium lues
utriusque populi, cernis hos tumulos ducum
et nuda totis ossa quae passim iacent
inhumata campis? Haec hymen sparsit tuus.
Tibi fluxit Asiae, fluxit Europae cruor,
cum dimicantes laeta prospiceres viros,
incerta voti. Perge, thalamos appara.
Taedis quid opus eset quidve solemni face?
Quid igne? Thalamis Troia praelucet novis.
Celebrate Pyrrhi, Troades, conubia,
Celebrate digne: planctus et gemitus sonet. (vv.892-902)

newly tortured relationship. As such, he is increasing the perceived magnitude of Bradamante's affront by accusing her of fickleness. Though this is a hypothetical situation, by introducing yet another man, the valiant Cesar, into their already triangulated affair, he explodes with rage once he believes that she prefers another to him.

While Ruggiero does acknowledge that in this case that Bradamante has the ability to independently exercise her free will (a stance that is quite different than her parents' statement that they will steal her away "voglia ella o non voglia"), his inclination to doubt the clear signs of faith she has shown him and to assume that her "voglia" is to turn her affections to a second man, is another critique of the doubt that undermines faith, while being indissociable from it. Indeed, the jealous fear that he feels, which encourages him to believe that she has been unfaithful to him recalls the judgment of most of the text's other male lovers, and the crux of the faith-based contentions in the tests of marital fidelity famously depicted in cantos 42 and 43. Ruggiero obsessively reiterates his "timor" and the concerns that he has about Bradamante's fidelity, traducing his anxieties about his own merit onto her possible change of heart:

Sarà possibil mai che nome regio,
titolo imperial, grandezza e pompa,
di Bradamante mia l'animo egregio,
il gran valor, l'alta virtù corrompa?
sì ch'abbia da tenere in minor pregio
la data fede, e le promesse rompa?
né più tosto d'Amon farsi nimica,
che quel che detto m'ha, sempre non dica? (44.58.1-8)

Recalling the initial critique Rinaldo made of what he mistakenly presumed was Ginevra's amorous indiscretion in canto 4, and similarly to Bradamante's parents who heighten the sense of scandal by gossiping about it, or to Bradamante who does not care for discretion or secrecy even when they would be beneficial to her, Ruggiero voices his doubts out loud. Since he is unconcerned about propriety and listening ears, he only draws more scandal to the idea of unfaithfulness and to the ramifications of broken vows while compounding a dishonorable situation by publically vilifying Bradamante to others. His mistrust of Bradamante is immensely hurtful to her on a personal level once his words are reported back to her "più di due volte," precisely because by questioning her fidelity, he ignores the long period of delay and the many trials of faith that she has withstood throughout the entire poetological trajectory of the *Furioso*, deferment and all.

Moreover, in terms of the narrative arc of the *Furioso* and the promises that the text offers to readers, Ruggiero's doubt continues to gravely imperil the foundational promise articulated to Bradamante by Merlin in the beginning of the text. Merlin's counsel to Bradamante—what he presented to her as a grammatically achievable condition—was simply that she continue to behave "animosamente," that is, courageously and confidently. In turn, her good, honest behavior, if upheld properly, would activate the "voler del ciel" in her favor, and allow her to marry the

man for whom she had been “fin dal principio eletta” (2.19.1-6). Subsequently, the fact that Ruggiero doubts Bradamante’s fidelity and accuses her of the poor comportment Merlin’s injunction suggests she must avoid is not just a betrayal of her integrity; it naturally imperils the *Furioso*’s promise to portray the foundation of the d’Este family through their union.

The fixity of Bradamante’s faith in Merlin’s prediction is definitively assured in the text, though she does suffer a few initial moments of hesitation and doubt. Nevertheless, this initial demonstration of what may appear to be a failure to comply with what she has promised, are quickly ‘corrected,’⁹⁵ which evidences Bradamante’s empathy and respectful deference towards those who are senior to her. Indeed, the fact that she does have such regard for her elders, further paints her refusal to obey her parents as an aberration, but perhaps, since it is so contrary to her usual behavior, is a justifiable one. The story of her brief lack of faith is the following: in cantos three and four Bradamante is given very explicit instructions from Merlin and Melissa. She is told that she is to kill the evil dwarf Brunello since he poses a direct affront to Ruggiero and his descendants:

Tu gli va dietro: e come t'avicini
a quella ròcca sì ch'ella si scopra,
dàgli la morte; né pietà t'inchini
che tu non metta il mio consiglio in opra.
Né far ch'egli il pensier tuo s'indovini,
e ch'abbia tempo che l'anel lo copra;
perché ti spariria dagli occhi, tosto
ch'in bocca il sacro anel s'avesse posto. (3.74.1-8)

In a surprising demonstration of autonomy, however, even though she recognizes Brunello and knows what she is supposed to do—“Conosce ella Brunel come lo vede, / di cui la forma avea sculpita in mente” (3.76, 1-2)—she does not follow their orders.

⁹⁵ Though her refusal to follow Merlin’s commandment has not received enough attention, much has been said about Bradamante’s contradictory status as a *guerriera/donna* and the related “‘praise/blame’ discourse of the querelle des femmes,” as Nancy Dersofi puts it (*Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1999). See, in particular, Margaret Tomalin, “Bradamante and Marfisa: An Analysis of the ‘Guerriere’ of the ‘Orlando Furioso,’” *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Jul., 1976), pp. 540-552 (545-52), and her *The Fortunes of the Warrior Heroine in Italian Literature: An Index of Emancipation*, Ravenna: Longo, 1982; Constance Jordan, “Writing Beyond the Querelle: Gender and History in *Orlando furioso*,” *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*. Ed. Valeria Finucci. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999. 295-315; Elizabeth Bellamy, “Androgyny and the Epic Quest: The Female Warrior in Ariosto and Spenser,” *Postscript 2* (1985): 29-37; Deanna Shemek, “Of Women, Knights, Arms, and Love: The *Querelle des Femmes* in Ariosto’s Poem,” *MLN* 104.1 (Jan. 1989): 68-97; Thomas Roche, “Ariosto’s Marfisa or Camilla Domesticated,” *MLN* 103 (1988): 113-133; Francesco Ferretti, “Bradamante Elegiaca. Costruzione del personaggio e intersezione di generi nell’*Orlando Furioso*,” *Italianistica: Rivista di letteratura italiana*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (Settembre/Dicembre 2008), pp. 63-75; J. Chimène Bateman, “Amazonian Knots: Gender, Genre, and Ariosto,” *MLN*, Vol. 122, No.1, Italian Issue (Jan., 2007), pp. 1-23; Lillian Robinson, *Monstrous Regiment: The Lady Knight in Sixteenth-Century Epic* (New York: Garland, 1985); and Valeria Finucci’s psychoanalytic approach to investigating identity, gender and power: *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

More than a skeptical stance towards their prophesy, simple disobedience, or concerns about her own strength, Bradamante's hesitation and refusal to do as she was told despite believing the good magician's prophesy occurs because she is humble and respectful towards her elders, and does not want to do harm to a pathetic, crying old man:

Disegnando levargli ella la testa,
alza la man vittoriosa in fretta;
ma poi che 'l viso mira, il colpo arresta,
quasi sdegnando sì bassa vendetta:
un venerabil vecchio in faccia mesta
vede esser quel ch'ella ha giunto alla stretta,
che mostra al viso crespo e al pelo bianco,
età di settanta anni o poco manco. (4.27.1-8)

Indeed, she will find other ways to protect Ruggiero and ensure his safety. In the meantime however, she leaves Brunello tied to a tree (4.9); he is later freed by Marfisa, but after he incites Agramante's wrath he is hanged (32.9.8).

Ruggiero's recurrent lack of faith increases her suffering since she understands the gravity of the affront of which she is being accused. Bradamante knows that both her honesty and the possibility of marriage itself are being challenged if Ruggiero's complaints are given credence. The threats that Merlin's early promise to Bradamante must endure put their union in grave danger, and the identity that she has so carefully cultivated as promised wife of Ruggiero is imperiled if he does not believe her commitment to him.

Marriage as the Final Reparation of Threatened Vows

The dramatic dénouement of these concatenated scenes imperiling the marriage of Bradamante and Ruggiero recall the *Furioso's* early contentions surrounding Charlemagne's broken vow. The fact that this failure of faith comes precisely after nearly all other hurdles have been overcome is yet another way in which Ariosto dramatically stages the vital importance of the vow and the difficulties of having faith in another. Much like Rinaldo's surprising and inopportune doubt of his wife's fidelity, Ruggiero's lack of faith is a damning critique of himself: he lacks faith, despite having been given ample evidence and proof, that is, "certa prova" of Bradamante's fidelity. It is also a damning critique of Bradamante since by not trusting her, Ruggiero's doubt implicitly suggests that perhaps—like the narrator's faithless lady, or like Angelica as seen by Orlando and Rinaldo—she is not truly worthy of his faith to begin with. The fact that Ruggiero's suspicion and doubt come directly on the heels of his conversion, vows, and

acceptance of Christian faith, only heightens the critical irony of his continued inability to trust and have faith in another. Only Rinaldo can repair the broken vows and bonds between the two.

Nevertheless, even the supposedly binding and restorative promise of Rinaldo is problematic as well, since it stages the ambiguity of the vow-making process and the degree to which vows are often imbricated in a greater social order. Though he may, at least according to his sister, be wiser, stronger, and more experienced than his parents, Rinaldo's promise to marry Bradamante to Ruggiero is questionable on many levels. Firstly, it is orchestrated precisely so that it leaves the reader—as it did for his parents—with more than ample room for doubt and scorn. Putting the question of Ruggiero's merit aside for a moment, Rinaldo's parents take the way in which their son contracts Bradamante's marriage as an affront, as we have seen. It is not, however, the mere fact that his effrontery strikes a blow to their ego that gives Rinaldo reason to be critiqued, but that parents and child have such starkly different understandings of who in their family has ultimate authority. By not involving his parents in a decision in which they would ordinarily have some say—though naturally Beatrice's will is presented as an extension of that of her husband, just with an extra touch of pretentiousness and greed—Rinaldo not only circumvents their wishes by imposing his own, he involves them in a promise they did not actually make. Thus, at least from a social standpoint, and if his parents were not as oddly prone to publicizing private affairs, it would seem to others that *they* were responsible for breaking their promise to Ruggiero.

Furthermore, by not finding anything problematic about swearing on his parents' behalf, and making an impulsive yet decisive promise that implicates them and hinges upon their accord (though it was contracted without their consent), Rinaldo shows that his understanding of vows is starkly different from that of his parents. More cautious and prudent, his father takes considerations that Rinaldo himself does not care to take. Truly respectful of his son's will, Aymon concerns himself with his son's opinion, even when the Greek emperor Constantine asked Aymon for Bradamante's hand in marriage on behalf of his son Leone. This deference reveals an imbalance in terms of the respect that father and son have for one another, and in terms of the authority they believe they have. While Aymon did take care to make sure that he had first obtained Charlemagne's approval of the union, he refuses to take any further action or confirm the marriage without first having the opportunity to consult Rinaldo. Giving precedence to his son over imperial ordinances, he explains to Constantine,

[.] che da sé solo
non era per concludere altramente,
né pria che ne parlasse col figliuolo
Rinaldo, da la corte allora absente;
il qual credea che vi verrebbe a volo,
e che di grazia avria sì gran parente:
pur, per molto rispetto che gli avea,
risolver senza lui non si volea. (44.13.1-8)

Finally, Aymon's awareness of the fixity of vows is directly acknowledged with words like "rispetto," "concludere" and "risolvere," as they both insist on deference, finality, and irrevocable resolution.

In contrast, Rinaldo takes quite a different stance. As we have seen, he articulates a promise, swears on behalf of others, and uses others as guarantors of his promise. As if to recall Malagise's troubling use of others to stand as guarantees for his word in the *Chanson de Roland*, Rinaldo's assumption of the authority of his father, and his orchestration of a promise that essentially depends upon the volition of people over whom he does not have absolute control, is highly problematic:

Or Rinaldo lontan dal padre, quella
pratica imperial tutta ignorando,
quivi a Ruggier promette la sorella
di suo parere, e di parer d'Orlando
e degli altri ch'avea seco alla cella,
ma sopra tutti l'eremita instando:
e crede veramente che piacere
debba ad Amon quel parentado avere. (44.14.1-8)

Nonetheless, "lontan dal padre"—that is, free from his father's control—Rinaldo "ignores" imperial protocol, though in difference to his consideration of Ginevra, in this case he does take the "parere" of holy and respectable people into consideration. Much like the Charlemagne of the *Furioso*'s opening canti, his "giudicio uman [...] erra"; he erroneously harbors false beliefs that essentially thwart the very promises that he makes when they conflict with reality, and with established laws and chivalric protocol.

Pointing to the same fault, "quella pratica imperial tutta ignorando" resonates in two ways. First, Rinaldo simply was not aware of his father's and the Emperor's desires regarding Bradamante's marriage. Second however, just like the infamous political laws that are obsessively critiqued in the *Furioso*, Rinaldo's affront of willful negligence, of completely "ignorando" "quella pratica imperial," is one of refusing to acknowledge established customs and laws. Though both men certainly assume that the other will find the plans they have for Bradamante's marriage amenable, Rinaldo's initiative is clearly in opposition to the care his father takes before swearing on behalf of another, and as such, thwarts the understanding of vows that his father has. The discord is multi-faceted. Aymon is egocentric and he believes that his vows are fixed and take priority while Rinaldo, perhaps due to a general animosity towards the unjust laws of Sweden, has learned to give no heed to "pratica imperial." The etiology of family discord is thus both that Bradamante and Rinaldo's parents do not approve of the partner Rinaldo has deemed suitable for her and that Rinaldo's interpretation of vows is a corruption of their own understanding.

Moreover, while naturally women did not have the agency to determine their marriage partners, Bradamante respects Rinaldo's intervention, not solely, as one might expect, because it pairs her with the man she loves, but because she has a

pristine understanding of the binding nature of vows. She gives authority where it is due, and considers as binding only the first vow that was made:

perché debbo voler che di me prima
Amon disponga, che Rinaldo e 'l conte?
Voler nol debbo, tanto men, che messa

in dubbio al Greco, e a Ruggier fui promessa. (44.47.5-8)

As such, any blame that might have fallen on Rinaldo for his imprudence and implication of others in vows that he makes is mitigated by the fact that his imposition of authority essentially amounts to an arbitration on Bradamante's behalf, as she does truly love Ruggiero. Moreover, a not-so-veiled critique consequently falls on the father as well since he lies and steals her away despite her wishes. Similarly, Aymon's words also reveal a problematic egocentrism, and not just because he is personally offended by his son's imprudence. Though he understands the fixity of vows that he himself makes, he wants to wait until he consults his son so as to avoid making a vow he cannot fulfill, even though he fully expects his son's will mirror his own. Therefore, when he learns that his son has made a fixed vow on his behalf and has broken protocol and usurped his authority, it is of no concern to him that his actions would make Rinaldo have to break his word.

Since promises in the *Furioso* are already threatened and vulnerable even when they are articulated directly by the promisor to the promisee (Austin 21-33), the thorniness of the intercalated relationships of authority within Bradamante and Rinaldo's family, evidenced by characters who promise on behalf of other without prior knowledge or consent are made into an even more dangerous affront. This relationship further destabilizes and reduces the fixity of whatever promise was made.⁹⁶ While the poetic voice does not overtly impugn Rinaldo for his assertiveness, aside from detailing how disruptive the contention and family discord that erupts as a result is, another blatant critique of the family's understanding of vows are made. In addition to Ruggiero's dramatic albeit temporary loss of faith, a subtle but extremely telling but ironic detail calls into question the nature and the fixity of the vow that was made—the fact that this most important vow it is not reported directly in the text. Indeed, while Rinaldo simply narrates to his parents that he has promised Bradamante in marriage, neither they nor the reader are even directly involved in the scene of the actual enunciation of the vow, and their speech is not reported.

Another textual absence circumscribes these vows with doubt. Similar to the problematization of the promise of a binding marriage, canto 43 ends by giving

⁹⁶ See, in particular Austin's discussion of foreseeability, intention, and failures to act in good faith (9-11; 89), and Judith Butler's analysis of the susceptibility and fragility of articulated promises (*Excitable Speech* 124-26). On the propositional content of future oriented illocutionary acts see Searle, *Speech Acts* (especially 46-68) and *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of the Mind*, particularly chapter 6, "Meaning," for an analysis of how promises, when properly articulated, condition their own fulfillment (160-79). By extrapolation, the converse would then also be true: promises made poorly or in bad faith, do not have fixity, and thus do not prognosticate or abet their own maintenance in any way.

great attention to the degree to which Ruggiero has been accepted by the Christian soldiers. However, true to the principles of deferral, precisely where readers would most expect it, and where it would most effectively substantiate Ruggiero's transformation, Ruggiero's vow is not immediately provided. It is purposefully omitted and even the details of the promise he has made are postponed until later.

Conclusion

Through the *Furioso's* treatment of Rinaldo and the major episodes connected to him, the precarious nature of vows is dramatized through the troubled learning curve that defines the knight's understanding of relationships oriented around promises and dependent upon faith. Rinaldo is first presented as naïve and trusting. He believes Charlemagne and hopes that his brawl with Orlando for possession of her will be settled fairly. While he learns over the course of the *Furioso* that the constantly repudiated affections he bore upon Angelica were misguided, his trust in Charlemagne is immediately tested. He learns that his faith was misplaced, and perhaps merited more investigation and probing before he took Charlemagne's promise to heart. But frustrating ideas of faith, and sardonically contributing to misplaced judgments, the text summarily glosses over Charlemagne's fault, leaving Rinaldo and Orlando to attempt to sort matters out given the inability of their leader to guide them. It is not until many canti later, that the text corroborates and justifies the sense of betrayal by their leader that Rinaldo and Orlando were made to experience, again privileging individual experience and close interpersonal bonds over the communital relationships that are less trustworthy simply because there is greater room for error. Referring to courts and palaces as places in which "la caritade è in tutto estinta," and where healthy relationships cannot exist "né si vede amicizia, se non finta" (44.1.7-8), the narrator's perspective on courtly behavior implicitly casts Charlemagne's betrayal as one of negligence, egocentrism, and the desire for profit above all else:

Quindi avvien che tra principi e signori
patti e convenzion son sì frali.
Fan lega oggi re, papi e imperatori;
doman saran nimici capitali:
perché, qual l'apparenze esteriori,
non hanno i cor, non han gli animi tali;
che non mirando al torto più ch'al dritto,
attendon solamente al lor profitto. (44.2.1-8)

Rinaldo then seems to apply his judgment well in the episode of Dalinda and Ginevra. Yet already he is more skeptical and wise to the complexity of faith, since

he agrees to assist Ginevra without any deliberation. Although he is informed by priests, monks, and the common people that Ginevra's honor should be considered unblemished, and consequently is somewhat assisted by the masses in his decision to support her cause, he is staunch in his commitment to resolving her plight and prefers to remain devoted to the outcome, rather than worry about any weaknesses in her story. In terms of the development of his understanding of faith, the Dalinda and Ginevra episode directly anticipates Rinaldo's more independent adventure when he is confronted with the fidelity test episodes, and must draw from the examples of spousal betrayal he has learned about in order to determine if he should indulge in the test or not. As we have seen, his refusal to accept the terms of the spousal fidelity tests shows his integrity, mettle, and commitment to his personal beliefs, yet it paradoxically exacerbates the divide between faith and proof, or integrity and dishonesty. Indeed, since he ends up realizing that he actually harbors more doubts about his wife's faithfulness than he would have anticipated, it is just that he prefers not to be confronted with them directly. Melancholic and shrewd, though at the very least he has saved himself from confirmed heartbreak, he is aware that his resistance is more a desire for felicitous ignorance than a preference for proof and definitive truth.

In the final episode that tests Rinaldo's faith, the threatened marriage of his sister and Ruggiero, the forces that combine against him and work towards undermining his vow are greater than any he has ever faced before. Perhaps his greatest independent chivalric exploit, since Rinaldo must stand up to his parents in order to protect a vow that he himself has made, rather than protecting the words and oaths of others, his promise and his honor alone are at stake. As Rinaldo's desire not to live a life "in paralela" to the truth-seeking husbands whose curiosity is their downfall, and as the many similarities between Rinaldo and the poetic voice prove, the paladin's struggle to remain dedicated to safeguarding his faith is akin to Ariosto's struggle to complete his narration of the *Furioso*. In many ways then, Rinaldo's great feat is aligned with Ariosto's detailed narration of the struggle of all of the characters to negotiate the promises that they have made, as well as the promises that have been made unto them.

Though somewhat less nuanced and grave than it will be in Tasso, readers see the *Furioso* demonstrates how the metaphors of the vow are constantly elucidated in terms of bodily health and beneficial sacrifice. Just like Rinaldo, the poet, and many of the text's other lovers, Orlando, as we recall, is described as so ill because of his love for Angelica that he risks death on many occasions. Similarly, her primary transgression, (not reciprocating his love), is often described as the breaking of a vow, and while his violent extremes mete out what he thinks is a proper remedy that will either cure him of his lovesickness or cure his beloved of her disaffection, he is nevertheless—like Rinaldo, like Ruggiero, like the poet and many other lovers—in dire need of a cure.

This predilection for inhabiting the extremes between near-fatal sickness and utmost health is not what only conditions the actions of the primary characters throughout the entire epic, the structure of the epic itself is replete with metaphors

of sickness, contamination, and rehabilitation. Orlando, for example, along with many of the texts' other sick lovers, occupies a role similar to that of the many misguided "doctors" whose flawed diagnoses, failed cures, broken promises, and corruption of the truth pepper the text. These diagnostic failures reinforce yet again, that even the quest for epistemological security is a futile, misguided endeavor.

Not only is there a constant obsession with doctors and diagnosis, but Ariosto's authorial position proves to be one that is circumscribed by curative references that insist upon the unwholesome and precarious nature of his text. Even Ariosto's interpretation of the literary tradition he depends upon reveals this medicinal interest when he 'diagnoses' the problem of his literary model Boiardo's text as one of incompleteness and failure. Thus, much like Guillaume de Lorris's promise in the *Roman de la Rose* to offer material that is "bone et neuve" and Jean de Meun's commitment to complete the narrative that we considered in the first chapter, Ariosto's constant insistence upon being able to finish what he began to narrate, as well as the narratological vow that opens the text, in which he states he will "dire cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima," is the first of an intricate series of failed vows.⁹⁷ Since the connection between his text and Boiardo's, as well as his text and the works of esteemed classical authors such as Virgil and Homer is extremely evident and would certainly be to the early modern reader as well (Lansing 311-13; Hampton, *Writing* 9), Ariosto's false claim of novelty and creativity immediately puts emphasis on the symbiotic relationship between the faith and deception, between vow, sickness, and other manifestations of bodily and psychic

⁹⁷ Although the narrator promises to recount "cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima" (I. ii. 2), the extremely high level of intertextuality in a statement like this, which characterizes this octave both on the thematic and rhetorical levels, recalls works such as: Seneca's *Hercules furens*, in which the protagonist becomes so 'furious' that he massacres those he loves: "Nondum tumultu pectus attonito caret; / Mutavit iras, quodque habet proprium furor, / In se ipse saevit" (5,1,vv.1219-21, p. 56). Though he does not murder his family, Orlando does harbor murderous intentions when he feels Angelica has betrayed him; he does 'rage against himself' as Hercules does; Dante's *La vita nuova*, which concludes with the author's hope that he is able to live long enough to tell others how singular his beloved is: "Sì che, se piacere sarà di colui a cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita duri per alquanti anni, io spero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue detto d'alcuna" (XLII).

Of course this anticipates Ariosto's request for time—and presumably creative and emotional stamina as well: "me ne sarà però tanto concesso, / che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso" (1.2.7-8). Ariosto's protasis also recalls Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in which the personal amorous experience of the narrator serves as a "cornice" and thus establishes many parallels that unite the heterodiegetic love affair, the characters' love stories, and the narrative framework, such as the theme of uncontrollable passions, the "fuoco nella mente concetto da poco regolato appetito," for example (Proemio 3). In addition, as we have already seen, explicit intertextual relationships between the Furioso and the *Roman de la Rose*, the *Chanson de Roland*, and the *Orlando innamorato*, put the sincerity and authenticity of Ariosto's poetic voice in question. Indeed, instead of acknowledging the long and rich literary patrimony that has shaped his own text so fundamentally, Ariosto brazenly insists on the originality of his poem, even in an octave replete with direct citations and references to the works of other authors. See Rajna, *Le Fonti Dell'Orlando Furioso: Ricerche E Studii*, and Richard H. Lansing, "Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso' and the Homeric Model," *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1987), pp. 311-325, for extensive discussions of Ariosto's classical sources.

discontent that spelled disaster for Orlando and had the ability to transform someone who was “si saggio [...] prima,” into a sick, languishing fool.

The pervasiveness of metaphors of sickness is seen in the fact that not only does Orlando’s insanity contaminate those around him, his illness bleeds over to the poetic voice that describes itself upon multiple occasions as having almost been pushed to the same mental extremes as Orlando, since he too suffers “da colei che tal quasi m’ha fatto”(1.2.5). Moreover, the actual structure of the text itself, with its interlace, constant interruptions, digressions, and deferral, is not just a poetic joke or ludic play as it might initially seem. Rather, deferral, which is so often misunderstood by critics as purely an innovative rhetorical strategy orchestrated to create tension and sustain attention, or as a glib way to metaphorically represent the frustration in love and delayed sexual gratification of many of the personages, as Javitch has astutely argued (69, 71), actually has vastly negative consequences since the poetic act of deferment—“differire”—is so frequently coupled with the verb “morire.” Thus, this rhyme scheme posits itself not just as a rhetorical game intended to pique the curiosity of readers by creating suspense and delaying cathartic resolution, rather, constant deferral becomes an indication of a sickly text that begs for its own rehabilitation. In other words, while Ariosto’s primary object of scorn is Boiardo—who not only leaves his work unfinished, but walks away from it *in medias res*—by constantly deferring his own narrative, Ariosto is mocking Boiardo’s inability to keep the one narratological promise he obsessively reiterates, which was to complete his narration. He is also revealing that his own text—though perhaps convalescing from moments of incompleteness—still suffers from the same type of narrative contagion.

CHAPTER THREE:
Breaking Vows for the Sake of the Soul: Missing Referents and the Crisis
of Faith in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*

Souffrir non Souffrir
III.

*Ton doux venin, grace tienne, me fit
Idolâtrer en ta divine image
Dont l'oeil credule ignoramment meffit
Pour non praevoir a mon future dommage.
Car t'immolant ce mien coeur pour hommage
Sacrifia avec l'Ame la vie.
Donques tu fus, o liberté ravie,
Donnée en proie a toute ingratitude:
Donques espere avec deceue envie
Aux bas Enfers trouver beatitude.*

-Maurice Scève, *Délie, Objet de plus haute vertu.*

The same value of absence that circumscribes the vow in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* contributes, in part, to threatened and absent vows in the *oeuvre* of Torquato Tasso as well. In many respects, in the *Furioso* Ariosto sets the stage for what will become a far greater problem in the *Gerusalemme liberata*—a problem that Tasso will eventually attempt to correct in the *Gerusalemme conquistata*. Indeed the preponderance of fragile, faulty, ambiguous and absent vows will become one of Tasso's obsessive preoccupations as well as the moral and religious axis around which, in distinct ways, both the *Liberata* and *Conquistata* turn.

Particularly if Tasso's battlefield is read as a sort of hermeneutical process, as metaphor for man's epistemic but ultimately failed quest for meaning as he forges through a dim realm filled with uncertainty and doubt, the blind or uncertain state in which many of the disoriented personages of *Gerusalemme liberata* seem to find themselves can easily have fatal ramifications. A systematic breakdown culminates on the battlefield and because it is all-pervading, it can be noted in nearly every detail of the poem. Since an "inganno occulto" has taken root, sign processes lack coherence; since vision is constantly frustrated, and the characters can almost never correctly identify what they see and appearances are never what they seem to be. Vision is always deceitful, nothing is what it seems to be, and violence is the only response to the profound confusion that results. Aside from the

visual frustrations and examples of the “denigration of vision”¹ which we will examine later, following the violent collision of the Christian and pagan troops in the *Liberata*, all of the barriers and categories that would usually order the world seem to have broken down as well. This visual and symbolic confusion subsequently catalyze the linguistic disorder that accompanies the destabilization of vows.

As such, the chaotic world of the *Liberata* is one in which stable vows cannot be grounded. That is, as layers of signifier and signified fail, signs lose their meaning and words prevaricate, provoking moments of linguistic disorientation that mirror the disorientation of the characters themselves. Additionally, both definitions and identity are problematic given that definitions are dependent upon already destabilized signs and identity proves itself to be constructed around highly mutable terms. Together, these lead to nefarious consequences in terms of the fixity of vows. Suggesting that appearances and apparent visual truths have a palimpsestic nature, in some instances, male and female are even rendered indistinguishable; implicitly linked to unhealthy and fragile vows, religious beliefs are external rather than fundamental—they can be stripped like clothing, embellished, and exchanged for new. Moreover, the cultural, religious and even physical barriers that technically should separate Christian and pagan—the greatest binarism of the poem—are mutable. It is precisely this mutability, this permeability, and the multiple, ambiguous identities of many of the characters of the *Liberata* that confound the making of vows and lead to a dangerous vulnerability that complicates ideas of truth, faith, and the identity of the self. If Christian and pagan are collapsible terms, so too are friend and enemy, good and evil, appearance and truth, and finally, self and other. Vows that are articulated in such uncertain terms or founded upon such false and mutable pretenses are vows that cannot withstand any sort of internal or external pressure; they are vows that will easily be broken. Given such manifestations of identity inconstancy, it becomes quite difficult for many characters in the *Liberata* to uphold vows that have such ambiguous, tenuous, and even contradictory beginnings.

The battlefield, upon which bloody tensions and violent conflicts are constantly brought to head and dispelled only to immediately resurface and incite an intercalated series of subsequent battles, is the primary *locus* not only for the dramatic action of *Gerusalemme liberata*, but also for the dramatic examination of identity, gender roles, love and sexuality. The stark contrast between Christian and Pagan, which can be further broken down into the division of light and darkness, love and hatred, good and evil, unity and disunity, and life and death, makes the

¹ I am taking this term from Martin Jay’s exceptional *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. His study, which good-naturedly quips about the pervasiveness of visual metaphors in everyday language, or the “ocular permeation of language,” as he calls it, also seriously traces the importance of vision and visual acts from Plato to Lyotard and is extremely pertinent to any examination of the gaze. See also Michael Argyle and Mark Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*, which examines alterity by putting visual interactions into a multi-cultural context. The diverse points of view, so to speak, which result from different cultures gazing one upon another, shed some light on the fundamental situation of *Gerusalemme liberata*—that is, what happens when Christians and pagans are in each other’s visual range.

battlefield both a sphere of contention and a sphere of syncretic negotiations. Particularly during the Renaissance, a time so deeply concerned with separating itself from a sterile medieval past while reestablishing its classical links, man understandably found himself in a type of temporal obscurantism that left him reeling from the contradictory rejection of his immediate past for the acceptance of a more remote one, which nevertheless, often seemed inaccessible because of its distance.² Additionally, and particularly among philosophers and authors, the identification with a pagan past, pagan works and other pagan cultural articulations, which manifested itself through an “anxious reverence toward the classical world” (Hampton 9), only exacerbated the ideological and personal disquietude that was felt,³ thus adding a new layer of meaning to Bloom’s theorization of the anxiety of influence.⁴

As can often be seen in Tasso’s own writings, conflicting values and moralities, conflicting temporal perspectives, and the conflict of interest between the “city of God” and the “city of Man” (Quint, *Epic* 403) seemed to cause the acute defensiveness,⁵ the nervous instability and the peculiar, almost schizophrenic disorientation of the author. However, instead of shying away from the source of his anxiety, Tasso’s sublime epic poem and the later *Gerusalemme conquistata*, which

² For more on the creation of selfhood, and emphasis given to the question of interiority and self-realization, particularly when mediated through conceptions of the past during the Renaissance, see Thomas Greene’s *The Light in Troy* and his article “The Flexibility of Self in Renaissance Literature” in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, or Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance self-fashioning*.

³ More specifically, as Timothy Hampton states in *Writing from History*, “[t]he strangeness or alterity with which the past inevitably appears to the present was intensified in the humanist return to classical antiquity. The vast distance between past and present, the perceived ‘darkness’ of medieval culture and the ideological moral differences between Christian and pagan world views places massive obstacles in the way of the student of antiquity” (14).

⁴ It would be fruitful to more explicitly address how tensions that later came to be subsumed in Bloom’s notion of the “anxiety of influence” seemed to profoundly affect Tasso’s life. From his brilliant yet anxiety ridden *Discorsi dell’arte poetica*, to his constant dialogue with and renegotiation of Plato and Aristotle’s texts (among many others) and his *Discorsi del poema eroico*, Tasso alludes to his own complicated relationship with his failed-poet father, and with other texts that serve as ‘paternal’ examples to him. In the “discorso primo” of the *Discorsi dell’arte poetica*, for example, Tasso explores the differences between the poet and the orator, and stresses the poets’ complicated heritage and complicated task. In fact, many of the initial conclusions and allusions he makes draw precisely upon metaphors or examples from Greek tragedies that deal specifically with many of the same issues he himself was dealing with in his struggle to weave together the proper fibers to create a perfect epic—that is, complicated parentage and the inherent violence of close-knit relationships, artistic influence, as well as how to best present the verisimilitude of these relationships through their literary portrayals. For a valuable analysis of Tasso’s second work on poetic theory, see “L’altre stelle”: The arguments of Tasso’s *Discorsi del poema eroico* by Lindsay Waters. Much of Lawrence Rhu’s work but particularly “Tasso’s First Discourse on the Art of Poetry as a Guide to the Gerusalemme liberata,” “Young Tasso’s Reckoning with the Orlando furioso,” and “From Aristotle to Allegory: Young Tasso’s Evolving Vision of the Gerusalemme liberate.”

⁵ Both Margaret Ferguson in *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* and Lindsay Waters’ previously mentioned essay deal with the defensiveness that was “forced” upon the poet by his critics and the factors at play in his society. The often debilitating defense mechanism led to the intense critical self-awareness, whose Freudian and Lacanian inquietudes, at least according to Ferguson, nuance yet again Bloom’s theory of authorial influence.

necessarily enter into a mutually intertextual relationship as one examines the mental and moral anguish suffered by the poet during the latter part of his life, function as the *mise en scène* of these very preoccupations. Thus, by offsetting poetic and political pressures, by pairing a Virgilian model with a Christian thematic, by fusing marvelous novelties and accepted truths, and by couching romance under an epic veil, Tasso's poem becomes functionally connected to the battlefield, as it is the brilliant setting for the power struggle between the many disparate forces at play. These disparate forces, inherently full of inconstancy and tradition lead to the articulation of vows that are easily manipulated, or which cannot be maintained.

For instance, present in the *Furioso*, but now rendered in a much more somber key in the *Liberata*, one of the earliest and most telling examples of the vulnerability of vows is the approximation of promises and vows to literal and metaphorical health. Directly recalling classical discussions of the *pharmakon* and catharsis, medicinal remedies and expiation such as Lucretius' *De rerum natura* in particular, in the *Liberata* Tasso presents his text as a rehabilitative medicine that concerned adults would administer to a sick child in order to restore the youngster's health and life:

Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
di soavi licor gli orli del vaso:
succhi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
e da l'inganno suo vita riceve. (1.3.5-8)

Rather than the intentionally duplicitous vows we examined in the *Roman de la Rose*, and rather than tricking others for purely personal gain or for access to forbidden knowledge as we have seen in the *Furioso*, persuasive methods are now ostensibly couched within an explicitly religious and ethical framework. Moreover, they stem from a legitimate concern for the well-being of another. The child will drink "sweet syrup" so that he will swallow vital medicine; he thus must be deceived so that he will accept that which will make him heal.

Yet even this life-saving medicine is presented as a cure that is somewhat dubious and duplicitous in nature. It does indeed restore health, but it only does so by operating through the transformative principles of perversion and deceit, which serve to somewhat contradict the implicit injunction against inflicting further harm upon the child. According to Tasso, the task of the poet is precisely this. As he says in his *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* (1587), the poet must "trick with the semblance of truth"—"[...] dovendo il poeta con la sembianza de la verità ingannare i lettori." He must also take heed to "congiungere insieme," or more specifically, to "congiungere il verisimile co'l meraviglioso" since both are necessary elements for the success of the poem: "[...] queste due nature, il meraviglioso e 'l verisimile; ed in guisa diverse, che sono quasi contrarie tra loro; nondimeno l'una e l'altra nel poema è necessaria [...] essendo ambedue necessarie, si debba or seguire il verisimile, ora il meraviglioso, di maniera che l'una a l'altra non ceda, ma l'una da l'altra sia temperata" (*Discorsi* 10).

This idea of manipulation for the greater good, or for better health, continues the text's opening invocation to the Muse, wherein poetry's double nature is

described as having the potential to either lead to restoration or to damage, given that it has the same alternatively sweet, alternatively bitter properties as does the sick child's medicine:

O Musa, [...],
tu rischiara il mio canto, e tu perdona
s'intesso fregi al ver, s'adorno in parte
d'altri dilette, che de' tuoi, le carte.
Sai che là corre il mondo ove più versi
di sue dolcezze il lusinghier Parnaso,
e che 'l vero, condito in molli versi,
i più schivi allettando ha persuaso. (1.2.1, 6-8; 3.1-4)

Recasting the perversity of the Vieille in the *Rose's* persuasive and deceitful tactics as well as the criminal implications of Ariostan persuasion in a much more edifying and supportive light, just as the boy is 'persuaded' to drink the medicine because of its sweet taste, the ornamentation, beauty and "dolcezze" that embellish the text would ideally *persuade* even the most reticent of readers. The emphasis Tasso gives in these verses to the binaries of revelation and concealment, enlightenment and ignorance, and seduction and refusal, immediately reveals the tensions between truth and deceit, which, like the restorative medicine, can either strengthen or imperil.

But the promise of health and restoration alone is not enough. If the "medicine" goes ignored by the child, any possibility of obtaining the promised restoration is negated; it fails and is must be replaced by deceit. Yet since the true taste of the medicine is concealed by the "soavi licor," the deceived child drinks more readily; what he otherwise might have refused to imbibe would have cost him his life without this necessary deception. Finally, since Tasso's text is supposed to offer the same salubrious properties to his readers as does the medicinal liquor to the child, it too can only heal through deceit (or, in poetic language, though adornment and ornamentation). By following this order of operations, however, the uneasy approximation and vacillation between truth and deceit pave the way for the *Liberata's* primary anxieties, which center around the "health" of vows and faith in the words and actions of others.

The problematic status of the vow and of promises made regarding restoration and redemption are not solely present in the protasis, but obsessively staged throughout the entire *Gerusalemme liberata*. Although the overarching context of the poem is the Christians' quest to liberate Jerusalem from the Pagans during the time of the First Crusade, even while describing the heroic and tragic clashes of the opposing camps, the primary narrative attentions focus obsessively on the tense negotiations between vows kept and broken. In this respect, aside from purely constituting Tasso's poetological vision, they circumscribe the actions of nearly all of his characters. Recalling the negative consequences that pair possession and violence in the *Rose*, and deferral and death in the *Furioso*, the *Liberata's* staging of the problematic of delayed and broken vows and promises is in fact, not only the poem's first major intrigue, but its motivating force, the dramatic

catalyst of the entire poem. Much like the *Rose's* Bel Ami, and even more like Charlemagne's failed original promise, a broken vow paves the way for subsequent problems of faith, conviction, and authority in the *Liberata*. These broken vows which thus foment ethical, moral, and linguistic ambiguity and negation then play a disordering role in the text that can only be resolved with violence.

To take an oft-cited example of how broken promises determine and catalyze the text's intrigue, it is a broken vow that causes God to send the angel Gabriel to spur the Christians into action:

Disse al suo nunzio Dio: Goffredo trova,
E in mio nome dì lui; perchè si cessa?
Perchè la guerra omai non si rinnova,
A liberar Gerusalemme oppressa? [...]
Goffredo, ecco opportuna
Già la stagion ch'al guerreggiar s'aspetta:
Perchè dunque trapor dimora alcuna
A liberar Gerusalem soggetta?
Tu i Principi a consiglio omai raguna:
Tu al fin dell'opra i neghittosi affretta.
Dio per lor duce già t'elegge; ed essi
Sopporran volontari a te se stessi. (1.12.1-4; 16.1-8)

Using verbs such as “cessar,” “rinnovare” “aspettare,” “trapore” and “affretare” that emphasize delay and fragmentation, action and inaction, suspension and motion, God himself laments that Goffredo's individual indolence has encouraged indolence and discord in others. Goffredo's error is essentially a failure that consists of delay. He allows actions that were already well in motion to stall, and seems content to leave them unfinished. His error also reveals that he has completely neglected the conditions around him (“ecco opportuna / già la stagion”), which not only paints a picture of him as problematically naïve and introspective, but suggests that he has been comporting himself in a manner that is completely anathema to his role as chosen leader of the Christian troops.

Furthermore, Goffredo's initial lassitude creates absence, both in terms of physical action and in terms of the promise that he has made. His failure to continue waging war leaves the “voto” he made unto God unrealized; it is “v(u)òto,” or empty, and consequently also retards the pledge and action of his men to “ristorare i danni / Della sua fede” (Quint 215; Ascoli, “Liberating” 164). David Quint has effectively pointed to the crucial positionality of the hero Goffredo, and of the catalyzing centrality of his leadership, necessary both to catalyze the plot of the poem and to spur the Christians into action (215). Much like the collapsible barriers that are supposed to order the protagonists' world, and which are indicative of an enterprise that is at once internal and external—Goffredo must not only combat the Muslim “defenders” and his own wayward companions, he must combat his own sluggish nature and his difficulty maintaining vows as well.

