INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book. These are also available as one exposure on a standard 35mm slide or as a 17" x 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9000023

So much nonsense: Poetic *copia* in Renaissance texts

Friedman, Rodger, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1989

Copyright ©1989 by Friedman, Rodger. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

SO MUCH NONSENSE:

POETIC *COPIA* IN RENAISSANCE TEXTS

by

RODGER FRIEDMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1989

c 1989

RODGER FRIEDMAN

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dec 19, 1988
Date

Fred J. Nichols
Chair of Examining Committee

Dec. 20, 1988
Date

Vincent Crapanzano
Executive Officer

Frank Rosengartern

John Van Sickle

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

SO MUCH NONSENSE:
POETIC COPIA IN RENAISSANCE TEXTS

by

Rodger Friedman

Adviser: Professor Fred J. Nichols

A 16th century literary fashion for colossal narratives manifests the literary expression of *copia*, a style reflecting Renaissance tastes for variety, abundance, inclusiveness, and sustained virtuosity. Works belonging to this movement are characterized by rich linguistic detail, an encyclopedic range of literary conventions, a willingness to violate established generic codes, and a labyrinthine plot structure. The Renaissance experiment with *copia* challenged the existing literary establishment and became the principle whereby Renaissance authors began to assert their mastery over classical literary forms, transforming and supplanting the early humanist poetics of imitation.

In an effort to approach the encyclopedic inclusiveness and fullness of meaning represented by ideal *copia*, Renaissance writers turned to fragmentary, episodic, assymetrical narrative structures. The Renaissance copious text often presented an apparently meaningless surface. The successive episodes do not seem to pattern themselves in accordance to an overall design. A structural tension appears between the aimless string of episodes in the foreground of the work and the overarching design which they

obscure. The narrative expands beyond the reader's ability to comprehend it, projecting an overwhelming fictional world larger in scope and variety than the reader's personal world, an entirety beyond grasp. Denied the assurance of secure narrative coordinates, readers are thrown off balance. The indetermination of a construct not governed by causal necessity seems to produce an anxiety of aimlessness, of being caught up in an uncertain pattern. A formal organization which cannot be made part of one's experience with the narrative is bound to seem beside the point, and failure to perceive a controlling order sends the reader back to the poem's frivolous surface, with all of its incoherences, to the appearance of "nonsense," as the place where the text's potential meaning is located.

This study examines four moments in the tradition of the copious style to discover how the principles of *copia* were used to determine (or deny) textual meaning. The tradition described by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Politian's *Sylvae*, the *Orlando furioso*, and the books of Rabelais explores *copia* as an ideal fullness of literary meaning, which may simultaneously appear to be meaningless nonsense.

Preface and Acknowledgements

"So Much Nonsense" emerged from a series of conversations and courses with Professor Fred Nichols and fellow students at the City University of New York Graduate School. Those discussions revolved around the conjecture that in emphatically long narratives, the work's exaggerated length might be seen as a component of meaning. The idea seemed amusing at the time, a fact that I recalled nostalgically as the toil and confusion mounted. The lofty speculation on matters of time, narrative and memory that the idea originally encouraged led nowhere that I could understand, yet it touched upon a network of problems with demonstrable reality in the colossal Renaissance texts and in the concerns of Renaissance criticism. The texts in question (I chose practically at random from a large group of possible candidates) weave long, complex narratives through a variety of literary styles far in excess of the tragic plot linearity favored by Aristotelian critics. It became apparent that my confusion was calculated by the authors I read and that it was coded into their works. The assertive shapelessness of Ariosto's "selva," Poliziano's "Sylvae," Ovid's "nemora avia," all place the reader in a spreading forest of narrative material which cannot be casually dominated. The nameless genre to which these giant works pertain embraces all literary styles and genres within its encyclopedic scope, and no poetic ornament, no elaboration is left out. Puzzling over this encyclopedic tendency, the abstract merged with the historical in the Renaissance poetics of *copia*, and *copia* soon replaced mere length or bulk as the main focus of my investigation. *Copia* as variety in discourse and as sustained virtuosity was clearly the point of arrival of Renaissance eloquence (and, to some, the remedy against its pretensions).

Yet, to my surprise, it has rarely been distinguished as a primary subject of study. To have explored it even tentatively has been a gratifying experience.

I have the great good fortune to know Fred Nichols as an adviser and instructor. Not only did he direct this dissertation, he carefully saw me through my entire graduate career from matriculation to defense. His teaching and his friendship have been a profound source of pleasure.