Problems with vows are present in the intrigues of the Christian warrior Tancredi. Similarly to Goffredo, Tancredi is one of the most valuable of the

Christians: “non è alcun fra tanti / (tranne Rinaldo) o feritor maggiore, / o più bel di maniere e di sembianti, / o più eccelso ed intrepito di core” (1.45.1-4). Tancredi’s valor and nobility are undermined, however because he makes layered and conflicting vows (to his fellow Christian soldiers, his religion, and to the beautiful pagan Clorinda) as well. Moreover, the discordance of vows conditions Clorinda’s own prodigious birth and upbringing and comes to define her own vow-making experiences. Deferred, broken, and absent vows are also fundamental to the interpretive failures and problems with belief and faith that lead to the dissolution of every amorous couple in the work, from major characters such as Armida and Rinaldo, to minor couples such as Sofronia and Olindo, and Gilidippe and Odoardo.⁶ A broken vow is also fundamental to the religious “error” of one of the poem’s most important characters, the warrior Goffredo, whose struggle with faith opens the *Liberata*.

Given the tenuousness with which certainty and promises are described in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, in this chapter I will examine how the tragic conflict between religious groups and the sexes is proleptically staged by the struggle to make and uphold vows. In particular, I will focus on the struggle for power and visual control at the heart of canto 2, one of the most fundamental yet also most neglected cantos of Tasso’s epic. While the array of tensions regarding truth and vows dramatize the rather incursive presence of the text’s female characters—such as Erminia, Clorinda, and Sofronia, for example—and the way in which their bodies attract, shock, and petrify the men around them, by following the path of poetic surveillance and the scopophilic eye, I will concentrate my analysis on the most overlooked but most profoundly disruptive female body of the *Liberata*: the figure that most overtly incarnates the struggle for possession and control exemplified by the clashing Pagan and Christian camps.

Instead of the shocking and scintillating body of a pagan princess as one might expect—particularly given Ariosto’s figuration of chaotic absence with the body of Angelica that is constantly in flight—the *Liberata*’s first disruptive body is

⁶ There are other relationships of course, like Erminia and Tancredi’s very peculiar and often comically frustrated love by proxy, which, as Beatrice Corrigan explains in “Erminia and Tancredi: the Happy Ending,” can eventually be read in a joyful light. In “Tasso’s Erminia: Telling an Alternate Story,” Marilyn Migiel gives a possible support for Corrigan’s claim by tracing back the origins of her title to one of Tasso’s letters to Scipione Gonzaga, wherein he writes: “Solo l’amor di Erminia par che, in un certo modo, abbia felice fine”(75). Their relationship however, which can also be read as a Petrarchean parody, is in stark contrast to the trio of ill-fated lovers precisely because of its positivism and dramatized humor, and does not lend to a reading of Clorinda and Tancredi’s relationship that fits our present purposes. We can also briefly consider the situation of Armida and Rinaldo for example, but the comic lightness of their relationship, with the magic powers and hystericized personality of Armida, and her completely passive, homosexually eroticized lover just seems to temper and even parody the serious nature of the other principle amorous relationships, all destined for tragedy, and will be disregarded here. For a justification of the startling presence of Armida and Rinaldo’s melodramatic relationship next to the “elegia” of Gilidippe and Odoardo, in particular, see Raimondo, *Poesia come retorica*, pp. 195-200. For a brief mention of the intertextual nature of the two couples, see also Verdino, “Sul canto XX della ‘Liberata.’ Appunti di lettura,” in *Studi tassiani*, XLII (1994): 95.

that of a statue of the Virgin Mary. This statue, whose material identity emphasizes her “to-be-looked-at-ness,” is representative of a problematic body indeed.⁷ It is not only fought over and abused, but completely reified, despite whether or not it is actually even present. Moreover, this statue is circumscribed by the same static, possessive, and sexualized terms which are later attributed to the catastrophic bodies of the poems’ other female characters as well. Thus, the drama surrounding the statue’s exemplary provenance and potential in canto 2 can be read as the *mise en scène* of the text’s later preoccupation with truth and religious vows. As we shall see, it elucidates the connection between fragmentation and negation, the violent dangers of ocular dependency, and the doubt and vulnerability that become fatal when combined with impotence and visual failure, and perverted or broken vows.

The City of Jerusalem: A Promise of Opposition

One of the most striking examples in the *Gerusalemme liberata* of the misarticulation of vows and the identitary and visual problems so pervasive in the work is the city of Jerusalem itself. Manifesting the same ambiguity and identitary inconstancy as does the protasis, and the main characters of the *Liberata*, Jerusalem is described early on in the poem as nearly schizophrenic in nature due to the conflicting groups contained within its walls:

Però che dentro a una città commisto
popolo alberga di contraria fede:
la debil parte e la minore in Cristo,
la grande e forte in Macometto crede. (1.84.1-4)

In the Tassian context, Jerusalem’s instability is clear, and although “commisto” and “alberga” might first seem to refer to a happily sheltered commingled populace, the readers are immediately provided with words of problematic opposition that set up the initial conflicts—“contraria fede,” and “debil” and “minore” versus “grande e forte.”⁸

⁷ See Laura Mulvey’s *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Her chapter “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” is especially useful to theorizing the gaze, the importance of the statue’s visibility, and the exalted though undermined tangibility of the statue (14-30).

⁸ These apparently contradictory tensions are wildly prevalent throughout the entire poem. In “Liberating the Tomb: Difference and Death in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*,” Albert Ascoli takes note of the consistent ambiguity with which Jerusalem in particular, is described. “In a classic and extremely powerful example of Tassian ambivalence, the historical city of Jerusalem stands at once as the typological prefiguration of the city of God and as its own symbolic antithesis, Babel-Babylon, particularly during the final siege when it is defended against the Christians by the ‘popol misto’ of pagandom”(Note 4, p.160).

Indeed, while “contraria fede” literally refers to the opposition of Christians and Pagans, it is also suggestive of the divisiveness that is found in each of the individual camps and the conflict, or problem of faith and faithfulness that assails nearly every character in the *Liberata*. The Christians, competitive, contentious, and in disagreement even amongst themselves, are described as disunified. They are torn apart and separated from each other by the “ritrosi pareri” they are unable to rectify (1.30.1-8). As the perspicacious Peter, the “più efficace promotore della crociata”⁹ who, “privato fra’ principi a consiglio sedita” explains in his anti-democratic justification of the Crusades, a healthy body politic is not present, though it is exactly what the Christians need for ultimate success. (1.31.1-8). Without a proper leader, the Christians will remain a headless horde, a heap of entangled, fighting limbs (Kantorowicz 193-202). It is only Goffredo’s leadership that will allow them the opportunity to come together as one.¹⁰

More than just the disunification that affects the Christian camp, the same instability is found amongst the Pagans. This attribution of similar characteristics to both Christians and Pagans blurs the divide between friend and enemy, self and other all the more. Just as divided as the Christians, en masse, the pagans similarly suffer from internecine relationships, and discord amongst them also goes from the plebes to the highest ranks.¹¹ Insisting, for example, on the importance of having a healthy and coherent body politic rather than a sickly, weak, or even headless one,¹² the sense of profound instability paradoxically becomes even more apparent at the highest level of Pagan command. This reinforces the problematic correspondence between Christians and pagans all the more, for it recalls the initial presentation of Goffredo as a high-ranking member of the Christian troops who nonetheless was too apathetic to fulfill his promise to God and to his men.

Ascoli points readers towards David Quint’s *Epic and Empire*, which also deals with the confounded barriers that ineffectively attempt to separate the opposing groups. He insists upon Clorinda’s “double identity as warrior and woman,” (242), and even describes the epic process, Goffredo’s job as duplicitous. “But Goffredo finds himself fighting on two fronts. Before he can conquer the Muslim defenders of Jerusalem, he must restore unity in his own ranks” (215)—he must structure, reorder and redefine his “compagni erranti.”

⁹ *Gerusalemme liberata*, n.3, p. 674.

¹⁰ In *L’uniforme cristiano e multiforme pagano*, Zatti discusses internal discord as a sign of a sort of interrogation of alterity. One of Tasso’s primary concerns seems precisely to be the indiscernibility of the enemy, the problematic blurring of the barriers that definitively differentiate the enemy from within from the enemy from without.

¹¹ To slightly modify Zatti’s statement, it is not just the similarity between the enemy from within and the enemy from without that should surprise readers, but the fact that these opposing groups are effectively one and the same. While critics have often taken this as sign of Tasso’s moral and religious laxity, it is rather a greater comment on the indiscernability and unknowability of the self and by extension, the other. From an ideological standpoint, the threat that the pagans pose is thus not a religious one, but a menace, predicated upon the difficulties of identification, that has its base in epistemology and recognition rather than solely religion.

¹² See Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, and in particular his introduction (3-7) and his discussion of “polity-centered kingships,” continuity, and corporality in chapters V and VI (193-272; and 273-317).

When Aladino the pagan king, conquers Zion “e vi cercò di stabilir la sede” (1.84.6) however, his actions only further the burgeoning inequality between the opposing groups crammed tightly together within the confines of one city: “[S]cemò i publici pesi a' suoi pagani, / ma piú gravonne i miseri cristiani” (1.84.7-8). Yet Aladino’s volatile decisions are not entirely unique to his changeable nature, for they symptomize the instability of his environment. Indeed, as his thoughts spin wildly out of control while he hovers between different stages of life with his moods and humors swinging drastically, it becomes apparent that he suffers from the same volatile and schizophrenic symptoms as does his city. An older man faced with new situations, and whose original nature has been “mitigated” by external forces, Aladino not only finds himself in a contradictory state, he proves that he is inherently unfit to be king. Indeed, his tentative and hesitant approach to all matters of political concern, his fear, unassertiveness, his haunting suspicions and violent anger reveal a rash, brooding nature that quite contradicts what one would look for or expect from a king.

Destabilized by the impending menace of the Christian troops, Aladino’s entire sense of self has been jeopardized. As if he were more a beast than a man, he initially reacts violently to the simultaneously political and personal threat:

Questo pensier la ferità nativa,
che da gli anni sopita e fredda langue,
irritando inasprisce, e la ravviva
sí ch'assetata è piú che mai di sangue.
Tal fero torna a la stagione estiva
quel che parve nel gel piacevol angue,
cosí leon domestico riprende
l'innato suo furor, s'altri l'offende. (1.85.1-8)

Despite this impulsive surge of anger and cruel resolve, the king’s cowardice promptly kicks in again and “s'un timor a incrudelir lo sprona, / il ritien piú potente altro sospetto” (1.88.3-5). Even Aladino’s attempt to squelch his “insane” rage is described by the narrator in a way that highlights his identitary and emotive instability. The assertion “Tempra dunque il fellon la rabbia insana,” (1.89.1) is immediately countered and then corrected on the following line—“anzi altrove pur cerca ove la sfoghi” (1.89.2). Thus, for Aladino, the need to “temper” his true nature as he breaks down the barriers between pleasing and offensive, innocent and villainous, young and old, and purity and poison, highlights the contradictory nature of appearance and truth which destabilizes the vow-making process throughout the entire poem. And, though the discordant, unstable nature of the Pagan camp seems that it might be positive for the Christians, as the plot develops, it is through Aladino and the eventual failure of his kingdom that we learn that vacillations of language, essence, and character are equally fatal to any empire and to any self.

Problematically, again we must remember that the similarities between the Pagan and Christian camps run quite deep, and the discord and disunity of the Pagans perfectly mirrors the discord and disorganization of the Christians. It is

true, after all, that the Pagan chaos presented in canto 2 had already been somewhat prepared by Christian dissent and the descriptions of their failed body politic first introduced in canto 1. Rather than absence in terms of shameful inaction, or the lack of qualities necessary to be an effective leader as it was for the Christians, in the case of Aladino, the crisis of possession, lack, and disorder in which he is caught reveals the importance of absence, particularly in regards to the text's representation of desire. That is, even more politically nefarious than the *Furioso's* portrayal of Polinesso's lust for Ginevra and ardor for the political power that she represents, Aladino's desire to possess an absent object—indeed, an object upon which he has based many rash promises—misguidedly propels the imperialistic and religious decisions that he makes. In addition, the violence and instability that so profoundly affect the fragile empire and even more fragile self occasion a loss of subjectivity that wreaks havoc for all and culminates in a “danno universal” and “pianto comun.”

For instance, in the beginning of canto 2, while demonstrating to what extent constructions of selfhood are entirely subjective, mutable and entirely dependent upon the variables of circumstance, the ambiguous inconsistency of the magician Ismeno's nature and the problematic vows that he makes recall those of Aladino and further an awareness of the instability of the Pagan camp. However, since Ismeno is first described as having the ability to resurrect the dead instead of *causing* death (as does his King, however), an intertextual vacillation that demonstrates the incongruous multiplicity of natures even amongst the members of the same camp, is promptly reinforced yet again. Indeed, this recalls the poignant description of the Christians as a headless throng, before they are organized under Goffredo's rule.

An even more important attestation of Ismeno's “contradictory” nature is that of a self in conflict with its own religious history and past. While it comes as no surprise that a malevolent magician well versed in the “arti ignoti” should be of such a protean subjectivity, Ismeno provides yet another example of the way in which confusion and a proliferation of conflicting identities and “contradictory” vows propel the self towards a state of crisis. Repeating Ismeno's name to draw more attention to his pivotal role as a conjurer, the first stanza of canto 2 describes his abilities and strengths through a list of hellish attributes among which number his ability to scare even the god of the underworld himself:

Mentre il Tiranno s'apparecchia all'armi,
 Soletto Ismeno un dì gli s'appresenta:
 Ismen, che trar di sotto ai chiusi marmi
 Può corpo estinto, e far che spiri e senta:
 Ismen, che al suon de' mormoranti carmi
 Fin nella reggia sua Pluto spaventa,
 E i suoi Demon negli empì ufici impiega
 Pur come servi, e gli discioglie, e lega. (2.1.1-8)

Although appointing himself counselor and interrupting the king in a moment of relative intimacy surely serves to cast Ismeno as a bad counselor, the fact that

Ismeno is able to present himself suddenly and unexpectedly, and penetrate “soletto” into the king’s private chambers emphasize his potency and singularity. Moreover, notions of his power are emphasized with the repetition of his name. Not only does this serve to draw attention to Ismeno’s dramatic appearance alongside the king, it operates like an incantation, and thus accentuates his pivotal but problematic connection to occult spells and dark magic.

Nevertheless, despite his ability to dominate demons and bend them to his will, Ismeno’s alleged potency is betrayed by his fragility of character as described in the stanza that immediately follows:

Questi or Macone adora, e fu cristiano,
ma i primi riti anco lasciar non pote;
anzi sovente in uso empio e profano
confonde le due leggi a sé mal note,
ed or da le spelonche, ove lontano
dal vulgo essercitar suol l'arti ignote,
vien nel publico rischio al suo signore:

A re malvagio consiglier peggiore. (2.2.1-8)

In addition to being weak, Ismeno is incompetent. Showing his powerlessness by being incapable of abandoning the “primi riti” he should technically no longer believe in, his confusion of two religions, neither of which he understands, converts his “magic” into a risky art. Elucidated by this demonstration of ignorance, the nervous balance between pagan and Christian principles, and Ismeno’s simultaneously pagan, simultaneously Christian identity are clearly looked down upon by the narrator. The “first laws,” as Ralph Nash renders it in his translation, or the first rituals or rites that “anco lasciar non pote” describe Ismeno’s feebleness and ineffectiveness. He is not able to leave the first rituals and precepts of Christianity behind, a condition which depicts both the fixity of the vows that once held him, his muddled religious principles, and his epistemological uncertainty and tentativeness—all of which are demonstrated by his inability to fully leave his former vows behind, even though he ‘now’ he “adores Mahoun.”

While the former state of isolation in which Ismeno lived was beneficial in that it kept him at bay, contained and distanced from the public and political realms, his unshakeable internal struggle leads to the confusion and devaluing of all of his future actions, and thus prepares his misguided irruption into Aladino’s kingdom. Indeed, his very presence in Aladino’s court represents a marked political failure. Moreover, the fact that Ismeno appoints himself counselor rather than waiting to be chosen for the task by Aladino signals a problematic assertion of authority (that was not his to seize). His heavy-handedness and thirst for dominance make it even easier for him to bend the confused, conflicted tyrant to his own desires. Similarly, not only should leadership be monarchical, with one sovereign leader as was emphatically discussed during the course of Goffredo’s appointment, but as Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and other political theorists of the period would say, Ismeno’s hybridity, malevolence, and assertiveness, make him the worst counselor Aladino could possibly have.

But it is not solely the narrator's scorn that Aladino receives because he so easily lets himself be guided by a dastardly fool. As soon as Aladino learns that the statue has gone missing, he attributes its disappearance to a theft orchestrated by Christians. He "[...] immagina ben ch'alcun fedele / Abbia fatto quel furto, e che se 'l cele" (2.8.7-8). Yet in a curious aside that serves to suspend yet also stress Aladino's haste and rage, the narration pauses to muse on the author of the statue's disappearance. So doing, it critiques the act of theft in the first place:

O fu di man fedele opra furtiva,
O pur il Ciel quì sua potenza adopra:
Che di colei ch'è sua Regina e diva,
Sdegna che loco vil l'immagin copra:
Ch'incerta fama è ancor, se ciò s'ascriva
Ad arte umana, od a mirabil'opra.
Ben è pietà, che la pietade e 'l zelo
Uman cedendo, autor sen creda il Cielo. (2.9.1-8)

Ismeno's irreverent actions and confused treatment of laws, religion, and magic that Aladino puts into practice, will later also be specifically reproached by the narrative voice once again, and then by a disapproving Clorinda. Distancing herself from the "comun sentenza" held by Pagans that the Christians had stolen (or more accurately, *stolen back*) a statue of the Virgin Mary, Clorinda critiques Ismeno's actions. She blames him for orchestrating the initial theft of the statue and for precipitating the chaos that ensued, and that only led to greater contention between both camps:

Fu de le nostre leggi irrivenza
quell'opra far che persuase il mago:
ché non convien ne' nostri tèmpi a nui
gl'idoli avere, e men gl'idoli altrui. (2.50.5-8)

By stealing a Christian idol representative of Christian vows and a Christian worldview, forcing its entry into the Pagan world, and then lazily ascribing Pagan beliefs to the very same Christian object, Ismeno breaks Pagan "law." In this sense, his ambiguous character, exemplified by a conflicted collapse of barriers and an obviously troubled selfhood, makes his function in the pagan camp inadvertently dangerous both to himself, the king, and the empire.

The distance between who Ismeno appears to be and the truth of who he is, is a conflict that can be read as an allusion to political treachery couched in terms that recall the rhetoric of empire. Seemingly a powerful, irascible pagan who has come "del periglio / e de l'opre compagno" in order to help Aladino,¹³ in reality Ismeno is nothing more than a fragile, confused polytheist with rather fraudulent magical skills. He perverts common laws and takes a blasphemous stance even towards his

¹³ This is also contrary to Machiavelli's advice, because he comes directly to Aladino: "Un Principe pertanto deve consigliarsi sempre, ma quando lui vuole, non quando altri vuole; anzi deve torre animo a ciascuno di consigliarlo d'alcuna cosa, se non gliene domanda; ma lui deve ben essere largo domandatore, e dipoi, circa le cose domandate, paziente auditore del vero; anzi intendendo che alcuno per qualche rispetto non gliene dica, turbarsene" (94).

own confused religious beliefs. Given his religious uncertainty, his only skill is a decidedly non-religious, and non-factually oriented one—the power of persuasion. Much like the wayward counselors and advice-givers in the *Roman de la rose*, and much like the assessments and counsel of Ariosto’s confused doctors, Ismeno’s dastardly manipulation substantiates (through negative correlation) Machiavelli’s, Guicciardini’s, and Salutati’s warnings that effective counselors must be well-chosen, stable leaders (Holmes 319). Instead, Ismeno is a confused “counselor” whose advice misleads and foments the deviation of others. Much like Polinesso’s strategy of perverse manipulation in the *Furioso*, Ismeno’s only skill is not “astute guidance,” but his ability to manipulate others into doing his bidding and strong-arm them into following his misguided lead.

Yet it is precisely this power of persuasion that once again conflates the necessary barriers between the Christian and Pagan camps. It is, after all, the same power of persuasion that allowed Goffredo to move his troops to action and restore the Christian vows; it is a type of persuasion that is used to heal the ailing boy of the exordium; and most problematically perhaps, it is the power of persuasion upon which the poetic voice depends and which is intended to serve as the motor for the entire poem. Nevertheless, despite Ismeno’s ability to effectively persuade, it is his own inconstancy that confounds his identity and thwarts any effectiveness he might have. Neither fully pagan nor fully Christian, he is in an imperiled state. Furthermore, his fragmented, almost schizophrenic identity is politically dangerous if we consider that he is the unstable as counselor to an already unstable, discommoding king. Or, as the narrator says, “[a] re malvagio consiglier peggiore” (2.2.8).

Desiring the Images of Others : Absence, Vows, and Problems with Visual Proof

The many examples of unstable natures that follow in the *Liberata* are increasingly worrisome since rather than just questioning the nature of individual characters, the poem takes on a more general examination of the conflicting values that combine to undermine the self and all articulated vows. Above all, these conflicts manifest themselves in terms of visual perspective and the way in which having access to a visual field not only dramatizes the conflict between blindness and vision, but also between superficiality and essence, and between that which is merely appearance versus that which stands as an absolute truth. Although vision often brings with it what should be the reliability of empirical experience since visual referents are so often absent in the *Liberata*, the ‘proof’ it purports to offer is a fundamentally faulty and unreliable tool. Tasso’s assessment of the idea of visual

proof and visual knowledge—predicated upon the principle of absence—emphasizes the damaging implications of ocular power. This negative relationship can most thoroughly be seen through the symbolism of the ‘image’ of the Virgin Mary that is stolen from the Christians.

While the theft of the “*sacra imago*” primarily functions in the text as a dramatic enactment of the obsessive desire to visually and physically dominate or possess the body of the “Other,” it also emphasizes how absent referents—tangible or otherwise—wholly derail the vow-making process. Since it is Ismeno’s idea to steal the statue from the temple, since *he*, a pseudo-pagan, desires a Christian effigy albeit for malevolent reasons, the statue becomes marked by his desire. In addition, inscribed as it is in his ambiguous religious and epic desires, it begins to display some of the very same symptoms of religious and identitary confusion as do both he and Aladino, and many of the other characters of the *Liberata*. That is, not only is it a statue unto which both Christian and Pagan vows have been made, but the fact that the statue is alternately housed in both a Christian temple and a pagan mosque described as a “*profan loco*” further lends to a facile awareness of the “*sacra imago*’s” complicated identity. So too does the poem’s insistent veiling and uncovering of visual metaphors that draw attention to the surprising intangibility by which the statue is defined, an intangibility that ultimately allows it to mysteriously elude its various possessors and the vow-makers who depend upon its presence to properly orient their prayers and validate their religious beliefs.

Covered in a veil, kept in the dark, and hidden away in underground, the statue of the Virgin is immediately eroticized and marked by desire, mystery and danger, and is clearly textually marked as a site of struggle for religious, political and gender trouble. Even the way in which the “*simulacro*” is viewed by the Christians emphasizes the sacred value given to a personified and visually reified presence:¹⁴

Dinanzi al simulacro accesa face
continua splende; egli è in un velo avvolto.
Pendono intorno in lungo ordine i voti
che vi portano i creduli devoti. (2.5.5-8)

The statue is a site of pilgrimage marked by desire, devotion and respect; the value ascribed to her and the “voti” offered to her by the devout, emphasize the value of her presence in religious and economic terms: she is a thing of value, and deserves to be surrounded by things of value. Yet even before she is removed from the Christian temple, the statue’s economic and religious worth, which immediately translate into political power, are imagined by the pagans. Ismeno tells Aladino

¹⁴ The crucial essentiality of the statue of the Virgin to the plot of the poem can be seen through the coherencies that link this episode with the opening declaration of the narrative’s mission. “Canto l’arme pietose e ’l capitano / che ’l gran sepolcro liberò di Cristo” (1.1.1). The emptiness of this tomb-like altar, the “*devoto/voto*” / (*vuoto*) “pun” as Ascoli calls it (“Liberating” 164), and the situation of the Christ’s tomb as a sort of textual *nec plus ultra*, or “textual endpoint,” further associate the two episodes. “The liberated sepulchre is at once the sign of death and of liberation from death [...]” (“Liberating” 165).

that once the statue is taken from the temple and brought to the mosque, “she” will be able to bring protection to the pagan people:

[...] mentre ella qui fia custodita,
sarà fatal custodia a queste porte;
tra mura inespugnabili il tuo impero
seculo fia per novo alto mistero. (2.6.5-8)

The pagans in the poem thus attribute the same identitary inconstancy and multiplicity from which they themselves suffer to the Virgin as well, naively believing that an image that has a very particular functional significance in one religion can be seamlessly applied to another through the vagaries of a “novo alto mistero.”

The description of the statue’s appearance and presence in the temple however, departs from a purely religious function in the poem and leads readers to examine the ocular barriers that distort visual access, desire, and power, wreaking havoc on the gazing subject. The first instance of disorder is the way in which the statue confounds vision, definitions and knowledge with her representational ambiguity. The simple fact that she is lusted after and coveted by both Christians and pagans creates the first level of her identitary vagueness—how, for example, can she possibly offer the same functional promise (protection through visibility) for such supposedly oppositional groups? Additionally, the link between what the eye sees and what the eye knows is frustrated by the lack of coherence between representation and signs, between representation and reality.

The language of the poem, which first calls the statue a “simulacro,” then an “effigie,” a “casto simulacro,” a “sacra imago,” “immagine” and “immagin,” refuses to give a sense of tangibility to the object, as it playfully draws upon purposefully vague pictorial terms that only accentuate her elusive nature. The use of “simulacro” positions her as a statue, but also as phantasmal image, as a superficial appearance that does not correspond to reality. As the *De Mauro Italian Dictionary* specifies, the statue is an “apparenza illusoria,” a “fittizia.” The terms “imago” and “immagine” also privilege exterior appearance over interior truth, since “imago” often lends to the idea of a copy, replication or picture, and “immagine” has a symbolic function that can be purely fantastical, a product of the imagination or the “exterior form” of a body with no guaranteed internal relevance. “Effigie” is the term imbued with the greatest sense of tangibility yet also recalls the vagueness of “immagine” by gesturing towards the intangible, illustrative realm of the imagination.

Both this teasing series of appellations as well as the veil that covers the statue repel and attract the eye, and seduce and frustrate the expectations of the observer as they incite and thwart desire.¹⁵ In particular, the veil toys with already heady sexual and scopic economies as it threatens to relentlessly frustrate any promise of ocular satisfaction. Indeed, it thwarts the viewer by mockingly

¹⁵ See Meyda Yegenoglu’s “Veiled Fantasies: Cultural and Sexual Difference in the Discourse of Orientalism” in *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* for a thorough analysis of the visual implications of sartorial matters.

accentuating the statue's visual inaccessibility and unnecessarily complicating the erotic potential of surveillance. Surprisingly, the preponderance of visual metaphors is even greater once the statue is stolen, and failed surveillance, inherently suggestive of failed control, stands in the poem as an indication of physical, political, and visual weakness (Mulvey 19; Foucault, *Dits et écrits* 85-6; *Surveiller* 53-57). In addition, however, the statue's absence, first from the Christian temple and later from the mosque necessarily increases the anxieties of the would-be viewers. The absence of the object of the voyeurs' attentions piques their sexual appetite and incites a scopophilic desire for domination, possession and penetration, while reminding them of their own insufficiencies and lack. Moreover, the absence of the object through which so many desires and anxieties are filtered, and upon which so many hopes and vows are cast (despite its contrasting and conflicting meanings for different parties), reminds the reader of the Girardian tensions of triangular desire (*Vérité romanesque* 12-23). It also irreverently parodies the importance of contemplation for the mystical experience. In an interesting combination of textuality and sexuality, the conflict between the pagans and Christians comes to a head when the pagans profane what can be read as the virgin statue's secret burial ground, so to speak:

Nel tempio de' cristiani occulto giace
un sotterraneo altare, e quivi è il volto
di Colei che sua diva e madre face
quel vulgo del suo Dio nato e sepolto. (2.5.1-4)

As if it were a final resting place, the "occulto" altar lies protected underground. The violent drama of possession in which it is caught however, disturbs the sanctity of this place. In this sense, "occulto," which was initially attributed to the Christian altar seems to simultaneously point towards the confused *occultismo* of the pagans, (whose king was encouraged by Ismeno's black magic and delusions of grandeur to steal the statue in the first place) as well as to the hidden identity of the agent behind the statue's second disappearance (2.11.1). Moreover, since the statue is repeatedly described in rather personified terms—"she" is in custody, forced, profaned, and twice associated with the verb "rapire"—both the pagan's desire to steal the statue and their frustrated proclamations once they find that it is missing result in violent promises of bodily harm. The violence that both describes the statue and conditions the actions of all those who strive to possess and keep it, or "her," is only intensified with the rupture of the initial vows that were made.

As such, the statue's ability to elude is treacherous and becomes an excuse for the failed promises and vicious political and sexualized violence that take place in the poem. In terms of gender-related anxieties, much like the surprising and often threatening Clorinda, and as a counterpoint to Sofronia's destabilizing presence in the pagan camp, the statue exemplifies the disruptive visibility of women and the threatening nature of the female body. Paradoxically, her presence, and then her lack, both accentuate her purely reified function as the hopefully passive recipient of the male gaze, yet also dramatize the paradoxical capacity of her disruptive (in)visibility to thwart the masculine matrix of power relations. For example,

although the text mentions that the faithful will interpret the statue's second disappearance as a feat authored by Heaven, select Pagans, as Clorinda states later, believe it to have disappeared thanks to a miraculous intervention on the part of Mahomet.

E dirò sol, ch'è quì comun sentenza
Che i cristiani togliessero l'imgo;
Ma discord'io da voi; nè però senza
Alta ragion del mio parer m'appago.
Fu delle nostre leggi irrivenza
Quell'opra far che persuase il Mago; [...]
Dunque suso a Macon recar mi giova
Il miracol dell'opra, ed ei lo fece
Per dimostrar ch'i tempi suoi con nova
Religion contaminar non lece.
Faccia Ismeno, incantando, ogni sua prova,
Egli, a cui le malie son d'arme in vece;
Trattiamo il ferro pur noi cavalieri:

Quest'arte è nostra, e 'n questa sol si speri. (2.50.1-6; 51.1-8)

Whether it be a deed authored by God or by Mahomet, and despite Clorinda's convincing argument, the statue's uncertain provenance creates 'discord' and it 'contaminates,' blurring boundaries that should have remained separate. However, since the text itself goes to great lengths not to definitively mark this second disappearance as the result of a divine action, it purposefully also leaves open the possibility for human, and presumably male, agency.¹⁶ For instance, Aladino, whose theft has been negated and overwritten by the statue's second disappearance, "imagina" that the "immagine" must have been stolen by one of the faithful. As a result, his insane rage surges up with the immoderate violence suggestive of a crime of passion:

Ma poi che 'l re crudel vide occultarse
quel che peccato de' fedeli ei pensa,

¹⁶ Whether the state goes missing due to male agency or female agency, the irrational desires of Aladino are nonetheless what occasions its disappearance. Illuminating this catalyst, Caroline Walker Bynum offers an extensive analysis of the disproportionate ways in which agency and control were wielded, which in turn contributed to the "asymmetrical power relationships" that developed between men and women, between ideas of 'maleness' and 'femaleness,'" and so forth. As she sustains, this forced female power and agency through an interpretive lens determined by male control, and through dichotomies created by male restrictions. "Female creativity must be facilitated by men; [...] female rejection of family and fertility must be conceptualized by men as an acceptance of other communal and generative possibilities" (17). Subsequently, this underscores how women who resisted these confines needed to position themselves against male tradition. Consult Bynum's *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* for an extensive and detailed discussion of sexuality, gender difference, and representations of the body and Joan Kelly's discussion of the prioritized "vantage point of men," which occasions a sort of "double vision" and foments relationships of "female dependency and male domination" during the Renaissance, in *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp 3; 20-22.

tutto in lor d'odio infellonissi, ed arse
 d'ira e di rabbia immoderata immensa.
 Ogni rispetto oblia, vuol vendicarse,
 segua che pote, e sfogar l'alma accensa. (2.11.1-6)

As if he were a lover scorned, it is his inability to have physical and visual access to the statue, paired with the idea that someone intentionally deprived him of the female body he desires that incite Aladino's wrath. Moreover, he perceives that his access to religious protection has been thwarted, which takes the crime to a whole new level. Not only does it affect his personal vows unto his God, it challenges and subsequently undermines the promise of protection that he has made unto his people. Fully realizing the gravity of what this second theft represents, Aladino knows that the statue's second theft (be it divinely ordained or not) negates his decision to steal the statue in the first place. Replacing his initial, more moderate desire for possession, a new thirst for vengeance takes over his already feeble mind, and ire and rage consume his "alma accensa" with an unusual incendiary vehemence. As if he were a second King Herod, Aladino decides to recapture the power that was 'stolen' from him by consciously massacring innocents.¹⁷

"Morrà," dicea "non andrà l'ira a vòto,
 ne la strage comune il ladro ignoto.
 Pur che 'l reo non si salvi, il giusto pèra
 e l'innocente; ma qual giusto io dico?
 è colpevol ciascun, né in loro schiera
 uom fu giamai del nostro nome amico.
 [...]
 Su su, fedeli miei, su via prendete
 le fiamme e 'l ferro, ardetè ed uccidete. (2.11.7-8. 12.1-4; 7-8)

Thus, as "le turbe," a mob of pagans rises up against one Christian aggressor, Aladino's quest to recuperate power again exaggerates the tensions between individuality and multiplicity.¹⁸ In this instance, the crime of one threatens to become the punishment of many. Aladino's punitive sanction "non andrà l'ira a vòto, / ne la strage comune [morrà] il ladro ignoto," will not be lifted unless the true culprit is found or a victim is sacrificed in the "ladro's" place. His "voto" therefore, is here realized in the "vòto"—the rage that surges in order to fill the space left empty by the absent statue (Zatti, *Quest* 101). Yet the idea of emptiness exaggerated in this scene, is of course a troubling reminder of how the absence of the statue exemplifies the superficiality of Aladino's religious vows and his broken promise that the statue will protect his people.

¹⁷ Herod's ire, as described in Matthew 2:16-18, arises because of a similar feeling of being betrayed by wiser people, which leaves him wanting to both in order to eliminate the affront to his pride: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men [...]."

¹⁸ See Sergio Zatti's *The Quest for Epic: From Ariosto to Tasso*, in particular, chapter 6: "Christian Uniformity and Pagan Multiplicity."

Undeniably, this moment of conflict catalyzed by the need for a pharmakos to purge Aladino's kingdom of a shameful affront provides another interesting instance of triangulation in the poem. That is, a victim, whose body will promptly be eliminated, must be found to take the punishment that would have otherwise been meted out to the missing "ladro" responsible for the missing statue, (even though it is only a hypothetical, imagined "ladro"). The fact that it is the body of the Christian virgin Sofronia that takes both the "ladro's" place and eventually almost substitutes for the statue's inexplicably absent female "body," doubles the corporeal threat that Sofronia represents as a martyr-figure by confounding gender barriers and menacing the normative social order when she contradicts the pagan king.¹⁹

Indeed, when Aladino demands a culpable body upon which to "sfogar" or unleash his rage and Sofronia offers herself, she threatens Aladino with her easy assumption of a masculine role. More dangerously still, her eroticized body threatens to distract him from the empire. Additionally, the substitution of her body for the statue not only creates an equivalence between a reified female object and a real woman, but also accentuates a specifically male desire for possession, while situating the female sex both at the origin of Aladino's frustrations and at the origin of his shameful personal impotence. That is, counseled by the impotent Ismeno, the impotence of Aladino bleeds over to the rest of his people once the statue mysteriously goes missing. Since the statue is viewed by the pagan camp as a repository of power and honor, and also serves to connect Ismeno's delirious sense of magical power with the fevered political aspirations of Aladino, the theft of the statue is suggestive of the disintegration of the male homosocial bonds that hold the empire together,²⁰ as well as the disintegration of the religious bonds that should have been upheld. The only way to reestablish these bonds and reassert masculine control is by finding another female body through which to filter the subtextual male homoeroticism so crucial to the male sense of self (Girard, *Choses cachées* 23)²¹

¹⁹ Although Phyllis Racklin's article "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage," deals primarily with the androgynous female heroines of Renaissance plays, many pertinent points can be taken from her work that illuminate Sofronia's androgynous situation, such as her analysis of the transgressive visibility of female bodies, the potency of sexual ambiguity, and the order-restoring properties of marriage.

²⁰ For a thorough examination of how triangular homosocial bonds contribute to the "trafficking" of women see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal work *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, Colombia University Press, 1985).

²¹ See, in particular, the first chapter "Le désir 'triangulaire'" of Girard's *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*.

“Nè loco a dubbio v’ha, sì certo è il vero” : “Magnanima menzonga” and the Triangulation of Promises, Doubt, and Ire

It is no mere coincidence that early descriptions of Sofronia, the virgin so eager to sacrifice herself with a “magnanima menzogna” for the safety of the Christians, are nearly identical to the defining characteristics of the statue of the Virgin Mary. The honest disposition of Sofronia and her self-sacrificing, mediating function parallel that of the Virgin, as do her “altezza,” her beauty, and her chaste modesty. The absence of ostentatiousness and the pulchritude that she carefully conceals—the “gran pregi” that “tra le mura / d’angusta casa asconde” (2.14.5-6)—can be read as an allegorized description of a virgin body reminiscent of the hagiographic tradition. They also recall the hidden underground altar of the virgin, and reinforce Sofronia’s positionality as recipient of the gaze while also suggesting her subsequent ability to elude it (Mulvey 19). For example, the description of her modesty—“[...] de' vagheggiatori ella s'involà / a le lodi, a gli sguardi, inculta e sola” (2.14.7-8) is directly linked to the Virgin’s initial ocular centrality and her ultimate evasiveness. Even Sofronia’s posture, her demure downward gaze paired with her “casto manto” and her veil, as well as her matter-of-fact beauty, humility, and singularity, correspond both to the veiled statue and to typical Marian iconography:

La vergine tra 'l vulgo uscì soletta,
non coprì sue bellezze, e non l'espone,
raccolse gli occhi, andò nel vel ristretta,
con ischive maniere e generose.
Non sai ben dir s'adorna o se negletta,
se caso od arte il bel volto compose.
Di natura, d'Amor, de' cieli amici
le negligenze sue sono artifici. (2.18.1-8)

Most specifically however, it is Sofronia’s peculiarly emphasized “mature virginity” that suggests Mary’s state of perpetual virginity, while her mediating salvatory act definitively links her to the Virgin. It is the “[v]ergine [...] di già matura / verginità, d’alti pensieri e regi, / d’alta beltà [...]” who restores both the hopes and the life of the Christians with her intercession, bringing them deliverance where they “meno speraro ebber salute” (2.14.1-2; 2.13.8).

Yet it is not just Sofronia’s willingness to thwart Aladino’s violent rampage that threatens pagan hegemony, but also her astute awareness of the prurient king’s visual dependency and her calm frustration of his desires.²² She is aware of

²² In a section of *Visual and Other Pleasures* entitled “Woman as image, man as bearer of the look,” Mulvey analyzes the sexualized visuality that forces women into the position of reified object: “In a

his dependence upon the presence of her body, both for its own aesthetic merits and as substitution for the absent statue. Indeed, just as Tancredi is physically and emotionally stunned by Clorinda's beauty, when Aladino first sees Sofronia he too is immobilized. He is left so "sospeso" by her singular beauty that her presence confounds his already confused thoughts and makes him temporarily forget his sadistic resolve:

A l'onesta baldanza, a l'improvviso
folgorar di bellezze altere e sante,
quasi confuso il re, quasi conquiso,
frenò lo sdegno, e placò il fer sembiante. (2.20.1-4)

Aladino's temporary tranquilization, the calming of his iron disposition by the resplendent beauty that distracts enough to momentarily ward off his desire for vengeance and literally pause both his "sdegno" and his violence, interestingly doubles the interpretive possibilities of "fer sembiante." The transformation Aladino undergoes when confronted with the awe-inspiring beauty of Sofronia happens on a personal and a sexual level. Previously "feramente irato," on a literal level his "fer sembiante" is placated by Sofronia's presence. The strategic use of the word "fer," which conflates "feroce," "fero/fiero" and "ferro," alludes to the temporary suspension or mollification, so to speak, of Aladino's sword. Given that the confused king is also described as "conquiso," from *conquidere*, which figuratively has an overtly sexual sense,²³ this scene emphasizing beauty, brilliance, suspense and desire leaves room for a wealth of Freudian interpretations. Aladino's perverse and Freudian eroticism is revealed most evidently, for instance, if we compare: the figurative description of Aladino's iron rod and demeanor and his obsessive preoccupation with absence and lack to the symbolic potential of associations of the female body with an underground enclosure or room (Freud 127-8), and the phallic implications of the gaze and masochistic visual mastery (Mulvey 8-10).

Although Sofronia's appearance profoundly affects the king, his threats, in contrast, have absolutely no effect upon her. She is elusive and impenetrable, and retains the upper hand, which only gives Aladino more cause to want to eliminate her threatening presence. Moreover, it is her ability to anticipate the evil king's desires and her willingness to frustrate his gaze that definitively provoke his insane ire and violent disgust towards the disordering body he must eliminate.²⁴ While

world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking is split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (19). In the *Liberata's* portrayal of the fugacity of female characters and their ability to elude male control and disappear from view, the active/passive dialectic is confounded; Sofronia and the statue of the Virgin Mary thus pose even more of a threat to their male voyeurs as they undermine visual coding, male possession, and male desire.

²³ From *De Mauro*, "vincere, conquistare, sedurre, avvincere, trasfigurare"; from *Garzanti Linguistica*: "vincere, conquistare, sedurre, far innamorare di sé."

²⁴ In "'The Devil's Gateway': Women's Bodies and the Earthly Paradise," Page Ann Dubois situates Renaissance violence towards women's body at the problematic nexus between desire and repulsion, or rather the "fear of women's corporeality," and a "strain of fear and disgust which conceals a desire for unthinking sexuality" (45).

Sofronia's beauty initially leaves Aladino "sospeso," suspending his attention and retarding his rage, his attempt at emotional repression fails him when she refuses to comply with his demands; denies having an accomplice, emphasizes the ironic fairness of her actions and brazenly forces a condition upon *him*:

Signore, o chiedi il furto, o 'l ladro chiedi:

quel no 'l vedrai in eterno, e questo il vedi

Benché né furto è il mio, né ladra i' sono:

giust'è ritòr ciò ch'a gran torto è tolto. (2.24.7-8; 25.1-2)

By substituting herself for the absent statue and the absent thief, and vowing that he will never see the person who orchestrated the "furto," Sofronia inserts herself seamlessly in the economy of absence that most frustrates Aladino. Falsely accepting responsibility for the statue's disappearance, she presents herself to the pagan King as a visual and physical substitute both for the statue and for the "ladro," yet this gesture serves only to accentuate the irony of his complete lack of visual control over the statue. That is, for all that he may have (visual) access to her body, he will still never find the true thief or see the statue again. And even if Sofronia does respond to his question about where the statue is hidden, it is something, she retorts, that is irretrievable; instead of just being hidden away, it has permanently disappeared from view. Since Aladino is "blind," and will remain "blind" to its whereabouts, the statue will forever remain "absent," so to speak. Sofronia's speech act, that is, her threat and promise that he will neither find the statue nor the real robber forces Aladino into another position of submission. In other words, by remaining absent, the statue will make Aladino break all of the vows that he has made to himself, as well as those that he has made (as part of his evil complot with Ismeno) to his people:

Qui comincia il tiranno a risdegnarsi;

poi le dimanda: "Ov'hai l'imago ascosa?"

"Non la nascosi," a lui risponde "io l'arsi,

e l'arderla stimai laudabil cosa;

cosí almen non potrà piú violarsi

per man di miscredenti ingiuriosa [...]

Or, quest'udendo, in minaccievol suono

freme il tiranno, e 'l fren de l'ira è sciolto. (2.24.1-6; 2.25.3-4)

Bringing his passionate violence full-circle, the punishment Aladino finds most suitable for Sofronia's irreverent, disrupting presence is complete negation. He believes that once he kills her, he will have the justice he desires; he will have no more obstacles before him that prevent him from upholding the promises he has made to his people. Thus, he must burn her at the stake so as to simultaneously put an end to the distraction caused by her incendiary presence and his lustful ardor:

Presa è la bella donna, e 'ncrudelito

il re la danna entr'un incendio a morte.

Già 'l velo e 'l casto manto a lei rapito,

stringon le molli braccia aspre ritorte. (2.25.1-4)

We remember of course, that while Sofronia understood her act of allegedly burning the statue as a “laudabil cosa,” that is, as a necessary act of violence in order to prevent the statue from being profaned, the sole objective of Aladino’s fiery crime is to obtain revenge and punishment. Given these passionate circumstances, both of the ‘female’ bodies in question are aligned with each other because of the threat of arson and their ubication in flames.

Furthermore, Sofronia’s punishment has a specifically visual resonance that approximates the threats of violence directed towards her body and the profanation of the statue of the Virgin. The verb “rapire,” for example, previously applied to the statue is applied to Sofronia as well. Similarly, the way in which her veil and “manto” are stripped from her ties into the eroticized dialectic of covering and uncovering while also coalescing with the hazy menace of rape that describes the irreverent handling of the statue. But of course the readers know that Sofronia’s body will be spared; the intervention of the love-struck Olindo, followed by the timely mediation of Clorinda who will save them both, will frustrate another one of Aladino’s vows, by first staying and then preventing the execution of his rage.

Feritor Feroci and the Dark Promise of Revenge

Although Aladino loses power because of Clorinda’s arbitration, his dark formula “ardete e uccidete,” becomes the driving force not only for a specific act of pagan revenge, but also for war and love, the major conflicts of the poem. The king’s desire to possess the statue both anticipates and adds a perverted nuance to the struggle of the trio of male Christian lovers of the poem—Olindo, Tancredi and Odoardo, and all of the frustrated vows that they make. They grapple too with the difficult negotiation of presence and lack, visibility and invisibility, and with the unity and disunity of the bodies of the women they love and want to possess. The discursive coherence of the male lovers’ situation, their fervent promises of devotion, and the web of homosocial bonds that tie them together, paradoxically paints woman at once as a reified, random victim of the male gaze, as a scapegoat who can be easily eliminated, while she also serves as the essential, idealized glue of masculine sociopsychological bonds. As it was for Aladino, so it is for many; the absence of a desired woman from the visual field is construed as a broken promise. Frustrated vision then stands as metaphor for an implicit sexual refusal, which subsequently jeopardizes a male sense of self entirely dependent upon obtaining and maintaining ocular control over the female body. The conflicts surrounding her presence or her lack stand for the visual problems and questions of unity and disunity that evidence man’s fragility as he searches for constancy and truth and desires to have visual, physical, and sexual control over the other.

Indeed, burning from the passions of love as any good Petrarchan lover would do, Olindo, Tancredi and Odoardo, are ready to sacrifice themselves because of visibility and invisibility, and because of the presence (on the pyre, upon a battlefield) and the absence (visual, mortal) of the women they love. Due to their inconstant, fragile, and volatile nature, the vows that these lovers make cannot fully be separated from those made by the dubious characters of the pagan camp. In this respect, quite telling is the case of Olindo, who explodes with emotion and confesses his ardent passions for Sofronia while surrounded by ever growing flames:

Composto è lor d'intorno il rogo omai,
e già le fiamme il mantice v'incita,
quand'il fanciullo in dolorosi lai
proruppe, e disse a lei ch'è seco unita:
"Quest'è dunque quel laccio ond'io sperai
teco accoppiarmi in compagnia di vita?
questo è quel foco ch'io credea ch'i cori
ne dovesse infiammar d'eguali ardori? (2.33.1-8)²⁵

Olindo's lament queerly stresses the visual, truth-seeking act that is so cruel to all of the loving and lusting men of the poem and the spoken promise that is constantly undermined despite the given characters' wishes. By overwriting the fiery passion of Aladino's lust, wrath, and promise of revenge with his passionate devotion and by deictically categorizing what he sees—"Quest'è dunque quel laccio [...] questo è quel foco"—Olindo is trying to stabilize that which he knows is treacherous. Recalling the sage Piero's insistence on the importance of the visual and the scorning of doubt ("[...] io consiglio: / Nè loco a dubbio v'ha, sì certo è il vero," [1.29.5-6]), Olindo believes that by concretizing the visual, and by defining the signs that he sees, he is better equipped to interpret reality and discern what is true from what is false. Olindo insists that what might have seemed to be an irreconcilable gap between truth and visual signs is much more coherent than he expected; the signs have always been present but his interpretive ability was flawed, and stable referents were absent. The passionate avowal of Olindo's love for Sofronia is thus tinged with a hint of shame that does not dissipate until Clorinda's intervention reestablishes order.

It is Tancredi however, whose passions burn most ardently, and who finds himself in the most dramatic staging of what vows and vow-making means. Just as Olindo's plight is irremediably connected to Aladino's ire, so too does Tancredi's violent ferocity align him with the rash violence of the ferocious pagan king. Indeed, Tancredi's first appearance in the poem is immediately associated with iron and flames. A great "feritor," his dexterous handling of arms is only marred by his insane love. Incidentally, as if ontologically connected to those very same weapons, Tancredi's love is born of violence. Consequently, love's bellicose beginnings

²⁵ The idea of flames incited by the "mantice" also continues the imagery regarding fanning flames and spreading fires found in the description of Goffredo's bellicose reinspiration and Tancredi's *innamoramento*.

irremediably link it to aggressive, destructive behavior, and to the traditional manifestation of love as a sickness, the *mal d'amour* of courtly love:

S'alcun'ombra di colpa i suoi gran vanti
rende men chiari, è sol follia d'amore:
nato fra l'arme, amor di breve vista,
che si nutre d'affanni, e forza acquista. (1.45.5-8)

Much like the descriptions of Aladino's vertiginous mood swings and identity inconstancy, and his constantly stalled promises, actions, and desires, the violence of this strange birth is immediately tempered by a brief moment of deceleration however, which suspends descriptions of battle in order to introduce the terms of Tancredi's love more concretely:

[...] poi che Tancredi al fin vittorioso
i fuggitivi di seguir fu stanco,
cercò di refrigerio e di riposo
a l'arse labbia, al travagliato fianco,
e trasse ove invitollo al rezzo estivo
cinto di verdi seggi un fonte vivo. (1.46.3-8)

By this bubbling spring decorated with trees, it seems that Tancredi has found respite, a brief moment of restoration and peace in which he can recuperate his strength and quench his thirst. Nevertheless, while this idyllic setting rings loudly with typical stilnovistic imagery in which the angelic, edifying beloved is situated at the height of a hierarchy of power, it recalls Ariosto's subversive love-reversing waters and also leans towards more foreboding Petrarchan themes that often mark the initial stages of a much more treacherous type of love. True to the typical Petrarchan torments, this initially peaceful imagery is nothing more than a cruel visual trick, yet another example of a false image that incites and perverts, preventing both Tancredi and the reader from accessing the truth, that is, from immediately understanding the terrible violence of love:

Quivi a lui d'improvviso una donzella
tutta, fuor che la fronte, armata apparse:
era pagana, e là venuta anch'ella
per l'istessa cagion di ristorarse.
Egli mirolla, ed ammirò la bella
sembianza, e d'essa si compiacque, e n'arse.
Oh meraviglia! Amor, ch'a pena è nato,
già grande vola, e già trionfa armato. (1.47.1-8)

Although the initial symmetry that brings Tancredi and Clorinda to the same place since they are both seeking respite seems to hint towards the couple's (eventual yet never realized) suitability for one another, the violent metaphors that describe vows, vision, and love already more suggestive of the fragmentation, suffering and disunity that will keep the couple apart—a disunity that is also apparent, in the foreboding and violent opening scenes of *Orlando furioso*. “Armata apparse,” Clorinda erupts on the scene and wrenches from Tancredi what little chance he had of a tranquil restoration. She is at once a threat to Tancredi because of her faithful

support of her cause, while her “gender indeterminacy and her religious confusion” (Fuchs, “Border” 21) are revealed because of her armor and aggressive stance as well as because of her beauty. We must note, of course, that the corporal covering that her armor provides faintly recalls the veils of both the Virgin Mary and Sofronia since it simultaneously reveals, conceals, and ultimately accentuates her somatic ambiguity by displaying her face while hiding her body.

Additionally, since her armor almost completely covers her, making the *evidence* of her female body disappear, it gestures towards the importance of absence by anticipating the crisis of missing female bodies of canto 2. Her covering simultaneously also suggests the erotic, political, and violent potential of penetration. That is to say, if Tancredi is able to penetrate her armor, he will have accomplished a religiously, politically, and sexually charged feat. As such, while evidencing an invigorated commitment to his religious enterprise, he will have proven both his physical and sexual prowess. Conversely, if he were to fail at these tasks, he would have triply failed in all three arenas.

Recalling Aladino’s failed drama of possession, so to speak, Clorinda’s ability to elude Tancredi, in conjunction with the brute emotional and visual violence of love, immediately render her lover impotent, and make him into the victim of his own misguided desires. Tancredi approaches the resting place already weakened; he then sees Clorinda, and is immediately ambushed by Love. “Oh meraviglia! Amor, ch’a pena è nato, / già grande vola, e già trionfa armato” (1.47.7-8). This is one of the most piteous of the many scenes of the *Liberata* that play with the problematic nature of truth and recognition, the vulnerability of the eyes, and the conflicting vantage points of would-be lovers. In this instance, love has already won. Like Clorinda, it appears suddenly; it is armed and it dominates, while Tancredi merely watches and burns.

What is particularly interesting about this first encounter is how the way in which Clorinda and Tancredi so differently interpret each other’s bodies alters and conditions the vows that they make. Clorinda sees Tancredi and immediately prepares herself for attack. Since she recognizes him as an enemy, she puts on her helmet and heads towards him, while he does nothing but daftly marvel at her beauty: “Ella d’elmo coprissi, e se non era / ch’altri quivi arrivâr, ben l’assaliva” (1.48.1-2). Although Clorinda does not have the opportunity to fight with Tancredi at this particular moment, her dominance is already manifest. Tancredi is not only weakened, but a victim, *her* victim:

Partí dal *vinto suo* la donna altera,
 ch’è per necessità sol fuggitiva;
 ma l’immagine sua bella e guerriera
 tale ei serbò nel cor, qual essa è viva;
 e sempre ha nel pensiero e l’atto e ’l loco
 in che la vide, esca continua al foco. (1.48.3-8, my emphasis)

Though Clorinda, like the *Furioso*’s Angelica, is constantly in flight, and although the early canti of the *Liberata* emphasize her fugacity given her stunning irruptions and quick departures, the relationship between Tancredi and Clorinda also augurs

a paradoxical closeness, rendered more obvious through the inter- and intratextual circumstances that proleptically condition their interactions. In the *Canzoniere*, for example, while the Petrarchan lover is bound upon seeing Laura's eyes, it is Love who is his hunter, and the "colpi" that he suffers are Love's.²⁶ On the other hand, though Love has certainly done Tancredi no favors, Clorinda's status as a recalcitrant beloved *and* an actual warrior puts him at far greater risk. While Laura is simply described as "armata," she is passive and not at all prone to action. In contrast, Clorinda is an aggressive "donna altera" who has already beaten "her victim" ("Partí dal vinto suo"). Tancredi is then even more directly assaulted by her "image [...] belle e guerriera" as well.

Intratextually, the description of Tancredi's violent *innamoramento* and his reaction to Clorinda's beauty also (problematically) recall Goffredo's initial lassitude and the moral, religious, and political ambiguity that implies. While Tancredi is immediately able to recognize Clorinda as a pagan and should launch an attack—"Quivi a lui d'improvviso una donzella / [...] armata apparse: / era pagana [...]" (1.47.1-3)—he does nothing, neglecting his political duties. The gravity of this amorous deviation is heightened all the more when we recall that it is his God himself, who "dentro spia / nel più secreto lor gli affetti umani" (1.8.3-4) who is disturbed by Tancredi's "vano amor." He finds fault in both the egocentrism and the futility of Tancredi's deviating desires (1.9). In fact, Tancredi, who has his "vita a sdegno," is one of the soldiers whose deviance God references directly when lamenting the Christian's laxity and their failure to uphold their promise to fight the pagans and liberate Jerusalem. The alignment between this scene and Goffredo's inaction thus heightens the fundamental criminality and nearly treacherous nature of Tancredi's love. Emphasizing Tancredi's need for rehabilitation, Goffredo's reinvigorated commitment to the Christian cause is articulated through the same metaphor of sparks and flames that defines Tancredi's passionate ardor. Indeed, Goffredo ardently wishes to follow God's message: "se già bramava, or tutto arde d'imporre / fine a la guerra ond'egli è duce eletto" (1.18.4). More importantly still, Goffredo's newly realigned desires are now ignited by, and in perfect concordance with divine will: "ma il suo voler più nel voler s'infiama / del suo Signor, come favilla in fiamma" (1.8). For Tancredi, however, it is not God, but Clorinda and his memories of her that are to him a spark that enflames; this dangerous pagan is the "esca continua al foco." Yet while Goffredo was quickly rehabilitated, and "sparked" by God's glory, Tancredi will continue to endure his deviating suffering and his amorous error for a much longer period.

Tancredi's crime is ultimately one that has a visual and perceptual component as well; his wayward sight and interpretation "spark" his

²⁶ As the Petrarchan lover laments in the famous third poem "Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro," Love caught him unfairly and off guard; Love took advantage of his unprotected state:

Tempo non mi pareva da far riparo
 contra colpi d'Amor: però m'andai
 secur, senza sospetto
 [...]

Trovommi Amor del tutto disarmato.(vv. 5-7; 9)

epistemological deviance. For instance, upon seeing Clorinda, Tancredi privileges the beauty that he perceives in her over her pagan markings; he overrides her bodily and sartorial determination by entertaining love: “Egli mirolla, ed ammirò la bella / sembianza, e d'essa si compiacque, e n'arse” (1.47.1-3; 5-6). Though he is an illustrious warrior, his love stains his honor: ‘S'alcun'ombra di colpa i suoi gran vanti / rende men chiari, è sol follia d'amore: / nato fra l'arme, amor di breve vista, / che si nutre d'affanni, e forza acquista” (1.45.5-8). Not only does his love increase and amplify, so too do his visual errors. Tancredi seems unable to interpret what he sees (a beautiful “donzella”) in the light of what he knows (she is a pagan who wants to kill him) and ignores the fact that he has taken a pledge to end, or at least try to end her life.

In addition, Love deprives Tancredi of a true interiority. As if his face were a text, the constant burning and Petrarchan sufferings to which he falls prey are easily read by others, and he is recognized as a victim of love: “E ben nel volto suo la gente accorta / legger potria: "Questi arde, e fuor di spene”(1.49.1-2). While he possesses no divine capacity to see inwardly as does his God, he is also unable to conceal himself and his emotions. Thus he is already made more vulnerable to others who can easily perceive his weaknesses. So often a symbol of sterility or impotence, Tancredi's wounded side, described as a “travagliato fianco,” corresponds to medieval metaphors of sterility and impotence,²⁷ and consequently alludes to the difficulty of possessing Clorinda while simultaneously evoking their violent future clash and Clorinda's final wound. Aladino's implicit vow to destroy all Christians is juxtaposed to Tancredi's obligation to destroy all pagans. As if Aladino's words have a textual potency that extends far past canto 2, his prescriptive “su via prendete / le fiamme e 'l ferro, ardetate ed uccidete” (2.12.7-8), has already forecasted the necessary eradication of the disruptive female presence while directly anticipating the tragic end of Clorinda and Tancredi's frustrated romance.

Indeed, although Tancredi initially suffers and burns because of his passionate desire to possess the “bella sembianza,” and although he is weakened and thirsty in this first canto, when he finally does have Clorinda under his control, the situation will be reversed. The wounded side will be hers; she will desperately wish for water; her armor will entirely conceal her female body; and his recognition of her will be delayed. His burning thirst will be quenched only when his sword plunges into her body and “drinks” her blood—and only then will his broken religious and military vows be repaired. Upon her death, the vows that he has taken

²⁷ The “fianco” is a particularly interesting body part to have be afflicted, as connected to both groin and leg it corresponds to the trope of the “wounded thigh” often associated with warriors, men in love and sex, as well as to the “wounded side,” which, taken from the “wound” of the biblical Adam, has primarily religious overtones. For examples of wounded flanks, we might think primarily of the image of the *Fisher King* in Wolfram von Eschebach, Chretien de Troyes, and other Holy Grail stories, Marie de France's *Guigemar*, or any representation of Acteon in Petrarch and Petrarchan poets, while the wounded side is primarily prominent in Gottfried von Strassburg's description of Tristan's parents and countless hagiographies. Additionally, wounds in *Gerusalemme liberata* as in many works, stand as once for the physical wounds of combat and the emotional wounds of love, or, *aegritudo amoris*, like Petrarch's wound that he “carries everywhere.”

as lover will of course be broken, yet they will instantly be repaired because he has saved her soul. He will then also finally abandon his state of victimhood to become the (unfortunate) victor.

Visual Errors and the Death of Clorinda

Let us take a closer look at epistemological ambiguity and error, which manifest themselves most tragically in the *Liberata* through the failure of visual proof (*qua* ocular guarantee) and the failure of vows that culminate in the death of Clorinda. Unfortunately for Tancredi, both victory and the promise he has made to his fellow Christians come at a great price. Due to the conflation of war and love, enemy and beloved, when he kills his valiant opponent he also kills the woman he loves, yet his violence occurs only because of a series of visual errors that impede both interpretation and knowledge:

Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta
che vi s'immerge e 'l sangue avido beve;
e la veste, che d'or vago trapunta
le mammelle stringea tenera e leve,
l'empie d'un caldo fiume. Ella già sente
morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.

Segue egli la vittoria, e la trafitta
verGINE minacciando incalza e preme. (12.64, 3-8; 65.1-2)

Although Tancredi alone is able to correctly recognize the warrior as a pagan treacherously trying to blend in with the Christian troops,²⁸ he does not recognize this warrior as a woman, and much less, as the woman he loves.

²⁸ As we have seen, visual errors run amuck in the poem, particularly when women's presence and bodies are concerned. For example, the reason for which Clorinda has to try and blend in with the Christian troops in the first place, is because she has not been properly identified, and has thus been shut out from her own camp. While this error could be attributed primarily to the general pandemonium caused by battle, as I suggested earlier, the narrator specifically emphasizes the culpability and flawed nature of vision, and the irony of yet another misrecognition that jeopardizes Clorinda's life:

Sola esclusa ne fu perché in quell'ora
ch'altri serrò le porte ella si mosse,
e corse ardente e incrudelita fora
a punir Arimon che la percosse.

When Tancredi finally realizes his interpretive errors, it is sight that he blames—the sight that has led him to a terrible knowledge come entirely too late. “Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!” (12.67.8). The cry of his lament is ironic yet comprehensible, since it is sight that caused him to love Clorinda in the first place, and sight that distracted him from his Christian vows by weakening him and turning him away from his true mission.²⁹ Later, it will again be sight that causes him to distinguish Clorinda as a pagan trying to pass by unperceived amongst Christians, but paradoxically will also prevent him from seeing who she truly is. Indeed, every time Tancredi sees Clorinda, he is both mentally and physically frozen, immobilized and rendered impotent. Her presence feminizes him, makes him sluggish, and leaves him shamefully prone to inaction, resulting in the lassitude that God decries, and again reinforcing the parallel between his broken promises and Goffredo’s broken vow.³⁰

During the beginning stages of their conflict for example, Clorinda is described with a certain nuance of promiscuity; she is a temptress who is easy in regards to whom she allows to have access, at least visually, to her body. She “s’offerse a gli occhi suoi” “in leggiadro aspetto” (4.26.3-4) and completely distracts Tancredi. Her appearance makes him a deviant, yet also turns him to stone as if she were another nefarious Medusa:

Già non mira Tancredi ove il Circasso
 La spaventosa fronte al cielo estolle;
 Ma move il suo destrier con lento passo,
 Volgendo gli occhj ov’è colei sul colle.
 Poscia immobil si ferma, e pare un sasso;
 Gelido tutto fuor, ma dentro bolle:
 Sol di mirar s’appaga, e di battaglia
 Sembante fa che poco or più gli caglia. (6.27.1-8)

Rejecting his imperialistic vows and purpose as he gazes dreamily away from battle and towards her, he is “immobil [...] e pare un sasso” and stands “quasi al pugnar restio” (6.29.6), giving others access to his place on the battlefield while humiliating himself with the shame of inaction:

Si scote allor Tancredi, e dal suo tardo
 pensier, quasi da un sonno, al fin si desta,

Punillo; e 'l fero Argante avisto ancora
 non s'era ch'ella sí trascorsa fosse,
 ché la pugna e la calca e l'aer denso
 a i cor togliea la cura, a gli occhi il senso. (12.49.1-8)

Argante has forgotten Clorinda for the moment—his eyes are blinded, and concern is taken from his heart.

²⁹ Sight and interest in earthly things that deter Tancredi, disorient him and distract him from what he should be doing, is suggestive of Petrarch’s “primo giovanile errore,” and Dante’s initial, and near fatal “smarrimento.”

³⁰ In this respect, a more dastardly aspect of Clorinda is presented, as her ability to weaken, feminize and transfix essentially makes her into another Armida, with dangerous, magical and unfairly wielded powers.

e grida ei ben: 'La pugna è mia; rimanti.'
Ma troppo Ottone è già trascorso inanti.

Onde si ferma; e d'ira e di dispetto
avampa dentro, e fuor qual fiamma è rosso,
perch'ad onta si reca ed a difetto

ch'altri si sia primiero in giostra mosso. (6.30.5-8; 31.1-4)

More than just shameful, Clorinda's ability to even tear Tancredi from battle puts him in a physical, existential, and even social danger as his inaction hints towards the loss or negation of his primary defining characteristic, his identification and self-identification as a warrior, and the unified sense of camaraderie that he is *supposed* to feel towards the other Christian soldiers. Instead of burning with love as he usually does, in this instance Tancredi burns with shame because of the mortifying gaze that threatens to negate his identity by causing him to break his more dearly held vows.

Indeed, both Clorinda's presence and her absence are dangerous for Tancredi since, much like the elusive statue, they are necessarily indicative of her autonomy and his lack of visual, physical and sexual control over her body. Her ability to elude Tancredi's grasp as well as his gaze, mark her body as transgressive and almost justify his insane desire to obtain the object he believes belongs to him, given that he has articulated vows that he believes bind him irremediably to her. Yet Clorinda has the unusual characteristic of always being able to mystify and confound visual signs with her complex, and often partially concealed, palimpsestic appearance. As such, it is not just the hysterical love of Tancredi that situates Clorinda at the origin of dangerous interpretative errors and broken promises; rather, any type of contact with her body seems to spread deadly confusion.

On the most obvious level for instance, her "bella sembianza," is easily evocative of the beautiful statue that either miraculously vanishes from the Christian temple or is stolen. Yet even from her youth Clorinda's physical presence and appearance have sparked trouble and disorder. Clorinda's beautiful Ethiopian mother for example, who had the visual access that Aladino was denied, was able to frequently *contemplate* an image of Saint Gregory accomplishing the heroic feat of saving a virgin from a dragon. This image, or rather, her contemplation ostensibly caused her daughter to be born with white rather than dark skin, as would be "natural." Recalling the Vieille's insistence on the deranging passions and fickleness of lovers in the *Rose* and Ariosto's obsession with adultery, this "miracle" causes Clorinda's mother to be terrified that her irascible, jealous husband will view Clorinda's miraculous skin color and interpret the girl's physical appearance as visual proof that his wife had infringed the vows of matrimony by being unfaithful to him:

Si turba; e de gli insoliti colori,
quasi d'un novo mostro, ha meraviglia.
Ma perché il re conosce e i suoi furori,
celargli il parto alfin si riconsiglia,
ch'egli avria dal candor che in te si vede

argomentato in lei *non bianca fede*.

Ed in tua vece una fanciulla nera

pensa mostrargli, poco inanzi nata (12.24.2-8; 25.1-2, emphasis mine).

To avoid errors, to avoid having her husband break his marital vows to her, and to avoid incurring the wrath that would probably culminate in her own death, Clorinda's mother knows that she can no longer permit the disconcerting presence of Clorinda's body to pose such a menace and threat to the health of her family and her marriage. She decides that she must give her daughter up to spare both of their lives. She gives her daughter to Arsete the eunich and makes him promise to take good care of her daughter, to baptize her, and to raise her as a Christian, as he confesses to Clorinda:

Piangendo, a me ti porse, e mi commise

Ch'io lontana a nutrir ti conducessi.

Chi può dire il suo affanno, e in quante guise

Lagnossi, e raddoppiò gli ultimi amplessi?

Bagnò i baci di pianto, e fur divise

Le sue querele da i singulti spessi.

Levò alfin gli occhj, e disse: O Dio, che scerni

L'opre più occulte, e nel mio cor t'interni:

Se immacolato è questo cor, se intatte

Son queste membra e 'l marital mio letto;

Per me non prego, chè mille altre ho fatte

Malvagità; son vile al tuo cospetto:

Salva il parto innocente, al quale il latte

Nega la madre del materno petto.

Viva, e sol d'onestate a me somigli:

L'esempio di fortuna altronde pigli. (12.26.1-8; 27.1-8)

Arsete's refusal to heed Clorinda's mother's request though she had great trust and faith in him, and his refusal to believe the different miracles he sees while raising Clorinda, however, are another type of interpretive error that ends poorly due to the series of broken vows upon which it is founded. He has waited too long to try and convince Clorinda of her wondrous beginnings, and he pays for this when she refuses to listen to his warnings. Instead of trusting his revelation of her miraculous birth and upbringing, she goes stubbornly to her final battle.

Not incidentally, an unusual word that is repeated in canto 12 in reference to Clorinda is "mostrare," which appears eight times in various forms ranging from the actual verb to "mostro."³¹ Elsewhere in the poem, her monstrous, difficultly

³¹ For an interesting description of the duplicitous nature of the monstrous women, see Torril Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics*. For Moi, the monstrous woman is "[...] the woman who refuses to be selfless, acts on her own initiative, who *has* a story to tell. [...] The monster woman... is *duplicitous*, precisely because she has something to tell: there is always the possibility that she may choose *not* to tell – or to tell a different story" (58). Particularly if we insist upon the link between authorship and authority, Clorinda's narrative agency so to speak, can be clearly seen in Moi's definition of the "monster woman." There are many different stories that Clorinda's body both literally and metaphorically hides; her awareness and unawareness of them, as well as her decisions to narrate or

definable nature, which has rejected femininity but continues to be beautiful and identified as female, permits multiple comparisons between her body and actions and those of beasts:

Poscia o per via montana o per silvestra
l'orme seguí di fer leone e d'orso;
seguí le guerre, e 'n esse e fra le selve
fèra a gli uomini parve, uomo a le belve. (2.40.5-8)

While she is described as a vague not-quite man, not-quite-beast, Clorinda's connection to violence and bloodshed seals her definitively monstrous nature (2.41.1-4). Since every mention of "mostrare" and "mostro" (and also "meraviglia") in canto 12 is linked to her, the discursive possibilities of her appearance as implied by "mostrare," are jeopardized by her textual representation as a type of monster whose appearance stupefies and foils coherent interpretations by confounding through shock and singularity. However, this reference to monstrosity only serves to further reinforce the similarities between Clorinda and the miraculous statue due to the connection between notions of monstrosity and the miraculous. Thus, even the mere etymological connection of the words is confusedly dismantled by Clorinda's corporeal ambiguity and the secrets enclosed in her body. That is, what is shown by Clorinda's presence and her body, is very different than what—and who—she is. Since her presence leads to the interpretive errors of others (ranging from her father to her actual enemies) it is capable of causing fatal confusion. The only way to avoid the interpretive errors caused by viewing her, therefore, is to evade or eliminate her threatening, duplicitous, monstrous body entirely.³²

not, only accentuate her 'naturally' transgressive independence, her monstrous nature, and her offensive presence on the battlefield. She irreverently threatens male identity by refusing to disclose her secrets.

³² As Patricia Parker says in her article "Othello and Hamlet: Dilation, Spying, and the 'Secret Place' of Woman", the act of refusing to narrate, or keeping something secret—which she interprets as an act inherently linked to woman's physical body—forces man to want to discover her secrets, and is thus both a sexual and epistemological seduction. Because of his unstoppable gaze and curiosity, the male takes on the role of "[...] delator or informer or a secret accuser, associated both with spying and with bringing something 'hid' before the eye; and second, the language of uncovering, dilating, and opening the 'privy' place of women, in the quasi-pornographic discourse of anatomy and early modern gynecology that seeks to bring a hidden or secret place to light" (60). A type of inquisitorial espionage and an obsessive dependence upon visual evidence is therefore characteristic of the function of a male lover, and most male viewers. It is the preoccupying alterity of the woman, her body full of paradoxical signs, her indecipherability that intrigues and repels, and the subsequent threat that she poses to the male self that convert her into a corporeal spectacle. Her alterity is rooted to her mysterious body and at the source of the insurmountable difference between woman and man is a mere anatomical vagueness. Full of "secrets" and hidden parts, if the male does not discover the secrets hidden in the female body, he will forever be threatened by her presence. In a vampiric, voyeuristic way, in his quest for knowledge, the scopophilic male morphs into a spy in an attempt to solve the enigma represented by the female body. Nevertheless, voyeurism, espionage, sexuality, and hysteria, pair up with a desire for penetration and possession, and can only possibly lead to violence, fragmentation and death.

“Tre volte il cavalier la donna stringe”: Tancredi’s Last Failure of Recognition

Tancredi’s scopophilic interest in Clorinda as a sexual entity, as his beloved, is only rivaled by the fundamental importance of vows, recognition, and vision as described in his final battle with her. While it is surely the conflation of war and love, and enemy and beloved that thwarts Tancredi’s happiness, what ends up effecting him most of all, is the incommensurability of appearance and truth, vision, and proof. If the death of Clorinda were not so widely discussed by critics, a new reader of the poem might easily expect that she *could* have been recognized by Tancredi, especially since during the course of all of their previous battles he had always been able to properly identify her.³³ Indeed, in all of their earlier encounters, it was precisely his ability to see her that served as proof of the depths of his love, but in all of their individual battle scenes and in canto 12 in particular, the text cruelly pairs eroticized images with intense violence, love and hatred, while playing with recognition and misrecognition. Since the battle draws closer and closer and becomes increasingly more vicious, it leaves the pair in an odd embrace that both mimics and mocks love. Their proximity seems to suggest an eventual, climactic recognition that somewhat parodies a conjugal embrace, but identification does not happen when it should. Once they briefly stop fighting, they just stare at each other, in a moment that recalls their fateful first meeting when their tired, breathless, thirsty bodies met by the shaded stream:

Tornano al ferro, e l'uno e l'altro il tinge
con molte piaghe; e stanco ed anelante
e questi e quegli al fin pur si ritira,
e dopo lungo faticar respira.

L'un l'altro guarda [...]. (12.57.5-8; 58.1)

As Giampiero Giampieri writes in his analysis of this scene in *Il battesimo di Clorinda: Eros e religiosità in Torquato Tasso*, “Clorinda e Tancredi, feriti e sanguinanti, possono guardarsi frontalmente, ma non si usano alcuna indulgenza. Nemici stremati, senza pietà, si scrutano [...]” (74). The only aspect Tancredi is able to recognize, are the indications, made real by Clorinda’s spilled blood, that he is winning the battle. When he sees these signs, he interprets them as proof of his success. Paradoxically, at the same time that her blood is proof of his victory, it also

³³ The one exception to Tancredi’s ability to recognize Clorinda occurs when Erminia dons Clorinda’s clothing and Tancredi takes her for his beloved. This attests however to Tancredi’s propensity to over-identify rather than to his inability to recognize her at all, yet also demonstrates how judgments are flawed when they are superficial. When Tancredi “recognizes” Clorinda’s dress instead of her face, he is not able to properly identify the body concealed by the clothes.

causes him to interpret incorrectly since he fails to recognize Clorinda as his lover and see the signs of her impending doom and his definitive heartbreak:

Vede Tancredi in maggior copia il sangue
del suo nemico, e sé non tanto offeso.
Ne gode e superbisce. Oh nostra folle
mente ch'ogn'aura di fortuna estolle!

Misero, di che godi? oh quanto mesti
fiano i trionfi ed infelice il vanto!

Gli occhi tuoi pagheran (se in vita resti)

di quel sangue ogni stilla un mar di pianto. (12.58.5-8; 59.1-4)

The text only increases the pathos of the terrible moment by ironizing on this rare instance of Tancredi's visual accuracy, which nevertheless is paired with yet another defective interpretation. The double bind and failed vows that are bound up in the visual act recall the "contrapasso" of the Ariostan chalice, wherein, as we have seen, the mistrusting husbands must decide if what they want to see is truly worth the risk, or if "their eyes will pay," and they will discover only what they never truly wished to see. The pathos of the scene is dramatized even further due to the fact that juxtaposed to Tancredi's failed recognition and frustrated promises, the menacing vow of the poetic voice does immediately become true—his eyes will quickly and greatly "pay" for what they have seen.

"[T]acendo e rimirando," Tancredi is still not able to recognize Clorinda even though they are locked eye to eye. Moreover, identification is further thwarted by the insolence Clorinda demonstrates when she refuses to reveal her identity. Since recognition only comes when Clorinda is about to die, of course it arrives much too late. When Tancredi sees her he freezes, as he is wont to do. Upon this occasion however, instead of finding himself completely immobilized because of the terrible wounds of love or stunned by Clorinda's all-consuming beauty, he is practically destroyed by the terrible anagnorisis that leaves him "inerme," or frozen in place:

Tremar sentí la man, mentre la fronte
non conosciuta ancor sciolse e scoprio.

La vide, la conobbe, e restò senza

e voce e moto. Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!" (12.67.5-8)

"Ahi vista! ahi conoscenza!" Epistemology has failed Tancredi. He has based everything he knows, or rather, the *only* things that he really knows about Clorinda on the vows that he has made to love her. These vows depend upon accurate sight—that is, they depend upon vision that does actually correspond to reality. In other instances, Tancredi is able to recognize her by her helmet and her dress when he is unable to see her face. Part of the tragedy therefore, (and similar to Ariodante's initial error), is that Tancredi thinks he can depend wholly on sight and recognition, and that sight and recognition are the only keys to knowledge. Until Clorinda dies, he does not seem able to understand—or perhaps the thought does not even occur to him—that signs can change, that they are movable, mutable and can be replaced entirely. When she changes dress and arms, perverting both knowledge and symbols, Clorinda proves the inherent mutability of signs. In doing so however, she

also adds yet another layer of mystery and treachery to the poem's construction of an already uninterpretable female body.

As we remember, in the scene of Tancredi and Clorinda's memorable first encounter, Clorinda and Love are the aggressors and victors, while Tancredi is the poor victim, who, like Aladino, suffers from a weakened body, a weakened mind, and an obviously destabilized sense of self as a result of his burning ocular dependencies. It is Tancredi however, who unconsciously follows Aladino's lead in their later encounters. Echoing Aladino, when Tancredi chases Clorinda down she asks him, "[...] O tu, che porte, / che corri sí?" and he responds "E guerra e morte" (12.52.7-8). The fatal menace of "guerra e morte," recalls the rallying "ardete e ucidete," and "le fiamme e'l ferro," of the flames and death proposed by Aladino as well as the flames of love Tancredi feels when he sees Clorinda, which exemplify the confused or thwarted vision that sparks the passions of Tasso's scopophilic male characters. Much like Aladino's rage that surfaces when the female bodies around which he fashions his identity and upon which he anchors his sense of self are missing, Tancredi is able to break away from female dominance, and 'portare guerra' only when he does not have full visual access to his beloved. As if he were a member of the pagan camp bonded with Aladino to fight against ambiguous identities and the unsettling presence of women, Tancredi carries out Aladino's will,³⁴ completes his suspended actions, and carries the King's terrible formula "ardete e ucidete" to fruition, when, with passion in his heart and a sword in his hand, he first burns for Clorinda, and then kills her.

Conclusion

As I have argued in this chapter, the surprising fragility of Tasso's characters can be seen primarily through visual metaphors that hinge upon absence. At many times in *Gerusalemme liberata*, the characters are described as being both spatially disoriented and lacking any visual power. Metaphors of darkness pervade the poem: the warriors find themselves in dark mists from under which they cannot see; they are frequently blinded by the sweat, smoke and blood of battle; dark trees paired with feeble moonlight hide the paths they are supposed to take; the evil machinations of magicians and spirits bind their eyes; and of course, their own passions, their "furori" ranging from love to hatred and ire, blind them as well.³⁵

³⁴ Indeed, he unwittingly carries out Aladino's will all the more since Clorinda is actually a Christian.

³⁵ The force of passions that blind is also a recurrent theme particular to Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. At one of many memorable moments dealing with sight, perception, recognition and desire, Marfisa

Ironically, even the things that seem the most clear, the most innocent, often glimmer with a brilliance that too is blinding and fatal. Hair stuns and disorients, skin enchants, beautiful eyes cast fatal enchantments, clear peaceful waters stupefy, even the light of divine messengers causes an initial reaction that seems like death.³⁶

Perversely, in addition to visual and empirical failures, the words and vows of others cannot be trusted at all. From the original lassitude of Goffredo to Tancredi's difficulty taking appropriate action, broken vows are the norm, imbricated as they are within ambiguous, 'deceitful,' and ultimately failure-bound linguistic codes, and epistemological and ideological systems. Yet since the narrator warns as far back as canto 7 that "inganno occulto giaccia," the reader knows that everything can have a concealed meaning or contain interior truths that are hidden from the eye. The hermeneutic difficulties, confusion and surprising fragility of Tasso's main characters are seen most clearly through moments of visual and linguistic failure that occasion a fractured sense of self.

All of these tensions are staged even more overtly in the *Gerusalemme conquistata*, which serves itself in large part as a corrective for the deceitful errors of the *Liberata*. Since Tasso uses the *Conquistata* to revise and amend the metaphor of medicine and health that can easily lead to dissolution and death when not properly manipulated, he must also revise and correct the *Liberata*'s description of poetry's seductive embellishments. Even the invocation to the Muse in the *Conquistata* is an insistence upon veracity, memory, and commemoration. Rather than aspiring to the abstract poetic ideal of "bellezza" and "dolcezza" invoked in the *Liberata*, the revised function of poetry is to serve as a repository that bestows fame

and Bradamonte are blinded in battle not because of a direct ramification or symptom of the actual combat, but because of the passions which incited their clash in the first place:

Ma tarda è la sua giunta; che si trova
 Marfisa inontra, e di tanta ira piena
 [...]
 che pregar nulla, e nulla gridar giova
 a Ruggier che di questo avea gran pena:
 sì l'odio e l'ira le guerriere abbaglia,
 cha fan da disperate la battaglia. (36.48)

In "Ottava rima and Novelistic Discourse" Catherine Addison finds the narrator's voice in this scene to be emphasizing the same destabilizing blindness that is found in Tasso as well: "[...] he shows that the *guerriere* are so dazzled ("sí . . . abbaglia") by their hate and anger ("l'odio e l'ira") that their viewpoints may be discounted by an impartial observer. [...] the narrator is not only smiling at Bradamante in love (a minor variation on the *furioso* theme); he is also making a sly point about battle and war in general—the staple material of epic verse. The close couplet rhyme, making an audible connection between the verb "abbaglia" and the noun "battaglia," suggests that battle and this sort of dazzled blindness are naturally related"(136).