I am grateful to the Alumni Association of the City University of New York for entrusting me with a magnanimous fellowship on the basis of work in progress presented early in 1987. Patricia A. Parker, Daniel Javitch and Fred Nichols agreed to address the problem of *copia* in an MLA session which was presented by the Division of Comparative Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Literature at the 1987 convention in San Francisco. Their approaches to the problem were extremely helpful to the subsequent development of the dissertation. John Van Sickle provided many useful comments on the drafts that he read and some inspiring ones in conversation. Frank Rosengarten also read draft versions and furnished many helpful suggestions. Burton Pike strengthened the language of the original proposal, and gave extensive practical pointers along the way. Diana Robin helped me to refine the arguments with her lively and attentive correspondence. Alyson Waters read Chapter 5 and returned it with a set of observations that wreaked consequences over the entire project.

Apart from the learned help I received from these professionals, I would like to acknowledge the inestimable support that was given to me by friends who, through no fault of their own, happened to be around for me to torture with unfinished ideas far removed from their ordinary concerns. I am particularly delighted to mention Anne Jensen (who read a version of the proposal) and Eric Jensen in this regard, and my colleagues Andrew Zaremba,

Mohammed Yousuf, Kene Rosa, Peter Feigenbaum, and Sidney O. Monteith, resolute defender of truth and devastator of shadowy and erroneous doubt.

My thanks, finally, to Kiki Nelson, without whom this work, or any work I might have undertaken, would have been a bleak and cheerless exercise. If there is triumph in its completion, it belongs to her, for putting up with "So Much Nonsense."

Table of Contents

Abstract.......... iv

Preface and Acknowledgements.......... vi

Introduction.......... 1

Chapter

1. The Ovidian Image of Time.......... 15

2. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Renaissance *Copia*...... 58

3. The Poetics of *Imitatio*
and the Poetics of *Copia*.......... 81

4. The Poetic Way of Knowing.......... 107

5. Rabelais's Inexhaustible Text.......... 145

Conclusion.......... 183

Bibliography.......... 188

Introduction

In the 16th century, a fashion prevailed for ambitious narratives that were much longer than their classical models. Some varieties mutated into giant poems of more than 30,000 lines, or into expansive, multi-volume prose tales. The movement produced texts characterized by rich linguistic detail, an encyclopedic range of literary conventions and styles, a willingness to violate established generic codes and literary "laws," and sometimes by a difficult, labyrinthine plot structure.

The exaggerated length and the uncertain generic boundaries of these massive texts represent a significant transformation of classical epic forms, and not merely an ornamental extension of their volume. Textual expansion often results in a problematic structural imbalance between plot and episode, presenting an array of interpretative difficulties. The sense of overall formal coherence is sacrificed in the crush of narrative detail. A bewildering succession of episodes suspends the eventual disclosure of an overall narrative design, making the plots often appear fragmentary and disordered. The presence of a coherent design may be revealed in the course of the narrative, but not every reader can hold out long enough to realize it. Bernardo Tasso once cleared the hall with a lengthy recitation of his *Amadigi.*[1] Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, hearing *Orlando furioso* recited, is supposed to have

[1] This took place in the Spanish court. Torquato Tasso relates the anecdote in the *Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme Liberata* (1585). See Tasso's *Scritti sull'arte poetica*, ed. Ettore Mazzali, (1959; rpt. Torino: Einaudi, 1977) 70.

interrupted Ariosto with the comment, "Where did you ever come up with so much nonsense?"[2]

The fashion for expansive texts represents the literary manifestation of *copia*, a style reflecting Renaissance tastes for extensive elaboration of basic forms that pervaded art and architecture by the mid-15th century.[3] In classical usage, the term was applied to specific objects. The editors of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* suppose *copia* to be derived from a contraction of *con-ops*, indicating capability, the means of power and dominion, and the natural fertility personified in the goddess Ops. Its occurence was widespread, expressing totality and embracing the positive values of abundance, wealth and material resources; in the plural, *copiae* could refer to military forces, storehouses and treasures. In conjunction with a genitive, *copia* designates the means of availing oneself of something, implying control over the resources named in the genitive case, and it is in this form that the term occurs in rhetoric. Quintilian employs it often to refer to the store of words (*copia*

[2] "Tante coglionerie," according to Michele Catalano, *Vita di Ludovico Ariosto*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Leo S. Olschki, 1930-1931) I:183, 435.