³⁶ To extend Addison's previously mentioned point a bit further, when the angel Gabriel speaks to Goffredo in canto 1 stanza 17, the verb "abbagliare" again is used. Although "abbagliare" is used to describe the reaction of Goffredo to a divine messenger and message, the "abbaglia-battaglia" sonic coherence that Addison mentions can almost be heard here even though "battaglia" is not specifically used—in terms of plot development, it is clear that the angel was sent to Earth precisely to incite the Christian troops to battle.

upon those it takes as its subjects, and that conserves and preserves memories in a “chiara lingua” that commemorates without deviation, darkness, or deceit:

Tu sei de gli anni e de l'oblio nemica,
tu sol conservi ogni memoria intera;
tu m'inspira cosí, ch'altrui ridica
ogni famoso in guerra ed ogni schiera:
suoni e risplenda omai la fama antica,
fatta da gli anni pria tacita e nera,
da l'origin sua prisca, in chiara lingua,
perch'ogni età l'ascolti, e nulla estingua. (17.4.1-8)

Thus, the primary poetological pursuit of the *Conquistata* is to lead towards “virtú vera e vera luce” that is, towards truth by fomenting certitude and fact-based knowledge, and away from the deceit of false vision and broken promises. Even though the *Liberata* already shows the signs of being obsessed with educative and correctional processes, the quest towards knowledge is always presented as a thorny one, since the inability to trust the words and vows of others—and oneself—hinder and deviate. The *Conquistata* thus corrects the already corrective model of the *Liberata* through its insistence on facts, history, and virtue, which take precedence over trusting or depending upon the words and promises of others.

CHAPTER FOUR:
**From the “dicho al hecho”: the Incommensurability of Promises
and their Fulfillment in the *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la
Mancha***

*Ouvi, que não vereis com vãs façanhas,
Fantásticas, fingidas, mentirosas,
Louvar os vossos, como nas estranhas
Musas, de engrandecer-se desejosas:
As verdadeiras vossas são tamanhas,
Que excedem as sonhadas, fabulosas;
Que excedem Rodamonte, e o vão Rugeiro,
E Orlando, inda que fora verdadeiro,*

* * *

*Pera servir-vos, braço às armas feito,
Pera cantar-vos, mente às Musas dada;
Só me falece ser a vós aceito,
De quem virtude deve ser prezada.
Se me isto o Céu concede, e o vosso peito
Dina empresa tomar de ser cantada,
Como a pres[s]aga mente vaticina
Olhando a vossa inclinação divina,*

-Luis de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*. 1.11; 10.155.

Though Cervantes matches Ariosto’s dark humor and exploration of epistemological uncertainty and suspicions, his treatment of the problematics of the vow is quite different from the primarily parodic critique of the vow-making process that the *Orlando Furioso* presents, which we examined in the second chapter of this dissertation. Although the *Furioso* ends in death as does the *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, at the very least the *Furioso*’s long-awaited promises of narrative completion and felicitous marital union are ultimately realized, if only temporarily. Cervantes, however, treats vows from an even more skeptical and negative standpoint as we will examine in the present chapter.

In contrast to the *Furioso*, the *Quijote* famously ends in failure, first with Don Quijote’s bathetic death and then with the dissolution of all of the text’s fundamental vows. Indeed, as if a type of narrative *thanatos* were controlling the

plot, Don Quijote's death is repeatedly dramatized and staged throughout the entire novel. The obsession with his bodily fragility is of course due in part to the high risks of any chivalric enterprise. Nevertheless, by dramatically rehearsing his death only to pass over its actual occurrence in the final pages of part 1, and by then structuring the entirety of part 2 around the promise to more definitively "bury" Don Quijote—that is, to finish the novel by leaving him "dilatado, y finalmente muerto y sepultado, porque ninguno se atreva a levantarle nuevos testimonios" (2. "Prólogo" 37)¹—Cervantes emphasizes the connection between death and narrative promises. In this manner, he dramatizes the vulnerability of the body and the vulnerability of commissive, propositional statements such as promises and verbal bonds (Searle *Speech*; "What is a Speech Act?"), for he can only be certain that the perverse resurrection and defiance suggested by "nuevos testimonios" will be avoided with death and sepulture. Similarly, in terms of authorial promises, not only does Don Quijote die and so doing, reject the chivalric promises around which he built and 'authored' his life, but Cide Hamete, the text's supranarrator, rejects chivalric literature along with his role as author, while Cervantes's heterodiegetical authorial voice wryly laments his own impending demise as well.

Moreover, not only does Don Quijote die, but the 'death' of his chivalric identity, which he articulates "como si hablara dentro de una tumba" signals his mortal end and the end of the authorial liberties he will take to construct himself. With his moving funereal pronouncement, his last will and testament, Don Quijote irrevocably breaks the chivalric vows in which both he and the entire narrative were bound up, while his death, the ultimate broken vow, is granted a redemptive function, and serves to reinscribe him and his vows in Christian orthodoxy. Cide Hamete attempts to convince his readers that this purifying, restorative function that realigns Don Quijote and his readers with the "cristiana profesión" was his intention all along: "pues no ha sido otro mi deseo que poner en aborrecimiento de los hombres las fingidas y disparatadas historias de los libros de caballerías, que por las de mi verdadero don Quijote van ya tropezando y han de caer del todo sin duda alguna." *Vale*" (2.74, 593). In this sense, the perverse correlation between vows and death, between Don Quijote's repeatedly staged death in part 1, and his promised mortal demise and the satisfaction of the prolegomenal vows which with part 2 opens hold fast; it specifically holds fast because it renders the dissolution of Don Quijote's original vows essential to the satisfaction of the overarching authorial promises.

Yet Cervantes's critical attitude towards the vow-making process is far more pessimistic than even the conflation of tragedies that lead to the mortal end of his protagonist portends. Intensifying the pessimism latent in the *Furioso*'s conclusion that depicts an aging author's literary trajectory and metaphorizes the fulfillment of

¹ All references to the Spanish original of *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* are from the fourth edition of the two volumes annotated and prepared by Luis Andrés Murillo. (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1978). The occasional reference to the English version of the text is from Burton Raffel's one-volume translation, edited by Diana de Armas Wilson: *Don Quijote* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

his authorial promises with the pairing of “porto”—as in, “arrivare a porto,” and “morto,” narrative vows are even more explicitly linked to death in the *Quijote*. The porto/morto metaphor implicitly reappears with Cervantes’s description of his own corporal fragility: “yo no estoy con salud para ponerme en tan largo viaje” (2. “Dedicatoria” 39), and he also promises his reader that Part 2 will end with Don Quijote’s death: “que en ella [esta segunda parte] te doy a don Quijote dilatado, y finalmente muerto y sepultado, porque ninguno se atreva a levantarle nuevos testimonies [...]” (2. “Prólogo” 37). Due, in part, to the pirated apocryphal versions of the *Quijote* that had entered in circulation and from which both Don Quijote and Cervantes vehemently wanted to distinguish themselves, the frustration and pessimism surrounding broken vows that are already apparent in part 1 are intensified and far more pervasive in part 2. From a linguistic standpoint, given the complex and derisive deconstruction of the vow-making process and the proliferation of negative examples of vows throughout the entire *Quijote*, Cervantes’s portrayal of all types of perlocutionary utterances, particularly commissives and expressives (Searle *Speech*, 60-62),² is so negative that while vows are obsessively discussed and the language of promises and oaths bandied about, they are consistently undermined and fundamentally flawed.

For Cervantes, therefore, vows are negative in the true sense of the word. That is, while they are the focal point around which entire systems of belief and systems of speech are constructed, the metaphors of absence that circumscribe Cervantes’s characters’ use of vows hang like specters over every conversation. This subsequently creates a system of interpretation filled with lacunae that leaves vows evacuated of any fixity, destabilized as they are by characters who speak, yet do not mean or understand what they say. The absence of well-articulated vows thus points to a pervasive linguistic and communicative failure since characters are unable to trust and understand each other. Similarly, contradictory vows, which problematically, are often articulated by the same person, illustrate the inherent fragility of speech systems and the difficulties of successfully carrying out any promised action. Finally, the unfixed and unsteady understanding of vows from

² See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: 1962) for his discussion of non-truth evaluable and illocutionary statements (“by saying something, we do something,” 109)—and Searle, *Speech Act Theory* and “What is a Speech Act?” in *Language and Social Context*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. 1965) pp. 136–154, for a thorough discussion of the illocutionary force determining propositional content and illocutionary and perlocutionary utterances. Judith Butler in *Excitable Speech* (New York: Routledge, 1997), and *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1999) discusses the connection between linguistic performativity and discursive subjectival formation. Ludwig Wittgenstein’s analysis of rules and how they are intrinsic to code- and group-formation with respect to language and belief in *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958, as well as his compilation of notes on knowledge, belief, and skepticism in *On Certainty* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979) are also relevant to the present discussion. Similarly, Saul A. Kripke’s *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) offers a thorough and elucidating analysis of the rule- and group- formation, and how they affect the linguistic practices of those who constitute a group. Given his relative isolation and preference of his imagination over all else, it comes as no surprise then, that Don Quijote should experience communication problems due to vastly different cosmovisions so frequently.

which all of Cervantes's characters suffer, and Don Quijote most of all, reveals a *Weltanschauung* in which language that should be fixed, such as promises, oaths, and other types of ostensibly binding speech only exacerbate the communication problems for already unstable characters attempting to forge meaning in a profoundly unstable world. Cervantes insists upon the failure of vows by illustrating how the lack of fixity of promises catalyzes a lack of fixity of action. Since what characters have promised is unclear, the actions they can take to fulfill these promises are inconstant, limited, and frustrated as well.

As we will examine in this chapter, from the abuse of legal bonds to contractual relationships that are destined for failure, the gaucheness of vows is seen in the way in which nearly every character in the *Quijote* uses and misuses them. More importantly however, it is the problematic way in which the “pobre caballero encantado,” the “loco, menguado y mentecato” knight from La Mancha attempts to make vows and exact promises from others that most directly reveals a complexity that has often been neglected by critics. As I argue, much like Cervantes's playful narratological methods (Dunn “Shaping” 186-88), Don Quijote's convoluted and contradictory use of language evacuates the very vows that he makes of their sense. A true Erasmian therefore (Forcione 20; Vilanova “Don Quijote,” 69-87, “La moria de Erasmo y el prólogo del *Quijote*,” 64-76),³ more than simply tracing the flawed system of vows and questioning the meaning of faith through his obsessive examination of the meaning of promises and oaths made and kept, in the *Quijote*, Cervantes puts forth a vision of modernity as a fiduciary wasteland. Since vows are consistently either flawed, foiled, or completely absent, Don Quijote's world critiques a period fraught with problems of faith, while also revealing itself as completely destabilized and undermined by them. Don Quijote's

³ Vilanova, in *Erasmo y Cervantes* (Barcelona: Lumen, 1989), and Marcel Bataillon, in his lengthy *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), offer the most detailed studies of the Erasmian influence on Cervantes and his epoch. See also Carlos Fuentes in his introduction to the *Quijote*:

Caught between the flood-tide of the Renaissance and the ebb-tide of the Counter Reformation, Cervantes clings to the one plank that can keep him afloat: Erasmus of Rotterdam. [...] The influence of Erasmian thought on Cervantes can be clearly perceived in three themes common to the philosopher and the novelist: the duality of truth, the illusion of appearances, and the praise of folly. Erasmus reflects the Renaissance dualism: understanding may be different from believing. But reason must be wary of judging from external appearances.” (vii-viii)

See also Bietenholtz, for the relationship between Erasmus's *Moriae encomium* and the “manifestations of folly [that] run through the fabric of Don Quijote like a red thread” (99), in *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus: Erasmus' Work as a Source of Radical Thought in Early Modern Europe*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) p. 211; Scham, “Don Quijote and the Art of Laughing at Oneself.” *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 29.1 (Spring, 2009), pp. 31-55, on recognizing one's own folly versus that of others; and Soledad Fox, “Don Quijote: A Selective Genealogy,” in *Flaubert and Don Quijote: The Influence of Cervantes on Madame Bovary*, (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2008) and Charles Presberg, *Adventures in Paradox: Don Quixote and the Western Tradition*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2001) for Cervantes's eErasmian education; and Chul Park, “Cada uno es hijo de sus obras: Concepto moderno del Quijote,” in *Con los pies en la tierra. Don Quijote en su marco geográfico e histórico*: (2008), pp. 231-240.

behavior, then, and the postridentine language he uses to discuss his actions reveal a profound epistemological uncertainty. Though Don Quijote is obsessed with keeping his word and problematically assumes that the moral chivalric code he applies to himself will forcefully bind all others as well, from his first sally until his dying breaths, his unwavering adherence to the literal meaning of words, his difficulty understanding commissives, and his ignorance of their metaphorical, contextual, or circumstantial meaning undermines the vows that he makes and more often than not leads him to utter failure.

Preposterous Literature and Failed Authorial Vows as Preparation: Don Quijote's Madness and the Literary Models of Feliciano Silva and Jerónimo Fernandez.

In terms of failure, Don Quijote's first sally is generally overlooked or considered only superficially and perfunctorily by critics. It is often taken quite literally as a mishap of sorts, as a false step that must occur before real adventures begin.⁴ Yet Don Quijote's first sally does far more than just serve as a paltry corrective or preparative for his later adventures; each of the truncated first sally's episodes dramatize the problematics of language that thwart his attempts to find epistemological and linguistic security. In chapter 1 for example, our protagonist loses himself in contradictory literary deliberations as he undertakes the important process of renaming himself and his horse. As shown by his struggle to synthesize and orient himself vis-à-vis the chivalric literature that he loves, readers are immediately immersed in a world of unstable literary references and unstable signifiers. This treatment of literature and language as deviant and disordering becomes even more overt when conflicting descriptions of the protagonist's hazy origins and name, and the derangement that reading inspires in him are articulated through a conflicting repetition of words such as "reason," "promise," "vow," and "doubt," that reveal the profound literary and epistemological incertitude that destabilize Don Quijote and his world.

Although it is not rendered faithfully in the text of the *Quijote*, a frequently cited passage from Feliciano de Silva's continuation of *Amadís de Gaula*, "la razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace [...]"(1.1.72)⁵ both catalyzes and elucidates the

⁴ See Dian Fox for a discussion of the treatment of literary standards in "The Apocryphal Part One of the Quijote," *Modern Language Notes* 100 (1985), pp. 406-16.

⁵ The full citation of the two excerpts from Feliciano de Silva's memorable text, at least as reported in the *Quijote*, are as follows: "La razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace, de tal manera mi razón enflaquece, que con razón me quejo de la vuestra fermosura," as well as "Los altos cielos que de vuestra divinidad divinamente con las estrellas os fortifican y os hacen merecedora del merecimiento que merece la vuestra grandeza"(1.1.72)

protagonist's particular brand of contradictory madness. For, though this citation is presented as an intertextual "takedown of Silva" (Syrový 124),⁶ Don Quijote incongruously esteems these convoluted lines because of what he claims is their luminous clarity—"porque la claridad de su prosa y aquellas enricadas razones suyas le parecían de perlas"—but loses his mind when he attempts to parse their significance: "Con estas razones perdía el pobre caballero el juicio, y desvelábase por entenderlas y desentrañarles el sentido, que no se lo sacara ni las entendiera el mesmo Aristóteles, si resucitara para solo ello"(1.1.72)." The etiology of his madness is quickly reiterated in the text when his disordered and excessive readerly practices are described: "[...] él se enfrascó tanto en su letura, que se le pasaban las noches leyendo de claro en claro, y los días de turbio en turbio; y así, del poco dormir y del mucho leer, se le secó el cerebro de manera que vino a perder el juicio" (1.173). The verb "enfrascarse," with its etymologically Italianate connotations of turbulence and agitation, entanglement, and absorption, certainly aligns the protagonist with the unstable and deranged knights of traditional chivalric literature. However, rather than the "turbio" and alterations brought about because of lovesickness and affections for a distant lady,⁷ the elusive ideal that has stolen Don Quijote's heart and caused him to "perder el juicio" is a purely literary affliction. In difference to the *Roman de la Rose*, the *Orlando Furioso*, and the *Gerusalemme liberata* as we saw in the earlier chapters of this dissertation, since the promise of a lady does not predominate (be she an allegorical manifestation or simply flighty in her affections), Don Quijote's madness, which supplants a lady with literature and is so solidly anchored in the fictionalized context that inspires him, makes his obsession with pursuing a fictional ideal even more ludicrous. As Christopher Weimer notes, "Don Quijote's fascination with chivalric romances emerges as absurd precisely because the text takes such great pains to describe *them* as absurd" (69).

Another way in which the ideas of instability and literary absurdity as related to Don Quijote's madness are presented, is with the failed narratological vow that Don Quijote (as Alonso Quijano) yearns to remedy. Referring to the final scene of Jerónimo Fernández's *Belianís de Grecia*, a work about which he is passionate—"[...] alababa en su autor aquel acabar su libro con la promesa de aquella inacabable aventura" (1.1.72)—Quijano is inspired by the hyperbolic and failed authorial promise that a pledged yet missing text represents. One might recall that despite hoping to continue the narration of Don Belianís's "estraña aventura [...] y otras grandes hazañas," Fernández's authorial intentions are thwarted when the rest of the story about which he wants to write goes missing and he is left to wait for it in vain. As he does not wish to pervert a factual "historia" with

⁶ In *Orígenes de la novela*, Menéndez y Pelayo describes Silva in terms that position the author as a quixotic figure himself: "Hombre de fácil pluma, de mediano ingenio, de fantasía superficial y desordenada, y de mucha aunque mala invención, diose á imitar las producciones más en boga, siquiera fuesen entre sí tan desemejantes como la *Celestina* y el *Amadís*." (cclxi-cclxv)

⁷ See Mary Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), for a seminal and meticulous study of lovesickness, in classical and early medieval medical, religious, and literary thought to the late middle ages.

“fingimientos,” he thus leaves the story’s narration to whomever is able to locate the missing part:

Mas el sabio Friston, passando de Grecia en Nubia, juró avia perdido la historia, y assi la tornó a buscar. Yo le he esperado y no viene, y suplire [sic] yo con fingimientos a historia tan estimada sería agravio, y assi lo dexaré en esta parte, dando licencia a qualquiera a cuyo poder viniere la otra parte la ponga junto con esta, porque yo quedo con harta pena y desseo de verla. (Fernández 281)

Quijano finds himself singularly interpellated and well-suited for this task, yet he perpetuates the difficulty that Fernández claims to have encountered due to the lost manuscript when he is unable to continue the story because of his pathological distraction: “muchas veces le vino deseo de tomar la pluma y dalle fin al pie de la letra como allí se promete; y sin duda alguna lo hiciera, y aun saliera con ello, si otros mayores y continuos pensamientos no se lo estorbaran” (1.1.72). Despite the fact that his authorial intentions have been sparked by the desire for completion, and by the faith that he has in his ability to carry out Fernández’s stalled promise, Quijano already shows in this very early moment that he does not read well at all, so to speak. Indeed, he is specifically *not* heeding the conditions that Fernández put forth, which are: firstly, that the story needs to be continued by someone who had managed to locate the missing manuscript; and secondly, that the new author should likewise shun perverting it with “fingimientos.” What is more, the fact that Quijano’s attentions were piqued in the first place by the tautological and contradictory praise that he has for Fernández’s “promesa de [acabar] aquella inacabable aventura,” is already grounded in failure. If the “aventura” is indeed truly “inacabable,” then he will not be able to bring it to completion even if he does try to do so. Finally, this absurdity and the linguistic instability that already confound Quijano, conditioning his madness and resisting interpretation, are then reinforced if one remembers the contradictory authorial confession with which the first chapter opens. Despite the text’s insistence upon verisimilitude and veracity, the awkward concession is that even when it comes to a detail as fundamental as a protagonist’s origins or his name, the accuracy of details do not matter. All that matters is to tell things as faithfully as one can: “que en la narración [...] no se salga un punto de la verdad” (1.1.71).

In the second chapter, primarily concerning himself with the idea that a historian will one day pen his exploits, the protagonist creeps from his home under the cover of darkness and searches desperately for adventure, presenting himself for the first time to others as “Don Quijote.” Having already realized the terrible problem of not yet having been officially “armado aballero” (1.2.72), which leaves him feeling so “assaulted,” vulnerable, and ashamed that he nearly gives up his entire enterprise, the third chapter then finds our protagonist seeking legitimization by orchestrating his own dubbing in front of a confused group of people. After much chaos and hilarity, his spectators comply with his imposed and thus preemptively falsified ceremony of taking the vows of knighthood. While these chapters do reveal the protagonist’s desire to reinvent himself through language

(Kurrik 137-39), and already hint towards Don Quijote's inability to articulate vows properly, it is chapter 4 of the *Quijote* in particular, in which his propensity to make, exact, and perpetuate a flawed (if not altogether failed) system of vow-making and vow-breaking is definitively revealed. Following the overarching pattern of promises articulated in the novel, Quijote's system of vow-making and breaking then serves to undermine both the success and fulfillment of the actions he attempts to take. In fact, although Don Quijote constantly makes promises and hinges his entire identity upon them, these vows fail when he is unable to understand that his fixed system of understanding vows is neither shared by others nor appropriate for the world in which he lives. As Don Quijote is a catalyst of disorder in terms of his relations with others, this confusion and lack of awareness then fosters moments of linguistic ambiguity that further complicate other characters' understanding and implementation of vows when they attempt to interact with him.

Due to its dramatic staging of disorder and confusion, chapter 4 is thus pivotal in that it provides the most explicit early depiction of Don Quijote's misuse of language and the prevalence of failed and absent vows with which the rest of the *Quijote* will be occupied. The first half of the chapter features Don Quijote's encounter with a young boy Andrés, who is tied to a tree and being beaten by his master, Juan Haldudo. Don Quijote intervenes, attempts to rectify the situation and believes to have done so successfully. Drunk on self-congratulatory glory due to this first "victory," the second half of the chapter features his encounter with a band of traveling silk merchants from Toledo. The knight is prideful and bold when he addresses them, and attempts to force them to share his belief system. At the conclusion of this episode however, it is he himself who becomes the victim of corporal punishment. His horse Rocinante trips; horse and rider both fall down; he rolls about only to be pinned under his awkward armor, and finally, he is nearly beaten senseless by one of the merchants, who was angered by the disruption he caused. Both the beating he receives and the heavy, antiquated armor of his grandfather that he has donned leave him unable to stand, and he writhes on the ground in great distress until a benevolent traveler passes by. Surprisingly, despite these infelicities, Don Quijote still believes that he has achieved enormous success; at the very least, he feels that he bears no responsibility for his defeat, as he would have emerged victorious had his steed not faltered.

Not only does Don Quijote's failure call into question his use of language and mistreatment of vows, as does Andrés's recurrence later in the novel, the initial failures of chapter 4 of part 1 directly parallel his final defeat and death in the last chapters of part two of *Don Quijote*. Since both of the chapter's episodes end with an increasing degree of failure that is definitively confirmed in later chapters then, the idea of Don Quijote's triumph in these early adventures is initially toyed with in a wryly ironic manner. These frustrated episodes metaphorize all too clearly Don Quijote's failed first attempt to function in the world according to the chivalric and literary codes that he loves; they mark his first attempt to put his grandiose aspirations and vows into practice, and thus, also represent his first failure. The

possibility of his success and more importantly, the fact that he is left believing that he has been successful become nothing more than a cruel and sardonic joke, and only dramatize his propensity towards heuristic error and the subjectivity of interpretation. In addition, given that his vows and commands are easily manipulated and perverted by his aggressive interlocutors in both episodes, Don Quijote's failure also comes about because he erroneously believes that the moral and linguistic chivalric code to which he adheres will bind all those he encounters as well. That is, instead of immediately understanding all articulated vows as irrevocable truths that coincide seamlessly with his interpretation, as Cervantes's pessimistic stance towards vows suggests, Don Quijote would have done far better to have acknowledged both his own difficulty reinforcing his words with his actions, and the violability and the absence that circumscribe all vows that are made.

Although Don Quijote begins his interactions with both Andrés and the Toledan merchants in a positive and confident manner, they ultimately end up leaving him in a humiliated state. Taken together, both events are of prime consideration in the current discussion regarding the fallibility of words precisely because of their crucial position in the novel as the first articulation of successful and failed vows, and for their stunning demonstration of the systematic misapplication and misunderstanding of promises by many key characters in the *Quijote*. While the first half of the chapter often piques the interest of critics studying literary genres in the novel with its portrayal of a picaresque vignette, given Cervantes's introduction of Don Quijote to a character straight from metaliterary fiction, or Andrés qua "pícaro," the second half of the chapter has drawn some attention from critics for its representation of the mercantile world of the *Quijote*, and for the band of traveling merchants who reveal many of the economic preoccupations that will occupy the rest of the work. While these observations are indeed germane, they overlook the centrality of vows and promises seemingly articulated in good faith in the episode; they also overlook the fact that this chapter is the first to clearly evidence the negative correlation between Don Quijote's promises and their fulfillment, between his words and his deeds.⁸ Many critics, such as Mary Gaylord and Timothy Hampton, have pointed out that Don Quijote has considerable difficulty marrying words with actions, or "palabras and obras" (Gaylord "New World" 77; Gaylord "Pulling" 137-9; Hampton, *Writing* 250-51). His defeat then, is a failure that points to the difficulty—or impossibility—of unifying words and actions, or illocution and perlocution. The very words that he proffers and the misguided system of belief that he attaches to them fail because there is no commensurability between what is said, or more specifically, promised, and what is done, or between what is promised and what is achieved.

⁸ While bearing in mind the "negative relationship" between words and deeds in terms of the misfortunes in which Don Quijote continually finds himself, in this instance I am referring to a statistical understanding of negative relationships, wherein an increase in one variable correlates to the decrease of another. Here, Don Quijote's propensity to make promises correlates to his inability to see them through.

Another aspect of the fourth chapter that has also been consistently overlooked by critics, is how these two episodes, Andrés's "vapuleamento" and Don Quijote's 'exchange' with the silk merchants, situate the thorny process of vow-making and vow-breaking at the crux of Don Quijote's epistemological crisis. Indeed, vow-making is the subtle but obsessive focus of a chapter that makes constant mention of the legitimacy of oaths and promises made versus those that are kept. Though contained within and subsumed by Don Quijote's pathological fascination for the *libros de caballería* that serve as the interpretive paradigm for his actions and his highly artificial attempts at self-fashioning, particularly as a "manipulable, artful process" (Greenblatt 2),⁹ these episodes demonstrate that Don Quijote's madness is just as much attributable to his exaggerated idea of what keeping one's word means and his impossible idealization of the vow, as it is to the literarily engendered folly that is habitually cast as vehicle for his "locura" (Azar 119). Finally, his literary proclivities and his madness are then explicitly aligned with inachieved and broken promises, as I have already suggested.

It is Don Quijote's twisted "linguistic perspectivism" (Spitzer, "Linguistic Perspectivism" especially 13-93; Gaylord, "New World" 72) that initially serves to starkly differentiate his conception of the vow and his cosmovision from that of those around him, which subsequently catalyzes a crisis of faith. On the narratological level, the instability of the signifier and the multiplicity of interpretations that result, demonstrate the dangers of making any vow. On a more general level, they combine to highlight Cervantes's pessimistic treatment of all vows. That is to say, vows, which have entirely different signifiers for different characters and situations are easily—and almost necessarily—violable in order to function 'properly' within a world that does not function properly. As an analysis of the articulation of vows in these early scenes will reveal, more often than not, promises are so misleading and problematic in the text—and for Don Quijote in particular—that they vanish. In the majority of cases in fact, negated or absent vows signal a profound perversion in the natural order of Don Quijote's world. Following Don Quijote's lead, many characters make obsessive references to the promises that they make or expect to be made unto them; yet these vows are then so inherently flawed that they cancel themselves out, are meaningless or indecipherable, or disappear from the text entirely.

⁹ See also: Thomas Greene, "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature," in *The Disciplines of Criticism*, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr. (New Haven, 1968), 241-68, and Victoria Kahn, *Future of Illusion: Political Theology and Early Modern Texts* for a discussion of the centrality of self-fashioning and self-determination in regards to relationships of individuals to authority.

The Promise to “cumplir con lo que deb[e]”: Vows of Knighthood, Protection, and Payback

The importance of Don Quijote's first encounter with the young rogue Andrés is clearly rendered by the attention given to the boy, by Don Quijote's empathetic and energetic response to his plight, and even by the way in which the episode itself comes about. Set in a picaresque key, which casts Andrés as a bit more of a rogue and thus less trustworthy than one might initially expect, his presence in the novel is proleptically announced by the double of him that one finds in the first innkeeper Don Quijote happens upon in his travels. This innkeeper is a “retired pícaro, or rogue, who tells his own story to boast about a misspent but adventuresome youth” (González Echevarría, *Love* 54). The innkeeper is jovial and rather kind towards Don Quijote, and shares similarly literary proclivities;¹⁰ nevertheless, he does relish in making fun of the knight, and he has a rather dark and sordid past. Associated with cities prone to robbery and favored by pícaros, he is described as “no menos ladrón que Caco, ni menos maleante que estudiantado paje” (1.2.84). Indeed, and quite humorously, it seems that this innkeeper abandoned his life of crime only because of his enormous girth (“por ser muy gordo era muy pacifico” [1.2.83]), although the prostitutes who serve as doorkeepers to his inn suggest a continued relationship with felonious activities.

Problematically, the fact that Don Quijote identifies so completely with the innkeeper's tale anticipates (and prepares) his identification with and sympathies for Andrés. The suggestion of an equivalence between Andrés and the innkeeper is thus of prime relevance because it emphasizes what are eventually revealed to be the failed operatives of the vow and the shameful mercantilistic underpinnings of all vows in the *Quijote*. Moreover, with the doubt that is cast on their honesty, these two picaresque figures illuminate both the difficulties of finding honorable persons in whom to place one's trust, and the propensity of human judgment to err. Given their imbrication in a genre of deceit in which characters are driven by base necessity and greed, the pairing of the young pícaro Andrés and the formerly hardened innkeeper grounds all of Don Quijote's exploits in an economic system that he would have both preferred to ignore and hoped to find himself above.

¹⁰ More than just enjoying chivalric literature, the first innkeeper is a very dedicated reader—he has even committed random verses to memory and can recall them easily. For example, when Don Quijote quotes a few verses from an old romance, the innkeeper is able to complete the stanza that Don Quijote left purposefully incomplete, rather seamlessly: “Para mí, señor castellano, cualquiera cosa basta, porque ‘mis arreos son las armas, mi descanso el pelear,’ etc’ [...] Pensó el huésped que el haberle llamado castellano había sido por haberle parecido de los sanos de Castilla. [...] y, así, le respondió: ‘Según eso, las camas de vuestra merced serán duras peñas, y su dormir, siempre velar [...]’ (1.2.84). See Murillo, n. 22 p. 84. Because they share the same literary interests, the innkeeper is able to interact with the knight with less friction than many other characters; nonetheless, the innkeepers self-identification as an ex-rogue renders Don Quijote's identification with him all the more problematic.

Finding Don Quijote to be a very curious figure, and wanting to get a rise out of him, the lying, teasing innkeeper describes the “honroso ejercicio” of being a knight in very skeptical and negative terms. Don Quijote of course identifies with the idea of knighthood as an ‘honorable profession,’ yet true to the conventions of the picaresque genre, the innkeeper describes the time he pretends to have spent as a “knight” as anything but esteemable and upright. He claims, for example, that he occupied himself: “haciendo muchos tuertos, recuestando muchas viudas, deshaciendo algunas doncellas, y engañando a muchos pupilos, y finalmente, dándose a conocer por cuantas audiencias y tribunales hay casi en toda España [...]” (1.3.89).¹¹ It should give the reader great concern then, that not only does Don Quijote identify with a man whose values he does not fully know, he seemingly overlooks or remains unperturbed by the innkeeper’s description of a deceitful, sexually explicit and morally questionable chivalric life, and he continues to identify with it!

This error of interpretation (or this willful omission?) subsequently facilitates Don Quijote’s acception of the story the innkeeper tells him. In turn, this challenges Don Quijote’s conception of knighthood and the way in which he has ‘fashioned himself’ because it puts him into parallel not just with the innkeeper’s clearly questionable background but with his questionable interpretation of chivalry; in addition, this subsequently puts him into parallel with the roguish and wayward boy. Finally, adding to the “itinerary of notorious picaresque emporia” that the innkeeper details (González Echevarría, *Love* 55), Don Quijote’s ascription of a positive value to the detail that the rogue has made a name for himself in the legal system (that is, he is famous in “cuantas audiencias y tribunales hay casi en todo España”), frustrates the divide between licit and illicit behavior while casting a very negative light on the “eterno nombre y fama” that Don Quijote is himself seeking. These equivalences thus dramatize Don Quijote’s propensity to misread, either by ignoring crucial details or speciously overinterpreting and manipulating the sense of what is directly said to him. Indeed, were Don Quijote an accurate interpreter of language or were he able to understand what should be the proper commensurability between words and the actions they describe, he would have refused to be associated with the innkeeper, who exclusively narrates dastardly deeds in his invented proposal of what chivalric enterprises are. Yet Don Quijote

¹¹ The innkeeper’s embellished description of his life as a pícaro elucidates how easily others are able to poke fun at Don Quijote, and how very credulous he is. Compare the innkeeper’s description with Don Quijote’s primary objectives as a *caballero andante*, at least in accordance with how he articulates them during the pre-dawn hours at the start of his first sally: “no quiso aguardar más tiempo a poner en efeto su pensamiento, apretándole a ello la falta que él pensaba que hacía en el mundo su tardanza, según eran los agravios que pensaba deshacer, tuertos que enderezar, sinrazones que emendar y abusos que mejorar y deudas que satisfacer” (1.2.78-79). Not only is the similarity between both accounts problematic because it aligns Don Quijote with a carácter who is (or who is willing to) present himself so ignobly, it proleptically gestures towards the repeated critique that others will make of the knight. Don Quijote is continually chastised because try as he might, he falls far short of being able to “deshacer,” “enderezar,” “emendar, and so forth; moreover, since he is unable to resolve the problems of others well, what he ends up ‘achieving,’ usually ends up being more aligned with the “accomplishments” of the criminal innkeeper.

accepts the lies the innkeeper puts forth about knighthood, and does not even realize that they are bad vows made in stunningly bad faith.

Given that they are both presented as picaresque rogues, the deceitful promises in which the first innkeeper claims he is involved call more attention to Andrés's questionable sanctity and innocence, while also dramatizing Don Quijote's problems with interpretation and the omission of crucial details even more overtly. Just as the first roguish innkeeper 'reappears' in the figure of Andrés, Andrés's importance in the *Quijote*, and the interpretive problems he represents are emphasized even further since he makes not just one cameo appearance in the novel, but two; indeed, after wandering out of Don Quijote's life in the middle of chapter 4, he wanders back into it in chapter 31, only to provide an exceptionally acerbic and disenchanted critique of the events which transpired earlier. Moreover, of the preliminary chapters, Don Quijote's encounter with Andrés, which stages the clash between heroic success and heroic failure, is the first enterprise in which he functions as a knight from start to finish. Similarly, the encounter with the merchants again features this dissonance but calls into question the idea of success less protractedly by marking Don Quijote's first blatant defeat. Given that this episode depicts such harsh failure directly after Don Quijote's presumed success, it serves as another acerbic metatextual critique: definitive failure is thus the only corrective to Don Quijote's pathological interpretive confusion.

By taking the encounter with Andrés and the merchants as paradigmatic of the problematic of vows that will plague the rest of the *Quijote*, both episodes thus show precisely how Don Quijote's self-perception depends upon the presence of vows, and upon one's systematic adherence to them. While this initially portends well for the newly dubbed knight, it quickly leads to failure since the vows that he makes are undoubtedly hollow—they are flawed and empty from the start, rusty vestiges of a feudal system that has corroded and a world that no longer exists. Moreover, the tenuousness and fragile debility of the artificial vows of knighthood that Don Quijote has forced others to grant him find their metaphoric match in the fragile, disarticulated voice that reminds him of just how glad he is to be a knight when he hears its cries for help: "Gracias doy al cielo por la merced que me hace, pues tan presto me pone ocasiones delante donde yo pueda cumplir con lo que debo a mi profesión, y donde pueda coger el fruto de mis buenos deseos. Estas voces, sin duda, son de algún menesteroso o menesterosa, que ha menester mi favor y ayuda" (1.4.95).

The need to "cumplir con lo que deb[e]," from the Latin *dēbēo*, is a verb that perfectly marries Don Quijote's self-perception—what he must, or should do—with a fixed and ultimately cumbersome understanding of his profession—that is, what he owes in exchange for the grace of having been knighted; what, based on his heroic literary exemplars he understands as his personal potential and "obligation" to the chivalric enterprise; and finally, what he thinks he owes the world now that he has entered the fraternity of illustrious knights. *Dēbēo* also picks up the mercantilistic preoccupations that become immediately pertinent to Don Quijote's discussion of what Andrés owes or is owed, and also provides the reader with yet another

example of Don Quijote's suitability or unsuitability for the chivalric world. Gesturing towards his contradictory values, his troubled relationship towards money and his skewed perception of what one's obligations are reveal his awkward situation vis-à-vis the awkward presence of the mercantile and economic world in the text—a world Don Quijote alleges in vain, is so anathema to his own.

While some critics insist that Don Quijote is a suitable knight precisely because he is ignorant of his own need for money, and thus, by extension, somewhat naturally impervious to corruption, dissolution, and vice, others maintain that his inability to understand how to go about meeting his most basic needs and the economic situation of post-ridentine Spain provide just as convincing proof of the idealism that conditions him for the altruistic exploits and noble precepts behind knighthood. Instead, and more specifically, I argue that Cervantes's portrayal of economics and mercantilism and their subtle yet pervasive presence grants even more suggestive proof for an understanding of Don Quijote's inability to articulate vows, and his unsuitability for performing, articulating, and narrating his own chivalric exploits and identity. As shown by his professed ignorance regarding money, he does not at all understand the economic importance of money, nor does he even consider what that importance would be, either for his newfound profession or for the time in which he lives. His idealism is thus undermined by the stark mercantilistic necessities that he cannot escape, as well as the system of exchange—both material and verbal—that is perverted when he fails to understand the very vows he makes or properly interpret the vows of others.

For example, in preparation for the absent vows featured in chapter 4, one remembers, of course, in chapter 3 that Don Quijote's false vows of knighthood are conducted over a mercantile ledger, a record book or "manual," not a sacrosanct text, as formal tradition would require. Though etymologically, "manual" does have religious connotations, extra care is taken in the third chapter to define the book upon which Don Quijote lays his most important vows. The transposition from a sanctified and verified text to the innkeeper's "libro donde asentaba la paja y cebada que daba a los arrieros" (1.3.93), grounds Don Quijote's identity as a knight in a system of economic exchange, whether he like it or not, whether he even realize it or not, or whether he is simply choosing to ignore this reality. With much feigned pomp and circumstance, the innkeeper approaches Don Quijote, parodying his idea of chivalric order:

se vino adonde don Quijote estaba, al cual mandó hincar de rodillas; y, leyendo en su manual, como que decía alguna devota oración, en mitad de la leyenda alzó la mano y dióle sobre el cuello un buen golpe, y tras él, con su misma espada, un gentil espaldazo, siempre murmurando entre dientes, como que rezaba. Hecho esto, mandó a una de aquellas damas que le ciñese la espada, la cual lo hizo con mucha desenvoltura y discreción, porque no fue menester poca para no reventar de risa a cada punto de las ceremonias; pero las proezas que ya habían visto del novel caballero les tenía la risa a raya. (1.3.93)

The satirical religiosity of the innkeeper, who twice pretends to pray over the book, demonstrates the ease with which he is able to pervert what traditionally would have been a devout scene. Similarly, the repetition of “como que...” emphasizes the highly performative measures he is taking in his transformation of the ceremony. By anticipating the exact sequence of events in Andrés’s full episode, with its physical punishment, varying degrees of abusive violence, failure, and the same barely suppressed laughter that one finds here, the falsified “devota oración” of this episode therefore brings together the problematics of faith, language, violence, and money, and position the vow as central to the failures of each.

In terms of the economic catalyst of this scene, in fact, one remembers also that Don Quijote happens upon Andrés in the first place only because his initial sally was truncated by his economic naiveté, by his inability to comprehend his own economic necessity—a major fault that will be righted only if he heeds the innkeeper’s advice to return home and obtain money:

Preguntóle si traía dineros; respondió Don Quijote que no traía blanca, porque él nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído. A esto dijo el ventero que se engañaba; que, puesto caso que en las historias no se escribía, por haberles parecido a los autores dellas que no era menester escrebir una cosa tan clara y tan necesaria de traerse como eran dineros y camisas limpias, no por eso se había de creer que no los trujeron; y así, tuviese por cierto y averiguado que todos los caballeros andantes, de que tantos libros están llenos y atestados, llevaban bien herradas las bolsas, por lo que pudiese sucederles. (1.3.89)

Using language that purposefully mocks a rhetoric of enlightening knowledge, epistemological certitude, and religious faith, the innkeeper’s management of Don Quijote evidences Cervantes’s pessimistic treatment of vows. As such, his ridicule provides a telling critique of Don Quijote’s process of inscribing all he believes in absence and founding his knowledge on absent referents. More tellingly, the innkeeper challenges Don Quijote’s claims of economic naiveté by providing a textual precedent that will later question Don Quijote’s honesty, showing him to be somewhat of a liar at worst, or a willful (and thus hypocritical) manipulator of words and facts at best.

Seemingly going against everything Don Quijote believes and drawing attention to the tensions between faith-based and proof-based belief that confound Don Quijote, the message that the innkeeper is trying to communicate is that just because money is not mentioned explicitly in the texts that Don Quijote has read does not mean that it does not exist: “Mas que, en tanto que esto no hubiese, tuvieron los pasados caballeros por cosa acertada que sus escuderos fuesen proveídos de dineros y de otras cosas necesarias como eran hilas y ungüentos para curarse; y, cuando sucedía que los tales caballeros no tenían escuderos, que eran pocas y raras veces, ellos mismos lo llevaban [...]” (1.3.90). Not only does the admonition that Don Quijote is given directly anticipate his dramatic encounter with the Toledan merchants who demand proof in order to be able to believe anything, the innkeeper’s language, which draws attention to the process of

proving, verifying, and rendering something a “cosa acertada” is also grounded in the very Cartesian language of evaluation and Erasmian language of proof that will occupy the entire *Quijote*.

Don Quijote’s misunderstanding of the importance of money, then, is far more significant than simply providing yet another example of how poorly he fits into the world around him or harkening back to the classical and medieval mindsets that exacerbate the distortion of his anachronistic thoughts. It anticipates how the cooperatives of the vow continuously fail his usage and proleptically announces the same process of misunderstanding that comes to define how he personally mishandles the vow. As the ventero sizes Don Quijote up and perhaps wonders what to make of his inn’s newest patron, or whether or not there is any personal financial gain to be had from this visit, he asks Don Quijote explicitly if he has brought money with him. While the ventero’s pointed question is not without self-interest, it is Don Quijote’s reply “que no traía blanca, porque [él] nunca había leído en las historias de los caballeros andantes que ninguno los hubiese traído” (1.3.89) that is particularly revelatory of his curious habit of basing everything he believes on absent referents, and more specifically, on absence itself.

Not only is Don Quijote’s need for money so “clara y tan necesaria” that anyone should know to bring it, the innkeeper’s language elucidates Don Quijote’s heuristic problems and failure to reach an understanding of both the texts he reads and the world around him that accentuates the seriousness of his error. That is, Don Quijote “se engañaba.” He is not just wrong, *he* has deceived or betrayed himself. In contrast, the fact that knights carry money is “cierto y averiguado,” or correct and proven. Subsequently, this suggests that for all that he presents himself as an accurate reader, Don Quijote has committed a crime of not reading properly if he truly does not understand the evidentiary proofs that testify to the most blatant necessity of money. Meanwhile, “menester” and “atestar” etymologically conjure up notions of witnesses, authority, and religiosity, all of which are suggestive of a system of faith and knowledge that he has involuntarily spurned and rejected by misreading. Yet Don Quijote maintains that he simply never thought to bring money with him. His claim is that he is “sin dineros,” and “sin [...] prevenciones,” because of words he did not read, and because he had never encountered specific references to money in his chivalric tales.¹²

¹² Don Quijote’s prioritization of his unique interpretation and perceptions over learned knowledge and a materialistic understanding of the world, as well as his obsessive belief that his perspective of people and objects is determinative of who or what they are, stand as a Cervantine recodification of George Berkeley’s theories regarding subjective idealism *avant la lettre*. Naturally Don Quijote’s stance does not have the same religious underpinnings as does Berkeley’s, however, Berkeley’s maxim “Esse est percipi,” is precisely Don Quijote’s understanding of what one might call his phenomenological authority—his ability to tailor the world into what he wants to perceive.

Many critics discuss Don Quijote’s problems with perception, or “enchantment” as it is often described. On Don Quijote’s attempts to mitigate the clash between his perception and reality, see Richard Predmore, “La función del encantamiento en el mundo del Quijote,” Vol. 5 (1955-56), especially 76-78; See also Bryant Creel, “Theoretical Implications of Don Quijote’s Idea of Enchantment” and Peter Dunn, “Don Quijote: Through the Looking Glass,” both in the *Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* (Vol., VII, No. 1, (Spring 1992). in regards to part II of the *Quijote* in

Following the innkeeper's orders, Don Quijote returns to his village to rectify his foolhardy and dangerous omission. While Don Quijote's confession of economic inexperience may be convincing in this early chapter, particularly since his adventures up to this point are still anchored more solidly in the world of mimesis than that of empirical experience, upon closer examination one learns that his evasiveness around the question of money is not just a superficial omission, as he would like to pretend. Rather, he is either all together dishonest regarding the question of money, or he simply does not care to learn his lessons well.

Despite the surprising technicality of the innkeeper's language, of course, readers know that he is "un poco socarrón." Like many of the other characters Don Quijote encounters, the ventero may just be teasing Don Quijote out of a perverse desire for divertissement, especially since he already had "algunos barruntos de la falta de juicio de su huésped" (1.3.88). Nonetheless, his critique of Don Quijote's way of grounding his beliefs in absence further undermines any faith in Don Quijote's interpretive abilities as reader of texts, and the way in which Don Quijote hangs his credence (that he has read properly and that money is not needed) on something that does not exist. Yet at the same time, Don Quijote's faith has clear religious resonances, similar to the ambiguous genealogy and problematic status of the novel itself. His conviction that money is not necessary for knights because he has simply never encountered that reality in written form not only scoffs in the face of the economic instability of his times but gestures towards the changes to contractual language sparked by the Council of Trent and manifested in Don Quijote's subjective interpretation of chivalric obligations. By uncomfortably forcing the transposition of a pastoral, utopian world where money need not exist on his blatantly dystopic one,¹³ Don Quijote's act of misreading also exemplifies his desire to idealize anything he finds favorable, without any attention to sanctity, logic, or discretion.

This anachronistic relationship with the world is further metaphorized later in the novel through his extremely reverent treatment of the classical ideal of the golden age—"golden," in his opinion because it gives value to the same absence that evacuates his vows of their fixity. As he bombastically explains, he appreciates the utopian golden age not because its inhabitants possessed gold, but because they lacked it entirely:

Dichosa edad y siglos dichosos aquellos a quien los antiguos pusieron nombre de dorados, y no porque en ellos el oro, que en esta nuestra edad de hierro tanto se estima, se alcanzase en aquella venturosa sin fatiga alguna, sino porque entonces los que en ella vivían ignoraban estas dos palabras de *tuyo* y *mío*. Eran en aquella santa edad todas las cosas comunes [...]. (1.11.155)

Be they genuine or not, both Don Quijote's own lack of money and proclamation that he rejects capitalism (Maravall 48) thus initially signals that he shares the

particular, see Francisco Márquez-Villanueva, "La locura emblemática en la segunda parte del *Quijote*," *Cervantes and the Renaissance*. (Easton, Pennsylvania: Juan de la Cuesta, 1980), p. 106.

¹³ See L. Quintana Tejera, "Los siglos dorados en la concepción cervantina," *Contrastes: Revista cultural*, No. 38, 2005, pp. 72-77.

same values of the idealized Golden Age inhabitants, which consequently suggests that he has a certain moral superiority over those of his time period. In addition, however, it yet again signals his incompatibility with the world around him and his anachronistically flawed sense of judgment. Similarly, during the “edad dorada” and the “siglos dichosos” there was no reason to apply judgment or discretion—“no había que juzgar, ni quien fuese juzgado” (1.11.157). This lack of judgement or discernment was permissible precisely because the idealized world he imagines not yet been contaminated by the modern world in which Don Quijote finds himself so out of synch. Don Quijote’s inability to properly judge and his complete lack of discernment are thus misapplied to the context in which he lives, and his omission represents a failure of judgment, a failure of discretion, and a problem of faith indeed.

“Quando caput dolet”: Money, Lies, Payback

Don Quijote’s untruthfulness, or his ignorance regarding the monetary realities about which he has clearly been warned has disastrous consequences that far exceed the dangerous oversight he shows during the course of his first sally. For example, his disdain for money stresses the contractual relationships that he has with others, and particularly with his squire Sancho, who feels betrayed by Don Quijote’s pecuniary promises juxtaposed with what he actually receives. One of the rare occasions in which Sancho does request compensation for his work Don Quijote explodes in a fit of rage; he complains that his squire is too materially oriented, that he is “tan amigo de [s]u interés,” and attempts to terminate their relationship because of it:

vuelve las riendas, o el cabestro, al rucio, y vuélvete a tu casa, porque un solo paso desde aquí no has de pasar más adelante conmigo. [...] ¡Oh hombre que tiene más de bestia que de persona! [...] Asno eres, y asno has de ser, y en asno has de parar cuando se te acabe el curso de la vida, que para mí tengo que antes llegará ella a su último término que tú caigas y des en la cuenta de que eres bestia. (2.28.770-71)

Hilarious at first, Don Quijote’s verbal abuse of his squire takes a very negative turn given the parallels it suggests between the text’s other cruel and abusive masters, which we will soon explore.

Furthermore, his vituperation is also very negative given the fact that Sancho is so downtrodden and desperate to stay with his master that he replicates the animalistic and debasing terminology that Don Quijote uses against him in his harangue and applies it to himself: “Señor mío, yo confieso que para ser del todo asno no me falta más de la cola; si vuestra merced quiere ponérmela, yo la daré por

bien puesta, y le serviré como jumento todos los días que me quedan de mi vida” (2.28.771). Accepting Sancho’s ‘confession,’ Don Quijote does forgive Sancho, yet abusively, he tries to defer the promises he made to his squire by pretending to test his patience and faith as he obliges him to perpetually wait for the dubious realization of what he has promised: “yo te perdono, con que [...] te alientes y animes a esperar el cumplimiento de mis promesas, que, aunque se tarda, no se imposibilita” (2.28.771). While Sancho would never lift a hand against Don Quijote—due perhaps to his naturally indolent disposition and his acceptance that he is Don Quijote’s subject—other characters are much more insistent that that they receive their expected payments. They then often express the insistence that they be paid and threaten that they will seek retribution through physical violence when they are not, which we will discuss in this section.

Similarly, not only does Don Quijote put himself at great risk when he continues to refuse to bring money, his negligence causes physical harm to others. What Sancho Panza will refer to as his most humiliating experience, his blanketing, for example, occurs precisely because of his master’s continued economic disregard and neglectful stance towards his own obligations. Recounting Don Quijote’s misadventures at yet another inn, part 1’s chapter 17 dramatizes the confrontation between Don Quijote and a second innkeeper, Juan Palomeque, who rejects the knight’s promise to repay the hospitable lodging he has been given abstractly by seeking vengeance on an undefined antagonist. Given its nearly precise repetition of the events of chapter 1, Don Quijote’s economic disregard is highly problematic and irresponsible indeed. Since his profession is to rectify “tuertos” and “castigar alevosías,” Don Quijote offers to ‘satisfy’ and ‘pay’ the innkeeper by helping him in this ambiguous manner—a proposition that is simply unacceptable for the innkeeper:

si os las puedo pagar en haceros vengado de algún soberbio que os haya fecho algún agravio, sabed que mi oficio no es otro sino valer a los que poco pueden, vengar a los que reciben tuertos, y castigar alevosías; recorred vuestra memoria, y si hallais alguna cosa de este jaez que encomendarme, no hay sino decilla, que yo os prometo por la orden de caballería que recibí, de faceros satisfecho y pagado a toda vuestra voluntad. (1.17.212)

Following the innkeeper of chapter 3’s advice that Don Quijote needed money “por lo que pudiese suceder[le],” this second innkeeper insists that he be paid monetarily, and on the spot.

Indeed, by turning down Don Quijote’s offer to ‘satisfy’ a real monetary need with the “promise” of metaphorical payback, Juan Palomeque proves himself to be a man perspicacious enough to reject the same metaphors of payment, payback, and retribution that Don Quijote will later unquestioningly accept, in error, when he once again encounters Andrés’s master, Juan Haldudo. Lastly, since this innkeeper has been keeping a tally of what Don Quijote owes, the price that he is supposed to pay is well defined, and not at all open for debate:

Señor caballero, yo no tengo necesidad de que vuestra merced me vengue ningún agravio, porque yo sé tomar la venganza que me parece, cuando se me

hacen. Sólo he menester que vuestra merced me pague el gasto que esta noche ha hecho en la venta, así de la paja y cebada de sus dos bestias, como de la cena y camas. 'Luego, ¿venta es ésta?' replicó don Quijote. 'Y muy honrada,' respondió el ventero. (1.17.212)

Just as Don Quijote habitually casts the blame for the battles he loses upon Rocinante's clumsiness when he slips, Sancho's poor advice, or on the unfaithfulness of his sword if it falls from his hand,¹⁴ he also refuses to accept any responsibility for being found without the means to pay. Rather, he blames his lack of preparedness on confusion, on a missing referent that conceals the identity of the place in which he finds himself. "Is this an inn?," he wonders out loud, seeking verification for what would have been obvious to anyone else, but to him is a misplaced signifier. It is this confusion, his assumption that he was in a castle that he blames for his misinterpretation.

Subsequently, believing the inn a castle, he exonerates himself of fault by explaining that he expected the rules of castle etiquette to apply to the inn. He thus understands the innkeeper's refusal to accept his way of interpreting (or really, what is the innkeeper's refusal to validate his misprision) as essentially a perversion of nature and chivalry since he personally cannot correct his error. To do so would exponentially "contravene" a long-established "order," or violate and infringe upon inviolable laws. In Don Quijote's opinion, the castle's absence, or the failure of the inn to morph into a castle should essentially free him from responsibility and excuse any error in judgement that one might believe he made. Although he is supposed to be an "ingenioso hidalgo," he has been living a deceived and confused life for far too long:

Engañado he vivido hasta aquí -respondió don Quijote-, que en verdad que pensé que era castillo, y no malo; pero, pues es así que no es castillo sino venta, lo que se podrá hacer por agora es que perdonéis por la paga, que yo no puedo contravenir a la orden de los caballeros andantes, de los cuales sé cierto, sin que hasta ahora haya leído cosa en contrario, que jamás pagaron posada ni otra cosa en venta donde estuviesen, porque se les debe de fuero y de derecho cualquier buen acogimiento que se les hiciere, en pago del insufrible trabajo que padecen buscando las aventuras de noche y de día, en invierno y en verano, a pie y a caballo, con sed y con hambre, con calor y con frío, sujetos a todas las inclemencias del cielo y a todos los incómodos de la tierra. (1.17.212)

Yet can the reader really be expected take Don Quijote's justification of not having money on face value? Can one really believe his insistence that he fully knows the "orden de los caballeros andantes," which he takes as a law that he cannot

¹⁴ Fully attuned to his master's ways, Sancho supports Don Quijote's habit of shirking responsibility and casting blame on others even when he is the sole catalyst of his own misfortune when he attempts to console the moribund knight. Indeed, he tries to reignite Don Quijote's will to live by assuring him that he will happily take the blame for Don Quijote's defeat: "Si es que se muere de pesar de verse vencido, écheme a mí la culpa, diciendo que por haber yo cinchado mal a Rocinante le derribaron"(2.74.590).

“contravenir” since he has never “leído cosa en contrario”? The language of this episode, which so clearly recalls his encounter with the innkeeper of chapter 3 who had explicitly admonished Don Quijote for not carrying money with him suggests otherwise. Although the first innkeeper certainly did encourage the knight’s assessment of his decrepit inn as a luxurious castle, with his reference to deceit and misprision—“engañado he vivido hasta aquí”—Don Quijote is specifically affirming that he does at least realize that this inn is not a castle after all. However, the repetition of the very words spoken by the first innkeeper, that Don Quijote “se engañaba,” and the fact that the state of “engaño” in which he alleges that he has lived “hasta aquí,” suggests that his “error” is not at all as innocent as he tries to claim.¹⁵ He then repeats the very same excuse he used previously, that is, that he had never read that *caballeros andantes* ever carried any money with them.

In chapter 17 however, while this confession of ignorance is, at the very least, the same story he spun to the first innkeeper, as a consequence of that initial conversation, he has already learned that *caballeros andantes* do indeed carry money with them. Most obviously, readers recall that Don Quijote had returned home in chapter 3 specifically because of the innkeeper’s suggestion that he needed money, which signals his complete acceptance of the recommendation given to him. Indeed, since he was ‘especialmente’ seeking the money and other essential provisions that were recommended to him, the relationship between the innkeeper’s advice and his return home was causal: “[...] viniéndole a la memoria los consejos de su huésped cerca de las prevenciones tan necesarias que había de llevar consigo, *especial la de los dineros y camisas*, determinó volver a su casa y acomodarse de todo [...]. Con este pensamiento guió a Rocinante hacia su aldea [...].” (1.4.94, emphasis mine). The innkeeper’s advice is thus the principle that guides his actions, which readers can take to mean that he had definitively heard, understood, and internalized the message he was given. Moreover, unless he was lying, we know that he understood money’s importance since he even went so far as to specifically promise the innkeeper that he would follow his directives: “y por esto le daba por consejo, pues aun se lo podía mandar como a su ahijado, que tan presto lo había de ser, que no caminase de allí adelante sin dineros y sin las prevenciones referidas [...]. Prometióle don Quijote de hacer lo que se le aconsejaba, con toda puntualidad” (1.3.90). Not only does Don Quijote promise to heed the counsel given, he promises to do so immediately. The language used to describe the advice Don Quijote receives is contractual. By calling him “ahijado,” the innkeeper not only fomenta a certain level of familiarity and intimacy by continuing the genealogical metaphors so prevalent throughout the *Quijote*, but he is specifically using contractual chivalric language¹⁶ that makes Don Quijote’s failure to maintain his promise to heed the innkeeper’s advice all the more transgressive.

¹⁵ Moreover, the awareness of deceit, while serving a ludic function in this instance, directly anticipates the language of disillusionment that constitutes the tragic, deathbed lament of Don Quijote transformed back into Alonso Quijano in the final scenes of the *Quijote*.

¹⁶ Although “ahijado” commonly refers to a “godchild,” a protégé or someone who receives patronage from another, it also designates chivalric order, and emphasizes the trust and respect between a

Exacerbating the idea of transgression since he is much less amused by Don Quijote's antics than the first innkeeper, the second innkeeper, Juan Palomeque, explicitly demands pay. Unlike the first innkeeper, he does not care about any vows made based on laws of chivalry and has no faith in the weight of Don Quijote's word. Like Andrés's master Juan Haldudo, all that matters to Palomeque is the economic reality inherent in his position as innkeeper and the necessary economic exchange that must take place: "Poco tengo yo que ver en eso' [...] 'págueme lo que se me debe, y dejémonos de cuentos ni de caballerías, que yo no tengo cuenta con otra cosa que con cobrar mi hacienda'" (1.17.213); Palomeque's only concern is that he is paid what he is owed. Since Don Quijote is angry that Palomeque does not agree to his proposal to accept the bizarre form of 'payment' he has proposed (which consists of ambiguous excuses and prevarications based on his version of chivalric reality), Don Quijote becomes furious and hurls insults at his host: "Vos sois un sandio y mal hostelero" (1.17.213). His ire is incited by two primary reasons: one, that his interpretive error should result in having to pay; and two, that Palomeque refuses to negotiate with Don Quijote's terms, and refuses to recognize his rank. Don Quijote then rushes off, concluding that in his absence, the implicit promise of pay made when a patron stays at an inn would necessarily cease to exist (Bernaschina Schürumann 218).¹⁷

But the question of Don Quijote's missing payment will not simply disappear. Again reminiscent of the violence exacted upon Andrés, even if he does not give the innkeeper money, payment will still be obtained all the same ("...que si no le pagaba, le cobraría de modo que le pesase"); the cost of Don Quijote's missing payment will be charged or "cobrado" on the "desdichando" Sancho's hide. As if he were being held as corporal collateral, Sancho incurs great risk by being associated with a traveler who refuses to pay for his lodging. Making his case even worse, the squire makes the error of articulating his own refusal to pay his master's bill in terms that are directly from the mouth of Don Quijote, and from the mouth of Haldudo as well. Indeed, Sancho informs Palomeque that he follows the same chivalric "rule and reason" as does his master, and that to do otherwise would contravene "la ley de caballería."

[...] que pues su señor no había querido pagar, que tampoco él pagaría, porque siendo él escudero de caballero andante como era, la misma regla y

recently dubbed knight and a more experienced one. As Rico explains, "el caballero novel con respecto al que lo armaba; ambos contraían obligaciones recíprocas" (1.3, n. 21). While recalling the idea of Cervantes as "padrastró" of Don Quijote as described in the "Prólogo" to part 1, "ahijado" also anticipates the relationship between Don Quijote and readers of the Quijote as imagined by Cide Hamete. Hamete is ambiguous about the provenance of Don Quijote, "por dejar que todas las villas y lugares de la Mancha contendiesen entre sí por ahijársele y tenersele por suyo, como contendieron las siete ciudades de Grecia por Homero" (2.74.591). Be it a familial or a chivalric bond, the intimacy and confidence that are invoked during Don Quijote's dubbing are fractured when the knight fails to keep his word, and do not bode well for his future relationships.

¹⁷ Vincente Bernaschina Schürumann, "El último llanto de Sancho: Lucha de poderes y la interiorización de la moral de Don Quijote," *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, No. 78 (April 2011), pp 205-22.

razón corría por él como por su amo en no pagar cosa alguna en los mesones y ventas. [...] que por la ley de caballería que su amo había recibido, no pagaría un solo cornado aunque le costase la vida, porque no había de perder por él la buena y antigua usanza de los caballeros andantes, ni se habían de quejar de los escuderos de los tales que estaban por venir al mundo, reprochándole el quebrantamiento de tan justo fuero. (1.17.213)

It is the “buena y antigua usanza” that again signals the profound disconnect between Don Quijote and his squire, and the rest of the ‘world.’ In this situation the anachronistic relationship causes Sancho’s extremely shameful and violent punishment, creating an impasse between the medieval chivalric world much more amenable to verbal bonds and the skeptical postridentine society that was not. Using Sancho’s terminology, and again emphasizing the importance of economic relations and the link between bodily and economic integrity that everyone except for Don Quijote seems to understand, at the end of this scene, it is the bawdy prostitute Maritornes who literalizes the parallel between monetary and corporal payment. After Sancho’s humiliating and painful blanketing finally satisfies Don Quijote’s (and by proxy Sancho’s) debt, Maritornes offers him an unexpected kindness, uncommonly free of monetary obligations.¹⁸ She gives him a drink to help restore him after the abuse he has suffered and generously pays the bill for his refreshment “de su mismo dinero” (1.17.215).

Andrés’s Promise and Satisfying Debts

Despite the animosity and violent clashes that erupt because of his negligence, the economic concerns and realities that Don Quijote attempts to ignore

¹⁸ That Maritornes should behave so compassionately towards Sancho evidences the extremity of the suffering that Sancho has been made to endure, for Maritornes consistently shows that she has little compassion for other characters. For example, in “The Whole Body of Fable with All of Its Members: Cervantes, Piciano, Freud,” Gaylord specifies that in order to evidence the extent to which Don Quijote is the “[victim] of counterproductive desires,” it is Maritornes who orchestrates the events that lead to his embarrassing and emasculating half-fall, half-suspension in part 1, chapter 42 (122-23).

In what Adrienne Martin calls “[o]ne of the most memorable transformation episodes” of the *Quijote*, she explains how readers are not only shown how vulnerable Don Quijote is from a physical standpoint, but how greatly the humiliation he is made to feel because of Maritornes’s cruel machinations affects him. (See the section “Maritornes and Rural Prostitution” in the chapter “Prostitution and Power” in *A Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008, pp.29-42). See also Carolyn Nadeau, *Women of the Prologue: Imitation, Myth, and Magic in Don Quixote I*, Bucknell University Press, pp.62-66; and Cascardi, “Don Quixote and the invention of the novel” 61; on erotic fantasy and epistemological distortion, see Carroll Johnson, *Don Quixote: The Quest for Modern Fiction* 52; and of course, El Saffar, “In Praise of what is Left Unsaid: Thoughts on Women and Lack in Don Quijote.” *MLN*, Vol. 103, No. 2, Hispanic Issue (Mar., 1988), pp. 205-222.

reveal his continual and often willful misreading of the world and those around him, as well as his inability to interpret properly. Given his lies regarding having read about *caballeros andantes*, and having been told that knights do carry money, Don Quijote's professions of naivety should fail to convince readers. Moreover, the money that he pretends to ignore, and the principles of debt and repayment upon which vows are made, are the unspoken and unarticulated catalysts for the majority of his actions. For example, it is only when Don Quijote heads home to obtain the money he claims he never knew he needed, that he happens upon Andrés in the first place. The boy's fragile cries provide him with the "ocasiones" by which he is able to "cumplir lo que deb[e] a su profesion" (1.4.95):

Y a pocos pasos que entró por el bosque, vio atada una yegua a una encina, y atado en otra a un muchacho, desnudo de medio cuerpo arriba, hasta de edad de quince años, que era el que las voces daba, y no sin causa, porque le estaba dando con una pretina muchos azotes un labrador de buen talle, y cada azote le acompañaba con una reprehensión y consejo. (1.4.95)

The ideas of fulfillment, realization, and debt are prevalent in the scenes leading precisely to this point, and thus accentuate the problematic question of the inescapable economic preoccupations that confound Don Quijote, and the problematic question of the vow that continues to confound him as the novel progresses.

Thus, when Don Quijote encounters the "delicado infante" being beaten by the master who in Don Quijote's mind, can only be a "despiadado enemigo," Don Quijote sees this enemy as a man so depraved and vile that he explicitly poses a threat, not only to the boy, but to all *caballeros andantes* since beating a defenseless person is an ignoble crime: "Descortés caballero, mal parece tomaros con quien defender no se puede; subid sobre vuestro caballo y tomad vuestra lanza'—que también tenía una lanza arrimada a la encina adonde estaba arrendada la yegua, 'que yo os haré conocer ser de cobardes lo que estáis haciendo'" (1.4. 95). Though manifestly valiant in contrast, Don Quijote's rush to action is again somewhat misguided, and shows a stunning lack of foresight and discretion on his part.

For one, the troubled economic relationship between the youth and this master is one that replicates itself in the troubled relationship between Don Quijote and Sancho, as we have already seen, with Don Quijote's constant deferment of giving Sancho his salary and the blanketing that comes about because of Don Quijote's refusal to pay, for example. Yet even at the beginning of the *Quijote*, when the protagonist weighs his options regarding the squires he could possibly choose, he preemptively imagines a relationship that would take advantage of a squire's economic dependence upon him, a relationship which, consciously or not, would primarily be beneficial only to himself. Since he desires someone poor with clear familial obligations, representative of great economic necessity, Don Quijote's thoughts fall immediately upon Sancho Panza, a neighbor of his, who was "pobre y con hijos." To put it crassly, the squire that he astutely chooses purposefully creates a capitalistic situation that ensures or at least maximizes Don Quijote's potential

for gain from the relationship.¹⁹ That is, the economic need that supporting a family requires suggests that the squire Don Quijote selects would be very loyal.

“[S]imultaneously an employee and a servant,” Sancho’s ‘wages were inadequate to the basic necessities of life’ (Johnson *Cervantes*, 21-22); though elusive, the promise of pay suggests that he will have a greater propensity to work hard and well in order to mitigate his very real economic necessity. However, just like Haldudo’s sadistic promise to pay Andrés at a later date and Andrés’s foiled attempts at receiving his money, Sancho will repeatedly beg Don Quijote for the pay and the island that he is owed only to have his indeterminate ‘contract’ indiscriminately and continuously prolonged, without ever receiving monetary recompense (Johnson *Cervantes*, 24).²⁰

Since Don Quijote has no real intention and no means by which to pay his squire in a tangible, feasible way while en route that concords with an economic system that will remunerate Sancho for his labor, the scene with Haldudo and

¹⁹ See Carroll Johnson’s excellent *Cervantes and the Material World*, particularly his first chapter, “Feudalism and Stillborn Capitalism,” which offers a careful study of the socioeconomic relationship of Sancho to Don Quijote (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp.15-36.

²⁰ At the beginning of part II, Sancho is furious that Don Quijote continually defers his promise to provide him with an island to govern. He feels baited and betrayed, taken from his family by of false words: “él me sacó de mi casa con engaños, prometiéndome una ínsula que hasta agora la espero” (2.52). Sancho is then forced to wait for so long for the island (Barataria), that when he finally does ‘receive’ it and is able to ‘govern,’ he has largely lost interest.

Regarding monetary compensation, despite the ambiguity of Don Quijote’s promises to pay him in ‘chivalric nobility’ and the like, and despite the fact that Sancho is able to acquire a bit of money along the course of their travels together, Don Quijote still owes his squire wages when they return to their village for the last time. Don Quijote acknowledges his debt and the elusiveness of his promises as he makes his dying testimony. “Ítem, es mi voluntad que de ciertos dineros que Sancho Panza, a quien en mi locura hice mi escudero, tiene, que porque ha habido entre él y mí ciertas cuentas, y dares y tomares, quiero que no se le haga cargo dellos ni se le pida cuenta alguna, sino que si sobrare alguno después de haberse pagado de lo que le debo, el restante sea suyo, que será bien poco, y buen provecho le haga [...]” (2.74.589). Nevertheless, even this final confession and attempt to return to Sancho some of the money he owes, leaves his squire in the lurch. Don Quijote does not say that Sancho will be repaid, nor does he directly ask that Sancho be repaid; he asks merely that Sancho be paid if some money is let over after other debts have been taken care of. Perversely, the use of the imperfect subjunctive renders the possibility of Don Quijote having enough money to give any to Sancho extremely unlikely.

On the island Barataria as a utopia, see José Antonio Maravall, *Utopia y contrautopia en el Quijote* (Santiago de Compostela: Pico Sacro, 1976). On Cervantine ethics and Cervantes’s ironic treatment of political theory, see Luis Corteguera, “Sancho Panza Wants an Island,” *Romance Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (2005), pp.261-270, and Hector Chiong Rivero, “Insula de Buen Gobierno,” *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 2009), pp.139-65. For an excellent discussion of the insularity and transatlantic colonialism and implicitly capitalistic tendencies underlying the political foundation of Sancho’s governance and his “razón de estado,” see Dan Nemser, “Governor Sancho and the Politics of Insularity,” *Hispanic Review* 78 (2010), pp.1-23. On implosion and hyperreality, and their effects on Sancho’s status as governor, see Álvaro Ramírez, “‘Don Quijote’ and the Age of Simulacra,” *Hispania*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp.82-90. See also David Quint, *Cervantes’s Novel of Modern Times: A New Reading of Don Quijote*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Simone Pinet, “On the Subject of Fiction: Islands and the Emergence of the Novel,” *Diacritics* 33 .3/4 (2003), pp.173-87; and Anthony Casardi, “Politics Brought Down to Earth,” *Cervantes, Literature, and the Discourse of Politics*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2012), pp.130-164.

Andrés insists upon Don Quijote's faulty understanding of vows, haphazard use of language, and his inconstant application of judgment since he holds a villain to higher standards than he holds even himself. Don Quijote is horrified by the Labrador's physical abuse of the child. However, he is nearly just as scandalized—and hypocritically, I would suggest—by the failure of the implicit promise so fundamental to this relationship: work proffered and compensation paid. Since the performance and quality of the work undertaken matters so little to Don Quijote, the frustrated contractual relationship between the Labrador and criado is perverted when the correlation between “deber” and “cumplir,” or here, between payment owed and task completed is fractured. The only substantive difference between Haldudo and Andrés, and Don Quijote and Sancho, is the absence of blatant physical abuse in the relationship between the knight and squire.²¹

While much has been said by critics about the ambiguous presentation of Andrés, whether or not the boy is believed to be innocent, manipulative, or criminal does not make the Labrador's abuse of him any less shocking for its violence, or excessive given the nature of the ‘crime’ Andrés is accused of committing. It does, however, largely determine if the Labrador's punishment is seen as comprehensible or not. On first glance, and if readers overlook obvious similarities between Andrés and the innkeepers as other picaresque figures, the boy seems to be presented in the text as an innocent victim, particularly since Don Quijote immediately leaps to his aid. However, his promise that he will not lose the sheep *again* leads one to question his innocence: “No lo haré otra vez, señor mío; por la pasión de Dios, que no lo haré otra vez, y yo prometo de tener de aquí adelante más cuidado con el hato” (1.4.95). Just as Don Quijote persists in his refusal to carry money, Andrés perplexingly continues to lose sheep, which should lead readers to question the innocence of the knight and the boy, as it supports the hypothesis that both are most likely participatory agents in the errors they claim to have accidentally made. In fact, Andrés's words become an elliptical admission of guilt, since, as his criado laments, we learn that he loses sheep with such frequency that one goes missing every day; he is “tan descuidado” that “cada día [l]e falta una”(96). Like the “descuido” that causes Don Quijote to forget or (willfully ignore) the necessity of carrying money, Andrés's “descuido” and the absent sheep circumscribe the whole question of payment. Should Andrés be paid for a job that he does not do? A job that he somewhat performs, but carries out so poorly that any efforts he does make negate themselves? If his interpretation of watching the sheep consists in losing one per day, then he is certainly not at all vigilant or successful in watching them; he is not at all “cumpliendo” “con lo que debe.”

Thus, even Andrés's very presence in the book is one that again, hinges upon absence. One would presume that it would take a certain level of “descuido” to lose a sheep daily; even Don Quijote believes that losing a sheep per day represents a

²¹ That being said, readers of the *Quijote* have a plethora of examples, the most vivid being the blanketing, which illustrate how Sancho is often forced to suffer physical harm because of Don Quijote, and because of the broken promises that come about because of the incommensurability of words and actions.

rather implausible loss, and concludes that Andrés must have been robbed. Still, to have been robbed on a daily basis leaves the question of “descuido” open even wider. Nevertheless, regardless of how the animals were lost, Andrés’s master has full-right to be furious given the great economic loss—over seventy reales, we later learn—to which Andrés’s faulty performance of his job amounts. Whether or not the boy is innocent, however, or simply the victim of a rather unfathomable continual theft, Don Quijote’s response to Andrés’s situation and his insistence that the boy must be paid what he is owed adds another layer of nuance to the portrayal and function of absence: “Pagadle luego sin más réplica; si no, por el Dios que nos rige, que os concluya y aniquile en este punto. Desatadlo luego” (1.4.96). Similarly, the language that Andrés’s master uses becomes more contradictory as it layers, much like Don Quijote would do, conflicting usages of key terms such as “owe,” “pay,” and “lack,” one on top of the other. Andrés has accused Haldudo of refusing to pay the salary he is owed out of a desire to punish him for the missing sheep. Haldudo then affirms that he has indeed withheld pay, but only because the lost sheep correspond to physical punishment, and to the money and potential profit that have been lost: “Señor caballero, este muchacho que estoy castigando es un mi criado, que me sirve de guardar una manada de ovejas que tengo en estos contornos, el cual es tan descuidado, que cada día me falta una; y, porque castigo su descuido, o bellaquería, dice que lo hago de miserable, por no pagalle la soldada que le debo, y en Dios y en mi ánima que miente”(1.4.96).

Although in economic terms, Haldudo’s monetary punishment of Andrés— withholding pay—is befitting of situation in which the job the boy has been tasked to perform is not carried out, Don Quijote explodes in rage when he sees that on top of unacceptable corporal punishment the Labrador is both defaming Andrés’s name as well as pronouncing a personal affront to Don Quijote’s honor by speaking of liars in front of him: “¿Miente,’ delante de mí, ruin villano?” dijo Don Quijote” (1.4.96). As Covarrubias explains, defamation such as this was indeed a serious affront: “El desmentir a alguien se tenía por afrentoso para el desmentido, y en presencia de una persona de categoría constituía una ofensa hecha a esa persona. Aun entre iguales no se hacía sin pedir perdón a los oyentes” (n.9, 96). Haldudo’s lies therefore, are interpreted by Don Quijote as libelous speech acts. Not only does Don Quijote dislike “tarnishing anyone’s good name”—“La osadía del labrador está a punto de costarle cara, debido a la excesiva atención de don Quijote a la palabra, a la forma como sustento de la coherencia comporta-mental (Martín Moran 348). Don Quijote’s explosion of anger because of Haldudo’s lies boils down to his unrelenting obsession with words, promises, and what they mean.

Don Quijote clarifies his rage later by admitting that he abhors defamatory speech: “[...] soy enemigo de que se quite la honra a nadie” (1.17.207), yet the principles of absence provide an even greater key to explaining his anger in the episodes of chapter 4. His rage, albeit directed at Haldudo, really surges because of the failure, through absence, of a code of conduct that he expects to have existed, and through which he orders and interprets the scene in front of him. Just like the situation with the innkeeper of chapter 4, Don Quijote’s confused anger towards

Haldudo is the result of the fact that he misunderstands contractual relationships, and specifically, a result of the fact that he misunderstands contractual relationships as being immutable and immediately binding to others. Finally, in Don Quijote's mind, Haldudo *should* have known that he was a knight; he *should* have understood that his presence effectuated a code of conduct that should have immediately determined how he was supposed to act and which Don Quijote would have expected him to follow. But of course, just like the castle that is not an inn, Haldudo is not a knight. The confused terminology that Don Quijote uses thus reveals his confused application of the logic behind vow making and vow breaking.

What is more, what Don Quijote says to Haldudo, and how he thinks of him vacillates wildly even over the course of this very short episode. Despite trying to force him to adhere to the code of comportment that knights are supposed to follow, if Don Quijote is truly undecided about Haldudo's identity and rank, then all of the words that he says to him and the vows by which he attempts to bind Andrés's violent master are prematurely broken since they are undermined by his inability to even understand the identity of his interlocutor in fixed terms. For instance, when he first happens upon Haldudo, Don Quijote addresses him as a knight, as a person of a certain rank, and thus imagines there to be a direct commonality and fraternity between himself and Haldudo. Indeed, he assumes that they are both bound by the same codes of chivalry. However, their relationship immediately reveals itself to be contradictory and problematic when Don Quijote becomes aware of Haldudo's villainy. Discord and confusion then erupt, especially since as a "villano," Haldudo ruptures the chivalric code and insults Don Quijote through their similarity. Finding commonality between a knight like himself, therefore, and someone he perceives as anything but puts Don Quijote's entire identity at risk, particularly since he has been so recently knighted. His flawed assessment of the situation finds that Andrés is innocent and Haldudo is a knight who has merely momentarily lapsed into villainous behavior. A misidentification would equal a severe lapse of judgment on Don Quijote's part and thus is an error he is not willing to recognize. Moreover, though neither his presumption of Andrés's innocence nor his intuition regarding Haldudo's villainy are necessarily true, since he has decided that Haldudo is undoubtedly a knight so as not to admit that he has made a poor decision and gauged Haldudo's nobility incorrectly, the man must therefore stay as such in Don Quijote's mind.

Don Quijote's inability to discern and his contradictory adherence to opposed signifiers continue when he later addresses Haldudo as 'ruin villano.' Covarrubias specifies that despite the prevalence during Cervantes's time of the use of the term "villano" to designate "el que habita en una villa o aldea" in this instance, Don Quijote is explicitly insulting Haldudo and not using the term "villano" innocuously at all: "Don Quijote se encoleriza porque se siente ofendido por un antagonista. Le ha desafiado como caballero y ahora le llama 'ruin villano,' más bien en el sentido de 'hombre descortés y mal criado' que refiriéndose a su estado llano social" (n.9, 96; Bennassar 32; Canavaggio 6-21). Were Haldudo actually a knight, "villano," particularly when paired with 'ruin' would certainly have been fighting words, yet

Don Quijote leaves insults behind when he believes that he has resolved the dispute by imposing terms and conditions he assumes Haldudo will follow. He again refers to Haldudo as “caballero,” that is, as the knight he believes him to be, assuming without any doubt, that the same chivalric standards to which he ascribes will be upheld by Haldudo. Based on this mistaken assumption, he naïvely tries to pacify Andrés’s concerns by promising him that Haldudo will be good to his word even though he is unable to pay Andrés on the spot.

Andrés shows that he is wise, however, to this problematic association and to the questionable status of knighthood that Don Quijote misguidedly grants to Haldudo. Indeed, he understands the danger that this suggests, and he objects, vehemently reminding Don Quijote that his master is by no means a knight: “Mire vuestra merced, señor, lo que dice -dijo el muchacho-, que este mi amo no es caballero ni ha recibido orden de caballería alguna; que es Juan Haldudo el rico, el vecino del Quintanar,” and, “pero este mi amo ¿de qué obras es hijo, pues me niega mi soldada y mi sudor y trabajo?” (1.4.97). Nevertheless, since the prospect of Haldudo not being a knight challenges his perception and interpretation of reality, Don Quijote manages to discard this truth as a mere technicality: “Importa eso poco -respondió Don Quijote-, que Haldudos puede haber caballeros; cuanto más, que cada uno es hijo de sus obras” (1.4.97). In other words, contradicting the very thought upon which his interpretation of the situation is founded—that Haldudo is a knight, albeit one who is acting villainously—Don Quijote oddly admits that actual knighthood is irrelevant. He believes that he is comforting Andrés by reminding him that only actions matter—what someone does is of importance, not who someone is. However, despite the words that Don Quijote says, this noble interpretation of one’s identity as separate from one’s social status completely goes against what his own actions and process of belief were shown to be in this very scene.

To return to the sequence of events as they unfold, Don Quijote orders Haldudo to let Andrés go, and Haldudo, obedient only unto his fear of being attacked, complies. The task then falls to Don Quijote to make a mathematical tally of the situation and determine how much money Andrés is owed:

Hizo la cuenta Don Quijote y halló que montaban setenta y tres reales, y díjole al labrador que al momento los desembolsase, si no quería morir por ello. Respondió el medroso villano que para el paso en que estaba y juramento que había hecho -y aún no había jurado nada-, que no eran tantos, porque se le habían de descontar y recibir en cuenta tres pares de zapatos que le había dado y un real de dos sangrías que le habían hecho estando enfermo. (1.4.96)

It is at this precise moment in which Don Quijote demands that Andrés be paid that the problem of absent vows and Don Quijote’s twisted understanding of verbal promises, particularly those made in self-effacing terms, reveals itself in full force. Don Quijote’s lack of follow-through can be understood as an executive failure (Austin 151-49).²² In short, while the threats or promises of violence that Don

²² Recalling the scene with Haldudo and Andrés directly, Don Quijote’s failure to marry his words to his actions results shows the susceptibility of orders and oaths in the Quijote, and the linguistic

Quijote makes are very matter of fact, and the promise that he believes Haldudo to have made a concrete one (“aún no había jurado nada”), and both vows fail and dissipate under pressure. Don Quijote is then unable, unwilling, or simply unconcerned about following through with actions that reflect the order he pronounced, as we will examine next.

Don Quijote first insists that Haldudo must pay Andrés *immediately* if he does not want to die at Don Quijote’s hand. Moreover, Don Quijote has articulated this vow of violence in unequivocal terms. He orders Haldudo to “paga[r]le luego, sin más replica,” and informs him “que al momento los desembolsase, si no quería morir por ello” (1.4.96). Nevertheless, since the villain hesitates and prevaricates, he calls Don Quijote’s vows into question, showing that Don Quijote’s words are not to be taken at face value. He subsequently renders the vows false through his ability to stall Don Quijote’s promise of immediacy since he does not comply with the knight’s order “al momento.” Just like Don Quijote’s failed promise to the first innkeeper that he will return home for money “con toda puntualidad,” which aligns him with villainous behavior, Don Quijote’s threat that Haldudo must act immediately does not come to fruition for Haldudo does not pay Andrés back immediately. If Haldudo took Don Quijote to be a real knight, he would not be speaking back to him in the first place, and he would have more readily taken the knight’s words as professions of the truth. It is Don Quijote’s own maladroitness of language that therefore undermines his own makeshift authority. For example, he has twice insisted in very explicit terms that Andrés must be paid immediately if Haldudo wants to live; he also warns Haldudo not to delay and insists that he must rectify the economic issue without any hesitation, though he himself makes no move to attack. Moreover, he insists that the Haldudo should not even have the gall to talk back to him, or resist or protest the orders that are given to him. In other words, he is to accept everything that Don Quijote says as if it were law. As Don Quijote promises, “basta que yo se lo mande...” (1.4.97)

The fact that Haldudo replies, and by doing so ignores Don Quijote’s forceful warnings, is therefore significant because it shows that Don Quijote’s words themselves lack currency for those who enter into communication with him. Nevertheless, there is even a more noteworthy and insidious detail hidden in the fact that Haldudo has the gall to disobey Don Quijote and talk back to him, and that Don Quijote permits him to do so, allowing him to both speak and to keep his life, which is that he is immediately able to perceive Don Quijote’s linguistic confusion and understand the instability of his words so as to better manipulate the situation to his advantage. While Andrés knows his master well enough to doubt that he will keep his word to Don Quijote, particularly since he has already lied to him about his identity, Haldudo sees the instability and violability of Don Quijote’s promises as an opportunity to turn the knight’s very language against him in order to escape from the conditions that Don Quijote has set before him—primarily, having to pay

inconstancy that is a failure of commitment. As we have already seen, “[e]xercitives commit us to the consequences of an act” (Austin 155), and Don Quijote is unable to execute or follow through the actions he promises to their completion.

Andrés without delay. Haldudo accomplishes his subversion of the intention behind Don Quijote's words by purposefully perverting the signifiers Don Quijote leaves absent in his language, which lends to the violability of all of Don Quijote's oaths and the failure of contractual language throughout the entire *Quijote*.

In an even more insidious and damning representation of vows and their failure, since Don Quijote is lost in his world of illusions and does not have the ability to give attention to detail, once he hears Haldudo's story and is tricked into believing that he has unequivocally pronounced some sort of vow when in fact he has done nothing of the sort, he then perpetrates the falsified story that Haldudo has led him to believe. He interprets words that the villain has never even said, as absolute truths. Taking Don Quijote's "linguistic disorder," to use White's terms (White, *Tropics* 16), as manifested in his prevarications and confusion as indications of a lack of clout and power, Haldudo has insidiously started to undermine Don Quijote's already tenuous authority by taking advantage of his fragile understanding of language and the way in which vows operate. In reality, Haldudo concocts the story that he has articulated a vow when he has not, and tries to accentuate Don Quijote's belief in this absent vow. Not only does this show that Haldudo is deliberately lying (which spells disaster for the promise of honesty he makes to Don Quijote and Andrés), it shows the facile and advantageous way in which he is able to manipulate the vow-making process through the principle of absence by pretending that a vow has been made when in fact it has not.

Verbal Manipulations of a Villain. Interruption, Absence, Broken Promises

In order to draw attention to the fundamental issue of absence that receives scant critical attention, it bears revisiting Juan Haldudo's full exchange with Don Quijote here, from the moment in which Don Quijote observes him beating Andrés and bursts onto the scene, for their exchange shows how Don Quijote's understanding of the vow is built around absence and omission. For instance, Don Quijote neglects details that do not coincide exactly with his subjective yet rigid understanding of what promises mean. Metaphorizing the dire consequences of empty promises, he even goes so far as to hinge all of his beliefs on vows that are not just problematic or only reported in part, but entirely absent. The initial moments of Haldudo's verbal response to Don Quijote go as such:

Señor caballero, este muchacho que estoy castigando es un mi criado, que me sirve de guardar una manada de ovejas que tengo en estos contornos, el cual es tan descuidado, que cada día me falta una; y, porque castigo su descuido, o bellaquería, dice que lo hago de miserable, por no pagalle la soldada que le debo, y en Dios y en mi ánima que miente. (1.4.96).

Don Quijote interrupts Haldudo, orders him to untie the boy, and Haldudo obeys: "El labrador bajó la cabeza y, sin responder palabra, desató a su criado [...]" (1.4.96). Don Quijote then asks Andrés how long he has been working and how much he is owed:

Él dijo que nueve meses, a siete reales cada mes. Hizo la cuenta Don Quijote y halló que montaban setenta y tres reales, y díjole al labrador que al momento los desembolsase, si no quería morir por ello. Respondió el medroso villano que para el paso en que estaba y juramento que había hecho -y *aún no había jurado nada*-, que no eran tantos, porque se le habían de descontar y recibir en cuenta tres pares de zapatos que le había dado y un real de dos sangrías que le habían hecho estando enfermo. (1.4.96, emphasis mine)

As we can see with this second reading, by suggesting that he has made a vow when in fact he has not, Haldudo perverts Don Quijote's system of understanding language. He maximizes Don Quijote's confusion by contorting his speech to mimic Don Quijote's contractual confusion. Haldudo's verbal manipulation makes the confused knight lose himself even further given his dishonest intimation that he did indeed make a vow, since, after all, he is referring to one. And Don Quijote does not even give a moment of consideration to the idea that the words of Haldudo could be false despite Andrés's protestation and awareness that Haldudo is a liar. While Andrés is certain of Haldudo's deceitfulness based on empirical experience, Don Quijote's worldview does not facilitate an understanding of Haldudo's dishonesty. Rather, Don Quijote continues to assume that his personal honorable adherence to chivalric precepts and codes of comportment can be applied to all other people, and he takes Haldudo's words as the truth. However, by giving credence to Haldudo's absent vow, and by believing (or allowing himself to believe) that a promise was indeed made, Don Quijote perverts the very system of understanding vows that he is trying to enforce. He does not want vows to be broken, yet he does not even give adequate attention to whether or not they have been properly made in the first place.

A number of linguistic and conceptual issues are acutely pertinent to the present discussion of absent and failed vows, as they illustrate how Don Quijote not only allows failed vows to exist, but even goes so far as to perpetrate them himself. Firstly, if Don Quijote's command to Haldudo is to be taken at face value, as he certainly intends it to be, then Haldudo must pay Andrés immediately, right there on the spot. If he does not comply, then he will perish by Don Quijote's sword. Given this double condition that Don Quijote continues to repeat—"y díjole al labrador que al momento los desembolsase, si no quería morir por ello" and "[...] estoy por pasaros de parte a parte con esta lanza. Pagadle luego sin más réplica; si no, por el Dios que nos rige, que os concluya y aniquile en este punto. Desatadlo luego" (I.4, 96)—it becomes apparent that Don Quijote is not at all the man of his words that he declares himself to be. Since none of his actions reinforce or effectuate the vows he has made, Don Quijote undermines his own vow when he blithely allows both sides of the condition he puts forth to fail.

For all that Don Quijote may wave his sword in Haldudo's face, telling him that he must take action swiftly and silently, the villain makes not a single move towards the actual physical violence he promises. His threats of imminent harm are therefore nothing more than empty promises and meaningless words. Especially given his extremely rash behavior in all following scenes, Don Quijote's reluctance to back up his commands with actions that corroborate his vow further offsets what is going on in the episode and which character actually has control. Haldudo's violent treatment of Andrés is so extreme and he has no qualms about hurting the "delicate child," that Don Quijote's empty threats become all the more ridiculous and evacuated of significance; they are also indicative of a gross miscarriage of his judgment. By stalling and prevaricating, Haldudo is able to delay what only Don Quijote believes is the inevitable promised payment; he replaces Don Quijote's directives with his own violent agenda of metaphorical "payback," and violently punishes Andrés so as to best prove what little weight Don Quijote's word actually has.

According to Don Quijote's beliefs about himself, and the inviolability of his threatening rebuke, Haldudo should not even be able to speak back to the knight, as Don Quijote's orders, on face value, do not invite any response. For his part, Don Quijote should not entertain any dialogue with Haldudo at all; yet he strangely allows the villain the courtesy of trying to explain the rationale behind what readers later unequivocally learn amounts to physical payback and violent retribution. Yet the difficulty Don Quijote has gauging the abusive scene before him reinforces both the weakness of his words and the weakness of his judgment and hermeneutic abilities. As many critics have mentioned, Don Quijote arrives at the tree to which Andrés is tied already believing that Haldudo is the guilty party. His first words to Haldudo insist upon his villainy; Don Quijote calls him a "descortés caballero," and critiques the power differential between the armed Haldudo and the unarmed boy he is beating. As the episode progresses, the admonishing language he directs to Haldudo reinforces this characterization, which makes it even odder and even more noteworthy that Don Quijote subsequently does allow him the time and space to offer up a few attempts at self-justification. What is more, however, Don Quijote goes so far as to negotiate with the villainous Haldudo, allowing him to modify the terms of his original promise as well as to undermine them completely.

Framed by his desire for fairness and the just resolution of the problem of payment and debt, Don Quijote's confusion surrounding the vow that Haldudo has, in fact, *not* made—the "juramento que había hecho" although he "aún no había jurado nada" (1.4.96)—is further offset by his inability to conceive of a system of identitary dishonesty in which words do not correspond to the actions they portend. It is highly problematic that Haldudo's explanation is that he simply cannot pay Andrés back "at the moment" since he does not have money with him: "El daño está, señor caballero, en que no tengo aquí dineros: véngase Andrés conmigo a mi casa, que yo se los pagaré un real sobre otro" (1.4.97). Indeed, the villain's false confession strengthens the problematic parallel between himself and Don Quijote since both claim that they do not carry money with them. As this rather damning identitary

similarity exacerbates the difficulties Don Quijote has assessing the trustworthiness of Haldudo, he erroneously takes Haldudo's lies as a promise to repay the boy. He takes their verbal exchange to mean that upon arriving home Haldudo will indeed pay Andrés, that he will "cumplir" what he owes, and fulfill the "promise" that he made to both knight and boy. Andrés is able to anticipate perfectly what might happen if he is made to return to his master's home unpaid—"¿Irme yo con él?" [...]. 'Mas, ¡mal año! No, señor, ni por pienso; porque, en viéndose solo, me desuelle como a un San Bartolomé'" (1.4.97)—Don Quijote rejects this interpretation because of his own triangulated and flawed system of understanding the vows that have been made. In great error, he takes as inviolable: the vows that he makes, the vows that are made unto him, and the 'chivalric' vows that he believes are to be obeyed by all.

Haldudo then manipulates Don Quijote's vow even further when he explicitly articulates his promise to the knight for the very first time. With great linguistic dexterity, he presents this new vow, "yo se los pagaré un real sobre otro," as a reinterpretation of Don Quijote's conditions on his own terms and in his own words. His promise initially appears to be trustworthy, grounded in words that are honest and articulated in good faith, but they can be read on another level entirely—one that hinges on the metaphorical correspondence between payback and physical abuse: "No niego, hermano Andrés -respondió el labrador-; y hacedme placer de veniros conmigo, que yo juro por todas las órdenes que de caballerías hay en el mundo de pagaros, como tengo dicho, un real sobre otro, y aun sahumados" (1.4.97). Thus, the only promise Haldudo has really made up to this point is this elliptical one, articulated in imprecise terms based on the vague suggestion that if Andrés returns home with him he will certainly pay him. Yet once the youth complains about the absurdity of holding someone so clearly dishonest to lofty ideals that he already mocks through his ignoble behavior and derisive treatment of Don Quijote, Haldudo appeals to Don Quijote's linguistic code to manipulate the situation even further to his advantage. Rather than just referring obliquely to words he has never said and passing them off as a "juramento," Haldudo now knows he must articulate his promise explicitly since Andrés knows the truth and has called him on it.

As if he were indoctrinated into Haldudo's system of false speech, Don Quijote has subsequently incorporated Haldudo's interpretation into his own vocabulary, considering it to be a profession of truth. Moreover, just as the comparison between Don Quijote and Haldudo initially gave Don Quijote cause for concern, by guaranteeing that Haldudo will pay Andrés, and stating that he himself will "aseguraré la paga," Don Quijote is once again putting his own identity as a knight into peril because of Haldudo. The success, or inviolability of his promise is completely placed in Haldudo's hands. This means that Don Quijote is the only person to blame if Andrés does not end up being paid. Yet, as I have insisted, the syllogistic interconnectedness of these dependent vows is ruptured when one of the principle tenets on which the vow is based does not even exist. Again, since Haldudo had in fact *not* pronounced the promise he claims to have made unto Don Quijote until he sees how he can manipulate speech to his advantage, the other two

components that Don Quijote presumes exists—that Haldudo will not hurt Andrés again, and that Don Quijote’s orders to Haldudo will come to fruition—do not.

In fact, right before he rides off happily, and believing that he has resolved the issue of the money Andrés is owed for once and for all, Don Quijote’s final words to Haldudo already gesture towards the inevitable failure and towards the violability and inconstancy of the terms he believes he has set. At first, Don Quijote’s words might seem reasonable since he responds to Haldudo’s hyperbolic promise to pay Andrés back with perfumed dollars in a very logical and straightforward manner. Anticipating the concreteness of the innkeeper from chapter 17’s message to him, Don Quijote informs Haldudo that perfumed dollars are not necessary; only real dollars are needed, as they represent the most precise correlation between labor completed and money owed:

Del sahumero os hago gracia—dijo don Quijote—: dádselos en reales, que con eso me contento; [...] Y si queréis saber quién os manda esto, para quedar con más veras obligado a cumplirlo, sabed que yo soy el valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha, el desfacedor de agravios y sinrazones, y a Dios quedad, y no se os parta de las mientes lo prometido y jurado, so pena de la pena pronunciada. (1.4.97)

However, after his brief moment of lucidity in which he requests that Haldudo pay Andrés with ordinary *reales*, everything else that Don Quijote says disintegrates into confused, tautological speech. He employs a rambling layering of the confused terms of an oath that has never been solidly made in the first place: “y mirad que lo cumpláis como lo habéis *jurado*: si no, por el mismo *juramento* os *juro* de volver a buscaros y a castigaros [...] y no se os parta de las mientes lo prometido y *jurado*, so *pena* de la *pena pronunciada*. (1.4.97). Recalling the convoluted “razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace [...],” of *Don Belianís de Grecia*, one of his favorite books, in this scene Don Quijote uses the root “jurar” in nearly all of its forms: “jurado,” “juramento,” “juro,” and “jurado” again; as well as “cumplir”: “cumpláis,” and “obligado a cumplirlo.” With his principal order to Haldudo—“mirad que lo cumpláis como lo habéis jurado”—Don Quijote continues to further undermine the ‘fixity’ of the vows he has pronounced by referencing the promise that Haldudo never actually articulated.

Don Quijote’s language then folds in on itself even more since he says that he will bind Haldudo by this same oath that Haldudo has (*not*) made: “por el mismo juramento os *juro* de volver a buscarlos y a castigaros [...] y no se os parta de las mientes lo prometido jurado, so pena de la pena pronunciada” (1.4.97-98). Given what we know about Haldudo’s way of making oaths, Don Quijote’s confused logic means that Haldudo is hardly bound at all, and that the aphasic threat of suffering the “penalty of the pronounced penalty,” is hardly a threatening consequence for breaking one’s promise at all. Unfortunately for Andrés, given Haldudo’s ‘acceptance’ of Don Quijote’s terms, and his repetition of a heavily recodified, duplicitous promise that he would pay the boy one “real sobre otro,” Don Quijote takes Haldudo’s distorted speech to mean that he will return to Andrés the money he owes him, and quickly speeds off: “Y, en diciendo esto, picó a su Rocinante y en

breve espacio se apartó dellos” (1.4). As if to dramatize the lack of fixity that Don Quijote’s vow holds, the gerundive construction “en diciendo esto [...] se apartó” suggests that he sped away during the very moment in which he was articulating what should have been his most authoritative promise.

Following Don Quijote with his eyes, as soon as Haldudo sees that he “había traspuesto del bosque y que ya no parecía,” he proves how little he respects the vows and promises that have been bandied about by brazenly defying Don Quijote. He immediately takes up his abuse of Andrés once again, perverting Don Quijote’s commands by applying the terminology the knight uses in a sense contrary to how it was originally intended : “Venid acá, hijo mío, que os quiero pagar lo que os debo, como aquel desfacedor de agravios me dejó mandado” (1.4.98). Andrés immediately objects, wise as he is to Haldudo’s villany, and attempts to reinvoke the oath Haldudo swore to Don Quijote in order to force his master to adhere to the terms he promised he would respect. “—Eso juro yo —dijo Andrés—, y ¡cómo que andará vuestra merced acertado en cumplir el mandamiento de aquel buen caballero, que mil años viva, que, según es de valeroso y de buen juez, vive Roque que si no me paga, que vuelva y ejecute lo que dijo!”(1.4). While Andrés shows that he gives great esteem to the fixity of the valiant knight’s word by adding his own promise that Don Quijote will seek retribution if Haldudo fails to comply with his order, Haldudo has no regard whatsoever. “—También lo juro yo —dijo el labrador—, pero, por lo mucho que os quiero, quiero acrecentar la deuda, por acrecentar la paga.Y, asiéndole del brazo, le tornó a atar a la encina, donde le dio tantos azotes, que le dejó por muerto” (1.4).

What is notable is not just the fact that Haldudo beats the boy in an even more violent fashion, but that he does so in a way that specifically perverts the terms of the oath that has been made. His inversion of terminology not only allows him to undermine Don Quijote’s authority, but specifically allows him to misapply the terms that Don Quijote laid out to his own advantage, while actually keeping his manipulated word, in a sense. That is, since Don Quijote’s intervention left him even more furious with Andrés, Haldudo attempts to satisfy the vengeance that he is more actively seeking by rearticulating yet perverting Don Quijote’s terminology. He uses his promise to “pagar lo que os debo” and “acrecentar la deuda, por acrecentar la paga” in order to justify and fuel further abuse of Andrés. Indeed, with the specification that he will pay Andrés back “como aquel desfacedor de agravios me dejó mandado,” not only does he continue to take Don Quijote in jest, he situates the knight as the causal force that stimulates abusive payback. Furthermore, as Haldudo sees it, Andrés now “owes” him even more for the inconvenience and embarrassment that Don Quijote has caused him to feel. Indeed, and unbeknownst to him, Don Quijote has unwittingly provided Haldudo with the key to manipulative speech that shockingly makes Haldudo far less of a liar than Don Quijote.

Haldudo’s punishment of Andrés takes an even more perverse twist when he claims that he wants to truly pay Andrés and “give him what he is due,” which is delivered in the form of “tantos azotes” instead of salaried pay. His final comments to Andrés, whom he eventually frees from the tree, as well as the narrator’s

intervention close the scene by sardonically mocking the ridiculousness and inefficacy of Don Quijote's intervention, repeating his convoluted language and satirizing his redundant and misapplied legal terms, insisting most of all, on his ability to "desfacer tuertos," and "deshacer agravios":

Llamad, señor Andrés, ahora —decía el labrador— al desfacedor de agravios: veréis cómo no desface aqueste; aunque creo que no está acabado de hacer, porque me viene gana de desollaros vivo, como vos temíades. Pero al fin le desató y le dio licencia que fuese a buscar su juez, para que ejecutase la pronunciada sentencia. Andrés se partió algo mohíno, jurando de ir a buscar al valeroso don Quijote de la Mancha y contalle punto por punto lo que había pasado, y que se lo había de pagar con las setenas. Pero, con todo esto, él se partió llorando y su amo se quedó riendo. (1.4.98)

If his satirical parody of Don Quijote's language were not problematic enough, the juxtaposition between Haldudo as laughing abuser and Andrés as still crying victim further indicate to the reader that Don Quijote has not been able to resolve the situation successfully. Andrés's primary fear is that he will be flayed and skinned alive (that is, treated like Saint Bartholomew) in Quijote's absence—"en viéndose solo me desuelle como a un San Bartolomé" (1.4.97). Unfortunately for Andrés, this fear corresponds directly with Haldudo's anger that has dangerously intensified *after* Don Quijote's intervention, whereupon he menaces the boy with the terrifying "me viene gana de desollaros vivo."¹

Moreover, by telling Andrés to call on a judge who he is sure will be unable to rectify the 'case' at hand, so to speak, and by using deictic language to do so—"Llamad [...] al desfacedor de agravios: *veréis* cómo no desface aqueste," (1.4.98, emphasis mine), Haldudo is both calling attention to Don Quijote's problematic absence from this scene and the moment of resolution, and mocking Don Quijote's self-appointed role as judge. In terms of problematic absence yet again, the scornful attention Haldudo gives to Don Quijote's departure from the scene, which has allowed him to continue his abuse of the boy, leads readers to wonder why Don Quijote was so trusting of Haldudo's word that he was content to wander off before seeing the situation to any type of resolution. Don Quijote is thus not the "buen juez" Andrés believes him to be, and it is precisely his unfortunate decision to take such a hasty departure that will weigh heavily on Don Quijote when Andrés confronts the knight in chapter 31, blaming him for his poorly articulated attempt at arbitration.

In addition to his untimely and irresponsible departure, Don Quijote's naïve complicity in Andrés's continued abuse is further evidenced through the facility with which others are paradoxically able to adhere to the words of oaths that are made with him, yet also manage to pervert the metaphors that he uses. For instance, paying Andrés back with revenge and anger-driven punishment instead of money is precisely what Haldudo had promised to do. Specifically, if corporal punishment is quite literally one definition of payment or payback, then by continuing to beat Andrés, he is thus actually carrying out his promise according to the terms that have been suggested and approved by Don Quijote. Readers must

remember that part of Haldudo's complaint is that he owes Andrés less than the boy claims he does because he has given him shoes and paid for bloodlettings to cure the boy of illness. But Don Quijote had insisted that minor details such as those did not matter; Haldudo needed pay the boy all the same: "Bien está todo eso, replicó Don Quijote; pero quédense los zapatos y las sangrías por los azotes que sin culpa le habéis dado, que si él rompió el cuero de los zapatos que vos pagásteis, vos le habéis rotpido el de su cuerpo, y si le sacó el barbero sangre estando enfermo, vos en sanidad se la habéis sacado; así que por esta parte no os debe nada" (1.4.96). Very problematically, since Don Quijote who was the first to verbalize this connection between money and broken skin, and between Andrés's destroyed leather shoes and his worn and beaten hide, it is also he who allows Haldudo to "fulfill" the promise that he makes to 'pay' Andrés back (through physical harm) based on the reversed meaning of the terribly flawed metaphor Don Quijote has himself verbalized. With absolutely no fear of Don Quijote's judgment and retaliation, and with no regard for the promises he made, Haldudo calls attention to the powerlessness of judges and the failures of any attempt at implementing a functioning legal system—a theme tellingly recurrent in the Cervantine *oeuvre*.

A final nuance of critique points to the pervasiveness of the perverted and damaging system of vows and vow-making, and to the lack of proper correlation between promises and actions, or words and deeds in this chapter. As the episode concludes, the situation becomes even more problematic still since it is Andrés, rather than the villainous Haldudo or the confused Don Quijote, who is arguing for an abusive management of the system of vows and exchange. Sulking as he finally is freed by Haldudo, Andrés again swears that he will find Don Quijote; he promises that the knight will make Haldudo pay for breaking his word. The important detail here is not simply that Andrés wants retribution, which is understandable, but *how* he wants it. He swears that he once he tells Don Quijote what has happened, the knight will have Haldudo "pagar con las setenas." Like today's "pagar con creces," "pagar con las setenas" means to over-pay or recompense more abundantly than the amount owed. More precisely, since it refers to an old form of punishment in which the punished party is made to pay a penalty that amounts to seven times the price at which the crime committed was monetized, the punishment Andrés wants his master to be forced to pay is specifically *not* one that corresponds to the abusive crimes that were committed.

The implication behind "pagar con las setenas" is thus that Andrés cares not a wit for justice and fairness. He wants to recover not just the money that he is owed, but more. Similarly, he wants Haldudo not only to suffer a physical punishment *equivalent* to the one that he himself has suffered, but one that has even greater physical consequences. In accordance with Haldudo's use of the idea of "payment," he insists that he will recount the abuses he has been forced to undergo "punto por punto." Tellingly, and drawing attention to the connection between abusive rhetoric and physical violence, "punto por punto" can be understood as "point by point," or "blow by blow." Thus, Andrés's language again picks up the perverse correlation between promises, and physical punishment that only Don

Quijote seems to ignore. Tying together money and corporality yet again, Andrés's final threat in this chapter is thus indicative of the fractured correspondence between word and deeds that circumscribes the entire episode, while also providing readers with the *Quijote's* first explicit example of the violence that accompanies the flawed system of vows. The problems of faith portrayed in the story of Andrés gesture simultaneously towards the inevitable failure of this particular chapter's episodes and towards all of Don Quijote's subsequent failures.

Defending Obvious Truths: “sin verla lo habéis de creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar y defender”

While Andrés provides the *Quijote's* first overt demonstration of the chasm between words and deeds, or promises made and promises kept, which catalyzes failure and results in violence, the situation becomes far worse when Don Quijote happens upon the silk merchants from Toledo in the second half of this same chapter. “Contentísimo de lo sucedido,” and “con gran satisfaction de sí mismo” because of what he believes to be the felicitous resolution of Andrés's lamentable situation, Don Quijote is puffed up with pride, self-importance, and delusions of grandeur when he takes his leave of the boy. His subsequent apostrophe to Dulcinea reveals that he takes his successful management of this first chivalric adventure as proof that his subsequent adventures will find similar success:

Bien te puedes llamar dichosa sobre cuantas hoy viven en la tierra, ¡oh sobre las bellas bella Dulcinea del Toboso!, pues te cupo en suerte tener sujeto y rendido a toda tu voluntad e talante a un tan valiente y tan nombrado caballero como lo es y será don Quijote de la Mancha; el cual, como todo el mundo sabe, ayer rescibió la orden de caballería y hoy ha desfecho el mayor tuerto y agravio que formó la sinrazón y cometió la crueldad. (1.4.99)

Given the rapidity with which he has undergone this period of such profound chivalric ‘maturation’ in the short span of time between his first sally and this apparent triumph, Don Quijote has no doubts that his valor and fame will continue to grow exponentially until they reach prodigious proportions. After this initial success, he then waits at a crossroads, which fulfills a mimetic function by allowing him to imitate what he has read about chivalric tradition. This exaggerated pause also gestures towards the importance of deliberation in a scene that dramatizes Don Quijote's existential chaos despite his professions of epistemological security. Don Quijote then sees a band of silk merchants arrive. Taking for granted that they are *caballeros andantes*, he haughtily puts himself in the middle of their path.

What arises next is a brief but extremely complicated exchange that reveals Don Quijote's fundamental misapplication of vows and the pessimistic stance that

Cervantes adopts towards them even in this early chapter. Don Quijote brazenly declares that unless the travelers in front of him—not just the ‘caballeros’ themselves, but their whole group of thirteen—declare Dulcinea the most beautiful woman in the world, he will not permit them to continue on their way: “Todo el mundo se tenga, si todo el mundo no confiesa que no hay en el mundo todo doncella más hermosa que la emperatriz de la Mancha, la sin par Dulcinea del Toboso (1.4.100). Just as we have seen in the situation with Andrés, Don Quijote’s authority is misapplied and disruptive. Moreover, it is he himself who undermines the inviolability or success of the very vows that he makes. Firstly, his stance, with his “adarga al pecho” and with his body and horse blocking their intended trajectory, is an antagonistic assertion of his newfound authority that physically impedes the merchants’ progress. Secondly, as we have already seen, and will unmistakably see when he continues to be trampled by other personages throughout the rest of the *Quijote*, and even by sheep and pigs, Don Quijote’s physicality is not imposing at all. More often than not, when he tries to stop passersby he is pummeled, run over, and knocked down, either because his ‘adversaries’ do not see him, because they know he will be easily knocked down, or because they simply do not care to stop. It is not, therefore, the physical obstacle that Don Quijote creates that causes the merchants to halt, but his strange countenance and the strange words that he passes off as the truth—the strange vow that he wants the merchants not only to reiterate, but firmly believe.

Indeed, it is the peculiarity of his desire to make the merchants confess and avow to a detail about someone they do not know and have never even seen or heard of before (and who, moreover, is a figment of his imagination) that piques the merchants’ curiosity, causing them to halt: “Paráronse los mercaderes al son destas razones, y a ver la estraña figura del que las decía; y por la figura y por las razones luego echaron de ver la locura de su dueño, mas quisieron ver despacio en qué paraba aquella confesión que se les pedía [...]” (1.4.100). Are the merchants obedient to Don Quijote’s orders or not? The complexity of the confession of truth he demands from them bears further examination: “Todo el mundo se tenga [...],” is his first command. While the fact that the merchants do actually pause initially suggests that they are following Don Quijote’s orders and respecting his influence, by pausing, they are actually defying his authority in fundamental way. It is their curiosity that stops them, not Don Quijote’s words themselves. Furthermore, the fact that the merchants do halt, inherently challenges the nature of what Don Quijote has presented to them as an incontrovertible truth and makes their reaction into an obedient but ultimately aggressive gesture. Much like Haldudo’s momentary break from beating Andrés only to resume his abuse more violently later, and although the merchants are following some of Don Quijote’s orders according to the terms that he has set before them, stalling is essentially a refusal to agree to the other half of Don Quijote’s conditions. It is a refusal to accept his assertion that Dulcinea is indisputably the most beautiful woman in the world—the “doncella más hermosa,” who is peerless, or “sin par.” By slowing their step, the merchants are proleptically determining Don Quijote’s words to be false and his appreciation of

Dulcinea skewed; thus, they are essentially calling the madman who believes himself to be a valiant knight, a liar.

Though Don Quijote assumes that the merchants' rejection of his vow is what causes them to pause, it is actually the oddity and incomprehensibility of his words along with his odd and indecipherable presence—his strange “razones” and his “extraña figura” that catch their attention, not the “exercitive” value of what he says, to use J.L. Austin's terms (151).²³ What is more, the absurdity of what Don Quijote is asking of the merchants is further shown by the tautological use of the word “mundo.” By foisting the representational value of the whole world upon a small group of only thirteen people through an awkward use of metonymy, Don Quijote affirms that Dulcinea's hyperbolic beauty must be accepted by the whole world, sight unseen. Yet almost despite himself, his language falters and introduces doubt when he damages the measurability of the vow by demanding a profession of faith from “todo el mudo.” Just like the narrator Cide Hamete's “encyclopedic” desires consist of being able to “tratar del universe todo” (Kenshur 60-65), Don Quijote wants Dorotea to be described with a universal truth. His triply skewed exercitive and confused logic express hyperboles so exaggerated they are impossible. As such, the very language that he employs when he makes an irrefutable vow about Dulcinea's beauty immediately foils the value of the vow that he is trying to make. His vow is first destabilized by his hyperbolic assessment of her pulchritude as singular in all the world. Subsequently, this statement is ironically undermined given that he recurs to the tired language of *amour courtois* to wax poetic about what is essentially a literary commonplace. Moreover, by mistakenly addressing a group of thirteen as representative of the entire world, and then assigning them a task already rendered impossible (since of course they are *not* the entire world), the very task that he insists must be executed if the “caballeros” do not want to face dire physical consequences is an impossible one. Taken literally, the whole world could never stop, nor would the whole world ever be able to attest to Dulcinea's beauty. The idea of impossibility is heightened all the more by Don Quijote's recurrence to language full of litotes and negation. By using the rhetorical device of adynaton, Don Quijote undermines his own language as the promise to which he wants others to conform is something that could never even be articulated by “todo el mundo.”

Yet unlike Andrés and Haldudo, who both have reason to take Don Quijote seriously, or at least initially pretend that they do, derisive laughter sets the tone for Don Quijote's encounter with the merchants, and all other episodes that follow.

²³ Austin defines exercitives as “the exercising of powers, rights, or influence,” the “giving of a decision in favour of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it”(151, 154-55). The importance of the exercitive expressions Don Quijote uses in this scene with the merchants and in subsequent exchanges with his adversaries cannot be overlooked. Indeed, the orders he makes to them are definitively committing Don Quijote to a certain course of action; if he fails to do his part to carry out said course of action, then he is egregiously breaking the terms of his very own promise (by not carrying out his promised action): “Many exercitives such as *permit*, *authorize*, *depute*, *offer*, *concede*, *give*, *sanction*, *stake*, and *consent* do in fact commit one to a course of action. [...] Exercitives commit us to the consequences of an act [...]” (155).

By mocking him and directly ridiculing the terminology that he uses—“Señor caballero, nosotros no conocemos quién sea esa buena señora que decís; mostrádnosla: que si ella fuere de tanta hermosura como significáis, de buena gana y sin apremio alguno confesaremos la verdad que por parte vuestra nos es pedida” (1.4.100)—the silk merchants take the same scornful stance as did the visitors at the first inn Don Quijote visited. Though he mimics Don Quijote’s language of confessions and truth, little does the merchants’ spokesman realize that the mechanics of the vow had already gone into effect from the minute that he and his companions paused for the sole purpose of making fun of Don Quijote and satisfying their curiosity. The spokesman’s feigned compliance with Don Quijote’s truth-affirming expedition and the interest he believes himself to be communicating with his desire to see Dulcinea have already been negated or canceled out by the fact that he and his companions did halt. Despite what he claims is his desire to see Dulcinea and his teasing efforts to participate in Don Quijote’s way of understanding the world by playing along and continuing the joke, pausing can only be interpreted by Don Quijote as an insult, as an act of defiance that challenges the sanctity of his vow and wages an affront against his authority.

Though they are simply teasing Don Quijote, the fact that the merchants want ocular proof to substantiate his insistence upon Dulcinea’s matchless beauty is another rejection of the chivalric code by which he operates. Because Don Quijote, as an upstanding *caballero andante* is just as faithful to his lady as he is to the codes regulating chivalric comportment, he expects the way in which he is perceived by others to coincide seamlessly with the way in which he perceives himself, and the way in which he believes to have presented himself to others. Completely ignorant of the anachronistic figure he presents, dressed as he is in his grandfather’s old armor and adhering to linguistic and chivalric codes long out of vogue, Don Quijote sees his status as a *caballero andante* as a role that has both a personal and a national objective. Though his understanding of temporal relevance is distorted, he finds his role to be well-suited to him, fitting and requisite, serving a function that is “convenible y necesario, así para el aumento de su honra como para el servicio de su república” (1.1.74). Consequently, he expects to be treated with the dignity and respect that match the importance of his rank. Leaving physical punishment aside, the fact that the merchants do pause and then have the gall to ask Don Quijote to substantiate his claims using “ocular proof” is a serious affront. The request for proof adds insult to injury since it recalls the great threat Haldudo made to Don Quijote’s authority by lying and being disrespectful towards him.

Together, these two examples of direct challenge to Don Quijote’s authority recall the dubiousness of the early scenes in which he first sets out: “[...] no quiso aguardar más tiempo a poner en efecto su pensamiento, apretándole a ello la falta que él pensaba que hacía en el mundo su tardanza, según eran los agravios que pensaba deshacer, tuertos que enderezar, sinrazones que emendar, y abusos que mejorar y deudas que satisfacer” (1.1.78-9). Yet because he is so eager to follow in the footsteps of his beloved protagonists from the *libros de caballería*, he sets off prematurely, considering himself to be an official knight before he has actually been

dubbed. When he remembers this detail, he is “assaulted” by this mortifying realization. Not only does he falter since he has not yet been knighted, he has technically infringed upon chivalric codes by thinking himself a knight when he is not. It is for this reason then, that he is so angry when his authority is challenged by Haldudo and the merchants, and that he encounters such failure in his dealings with them (Cascardi, *Cervantes* 215). Not respecting the laws of chivalry is thus as good as telling him that he is not a true knight and undermining his entire (newly) constructed and fragile self-identity.

In this sense, Don Quijote’s status as a knight even after he has been “dubbed” remains a subjective matter, especially given the way in which he is marked by the unshakeable obsession with money that calls his idealism into question. Epistemologically and linguistically however, Don Quijote functions as a knight, and applies this code of conduct to the entire world around him. Indeed, he believes that he must rectify any violation of the chivalric code that he obeys and expects all to respect. Moreover, given the new preoccupation with money, the identity that Don Quijote wants to be so similar to that of the *caballeros andantes* about which he has read, is already marked as different. If the question of money catalyzes his knighthood as he is dubbed; or if it is applied as a corrective to his idea of knighthood when he is redirected home; or finally, if his “*innamoramento*” is later monetized by association with the galley slaves’ imprisonment, then what he learns was an absent signifier in all of the chivalric literature he reads is markedly present in *his* particular story of knighthood. Therefore, though Don Quijote does not admit it outright, the Toledan silk merchants’ refusal to take what he says on face value becomes an even more profound offense that exacerbates his perceptions of difference from the knights about whom he read, and whom he yearns to perfectly imitate. With their insistence upon volition and empirical experience, rather than trust and obligation, the merchants challenge Don Quijote’s words, authority, and position in the world.

In a problematic reversal of his confession in the scene with the innkeeper of chapter 3 that he ignored something obvious and universally accepted because he did not see it with his own eyes, in chapter 4 Don Quijote contests the merchants’ desire for “ocular proof” by stating that he does not see the point of making others acknowledge the obvious. It is for this reason precisely, then, that he should not need to show the merchants anything at all: “Si os la mostrara —replicó don Quijote—, ¿qué hiciéradés vosotros en confesar una verdad tan notoria? La importancia está en que sin verla lo habéis de creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar y defender; donde no, conmigo sois en batalla, gente descomunal y soberbia” (1.4.100). Like religious devotion itself, from Don Quijote’s perspective, Dulcinea’s beauty is a given. Needing to see proof of her beauty in order to confirm his vow would be visually redundant and verbally insulting, to both him and his lady. Anyone who does not believe Dulcinea is as beautiful as Don Quijote says she is is committing what he later refers to as a “grande blasfemia,” for her beauty should be so

indisputable that it should not even need to be discussed, qualified, or questioned.²⁴ The condition that Don Quijote puts before the merchants is thus clear; they need to acknowledge his status and rank, and validate his assessment of Dulcinea's beauty by taking him on his word or facing him in battle. In other words, they must "confesar" or "morir"; they must attest to her unparalleled worth or perish at his sword.

For the merchants' spokesperson and by extension, the rest of the merchants, however, the exchange with Don Quijote has precisely the opposite meaning. Pretending that they are princes in response to Don Quijote's insult that they are knights of ignoble lineage given their uncouth behavior, the merchants insist that they simply cannot swear sight unseen. To confess to something without even having had visual reference would put their personal beliefs in question and also risk their national obligations. They claim that they must see a picture of Dulcinea to "comprobar" what Don Quijote says and attest, or "confesar" to her beauty: "Señor caballero, nosotros no conocemos quién sea esa buena señora que decís; mostrádnosla, que, si ella fuere de tanta hermosura como significáis, de buena gana y sin apremio alguno confesaremos la verdad que por parte vuestra nos es pedida" (1.4.100). Like the effrontery Haldudo commits by talking back to Don Quijote, the

²⁴ At a pivotal juncture that gestures towards Don Quijote's end by suggesting a nascent cognizance of his idealism and the independence of his phenomenological perspectivism, Don Quijote contradicts his assessment of Dulcinea's beauty as expressed in chapter 4 of part I, after praising knight errants who 'go crazy for good cause' (the cause of course, is love—"Loco soy, loco he de ser" [I.2, 306]), he insists that he is aware of the "immense complexities and internal tensions" (Glover 19) underlying his love for Dulcinea. As the knight articulates, in "one of the most moving declarations of love," as Carlos Fuentes calls it ("Introduction" xxiv):

Así que, Sancho, por lo que yo quiero a Dulcinea del Toboso, tanto vale como la más alta princesa de la tierra. [...] Y, así, bástame a mí pensar y creer que la buena de Aldonza Lorenzo es hermosa y honesta, y en lo del linaje, importa poco, que no han de ir a hacer la información dél para darle algún hábito, y yo me hago cuenta que es la más alta princesa del mundo. [...] Y para concluir con todo, yo imagino que todo lo que digo es así, sin que sobre ni falte nada, y píntola en mi imaginación como la deseo, así en la belleza como en la principalidad [...]. (1.25.314)

If Don Quijote is able to "paint her in his imagination" according to his own desires, then he does recognize the malleability and subjectivity of perception. Similarly, and perhaps pointing to an increasing awareness (despite frequent contradictions and vacillations) of subjectivity and perspective as the novel progresses, he acknowledges a preference for tangible evidence that can be substantiated when he is confronted with an ugly Dulcinea thanks to Sancho's refusal to go off in search of a woman he knows does not exist in part II, chapter 10. Instead of Dulcinea, he presents to Don Quijote a trio of heinous looking women; Don Quijote recognizes their lack of beauty and believes he must be enchanted, since 'Dulcinea is nothing like the beautiful woman he imagines.

While Don Quijote still does not need 'proof' to have faith in her beauty, whether or not she is actually beautiful ceases to be a concern to him. He realizes that his reality and perspective may not coincide with the reality and perspective of others. In other words, his commitment to her is significant, not her subjective possible beauty. In the following chapter, the level of 'engaño' he is forced to experience leads him admit a preference for obtaining proof "empíricamente" since he has finally started to "desconfia[r] de las apariencias," keen as he is to the extent to which reality can be manipulated (Rico II. 11, n.28). Ideally, what he wants is visual and tangible proof in order to have certainty free from spells: "Por la fe de caballero andante [...] ahora digo que es menester tocar las apariencias con la mano para dar lugar al desengaño" (2.11.117).

merchants insist that they cannot believe him without visual proof and twice command him to substantiate his claims with a visual reference. Directly contrasting Don Quijote's conception of faith, the fact that they must see a picture in order to have belief, demonstrates that they do not have faith in his words or in his status as a knight. Yet the contradictions already abound. By insisting that they will 'confess the truth' "sin apremio alguno," their promise becomes an intertextual parody of Haldudo's refusal to carry out any of Don Quijote's orders with any type of immediacy, which exacerbates the fact that their demand for "ocular proof" as means of confirmation essentially verbally assaults the knight:

Señor caballero —replicó el mercader—, suplico a vuestra merced en nombre de todos estos príncipes que aquí estamos que, porque no encarguemos nuestras conciencias confesando una cosa por nosotros jamás vista ni oída, y más siendo tan en perjuicio de las emperatrices y reinas del Alcarria y Estremadura, que vuestra merced sea servido de mostrarnos algún retrato de esa señora, aunque sea tamaño como un grano de trigo; que por el hilo se sacará el ovillo y quedaremos con esto satisfechos y seguros, y vuestra merced quedará contento y pagado; y aun creo que estamos ya tan de su parte, que, aunque su retrato nos muestre que es tuerta de un ojo y que del otro le mana bermellón y piedra azufre, con todo eso, por complacer a vuestra merced, diremos en su favor todo lo que quisiere. (1.4.100)

If this request for proof were not transgressive enough in the eyes of Don Quijote, the merchant's spokesman causes the situation to become more offensive by making an even greater mockery of the knight and his words. He also ridicules the idea of truth upon which Don Quijote insists by stating that whether Dulcinea is beautiful or not is not actually of any importance at all; and thus, that the promise, vows, and assertions that Don Quijote has made hold no weight whatsoever.

The reductive and insulting way in which the merchants treat Don Quijote's professions of truth was already hinted at with their statement that the picture need only be the size of a grain of wheat—hardly a size that would allow any process of verification to ever take place. Yet the insistence that his assertion needs to undergo a process of verification is not the only problem for Don Quijote. Indeed, the spokesman even first says that metonymic proof, or proof that just gives a hint of what Dulcinea looks like is more than sufficient since "por el hilo se sacará el ovillo"(1.4.100). His insistence upon the utility of taking a part for a whole, or using proof metonymically, so to speak, subsequently aggravates the assault made to Don Quijote's word and honor when he changes his approach and says that as long as they were to have some sort of tangible object in front of them to which to refer, they would repeat whatever Don Quijote wanted them say to simply to please him, no matter how far behind they had to leave the truth in order to substantiate his claims. That is, if they were to see just a hint of Dulcinea's beauty, they would be "con esto satisfechos y seguros, y vuestra merced quedará contento y pagado," and "por complacer a vuestra merced, diremos en su favor todo lo que quisiere" (1.4.100).

In parallel with Don Quijote's obsessive concern with the correspondence between "cumplir" and "deber," the correlation the merchants suggest between

satisfaction and security or surety, happiness and fulfillment would have been amenable to Don Quijote under other circumstances. While mention of pay in Cervantes unfailingly gestures towards conflicts of class that catalyze larger-scale struggles and problems of comprehension, the merchants's implication that Don Quijote would be left "contento y pagado" (my emphasis) with anything less than a confirmation of the truth violates everything for which he stands, challenges all of the vows that he has made, and questions the status of everything he has presented as truth. If what is important to Don Quijote is that "sin verla" the merchants still need to believe—"creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar, y defender"—in her beauty, then by referring to a picture that neither exists nor necessarily would present Dulcinea's portrait favorably, and one that would situate that imaginary portrait, (fitting for the imaginary Dulcinea, one might say) as "proof" would never please Don Quijote. Moreover, the insult of verbalizing Dulcinea's ungainly appearance is understood by Don Quijote as not just defamatory, but as blasphemous, since he is not just concerned with his own rank, but her quasi-divinity. Finally, the facility with which the merchants affirm that they are ready to pervert truth with false speech, saying "en su favor todo lo que quisiere" (1.4.100) denigrates the importance of vows, and the sanctity of the words that Don Quijote has presented as inviolable.

Uniquely, although Don Quijote has perverted his own speech upon numerous occasions, he cannot tolerate any nuance of falseness related to Dulcinea. Because of the imagined perverted blazon the merchants offer up as a catalogue of how they would modify and distort the truth for the 'knight,' Don Quijote is so incensed by the application of false and untruthful attributes to Dulcinea that he has trouble even accurately repeating the language the spokesman of the merchants uses. Yet his lassitude in terms of interpretation and accuracy still invites inconstancy and contradiction. For example, he cannot accurately reiterate the description of the poisonous "bermellón y piedra azufre" that the merchants use to evoke the suppurations that allegedly oozes from her one "good" eye. Or perhaps it is simply that he refuses to replicate what is said out loud: "No le mana, canalla infame —respondió don Quijote encendido en cólera—, no le mana, digo, eso que decís, sino ámbar y algalia entre algodones" (1.4.101). He cites the merchants only vaguely and elliptically—"no le mana [...] *eso que decís*"—and describes the oozing, venomous substance only in positive, precious terms that are extremely embellished.

He has no argument with the idea that *something* oozes from Dulcinea's eye; what he contests is just the hypothesis that whatever is leaking down her face is the mortal poison suggested by the merchants. Furthermore, he is then so angry that he does not even repeat the insults hurled at Dulcinea accurately, and curiously even *adds* to the merchants' offensive repertoire an insult they never even mentioned that her eyes are crossed and she is hunchbacked: "[...] y no es tuerta ni corcovada, sino más derecha que un huso de Guadarrama. Pero vosotros pagaréis la grande blasfemia que habéis dicho contra tamaña beldad como es la de mi señora"

(1.4.101).²⁵ This embellishing inaccuracy is yet another sign of Don Quijote's inability to articulate vows faithfully and his continual heuristic failures. Even though he is far more concerned with the idea of truth when Dulcinea's honor and beauty are at stake, just as he twisted the meaning and inaccurately reported what was said regarding the question of perfumed or unperfumed dollars in the chapter's first episode, and responded dishonestly to innkeepers who demand pay, in this case also, he is unable to provide a truthful response to the merchants that corresponds faithfully to the words they have actually said to him. And so, much like Haldudo makes Andrés pay for Don Quijote's disturbing interference, to make the merchants "pay" for their egregious affronts and for not fully recognizing and swearing by Dulcinea's beauty, Don Quijote finds that he has no other honorable recourse but to attack them.

Despite a perverse and subtle foreshadowing that things will not end well for Andrés after the confrontation between Don Quijote and Haldudo, we only learn definitively that this episode ends poorly much later, in part 2, chapter 31 of the *Quijote*. The episode with the merchants has immediately disastrous results, however. Don Quijote makes a move to attack the group before him, but a misstep by his elderly horse Rocinante causes him to fall before he is even able to make physical contact with any of them. If that were not bad enough, his armor is so awkward and he is so ill-adept at managing all of his heavy weapons well that he cannot raise himself from the ground. The troubled connection between "words and deeds" that we see throughout the *Quijote*—and, as we see even more specifically in this chapter, between what is owed, promised, and paid—is literalized once again when, recalling Haldudo's violence, one of the mule drivers wants to make Don Quijote "pay" for his supercilious pride by responding to his "arrogancias" with physical aggression:

Un mozo de mulas de los que allí venían, que no debía de ser muy bienintencionado, oyendo decir al pobre caído tantas arrogancias, no lo pudo sufrir sin darle la respuesta en las costillas. Y, llegándose a él, tomó la lanza y, después de haberla hecho pedazos, con uno dellos comenzó a dar a nuestro don Quijote tantos palos, que, a despecho y pesar de sus armas, le molió como cibera. Dábanle voces sus amos que no le diese tanto y que le dejase; pero estaba ya el mozo picado y no quiso dejar el juego hasta envidar todo el resto de su cólera (1.4.101).

Though Don Quijote is quite literally beaten at his own game, savagely assailed as he is by fragments of his own broken lance, at the very least, the curious detail that the narrator provides that he was beaten "como cibera," suggests a commonality

²⁵ See González Echevarría's article "'Don Quixote: Crossed Eyes and Vision,'" that emphasizes the power and importance of sight. While his focus is more on Don Quijote and Ginés de Pasamonte, another cross-eyed figure, in this description of Dulcinea's odd aspect, her crossed eyes can serve as a metaphor for Don Quijote's skewed perspective and sight: "The power to see, or not to see, correctly, and to be seen or not accurately by others, determines the knight's fortunes, and these problems of vision and perception quickly become one of the novel's central themes" (218).

between him and his beloved of which he should be proud.²⁶ In fact, the metonymic games of a part for a whole that are ubiquitous in this episode are realized through the parallel established between Dulcinea's fictive portrait, which needs to be nary the size of a "grano de trigo" to satisfy the merchants' doubt and the thrashing that Don Quijote receives, which is carried out in this episode in accordance to how one would thrash a sack of grain.

Finally, if representationally, Don Quijote stands in the scene as threshed grain, then the mercantilistic metaphors again prove to have much more preponderance over the actual vows that Don Quijote has made than it initially appears. Both the fact that grain links the knight to his beloved, and the fact that the silk merchants themselves are conspicuous cogs in the mercantilistic system insists upon the underlying economic concerns that are inherent in any system of exchange, and undermine Don Quijote's vow-making process as well. In other words, money's preeminence in the scene is orchestrated such that it highlights both the importance and failures of contractual exchange, be it sheep for remuneration, silk for money, or wages for labor, and even more importantly, the price and value of one's word.

²⁶ Though the question of Dulcinea's missing portrait may seem of rather negligible concern, since it is, in fact, entirely absent from the scene and cannot exist at this point in the novel, the conflict created by the absent portrait is a recurrent theme in the Cervantine *oeuvre*. A telling example given its centrality to the rest of the work in question is the "Prólogo" Cervantes writes for his *Novelas ejemplares*. In this prologue Cervantes blames a friend of his ("de quien me quejo") for failing to provide him—and by extension, his "lector amantísimo"—with his portrait. He would have preferred not to write a prologue, but now he must, since his friend has failed him:

Quisiera yo, si fuera posible, lector amantísimo, escusarme de escribir este prólogo. [...]. Deste tiene la culpa algún amigo, de los muchos que en el discurso de mi vida he granjeado, antes con mi condición que con mi ingenio; el cual amigo bien pudiera, como es uso y costumbre, grabarme y esculpirme en la primera hoja deste libro, pues le diera mi retrato el famoso don Juan de Jáuriguí, y con esto quedara mi ambición satisfecha, y el deseo de algunos que querrían saber qué rostro y talle tiene quien se atreve a salir con tantas invenciones en la plaza del mundo [...]

In addition to staging the gravity and chaos caused by absent visual referents, the prologue to the *Novelas ejemplares* situates the missing portrait as the catalyst for many of the other tensions the episodes of chapter 4 of the *Quijote* sets up, such as: poor judgment and enfeebled faith, amity and enmity, promises and the failure to meet those promises, testimony and confession, and finally, obligation and debt. Yet, again emphasizing how vows are intrinsically linked to failure, the friend's capacity to provide the promised portrait and descriptors is frustrated from the very start. Indeed, it seems that even if the friend had delivered on his promise, his contribution to Cervantes's text would have never sufficed. Cervantes would have still been obligated to provide his own "testimonio":

Y cuando a la deste amigo, de quien me quejo, no ocurrieran otras cosas de las dichas que decir de mí, yo me levantara a mí mismo dos docenas de testimonios, y se los dijera en secreto, con que estendiera mi nombre y acreditara mi ingenio. Porque pensar que dicen puntualmente la verdad los tales elogios es disparate, por no tener punto preciso ni determinado las alabanzas ni los vituperios. En fin, pues ya esta ocasión se pasó, y yo he quedado en blanco y sin figura, será forzoso valerme por mi pico, que, aunque tartamudo, no lo será para decir verdades, que, dichas por señas, suelen ser entendidas.

A Fatal Miscarriage of Judgment

Don Quijote takes great pride in his successful resolution of Andrés's plight and tenaciously is still able to cast his shameful defeat at the hands of the traveling Toledan merchants as a positive experience. He classifies their encounter as a simple momentary setback that nonetheless has the benefit of irrevocably inscribing him in a chivalric context—"aun se tenía por dichoso, pareciéndole que aquella era propia desgracia de caballeros andantes" (1.4, 102). Nevertheless, the same indignation that he feels when his promises, oaths, and commandments are not heeded by the merchants will propel most of his subsequent adventures. Naturally, Don Quijote's obsession with proving Dulcinea's pulchritude will continue throughout the entire *Quijote*, as evidenced in his unwavering desire to make others "creer, confesar, afirmar, jurar, y defender; la supremacia de Dulcinea sin haberla visto." However his blind adherence to what is essentially a missing referent, and his constant application of faulty judgement will cause him great distress. In an episode that thematically follows the dramatic violence, discord, and broken promises of chapter 4, one of Don Quijote's greatest moments of humiliation illustrative of his propensity towards hermeneutic failure comes about in chapter 31 of part 1, when he encounters Andrés again.

To briefly recapitulate the embarrassing scenes that serve to directly prepare the profound humiliation that results from seeing Andrés once more, chapters 29 and 30 anticipate Don Quijote's miscarriage of judgment and dramatize the consequences of failing to uphold promises (and maintain them well) that are fully brought to light in chapter 31. In chapter 29, Don Quijote learns that the galley slaves he liberated in chapter 22 because he thought they were being abused, tortured, and imprisoned against their will did not need or want his intervention. As he explains, his desire to liberate them was well-intentioned, however:

he sacado en limpio que, aunque os han castigado por vuestras culpas, las penas que vais a padecer no os dan mucho gusto [...] y que podría ser que el poco ánimo que aquel tuvo en el tormento, la falta de dineros deste, el poco favor del otro y, finalmente, el torcido juicio del juez, hubiese sido causa de vuestra perdición y de no haber salido con la justicia que de vuestra parte teníades. (1.22.273)

In a situation that proleptically announces the admonishment he will receive from Andrés, chapter 29 confirms that the galley slaves did not want to be liberated from their shackles; in fact, they are furious about his untimely intervention, and call him a brigand for his efforts and concern. They then turn against Don Quijote and Sancho, throwing stones at them, and robbing both of clothing and essential

supplies. Even more problematically, however, once freed, they run around causing harm and damage to others that reflects extremely poorly on their naïve liberator. The priest, who, along with the barber Maese Nicolás was attacked and robbed by these ruffians, recounts the shameful turn of events to Don Quijote:

pasando ayer por estos lugares nos salieron al encuentro cuatro salteadores y nos quitaron hasta las barbas [...] Y es lo bueno que es pública fama por todos estos contornos que los que nos saltearon son de unos galeotes que dicen que libertó casi en este mismo sitio un hombre tan valiente, que a pesar del comisario y de las guardas los soltó a todos; y sin duda alguna él debía de estar fuera de juicio, o debe de ser tan grande bellaco como ellos, o algún hombre sin alma y sin conciencia, pues quiso soltar al lobo entre las ovejas, a la raposa entre las gallinas, a la mosca entre la miel; quiso defraudar la justicia, ir contra su rey y señor natural, pues fue contra sus justos mandamientos [...]. (1.29, 370-71)

Aside from the obvious shame of committing actions against his King, the description of Don Quijote's actions as being those of a brigand who "quiso soltar al lobo entre las ovejas" is an extremely harsh critique for it debases his noble chivalric desires and shows how his actions had precisely the opposite effect of what his intentions were. Although he is described as a very valiant man, his courage is paired with his criminal and insane felony. By referencing the rapacity of wolves and the vulnerability of sheep, he is then situated as the catalyst for great damage; he has put into motion a chain of actions that cause direct harm to people for whom he cares.²⁷ In addition, the mention of a "lobo entre las ovejas" prepares for Andrés's reappearance in the text. Indeed, the reference to a wolf directly alludes to the crime that Andrés was accused of committing, that is, the "descuido" that either allowed a robber, a wolf, or Andrés himself to steal away with sheep that were not his to lose.

Another detail that heightens the parallels between this scene and the reappearance of Andrés while accentuating Don Quijote's discomfiture is the fact that both his judgment, and his process of interpreting the situation or narrativizing is called into question. As a result of these events and the priest's bombastic retelling of his misfortune, Don Quijote is unable to admit that it was he who liberated the galley slaves. His awareness that his actions were wrong and that

²⁷ The devastation caused by Don Quijote's misbehavior is dramatized through a negative twist to a common biblical metaphor. The description of loosing a wolf into a crowd of sheep reverses Jesus's command to his disciples as reported in Matthew 10:16, regarding how they should remain peaceful yet constant in their faith despite the many attacks that would be made against them: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

By being sent into the world as sheep amidst wolves, the disciples are not the aggressors. Cast as the rogue who releases wolves, Don Quijote's actions are villainous and illicit since they defy the "justos mandamientos" of the State. The verses in Matthew that follow almost seem to summarize the priest's description of Don Quijote's problematic intervention and the tension and discord it causes: "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils [...]; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, [...]" (Matthew 10:17-18).

events were narrated improperly, is shown very clearly since he blushes violently and remains silent despite the fact that the priest is purposefully trying to elicit some sort of embarrassed response or confession from the chagrined knight:

Habíales contado Sancho al cura y al barbero la aventura de los galeotes, que acabó su amo con tanta gloria suya, y por esto cargaba la mano el cura refiriéndola, por ver lo que hacía o decía don Quijote; al cual se le mudaba la color a cada palabra, y no osaba decir que él había sido el libertador de aquella buena gente. —Estos, pues —dijo el cura—, fueron los que nos robaron. Que Dios por su misericordia se lo perdone al que no los dejó llevar al debido suplicio. (1.29.371)

Don Quijote's mortification, which stems from this faulty correspondence between words (how the adventure was retold), and deeds (what actually happened), is dramatized by his inability to comment, by an exceptional moment of silence that is all the more telling because it is so rare on his part. The beginning of chapter 30 only heightens Don Quijote's embarrassment and incites his rage when Sancho, who he calls a "mahadero," a liar, and a "hideputa mal nacido," breaks his promise to his master to conceal his involvement in the galeotes's liberation and thus betrays Don Quijote's trust. Continuing with the priest's mordant 'prayer' that hopefully "por su misericordia" God can forgive the galley slaves' liberator, who is now a criminal in the eyes of the Santa Hermandad, Sancho even goes so far as to inform others that he had specifically warned Don Quijote not to interfere, and had told him that giving the slaves "libertad" was not only ill-advised but an obvious "pecado."

It is precisely this disgraceful dissonance, the difficulties in trusting others, and the ignominy that he has brought to himself—and consequently, to all *caballeros andantes* and to his beloved lady—that profoundly embarrasses Don Quijote. More shamefully still, when he finally happens upon Andrés in the next chapter, the tone of critique suggestive of his failure continues to present itself when he seems not even to recognize the boy: "—¡Ay, señor mío! ¿No me conoce vuestra merced? Pues míreme bien, que yo soy aquel mozo Andrés que quitó vuestra merced de la encina donde estaba atado" (1.31.388). At a time when he was already feeling fragile since he was so roundly demoralized by the galley slave fiasco, in chapter 31 Don Quijote takes the opportunity of running into Andrés again as a way to validate his entire enterprise and position in the world. It gives him the chance to rehabilitate his reputation, using Andrés as the deictic proof and evidentiary vehicle through which he can remind the world of both his inherent goodness and the goodness of his endeavors. Indeed, as soon as he recognizes the boy, he launches into a hyperbolic description of his successful resolution of the boy's problem:

Porque vean vuestras mercedes cuán de importancia es haber caballeros andantes en el mundo, que desfagan los tuertos y agravios que en él se hacen por los insolentes y malos hombres que en él viven, sepan vuestras mercedes que los días pasados, pasando yo por un bosque, oí unos gritos y unas voces muy lastimosas, como de persona afligida y menesterosa. Acudí luego, llevado de mi obligación, hacia la parte donde me pareció que las lamentables voces sonaban, y hallé atado a una encina a este muchacho que ahora está delante,

de lo que me huelgo en el alma, porque será testigo que no me dejará mentir en nada. (1.31.389)

Not only does Don Quijote believe that the narration of his success with Andrés will serve to justify his actions and confirm his efficacy as a knight, he also expects the boy to serve as a witness. He wants the young rogue to testify that his intervention was beneficial and helped to rehabilitate the contractual promise of payment that Haldudo was breaking by refusing to recompense Andrés for his work. As such, he asks Andrés to corroborate his subjugation of the villainous Haldudo: “¿No es verdad todo esto, hijo Andrés? ¿No notaste con cuánto imperio se lo mandé, y con cuánta humildad prometió de hacer todo cuanto yo le impuse y notifiqué y quise? Responde, no te turbes ni dudes en nada, di lo que pasó a estos señores, porque se vea y considere ser del provecho que digo haber caballeros andantes por los caminos” (1.31.389). Just like his presumption that Haldudo and he obey the same chivalric code and thus, that Haldudo will remain true to his word, by presuming that Andrés shares his sentiments and can therefore communicate “lo que pasó” exactly as he himself would, Don Quijote opens himself up to the same type of error he incurred earlier. What he reveals then, is his faulty management of Andrés’s situation, which only makes it more difficult for others to trust him.

Firstly, the message that Don Quijote wants Andrés to verify is problematic because what he wants the boy to do is contradictory. His primary objective is to have Andrés’s factual testimony serve as evidence that exalts his successful intervention that put an end to abuse and led to the restitution of Andrés’s money (Austin 13). As a result, he asks for confirmation of the referents he has just situated as the ‘truth’: “¿No es verdad todo esto?” Paradoxically however, Don Quijote also encourages the boy to provide an independent, objective account of the situation by articulating his request for confirmation through interrogative illocutions for which the answers can easily be “no.” —“¿No es verdad [...]? ¿No notaste?” Furthermore, by assuring Andrés that he can speak freely—“Responde, no te turbes ni dudes en nada [...]”— he also is instructing the boy to amend and correct his original proclamation of success if need be. In fact, he is glad that Andrés is present because as a “testigo que no me dejará mentir en nada,” the boy’s testimony will be useful in that it prevents Don Quijote from spreading any untruths. While perhaps this shows that Don Quijote wants an honest and truthful account above all else, readers know that what he truly is seeking is Andrés’s confirmation of his value, and consequently, the value of all knights.

Secondly, the language that Don Quijote wants Andrés to verify is also highly problematic since it is ambiguous. Indeed, the subtext of Don Quijote’s narration of events reveals that although he took Haldudo on his word, he either did not fully listen to the villain or he did not fully understand what Andrés’s master said. Just like his reaction to innkeepers’ demands for repayment, this is a telling oversight or “descuido” that further reinforces Don Quijote’s inefficacy as a judge. Although he had deemed all of Haldudo’s excuses defective and determined that the “villano” did indeed owe the boy, he describes Haldudo’s speech as incomprehensible and perplexing, consisting of a “faulty language” that he claims to have largely ignored

and rejected. "El amo replicó no sé qué arengas y disculpas, las cuales, aunque de mí fueron oídas, no fueron admitidas" (1.31.389). In other words, though Don Quijote has heard the villain's excuses and rejected them, he has also ignored what they meant. He attempts to explain his oversight by prioritizing the fact that he was able to exact a "juramento" from Haldudo, which he takes as a binding promise and guarantee of payback, and of better (future) behavior: "En resolución, yo le hice desatar, y tomé juramento al villano de que le llevaría consigo y le pagaría un real sobre otro, y aun sahumados" (1.31.389). With this admission that he did not fully comprehend Haldudo's language in the first place, readers can understand how his gross error subsequently facilitated Haldudo's ability to manipulate Don Quijote's terms, helping to transform the "un real sobre otro" as monetary payback, to payback in terms of physical abuse.

Indeed, by twisting Don Quijote's terms to his advantage, Haldudo is able to paradoxically keep his word through increased physical violence. Furthermore, Don Quijote's carelessness when it comes to understanding the words of others is demonstrated when he blatantly changes the terms of something he had previously insisted upon, and clearly articulated himself—the most important matter at the crux of the dispute between Andrés and Haldudo—the question of money. Recalling Don Quijote's recodification and embellishment of the merchants' insulting description of Dulcinea's infected eye, while Don Quijote had previously insisted that Haldudo avoid exaggerated speech when he offered to pay Andrés back with perfumed money, in this second encounter with Andrés, Don Quijote now aligns himself more directly with Haldudo's language and description and use of money. He even willfully employs the very language he critiqued Haldudo for using. For the second time with the same group of players therefore, Don Quijote has completely altered the terms of their original agreement and contradicted his previous mandate. In fact, though he protested the use of "perfumed reales" in chapter 4—"Del sahumero os hago gracia [...] dádselos en reales, que con eso me contento"—in chapter 31, he has apparently changed both his mind and the details of the accord to which they had come. Don Quijote now says: "tomé juramento al villano de que le llevaría consigo y le pagaría un real sobre otro, y aun sahumados" (1.31.389). While it might be extremely odd that Andrés does not correct Don Quijote in this detail, and rather, seems to accept this version of events—"Todo lo que vuestra merced ha dicho es mucha verdad —respondió el muchacho—, pero el fin del negocio sucedió muy al revés de lo que vuestra merced se imagina" (1.31.389)—we must remember that as a self-appointed "juez" ultimate responsibility should fall to Andrés. Similarly, of all people, Don Quijote should be the one who most clearly understands the terms that he himself set and articulated.

Yet Andrés has more pressing issues to settle with Don Quijote than adjusting details. His priorities are resolving the question of his missing salary, and informing Don Quijote that he never again wants him to intervene in his life, particularly since matters ended so poorly—indeed, exactly "al revés" of what Don Quijote had promised him:

‘¿Cómo al revés?’ replicó don Quijote. ‘Luego ¿no te pagó el villano?’ ‘No solo no me pagó —respondió el muchacho—, pero así como vuestra merced traspuso del bosque y quedamos solos, me volvió a atar a la misma encina y me dio de nuevo tantos azotes, que quedé hecho un Sambartolomé desollado; y a cada azote que me daba, me decía un donaire y chufeta acerca de hacer burla de vuestra merced, que, a no sentir yo tanto dolor, me riera de lo que decía. En efecto, él me paró tal, que hasta ahora he estado curándome en un hospital del mal que el mal villano entonces me hizo. De todo lo cual tiene vuestra merced la culpa [...]’ (1.31.390)

The “culpa” Andrés finds in Don Quijote, and the connection between Don Quijote’s poor judgment and the vows that are promised but never fulfilled point both to Cervantes’s continually derisive treatment of judges and the repeated failures of Don Quijote as a self-appointed judge.²⁸ The question of perfumed versus unperfumed dollars may seem of negligible concern, perhaps due to its excessive specificity. However, this detail elucidates how Andrés, as both victim and witness, has the empirical knowledge in order to testify accurately. Since he is unable to do so and does not give necessary attention to detail, this failure provides yet another critique of the failed mock-judicial system obsessively featured in these episodes. Moreover, rather than serving as a stalwart of truth and accuracy, Andrés wants to inform Don Quijote that his intrusion in matters of no concern to him, or “negocios ajenos,” actually made his plight far worse—certainly “al revés”—than it would have been otherwise.

The problem, as Andrés describes it, is three-fold. Don Quijote’s first error is one of poor interpretation and deviation: “porque si se fuera su camino adelante y no viniera donde no le llamaban, ni se entremetiera en negocios ajenos, mi amo se contentara con darme una o dos docenas de azotes, y luego me soltara y pagara cuanto me debía” (1.31, 390). Charged with epistemological undertones, this critique implicitly challenges Don Quijote’s success as a knight. That is, deviation and the wandering it implies suggests a loss of focus and an abandonment of a specifically demarcated trajectory that harkens back to the religious, epistemological, and amorous confusion of the literary models Don Quijote finds in Saint Augustine, Dante, and Petrarch, just to name a few. His second mistake was treating Haldudo in such a dishonorable manner that he enflamed the villain’s anger all the more: “Mas como vuestra merced le deshonoró tan sin propósito y le dijo tantas villanías, encendiósele la cólera, y como no la pudo vengar en vuestra merced, cuando se vio solo descargó sobre mí el nublado, de modo que me parece que no seré más hombre en toda mi vida” (1.31.390). His third mistake, as both Andrés and Don Quijote

²⁸ The conflicts surrounding Andrés’s testimony also reveal Don Quijote’s poor understanding of the mechanics of the testimony and confirmation that he himself as given, and that he is attempting to elicit from Andrés. He is so focused on himself and Andrés and what he believes is the interpretation they both share, that he neglects the importance of the audience to whom their testimonies are given. As Austin reminds us, “[a]s official acts, a judge’s ruling makes law; a jury’s finding makes a convicted felon [...]” (154). Yet in this episode, the judgment of Don Quijote’s audience is invoked but then essentially negated, since Andrés so vehemently disagrees with Don Quijote that he refuses to provide the testimony the knight is seeking.

himself admit, is that he left the scene before ensuring that matters had been definitively resolved. Andrés's critique of Don Quijote's untimely departure reinforces the link between absence and physical violence, since as soon as Haldudo 'finds himself alone' again, he resumes his punishment of Andrés.

Acknowledging that Andrés is correct solely in regards to this slight blunder of early departure, Don Quijote reduces all of the other problems for which he is being blamed to a simple error of misplaced trust. More specifically, he admits that he should have known that Haldudo and others similar to him were not to be trusted; his personal knowledge and empirical experience should have already taught him so. "El daño estuvo [...] en irme yo de allí, que no me había de ir hasta dejarte pagado, porque bien debía yo de saber por luengas experiencias que no hay villano que guarde palabra que diere, si él ve que no le está bien guardallas; pero ya te acuerdas, Andrés, que juré que si no te pagaba, que había de ir a buscarle, y que le había de hallar, aunque se escondiese en el vientre de la ballena" (1.31.390). Rather than leaving the situation *in medias res* with his departure, he should have seen it to completion. Though Don Quijote certainly made no specific mention of finding Haldudo even if he were to hide in the stomach of a whale as he claims he did in chapter 31,²⁹ the way in which he blithely trades one metaphor for another presents yet another distortion of the facts of the previous episode. Although the overall connotations of the comparative metaphor are the same, what he said in chapter 4 had nothing to do with a whale at all, but rather, a lizard: "por el mismo juramento os juro de volver a buscaros y a castigaros, y que os tengo de hallar, aunque os escondáis más que una lagartija" (1.4.97). This displacement is the manifestation of a habitual tendency towards inaccuracy that illustrates, yet again, how Don Quijote continually modifies and undermines the fixity of terms that he himself has defined and promises that he himself has made.

The double iteration of Don Quijote's absence, first by Andrés and then by Don Quijote himself, draws even more attention to the idea of how deviation and faulty interpretation afflict and undermine vows, yet the problems do not stop there. When Don Quijote promises Andrés that he will immediately go in search of Haldudo to make him "pay" once and for all, he is interrupted by Dorotea (representing herself as the princess Micomicona), who insists that he cannot do so. In a similar position to that of Andrés, she too has learned the dangers of holding "por verdaderas tantas falsedades" (1.28, 351). She reminds Don Quijote that a previously standing vow that *he made* unto her is binding and already determines what his future actions to help her rectify her situation need to be.³⁰ Maximizing

²⁹ This is a clear allusion to the biblical Jonas.

³⁰ The use of Dorotea to remind Don Quijote of his obligations is quite effective, since she has just recounted her "desdichas," that is, her unfortunate indoctrination into the problematics of the vow because of the lies and betrayal of Don Fernando who claimed he wanted to marry her. In short, he used every tactic he could to convince her of his honesty; he "sobornó [...], ofreció dádivas y mercedes," sent her false written promises, letters that were "infinitos, llenos de enamoradas razones y ofrecimientos, con menos letras que promesas y juramentos," and constantly reiterated his dishonest vows "con palabras eficacísimas y juramentos extraordinarios" (1.28.350). Using the same economically-based lexicon that presents itself in the narration of Don Quijote's encounters with

the irony underlying Andrés's complaint that Don Quijote did not fully carry out his promise of protection when his distraction and pride led him to depart early, she informs Don Quijote that if he were to go off in search of the villainous Haldudo, this would not only be another untimely departure but one that would cause him to break the promise that he made to her to resolve *her* situation without delay:

Preguntóle Dorotea qué era lo que lo que hacer quería. Él le respondió que quería ir a buscar al villano y castigalle de tan mal término, y hacer pagado a Andrés hasta el último maravedí, a despecho y pesar de cuantos villanos hubiesen en el mundo. A lo que ella le respondió que advirtiese que no podía, conforme al don prometido, entremeterse en ninguna empresa hasta acabar la suya, y que pues esto sabía él mejor que otro alguno, que sosegase el pecho hasta la vuelta de su reino (1.31.391).

Given that he is bound to his promise not to take on another enterprise before seeing the completion of hers and has already even proffered up the adage “Y manos a labor, que en la tardanza dicen que suele estar el peligro” (1.29.365) as further confirmation that he would see directly to the resolution of Dorotea's case, her admonition that he will break his word if he rushes off is a telling critique. Most seriously, it signals the “peligro” he can put her if postponement occurs; more humorously, it serves as a tongue-in-cheek critique of the obsessive ariostesque chivalric conventions of interruption, deferral, and delay. However, when Don Quijote agrees with Dorotea, tells Andrés to be patient, and reiterates his “juramento” that he will not rest until he sees him paid—“que yo le torno a jurar y a prometer de nuevo de no parar hasta hacerle vengado y pagado,” Andrés spurns his promise of assistance completely. He has no faith in Don Quijote's promises: “No me creo desos juramentos.” (1.31.391).

In a mortifying conclusion to a scene in which all Don Quijote wanted was to have others confirm his worth, the dramatic frustration of his desire to “hacer pagado a Andrés [...] a despecho y pesar de cuantos villanos hubiesen en el mundo,” ends up aligning *caballeros andantes* with villains yet again. Indeed, with his final words to Don Quijote, Andrés begs the knight to never to intervene in his life again, as he curses Don Quijote and all other *caballeros andantes* in the world: “Por amor

innkeepers of chapters 3 and 17 and in Andrés's episodes, Dorotea elucidates her awareness of the ease with which swindlers can make promises. Admonishing Don Fernando for what she correctly suspected were his lies and attempting, in vain, to dissuade him, her “razones” are ignored: “[...] no fueron parte para que él dejase de seguir su intento, bien así como el que no piensa pagar, que al concertar de la barata no repara en inconvenientes” (1.28.184). Her commentary on the lack of failed vows, the frustrated promise of payment in particular, and “inconvenientes” that are ignored, problematically align Don Quijote's unwitting attempt to break his promise with her with Don Fernando and the other villainous characters we have discussed in this chapter, and anticipate her admonition that he tend to her situation “conforme al don prometido.”

For in-depth studies of Dorotea, an important figure for the consideration of epistemological uncertainty, “misapprehensions” and “false appearances” in the *Quijote*, see Gorfkle, “The Seduction(s) of Fiction and the Gendered Reader in/of Don Quixote: Dorotea's Tale”; Jehenson, “The Dorotea-Fernando/Luscinda-Cardenio Episode in Don Quijote: A Postmodernist Play”; Fajardo, “Unveiling Dorotea or the Reader as Voyeur”; and El Saffar's seminal *Beyond Fiction: The Recovery of the Ffeminine in the Novels of Cervantes*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

de Dios, señor caballero andante, que si otra vez me encontrare, aunque vea que me hacen pedazos, no me socorra ni ayude, sino déjeme con mi desgracia, que no será tanta, que no sea mayor la que me vendrá de su ayuda de vuestra merced, a quien Dios maldiga, y a todos cuantos caballeros andantes han nacido en el mundo”(1.31.391). Since Andrés’s new request to Don Quijote as well as Dorotea’s admonition both repeat the verb “entremeterse” to derisively comment upon Don Quijote’s interventions and inability to stay focused, they call attention to Don Quijote’s fundamental inability to understand and fulfill the vows that he makes, and to the pervasiveness of the deviation that has come to define him, both in terms of his actions and his “locura.” His incompetence and confusion are reinforced all the more by the mocking laughter in which Andrés would have been able to indulge in chapter 4 “a no sentir [...] tanto dolor,” as well as by the barely stifled derisive laughter of others that closes this episode.

Don Quijote’s End

The twin events of Don Quijote’s early encounter with Andrés and then the merchants, proleptically parallel the events that combine to determine his demise. What he perceives as his tragic defeat by the Caballero de la Blanca Luna in chapter 64 effectively closes his final sally, which puts an even more negative spin on his defeat by the Toledan merchants in the early chapter 4 that closes his first of many frustrated ventures. Despite not even being touched by the Caballero de la Blanca Luna’s weapon, Don Quijote ends up suffering a “peligrosa caída” that leaves both him and his horse immobilized and should clearly remind readers of the end to chapter 4 when Rocinante’s sudden slip leaves both horse and rider unable to move.

Although Don Quijote experiences no real physical threat because of the supposedly ‘dangerous’ fall, it serves to metaphorize his fall from grace, so to speak—that is, his lost honor and nobility that subsequently occasion an epistemological and identitary failure. While he boldly asserted his identitary constancy and assertively articulated his faith in his own potential directly after the close of chapter 4—“Yo sé quién soy, [...] y sé que puedo ser, no solo los que he dicho, sino todos los Doce Pares de Francia, y aun todos los nueve de la Fama, pues a todas las hazañas que ellos todos juntos y cada uno por sí hicieron se aventajarán las mías” (1.5.106)—at this later juncture he has lost his confidence and his metaphorical bearings. After his embarrassing defeat, he spends six days ill, “marrido, triste, pensativo y malacondicionado,” as he obsesses over “el desdichado

suceso de su vencimiento.” Cheered by good news, he begins to feel better until he realizes that he can no longer engage in the chivalric exploits he loves so dearly.

His subsequent lament is nearly an exact reversal of his confident self-representation in chapter 4, for in this instance he neither knows who he is, nor what his function in the world should be. He reveals his self-doubt in dejected rhetorical questions: “Pero ¿qué digo, miserable? ¿No soy yo el vencido? ¿No soy yo el derribado? ¿No soy yo el que no puede tomar arma en un año? Pues ¿qué prometo? ¿De qué me alabo, si antes me conviene usar de la rueca que de la espada” (2.65.538). Mention of the “rueca” emphasizes the connection between Don Quijote’s final defeat and the events of chapter 4 once again; Andrés is a “miserable” and “vencido” with no recourse to arms, while the ware that the Toledan merchants are trading is silk, which needs to be spun. Furthermore, in his attempts to correct the insulting, ‘blasphemous’ way in which Dulcinea was treated by the merchants, Don Quijote specifies that she is “más derecha que un huso de Guadarrama” (I.4, 101). Both literally and metaphorically, her unhunched back, or her spindle-like rectitude serve to emphasize the connection between the knight and his lady, for the characteristics he lauds in her are represented by the precise tool that he would need to use were he to “usar de la rueca.” The one stark contrast in comparison to chapter 4 however, is that in this later chapter Don Quijote has realized that his promises mean nothing, and that even his terminology—¿qué prometo? ¿De qué me alabo [...]—is faulty.

Don Quijote laments the impotent and feminized fate of which he has just made a harsh realization by quoting words directly reminiscent of Aeneas’s sorrowful lament when he is forced to leave Troy behind in the *Aeneid*: “Litora cum patriae lacrimans portusque relinquo / et campos ubi Troia fuit.”³¹ The reference Don Quijote is making is to Aeneas as he struggles through a decisive and climactic moment of disgrace. As we remember, the Trojans are being routed, and at the moment of describing his tearful departure from his “superb[o] Illi[o],” Aeneas is about to leave with his young son and colleagues; he is about to carry his father to safety, though he will lose his wife in the melee. In a reversal of Aeneas’s fate Don Quijote is being forced *to* his home rather than away from it, but he shares the same

³¹ With this opportune citation of the *Aeneid*, Don Quijote conveys the magnitude of his shattering defeat while retaining a nuance of heroism. That is, the assertiveness and leadership that Aeneas demonstrates as he readies himself to depart from Troy provide Don Quijote with a way to align himself with the nobility of this Trojan hero, despite the momentary setbacks they are both made to endure. Aeneas’s exile is bound up in his personal losses, as well as in the strife and exile of his people, and thus has both individual and collective ramifications. As the Trojan describes at the end of Book II, a “great multitude of fugitives” (Long 189) are prepared to follow him from the city: “Sic demum socios consumpta nocte revise. / Atque hic ingentem comitum adfluxisse novorum / Invenio admirans numerum, matresque, virosque, / Collectam exsilio pubem, miserabile volgus” (2.795-98.370).

Similarly, Don Quijote’s exile, instead of solely an individual burden, gestures towards the disgrace and sorrow that his absence from the chivalric world will occasion, as even the public laments his loss, albeit for different reasons. When other characters learn of his forced withdrawal, they are left without “mucho gusto porque en el recogimiento de don Quijote se perdía el que podían tener todos aquellos que de sus locuras tuviesen noticia” (2.65.537).

sense tragedy and sorrow as does Aeneas, for he has just been abruptly thrust from the chivalric world, the only 'home' that he truly loves.

Uprooted as well, Don Quijote continues Aeneas's sense of tragedy, and articulates his defeat as the ultimate failure: "¡Aquí fue Troya! ¡Aquí mi desdicha, y no mi cobardía, se llevó mis alcanzadas glorias, aquí usó la fortuna conmigo de sus vueltas y revueltas, aquí se escurecieron mis hazañas, aquí finalmente cayó mi ventura para jamás levantarse! (2.64.541). Indeed, this adventure—"la aventura que más pesadumbre dio a don Quijote de cuantas hasta entonces le habían sucedido" (2.65.531)—marks an immense failure precisely because it hinges on the clash between words and actions that Don Quijote would have preferred to ignore. What Don Quijote is woefully referring to is the fact that due to an oath that he refuses to break, he is forced to lay down what he most values—his arms, his outfit, and his chivalric pursuits for at least one year.³² Not only have all of his heroic exploits been negated, even his name and chivalric identity have been defamed as well.

The failures of Don Quijote's final defeat are introduced by a seemingly innocuous exchange between Sancho and Don Quijote, which becomes ominous in the light of Don Quijote's impending downfall as a knight that takes concrete root from the beginning of chapter 64. After a meditation on the question of faith, pay, and promises in the episode(s) of Ricote and his daughter; a debate over the trustworthiness of a renegade, who is tasked with carrying out a seemingly impossible endeavor and acting in good faith to do so, though his ability to succeed and ability to keep his word are not guaranteed. Indeed, Sancho and Don Quijote affirm that they trust the renegade, despite others' doubts and lack of faith, despite the general stereotyping of Moors, and despite the complex implications of his identity as a renegade (a *re-negado*—not only in the sense of someone who has denied his faith, but also someone who has gone back on his word, twice). Yet while Don Quijote ideates the renegade's success as sure, easy, and grossly simplifies what they are asking him to do since he thinks he could easily figure out how to complete the task himself—"para todo hay remedio, si no es para la muerte" (2.64.531).³³ Sancho, who has become much more perspicacious by this 64th chapter agrees with Don Quijote but wisely reminds him that the matter is far more complicated than Don Quijote thinks³⁴: "Muy bien lo pinta y facilita vuestra merced [...], pero del dicho al hecho hay gran trecho, y yo me atengo al renegado, que me parece muy hombre de bien y de muy buenas entrañas" (2.64.532). Much like Rinaldo's awareness in the *Furioso* of the dangerous independence of words and deeds (as evidenced by the series of episodes that reiterate the Latin adage "multa

³² See Stephen Rupp, "True and False Pastoral in 'Don Quijote,'" *Renaissance and Reformation* (Summer 1992), pp. 5-16; Javier Herrero, "Arcadia's Inferno: Cervantes's Attack on Pastoral," *BHS*, 55, (1978), 289-99, and Barbara Fuch's "Dismantling Heroism: The Exhaustion of War in 'Don Quijote,'" *PMLA*, Vol.124, No. 5 (Oct., 2009), pp.1842-1846.

³³ This comes up again at the end of the novel when he actually dies.

³⁴ On Sancho's long and hard-fought process of acquiring an education as a result of his engagement with Don Quijote, see: Williams García, "La educación de Sancho," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 3 (1969): 257-63.

cadunt inter calicem supremaque labra" and use it as a very literal warning³⁵—particularly in the scenes of wife-testing in which the gap between the goblet and the mouth can evidence (in)fidelity—by mentioning the divide between the “dicho” and the “hecho,” or between what is said, and what is done, Sancho, who is now more edified after his long indoctrination into chivalric travails, draws attention to the prime issue that has plagued Don Quijote since he set out as a knight. This is also the very issue that will be the cause of Don Quijote’s final downfall: the chasm between words and deeds. Reversing the felicitous actiancial and interdependent relationship between “far e dir” that the Troubadour poet Arnaut Daniel presents in order to validate his artistry,³⁶ and more like the *Quijote*’s episodes of Andrés and the merchants, this distance between what is spoken and what is done, between what is promised and what is achieved, is precisely the key that will determine Don Quijote’s failure when he is approached by the Caballero de la Blanca Luna shortly thereafter. At this juncture however, Don Quijote still has not learned the lesson his encounters with Andrés and the merchants should have taught him; only Sancho is wise to the incommensurability of words and action.

Don Quijote’s encounter with the Caballero de la Blanca Luna should of course remind readers of a similarly natured meeting that Don Quijote had at the

³⁵ While this saying has an uncertain provenance in terms of classical literature, early uses are attributed to Laberius, Plautus, Palladas’s epigrams, and during the early modern period, to Alberici Gentilis’s *De armis Romanis*, Book II, (p. 178/220), and *Erasmus’s “Adagia,”* (I.4.1). Just like the obsession with visual proof, in the *Furioso*, this topos is best dramatized in the discourse surrounding spousal fidelity, the fragility of human judgment, and the related difficulties of discerning whether or not definitive proof is necessary in order to have faith. Lovers are able to test the commitment of their ladies by drinking from a magic goblet that will either allow them to drink normally if their ladies are faithful, or spill drops of wine if they have been deceived. See *Orlando Furioso* canto 44 in particular:

-Mal consiglio ti diè Melissa in vero,
che d’attizzar le vespe ti propose;
e tu fusti a cercar poco avveduto
quel che tu avresti non trovar voluto. [...]
Quanti uomini odi tu, che già per oro
han traditi padroni e amici loro?
Non dovevi assalir [la tua donna] con sì fiere armi,
se bramavi veder farle difesa.
Non sai tu, contra l’oro, che né i marmi
né ’l durissimo acciar sta alla contesa?
Che più fallasti tu a tentarla parmi,
di lei che così tosto restò presa.
Se te altrettanto avesse ella tentato,
non so se tu più saldo fossi stato. (44.47.5-8; 48.7-8; 49.1-8).

Similarly, in the “Curioso impertinente,” the novella Cervantes interpolates into the *Quijote*, the “overly curious” husband Anselmo cannot rest until he submits his wife to a fidelity test and sees the results for himself. See David Quint, Cervantes’s *Novel of Modern Times*, and the section “Cardenio, Quijote, Amadís, Orlando,” in particular (25-29).

³⁶ Marisa Galvez offers an extremely well-considered discussion of the rhetorical strategies Arnaut utilized to reinforce perceptions of his agency and artistry in *Songbook: How Lyrics Became Poetry in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 94.

beginning of part II, that is, his successful defeat of the Caballero de los Espejos who had tried to make him proclaim the beauty of his peerless lady, Casilda de Vandalia: “Llámola sin par porque no le tiene, así en la grandeza del cuerpo como en el extremo del estado y de la hermosura” (2.14, 134). And indeed it should, since the Caballero de los Espejos and the Caballero de la Banca Luna are one and the same. Both “knights” are the college graduate Samson Carrasco travestied.³⁷

In the first instance, Samson set out to cure Don Quijote of his madness. His plan was to defeat Don Quijote in battle and then force him to return home to be ‘cured.’ However, since things do not go at all as Samson has planned—indeed, since it is he who suffers an embarrassing defeat instead of his target, Don Quijote—the second encounter comes about at a point in which Samson does not solely want to make Don Quijote return home, he now also seeks revenge.³⁸ In particular, he wants to avenge the embarrassment of his shameful earlier defeat while also managing to finally force Don Quijote into a situation in which he has to comply with his terms. As the Caballero de la Blanca Luna insists on the peerlessness of *his* lady, the relationship between the two ‘knights’ immediately becomes antagonistic and Don Quijote becomes incensed. Precisely reversing what Don Quijote demanded of the merchants in chapter 4, Samson (as Caballero de la Blanca Luna), claims that he wants Don Quijote to acknowledge the “truth” that his lady is more beautiful than Dulcinea:

Insigne caballero y jamás como se debe alabado don Quijote de la Mancha, yo soy el Caballero de la Blanca Luna, cuyas inauditas hazañas quizá te le habrán traído a la memoria. Vengo a contender contigo y a probar la fuerza de tus brazos, en razón de hacerte conocer y confesar que mi dama, sea quien fuere, es sin comparación más hermosa que tu Dulcinea del Toboso; la cual verdad si tú la confiesas de llano en llano, escusarás tu muerte y el trabajo que yo he de tomar en dártela; y si tú peleares y yo te venciere, no quiero otra satisfacción sino que, dejando las armas y absteniéndote de buscar aventuras, te recojas y retires a tu lugar por tiempo de un año, donde has de vivir sin echar mano a la espada, en paz tranquila y en provechoso sosiego, porque así conviene al aumento de tu hacienda y a la salvación de tu alma; (2.64.532)

Though conventional, at least superficially, the terms that Samson is using should strike the reader as quite bizarre and problematic given that they are articulated by

³⁷ See Eduardo Godoy Gallardo’s description of the centrality of Sansón to part II of the *Quijote* in “Presencia y sentido de Sansón Carrasco,” *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, No.67 (Nov., 2005), pp. 53-67. “[E]s protagonista clave en la segunda parte, tanto en la estructura del texto como en el caminar de don Quijote hacia su último destino: la muerte” (54).

³⁸ Sancho actually makes four unique appearances in the *Quijote*, but for the ease of discussion in the present chapter I will be focusing on the two physical battles between Samson and Don Quijote. Samson’s trajectory in the novel is the following: first, in chapters 2, 2, 4, and 7, he informs Sancho and Don Quijote that they have been irrupted into the literary world with the publication of their adventures; second, in chapters 12 and 16, he fights against Don Quijote as the Caballero de los Espejos and loses. In chapters 64 and 65, he reappears, dressed as the Caballero de la Blanca Luna to fight Don Quijote and wins; finally, dressed as his ordinary self, Samson mourns at Don Quijote’s bedside (Godoy Gallardo 54).

someone other than Don Quijote. Despite the fact that he articulates his terms using the language of knowledge and proof, the truth that the Caballero de la Blanca Luna wants Don Quijote to affirm in this second confrontation is surprisingly vague. While earlier, Samson (as Caballero de los Espejos) hinged his articulation of female beauty on a specific referent, presumably the specific “lady,” Casildea de Vandalia, who had unique and identifiable attributes, here the Caballero de la Blanca Luna’s beloved lady is unspecified. Her identity does not matter; she could be anyone, “sea quien fuere.”

Yet if her identity were in fact unimportant, or rather, if she could truly be anyone, then the insult Samson (as Caballero de la Blanca Luna) is directing at Dulcinea—and by extension Don Quijote—is even greater, as it essentially implies that Dulcinea is less beautiful than potentially anyone else in the world. While this affront might seem to justify Don Quijote’s defensive rage, it is actually yet another demonstration of his inability to fully understand the words and vows that are used. He does not even give any attention to the fact that the lady he is defending Dulcinea against does not exist as a specific entity. While one might argue that Don Quijote would always protect Dulcinea’s honor against anyone, specified or non-specified, real or imagined, the stark juxtaposition between the nonspecificity of Samson (as Caballero de la Blanca Luna)’s ambiguous lady—the cause for their clash and the meticulous precision with which the consequences of their battle are laid out—would have given an attentive Don Quijote great cause for apprehension. Curiously however, Don Quijote’s primary concerns are not at all the promises or vows that have been made, as is his usual wont. Rather, and very problematically given his continual insistence on the importance of words, he harbors an obsessive preoccupation with ocular proof that undermines and contradicts the sovereignty he grants to words in other situations:

Caballero de la Blanca Luna, cuyas hazañas hasta agora no han llegado a mi noticia, yo osaré jurar que jamás habéis visto a la ilustre Dulcinea, que, si visto la hubiéradés, yo sé que procuráradés no poner os en esta demanda, porque su vista os desengañara de que no ha habido ni puede haber belleza que con la suya comparar se pueda; y, así, no diciéndoos que mentís, sino que no acertáis en lo propuesto, con las condiciones que habéis referido aceto vuestro desafío. (2. 64, 533)

In chapter 4, Don Quijote lambasted the Toledan silk merchants for merely suggesting that they needed ocular proof in order to believe. In an interesting reversal of this exchange, and one that fully demonstrates Don Quijote’s inconstant application assessment of what faith, trust, and taking someone on their words truly means, Don Quijote himself now proposes that visual proof is the ultimate panacea for doubt. In fact, though he broaches the subject of visual proof by suggesting—or “daring to suggest”—that his antagonist has not actually seen Dulcinea (“yo osaré jurar que jamás habéis visto a la ilustre Dulcinea”), he subsequently hinges what he claims to know with absolute certitude on the missing visual referent (“que si visto la hubiéredes.....”). This lack of visual evidence is what he believes has caused his foe to fall into the error of believing Dulcinea anything

less than the most beautiful woman in the world. Furthermore, precisely recalling the silk merchants' concerns once again, whose arguments were so contrary to the philosophy Don Quijote espoused while dealing with them, in this situation, Don Quijote hypocritically insists that only vision will "desengañar" and eradicate doubt, not any words or promises themselves.

Though Samson does not even land an actual blow on Don Quijote, chance would have it that Don Quijote's "peligrosa caída" causes him to effectively lose the battle. It is this precise moment of defeat when the knight's words and the vows that he makes that are most explicitly put to the test. Like many times before, the terms of the battle were fixed and clearly stated; the loser had no "otro remedio sino confesar o morir." Therefore, upon falling and losing the battle, Don Quijote would ostensibly need to immediately perform one of these two crucial actions, and Samson immediately reminds him of their vow: "Vencido sois, caballero, y aun muerto, si no confesáis las condiciones de nuestro desafío" (2.64, 534). Yet while those who have gone before him would easily lie or break their vows to remove themselves from difficult situations, Don Quijote is unique in that even in the face of death he still refuses to go back on his vow or profane what he holds as truth. In fact, he shows this mettle by insisting that he be killed on the spot since he will never be forced or tempted to go back on his word or confess to something that is not true.

Don Quijote, molido y aturdido, sin alzarse la visera, como si hablara dentro de una tumba, con voz debilitada y enferma, dijo:—Dulcinea del Toboso es la más hermosa mujer del mundo y yo el más desdichado caballero de la tierra, y no es bien que mi flaqueza defraude esta verdad. Aprieta, caballero, la lanza y quítame la vida, pues me has quitado la honra. (2.64.534)

Given that Samson does not wish to kill Don Quijote and wants only to make him return home for a year, of course he refuses Don Quijote's desire for death. Since immediate physical harm, death, and even more importantly, false confession have been taken off the table, Don Quijote then readily accepts the rest of the conditions that Samson set before him: "don Quijote respondió que como no le pidiese cosa que fuese en perjuicio de Dulcinea, todo lo demás cumpliría como caballero puntual y verdadero" (2.64.535). While Don Quijote's actual physical death does not come until much later, the fatal blow, however, has already been administered. The sense of pessimism and utter despair by which Don Quijote is marked as a result of this defeat, effectively signal his end as a knight, and the death of his honor; in turn, these losses suggest a social and literary demise that combine to inaugurate his physical end.

While superficial, the primary difference in the episodes describing Don Quijote's encounters on the battlefield with Samson reveals itself in regards to the conditions that they set, and the reversed specificity of the terms they each use. Samson (as Caballero de los Espejos)'s lady had a specific referent, while the penalty that either knight was to face if defeated was simply left open to the "discreción del vencedor." What vastly differentiates this concluding scene from the earlier version of this episode is that Don Quijote's word is fully put to the test since

he is indisputably defeated and cognizant of his defeat. Despite his downfall, Don Quijote staunchly refuses to go back on his words and break his promise to Samson (as the Caballero de la Blanca Luna) or his vows to his beloved. Returning to Don Quijote's threat to the merchants, the conditions to which he and his adversary agreed were indeed to "confesar o morir." More specifically, both 'knights' established that whomever ended up the victor would have the confirmation that his lady was the most beautiful, while the loser must confess and acknowledge this as an indisputable truth.

As a result of their first encounter, Samson has admitted, though very begrudgingly, that Dulcinea's beauty does surpass that of Casildea. In another telling example of Don Quijote's continued inability to fully understand vows that are made or understand the subtleties of the words that are spoken (and much like his dispute with the merchants in chapter 4), he fails to recognize the hardly subtle insults that the defeated Samson Carrasco continues to hurl towards Dulcinea even while attesting or "confessing" to her beauty: "Confieso' dijo el caído caballero 'que vale más el zapato descosido y sucio de la señora Dulcinea del Toboso que las barbas mal peinadas, aunque limpias, de Casildea, y prometo de ir y volver de su presencia a la vuestra y daros entera y particular cuenta de lo que me pedís'" (2.15.144). Yet in stark contrast to Samson, Don Quijote's mettle and adherence to his word are shown after his defeat when he refuses to accept the possibility of the Caballero de la Blanca Luna's undetermined woman's superior beauty. So as not to violate his word and insult Dulcinea's beauty, Don Quijote refuses to state that his lady is anything less than the most beautiful woman in the world. At the same time, he will remain true to his promise that he will not take up arms, for now that he has lost his honor, value, and status as a knight, the only things he has left to signal his valiance are the virtue and honesty of his words: "Atrevíme, en fin; hice lo que pude, derribáronme, y, aunque perdí la honra, no perdí ni puedo perder la virtud de cumplir mi palabra. Cuando era caballero andante, atrevido y valiente, con mis obras y con mis manos acreditaba mis hechos; y agora, cuando soy escudero pedestre, acreditaré mis palabras cumpliendo la que di de mi promesa" (2.66.542). As we shall see in the following section, both metaphorically and literally Don Quijote prefers death over going back on his word and confessing to something that he does not believe to be true. And, holding fast to these convictions, he will die.

Conclusion

And so, even before he definitively gives up his identity as Don Quijote, the protagonist of our novel agrees to lay down his arms. Though he agrees to these terms solely in order to preserve his vow to Dulcinea, and not bring dishonor to her

by breaking the terms of his agreement with Samson, the loss of the identity that he holds so dear is a loss from which he cannot recover. As he lies on his deathbed he confesses that if he must sacrifice his identity as a knight he will sacrifice it all:

Dadme albricias, buenos señores, de que ya yo no soy don Quijote de la Mancha, sino Alonso Quijano, a quien mis costumbres me dieron renombre de 'bueno.' Ya soy enemigo de Amadís de Gaula y de toda la infinita caterva de su linaje; ya me son odiosas todas las historias profanas de la andante caballería; ya conozco mi necedad y el peligro en que me pusieron haberlas leído; ya, por misericordia de Dios escarmentando en cabeza propia, las abomino. (2.74.588)

Indeed, given Alonso Quijano's rejection of the vows of knighthood and everything that Don Quijote has come to represent, he must reject the chivalric identity he has worked so hard to cultivate. Consequently, due to his ultimate admission of the "errors into which he has fallen," and the fact that his last action is a confession that distances himself from the original vow that he made, the entire *Quijote* can be situated within this fundamental mistrust of vows and this pessimistic understanding of the vow-making process: "Yo, señores, siento que me voy muriendo a toda priesa: déjense burlas aparte y tráiganme un confesor que me confiese y un escribano que haga mi testamento, que en tales trances como este no se ha de burlar el hombre con el alma; y, así, suplico que en tanto que el señor cura me confiesa vayan por el escribano" (2.74.88). According to this final testimony, Don Quijote has ceased to exist, and Alonso Quijano is a man who can no longer run the risk of endangering his soul with chivalric fantasies and lies.

Many critics have read Don Quijote's death as an ironic commentary on the literary precedents that both inspired and guided the protagonist. While germane, his death is a much more subtle but acerbic commentary on the status of vows articulated orally versus a desire for greater fixity of expression, obtained only in written form. For Don Quijote that is, promises are evacuated of the meaning to which he tries desperately to cling but at which he can only grasp. The elusiveness of the vow thus foment this existential and linguistic crisis, leaving behind only a gaping hole in the text, an empty signifier where vows once stood—or rather, according to Don Quijote's logic, where they *should* have stood. Similarly, yet even more gravely, for Alonso Quijano, the failed vows that his fantastical self led him to make have become a shameful reminder of his deviation and error. As such, the absolution he seeks at the end of the *Quijote* is apparent in his desire to rehabilitate and purge himself from the vows that, misguidedly, he once made: "Quiero confesarme y hacer mi testamento (2.74.588). On his deathbed, his language is clear and unequivocal; he desires a statement put in writing that confirms how he has fully distanced himself from the vows he made as Don Quijote, and how he wants to reject the deviated self he imagined himself to be.

The fact that Alonso Quijano wants to confess *in writing* completely demonstrates how far behind he has left Don Quijote. When the protagonist first set out, and indeed, throughout the rest of the *Quijote* as well—he was fully convinced of the importance of the spoken word. In his opinion, spoken promises were

immutable truths and fixed, honest utterances that proleptically announced a future action that undoubtedly had to come to fruition since the utterance was true. Yet this insistence upon the power of the spoken word alone is revelatory of the anachronisms that plagued the protagonist and distorted his perspective. Indeed, while his insistence upon the spoken word draws attention to Cervantes's narratological concerns and the process of writing the *Quijote*, Don Quijote's adherence to the spoken word suggests an anachronistic dealing with the world around him. That is, since the orality of words as verbal bonds harkens back to a distinctly medieval mindset (Donnelly 318) that changed drastically with the Council of Trent, Don Quijote's initial temporal lateness, so to speak, is symptomatic of his refusal—or perhaps inability?—to adapt to the world around him. By preferring an oral code, Don Quijote is perpetrating the idea, to use Canfield's and Donnelly's terms, that the “word-bond is the sole gauge of nobility” (Donnelly 324; Canfield xi; North) and he expects that all those that he encounters will also similarly value the oaths and vows that they make. As we have seen, however, not even once does this turn out to be the case.

Thus, when Alonso Quijano desires confession and asks to leave a written testament, his rejection of himself as Don Quijote is also a rejection of the medieval importance of the verbal bond, a definitive rejection of an out-of-vogue oral code to which Don Quijote had adhered, but which is nothing more than “sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia” to the newly repentant Quijano. Reversing the *Quijote*'s initial obsession with how Alonso Quijano “perdió el juicio” in order to become Don Quijote, now he has recovered his wits: “tengo juicio ya, libre y claro, sin las sombras caliginosas de la ignorancia, que sobre él me pusieron mi amarga y continua leyenda de los detestables libros de las caballerías. Ya conozco sus disparates y sus embelecos, y no me pesa sino que este desengaño ha llegado tan tarde, que no me deja tiempo para hacer alguna recompensa, leyendo otros que sean luz del alma” (2.74.587). Taking the idea of baroque disillusionment to the extreme, the metaphorical darkness that clouded his mind and that yoked his “juicio” has lifted; now he knows, albeit far too late, that he was chasing a deceitful, “unenlightening” light.

These homodiegetical preoccupations that assail Quijano also recall the heterodiegetic concerns that Cervantes expresses in his prologues, particularly in the prologue to part 2, which gives greater emphasis to authorial identity and to the writing process. The emphasis given to the truthfulness of the written word as opposed to verbal bonds is of course also Cervantes's way to yet again critique thievish authors and “presuntuosos y malandrines historiadores” who cram their books with ‘deceptions,’ lies, and defamations, or authors such as those against whom he rails in the prologue to part 2, who have written continuations and dishonestly tried to appropriate themselves of the *Quijote*. These authors, or “author imposter[s],” as Burton Raffel puts it in his translation (360), are bold in their thievery, but so cowardly that they must hide themselves; they dare not “parecer a campo abierto y al cielo claro, encubriendo su nombre, fingiendo su patria, como si hubiera hecho alguna traición de lesa majestad [...]” (2. “Prólogo,” 34).

Similarly, and reinforcing Quijano's own desire to "dejar testamento," as soon as he transpires the immediate concern of the priest is precisely with the fixity of the written word.

Following Alonso Quijano's last wishes, his priest wants to make sure that the scribe details everything accurately in order to bear proper witness both to Quijano and to Quijote. The priest's very specific request to the scribe insists on veracity, fixity, and faith, both in terms of narrative and identitary status:

[...] pidió al escribano le diese por testimonio como Alonso Quijano el Bueno, llamado comúnmente 'don Quijote de la Mancha,' había pasado desta presente vida y muerto naturalmente; y que el tal testimonio pedía para quitar la ocasión de que algún otro autor que Cide Hamete Benengeli le resucitase falsamente y hiciese inacabables historias de sus hazañas. (2.74.591)

He wants the scribe to immortalize Quijote and render his 'life; immutable and fixed, so that his story, and the narration of his Quijano's life can properly draw to a close on a literal level as well.³⁹ As such, marrying Alonso Quijano's "testament," to the written testament the priest demands, and to Cide Hamete's authorial promise in the prologue to part 2 that the definitive way in which he will bring Don Quijote's story to a close will leave all other authors incapable of leaving false testimony becomes an explicit critique of the flexibility of language, particularly speech, that facilitates the perversion of vows:

te doy a don Quijote dilatado y finalmente muerto y sepultado, porque ninguno se atreva a levantarle nuevos testimonios, pues bastan los pasados y basta también que un hombre honrado haya dado noticia destas discretas locuras, sin querer de nuevo entrarse en ellas: que la abundancia de las cosas, aunque sean buenas, hace que no se estimen, y la carestía, aun de las malas, se estima en algo. (2. "Prólogo," 37)

For a novel obsessively concerned with the written word and one that constantly anticipates and stages the Bloomian anxieties that develop when texts fall out of the control of their rightful owners,⁴⁰ and the facility with which texts are lost, fragmented, manipulated, and misinterpreted, the final scenes of the *Quijote* emphasize a preference for the fixity and immortalization of the written word. As shown through his hermeneutical failures, and poorly articulated vows, Don

³⁹ This of course recalls the fundamental narratological question of narrative completion that yet another picaresque figure, Ginés de Pasamonte, brings up to Don Quijote in part I chapter 22, which relates the knights encounter with a group of galley slaves. Having discovered that Ginés is writing the book of his life, one which ostensibly rivals *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and "todos cuantos de aquel género se han escrito o escribieron" (271), Don Quijote asks after the book's status, his curiosity and desire to read piqued: "¿Y cómo se intitula el libro?" preguntó don Quijote. '*La vida de Ginés de Pasamonte*' respondió el mismo. '¿Y está acabado?' preguntó don Quijote. '¿Cómo puede estar acabado' respondió él, 'si aún no está acabada mi vida? Lo que está escrito es desde mi nacimiento hasta el punto que esta última vez me han echado en galeras' (I.22, 272). Ginés's insistence that his book is a work in process and that the narration of his life cannot be finished until his death precisely correlates to the priest's desire to ensure that the book of Quijote's life *does* reach an end, and that it is finished and sealed upon his death, just as one would seal a tomb.

⁴⁰ Bloom (4-20). See also Elisa Rivers's "Lectura comentada del prólogo."

Quijote's anachronistic desires reveal themselves in his obsession with resurrecting the past: "Sancho amigo, has de saber que yo nací, por querer del cielo, en esta nuestra edad de hierro, para resucitar en ella la de oro, o la dorada, como suele llamarse. [...] ¿Qué se platica del asumpto que he tomado de resucitar y volver al mundo la ya olvidada orden caballeresca?" (2.20.238; 2.2.55). This valorization of the fixity of the written language clearly articulated in the authorial desire *not* to resurrect Don Quijote, "que deje reposar en la sepultura" (2.74.593), is more in tune with the concerns of a Post-Tridentine world.

Finally, on an authorial level, the turn away from oral vows and towards writing is a way for Cervantes to problematize questions of authority and the proliferation of often contradictory narrative voices (Dunn, "Framing" 99). As such, it allows him to address his anxieties with respect to Don Quijote as a character, and his portrayal of his story. Letting Don Quijote die, and actually definitively burying him resolves the question of the stolen and pirated text that caused such a disturbance and such great distress to both Don Quijote, who feels that he must prove that he is "not who they say he is" to avoid shame and dishonor. The dishonesty, deceit, and subterfuge involved in pirating the Quijote was also distressing to the author himself, who felt an increased need to ensure that "ninguno se atreva a levantarle nuevos testamonios" (2. "Prólogo," 37). This pessimistic treatment of vows articulated orally links his problems with interpretation and the fixity of vows to Cervantes's problems as an author, particularly given the affronts made to the authority of his words and the tale he has created. The pessimism of the narratological concerns are emphasized even further when Cide Hamete hangs up his tool of preference, his pen. This heroic gesture perfectly marries the 'death,' or end of the chivalric exploit with the end of the authorial enterprise, while also aligning itself with how Don Quijote is forced to hang up his arms at the end of his last failure. Yet Cide Hamete's primary concerns are not merely with identifying with his protagonist, but showing their indissoluble fusion: "Para mí sola nació don Quijote, y yo para él: él supo obrar y yo escribir, solos los dos somos para en uno" (2.74.592). The turn towards the truthfulness and fixity of the written word stages Cervantes's authorial concerns through the protagonist's death and the pessimism that accompanies his passing.

CONCLUSION:
The Quest for Truth: A New Phenomenological and Epistemological
(In)Stability through Montaigne and Descartes

Lo que en esta estraña aventura subcedió, con las espantosas guerras de los nubianos príncipes y libertad de la linda Belianisa, con lo que aconteció al niño Fortimán de Grecia, que en Tartaria se criava, y lo que avino a estas dissimuladas princesas Primaflor y Dolainda, con el fin de los amores de don Dolistor y Polisteo y otras grandes hazañas, quisiera contar (porque la aventura d'este torneo cada uno cumplió su promesa sin desonor de sus compañeros); mas el sabio Fristón, passando de Grecia en Nubia, juró avía perdido la hystoria, y assí la tornó a buscar. Yo le he esperado y no viene, y suplrir(l)e yo con fingimientos a historia tan estimada sería agravio

- Jerónimo Fernandez. *Don Belianís* (Tercera y quarta parte, fol. 280-vº).

*S'io èsca vivo de' dubbiosi scogli,
et arrive il mio essilio ad un bel fine,
ch'ì' sarei vago di voltar la vela,
e l'ancore gittar in qualche porto!
Se non ch'ì' ardo come acceso legno,
sì m'è duro lassar l'usata vita.
Signor de la mia fine e de la vita,
prima ch'ì' fìacchi il legno tra li scogli,
drizza a buon porto l'affannata vela.*

-Petrarch. *Canzoniere*, LXXX . vv.31-39

As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun evince a pessimistic fixation with vows and trials of faith in their intertextual interpretation of veracity, fidelity, and promises of novelty and authorial creation. Similarly, in their homodiegetic “examinations” of fidelity and their narratological anxieties, Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes obsessively depict a developing uncertainty and cynicism towards professions of faith both in terms of their own status as authors, and the relationship of one character to another. The cynicism they

detailed becomes increasingly more acute as the early modern period progresses. Given that much of what these authors understood in terms of vows both stemmed from and resisted the medieval model of governance rooted in feudal systems and seigneurial power, which were themselves dependent upon extremely strict codes of comportment and a very narrow understanding of debt and obligation, the crisis of broken vows featured in the *Roman de la Rose*, *Orlando furioso*, *Gerusalemme liberata*, and *Don Quijote* also corresponded to the sense of crisis that accompanied the increasing fragility of feudal culture and an increasing awareness of its frequently propagandistic—and thus unreliable—foundation. This growing skepticism was also reflected in the historical and philosophical tenor of the medieval and early modern periods. The historical concerns surrounding the Inquisition and the renegotiation of belief and faith inaugurated by the Council of Trent, for instance, prepared the terrain for what would eventually turn into a Cartesian orientation.

Yet before Descartes, there was Montaigne. In his *Essais*, as in the *Furioso*, the *Liberata*, and the *Quijote*, the same realization that the vows and actions of others cannot be relied upon infects all trust-based relationships, and isolates the self to a dramatic extent that is rarely seen before. The theme of broken vows, which is presented as early in the *Essais* as the first sentence of the opening “Advertissement au lecteur”—“cest icy un livre de bonne foi lecteur”—catalyzes the profound cognitive deception that takes place when faith, relationships dependent upon trust, and ultimately knowledge itself are not only proven to be unstable but completely dismantled. By insisting throughout the *Essais* upon the unreliability of individuals whose professional function it is to foment trust, such as religious leaders, witnesses, translators, and historians, Montaigne’s stance evidences the failure of the sanctioned systems of knowledge that might have once portended reliability and conviction. Indeed, these figures, which initially inspire trust, stand in for the visual proof that is integral to the individual’s own process of belief, until, destabilizing the self dependent upon them, they break trust or are proven to be inept. Moreover, in terms of the dialectical structure of Montaigne’s essays, many anecdotes are recounted that are meant to purposefully lead simultaneously to antithetical conclusions, and many performative examples are used to bridge what was believed to be an incommensurable gap between binaries.

By insisting on the fungibility of seemingly polarized terms and the facile reversibility of designations such as “savage” and “civilized,” cannibal and non-cannibal, or rich and poor in essays such as “Des cannibales” and “Des coches” for instance, not only are the reader’s personal beliefs put to the test, so too is the faith that the reader has in the words of the author. And from that point, both the reversibility of extremes as well as deep similarities, ranging from banal details to profound ideological resemblances emerge: “Leurs licts sont d'un tissu de cotton [...], comme ceux de noz navires. [...] Leur breuvage est faict de quelque racine, et est de la couleur de noz vins claires [...]. Au lieu du pain ils usent d'une certaine matiere blanche, comme du coriandre confit” (“Des cannibales”). More tellingly, not only does the consumption of human flesh serve a ritualistic or religious purpose while

also providing sustenance in the true sense of the word, the broken vows of European men effectuate a chain reaction that is manipulated in order to delegitimize their own cannibalistic acts: “Nous les pouvons donc bien appeller barbares, eu esgard aux regles de la raison, mais non pas eu esgard à nous, qui les surpassons en toute sorte de barbarie” (“Des cannibales”). This confusion of barriers, much like Rinaldo’s unexpected and deleterious pact with Ferraù serves to call into question the self-perception of the European in regards to his relationship with the Other, as well as that of the reader, in regards to the text. As we have seen in the Chivalric Romance Epics of Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes, in Montaigne and Descartes, the problem of trust, faith, and unstable vows that initially appears foremost as an obsession with the Other marks the presence of a larger conflict: a growing awareness of the unknowability and unreliability of the self.

In “De la force de l’imagination,” although Montaigne claims to have set out to investigate this relationship—which he articulates as the “étroite cousture” between the body and the mind—he peppers the essay with examples of bodies that are out of control, and minds, or ‘imaginationes’ that are similarly out of balance, especially when compared to his frequent laments on the different forms of bodily instability that threaten the mind throughout the rest of the *Essais*. In his note to the reader, Montaigne famously states that he is the “material” of his book. Yet after endorsing the necessity of an undulating process of reading and textual interpretation, he rocks the very foundation upon which judgments are made as he emphasizes the complex elusiveness of his subject matter. After determining that the main crux of his essays deals with human experience and man *qua* “subject merueilleusement vain, divers et ondoyant,” in his first essay “Par divers moyens on arrive à pareille fin,” Montaigne explicitly warns against the fixity of judgments. With a conflation of terms that reinforce physical and metaphorical instability, he destabilizes the very foundation of vows and decision making; he suggests that unwavering certitude is actually indicative of nothing more than a lack of good judgment since its rigid stability leads down a narrow path of ignorance and folly: “Certes, c’est un subject merueilleusement vain, divers, et ondoyant, que l’homme. Il est malaisé d’y fonder jugement constant et uniforme” (1.1)

Constancy and uniformity therefore, promote a sense of false security. They are binding, restrictive, and cause discomfort. They are indicative of reasoning processes that are numbingly formulaic, less analytical and less thorough, which consequently can only lead to judgments that more easily run the risk of being more biased, less accurate, and less complete. In terms of his textual trajectory, Montaigne’s metaphorical route leads to the act of writing, which subsequently overpowers his actions, replacing them with his repository of words. More than a uniquely expository function however, Montaigne employs these movement-related references in order to map out the role that personal experience and perspective play in interpretation. By drawing attention to the importance of reasoning as a deliberative procedure that must be undertaken prior to arriving at any decisive conclusion, Montaigne situates the body as a privileged locus. In doing so, since the body must follow the mind’s discursive reasoning, and since the body’s only

bearings are the vacillations of the mind, it becomes immediately apprent that the priveleged locus, “l'estroite cousture de l'esprit et du corps” is not a very stable one at all.

Given this order of operations and the constant recurrence to an examination of foundational security or instability, problems of faith and knowledge, body and mind, Montaigne's approach anticipates the trajectory that Descartes implements in his *Discours de la méthode* and the *Meditationes*. Like Montaigne, Descartes's solution to the Early Modern anxieties found in the works of Cervantes, Ariosto, and Tasso become a theoretical end-point to the dilemma surrounding vows and an appropriate conclusion to the present analysis. In particular, since the authors studied in the previous chapters all go from problematizing failed vows and articulating problems of faith first through identitary relationships that are damaged by the intrusion of the other (as seen in Ariosto and Tasso, in particular), to locating problems of faith in the divide that develops between self and other, (as seen in Cervantes), and finally, to those which originate and develop within the self (upon which all of the authors comment, Montaigne most extensively), they should be understood as forerunners to Descartes's prioritization of singularity and his insistence upon the self as the only truly reliable point of inquiry.

The only remedy Descartes can find for doubt is the eradication of what stands between himself and certainty. As he explains in the *Discours*, what paradoxically impedes his access to truth are all of the previous forms of knowledge he has acquired through instruction and the doctrine of others: “J'ai été nourri aux lettres dès mon enfance, et parce qu'on me persuadait que, par leur moyen, on pouvait acquérir une connaissance claire et assurée de tout ce qui est utile à la vie, j'avais un extrême désir de les apprendre”(7). The fact that he had been taught to believe “dès [s]on enfance,” that certainty could be obtained is tantamount to a betrayal. So too is the connected idea of having consistently received this misprison as sustenance, which in this instance is faulty, improperly wrought, and reveals both his puerile, trusting vulnerability and the perversity of those who would administer questionable fare to a young child. Indeed, by pairing the verb “nourrir” with “persuadir,” Descartes emphasizes both the magnitude of the deception that caused him to alter his own beliefs as well as his natural (initial) resistance to this type of persuasion and manipulation—it was simply that he was too trusting of others and too ‘hungry’ and eager to have the promised “connaissance claire et assurée de *tout* ce qui est utile à la vie,” which incited his rash and “extreme” desires. Yet the process by which he has learned continues to fail him as he matures, and even fails in the precise arenas that he believed would have offered him gauranteed and certain knowledge.

As soon as Descartes finishes school and gathers empirical evidence that contradicts what he has been taught, he is quickly disabused of his notions of knowledge and faith: “[...] sitôt que j'eus achevé tout ce cours d'études, au bout duquel on a coutume d'être reçu au rang des doctes, je changeai entièrement d'opinion. Car je me trouvais embarrassé de tant de doutes et d'erreurs, qu'il me semblait n'avoir fait autre profit, en tâchant de m'instruire, sinon que j'avais

découvert de plus en plus mon ignorance”(7). Instead of certainty, he is faced with deception and burdened with doubts along with an increasing awareness of the confines and susceptibility of what little he knows. Even the fact that he has not learned what he sought out to learn, and that he is left in such an initially disempowered state when he is made aware of the limits of his environment are suggestive of the deception that causes him to literally become disoriented and to lose confidence in his surroundings: “Et néanmoins j'étais en l'une des plus célèbres écoles de l'Europe, où je pensais qu'il devait y avoir de savants hommes, s'il y en avait en aucun endroit de la terre”(7). Yet it is precisely this deception which prompts him to investigate new pathways of knowledge that are actually true. In order to achieve this, Descartes finds that he needs to fill the gap between what he has been told and what he has learned. He must independently discover what he believes, as well as in what—rather than in whom—he should found his beliefs. Indeed, the more he learns and feels ‘secure’ about his knowledge, the more he comes to “sense” that this knowledge itself is not secure and cannot be trusted: “je jugeais qu'on ne pouvait avoir rien bâti, qui fût solide, sur des fondements si peu fermes”(9). Returning in the *Meditationes* to the early moment of disillusionment that he described in the *Discours*, Descartes insists upon forging a new beginning for himself.

Animadverti jam ante aliquot annos quàm multa, ineunte aetate, falsa pro veris admiserim, & quàm dubia sint quaecunque istis postea superextruxi, ac proinde funditus omnia semel in vitâ esse evertenda, atque a primis fundamentis denuo inchoandum, si quid aliquando firmum & mansurum cupiam in scientiis stabilire; sed ingens opus esse videbatur, eamque aetatem expectabam, quae foret tam matura, ut capessendis disciplinis aptior nulla sequeretur. (1.1)

Recodifying his “deviation” from the path of others, presenting it as a quest for new knowledge, and taking Montaigne’s critique of foundational instability and our early modern authors’ intertextual approaches to a new extreme, Descartes describes having to raze everything: “[...] sed quia, suffossis fundamentis, quidquid iis superaedificatum est sponte collabitur, aggrediar statim ipsa principia, quibus illud omne quod olim credidi nitebatur” (1.2) This methodology can be understood as a reorientation founded in a desire for knowledge that is proven to be accurate and reliable, rather than knowledge that is merely *taken* as accurate and reliable, or that is transmitted or inherited as such. For surety then, Descartes must tear down the ‘buildings’ of knowledge that have been passed down to him by his forefathers, specifically those who have served him as literary, educational, and familial models, and those who falsely present lies and other chimera as truth and established, scientifically proven facts. He must forge his own path.

The only remedy Descartes can find for doubt is the eradication of what stands between himself and certainty; ironically, as he explains in the *Discours* and the *Meditationes*, what impedes his access to truth is all of the previous knowledge he has acquired empirically or by learning from the doctrine of others—that is, the very foundation upon which his knowledge is based. In stark contrast to the failed

pre-cartesian “method” followed by the suspicious husbands in fidelity-test episodes for example, for Descartes, once the foundation has been destroyed, everything except self-evident, irrefutable truths must be weighed and considered in a systematic way, starting from simple facts and objects to those that are more complex. Moreover, since the injunction to doubt everything and abandon all previously learned information is pronounced by an author who not only grapples with doubt but also claims that he has broken all ties with authorial figures when he has done no such thing, the problem of trusting as presented by Descartes potentializes the suspicious treatment of vows suggested by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, which is definitively posited by Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes.

As we have seen, the genre of Chivalric Romance is, by necessity, fundamentally intertextual given the proliferation of episodes, “*aventures*,” and exempla it must present. By necessity yet again, due to its emergence from within a feudal culture organized heavily yet imprecisely around vows and the notions of obligation, subordination, fulfillment, and indebtedness that the political alliances, relationships of vassalage, and marital contacts depended upon and utilized as structuring mechanisms, the genre of Chivalric Romance is thus historically, structurally, and thematically built around the articulation of vows. Yet given the lack of reliability of the Other and the instability of the outside world, univocal understandings of vows and their negotiation became increasingly difficult. This difficulty was then reflected in an increasingly sardonic and pessimistic approach to depicting vows, as we have observed in the literature of Ariosto, Tasso, and Cervantes, and in the philosophical approaches of Montaigne and Descartes.

Indeed, as vows began to fail, the starting point for new investigations of knowledge was also reoriented. As the medieval period gave way to the early modern period, this reorientation turned a privileged gaze upon the individual instead of identifying alterity as a fundamental and exclusive characteristic unique to the Other. Although the individual’s polyvalent nature started to be valorized, particularly given an increasing interest in self-fashioning and actualization, the fact that this individual was still an inherently unstable and largely unknowable entity confounded stable referents, even grammatically. This multiplicity, the ability of the individual to model and fashion himself, and the individual’s obligations and promises to others, further elucidate the difficult binary between Self and Other; subsequently, this fractured relationship undermines trust and destabilizes all vows that are made.

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