[3] Renaissance *copia* dominated European style between 1450 and 1650, yet the only recent study devoted to the subject is Terence Cave's *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979). To Renaissance thinkers, *copia* was the end of eloquence, a notion illustrated in a variety of documents, including Pontano's *Actius*, Politian's *Sylvae*, Anton Maria De' Conti's *De arte poetica*, Girolamo Muzio's *Dell'arte poetica*, Rudolph Agricola's *De inventione dialectica*, Alessandro Lionardi's *Dialoghi dell'invenzione poetica*, and Erasmus's *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*. Nevertheless, *copia* is rarely singled out in modern studies of Renaissance eloquence. See *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) with extensive bibliography; Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); and Baxter Hathaway, *The Age of Criticism: The Late Renaissance in Italy* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962). For the Quattrocento idea of beauty as proportion and the arts as ornamental elaboration of a mathematical expression, see L.B. Alberti's treatises, *De Pictura* and *De re aedificatoria*, and Edgar Wind's comments on his aesthetics in *The Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, (1958; rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968).

verborum) and subject matter (*copia rerum*) that form the raw material and agency of eloquence.[4] From the concept of an abundance of resources, it is a short step to the concept of a general style that demonstrates mastery over the possibilities those resources represent (*copia dicendi* or *copia eloquentiae*). Cicero's perfect orator (at the climax of *De Oratore*) is capable of commanding a "spontaneous brilliance" in which "a full supply of material (*copia rerum*) begets a full supply of words (*copia verborum*)." Cicero expressed the benefits of such a style in terms of spatial expansion, suggesting that its discipline could endow the subject with "the liberty to roam freely in so wide and measureless a field and wherever he takes his stand to find himself on his own ground."[5]

Evolving within the context of humanist pursuit of eloquence, the notion of a treasury of *verba* and *res* bled into a stylistic principle involving the proliferation of language to its utmost capacities of signification. Renaissance lexicographers borrowed the term *copia* from Cicero and Quintilian to refer to the wealth of words and *sententiae* in the texts of great writers.[6] When Erasmus composed his influential textbook, *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (1512), he carefully replaced the term "rhetoric" with *copia*

[4] See especially VII, proem, 1; VIII, vi, 5; and X, i, 5, "Num ergo dubium est, quin ei velut opes sint quaedam parandae, quibus uti, ubicunque desideratum erit, possit? Eae constant copia rerum ac verborum."

[5] "In hoc igitur tanto tam immensoque campo cum liceat oratori vagari libere atque ubicumque constiterit consistere in suo, facile suppeditat omnis apparatus ornatusque dicendi; rerum enim copia verborum copiam gignit, et si est honestas in rebus ipsis de quibus dicitur, exsistit naturalis quidam splendore in verbis" (*De Oratore* III, xxxi, 125).

[6] It appears, for instance, in the title of Nicholas Perotti's 1489 lexicographical study of Martial, called *Cornucopia, sive linguae latinae commentarii*. Somewhat later, a concordance of Boccaccio's Italian works by Francesco Alunno appeared under the title *Le ricchezze della lingua volgare* (1523); "ricchezze" closely approximates the idea expressed in Latin as *copia*.

to denote the techniques and goals of eloquence. "There is nothing more splendid," he says, "than a rich copia of thoughts and words overflowing in a golden stream," warning that this ultimate reward of eloquence should only be attempted by the most authoritative masters, and only after long study, lest they "fall into a kind of futile and amorphous loquacity."[7] Erasmus promises that the techniques and practice of *copia* would insure that we are never at a loss for words in any endeavor, never troubled by an inexpressible concept, safe from the humiliation of crude discourse or, even worse, silence.[8]

Renaissance authors discussed *copia* in the context of rhetoric, but, strictly speaking, *copia* is not a rhetorical term. It does not appear among the lists of styles and ornaments in the rhetorical handbooks; it should not be confused with *amplificatio* or contrasted with *brevitas*; both figures enter into the copious style's distinctive principle of *variatio*. The term *copia* might best be understood as denoting a virtuoso command over all the figures of rhetoric, and an ability to arrange them into an organized form, embracing a vast range and variety of subjects and styles. In the Renaissance, *copia* with a genitive, or even *copia* alone, came to represent the fulfillment of eloquence in speech, poetry or prose, an eloquence fundamental to all knowledge, that would articulate the whole range of the human mind, an expansion of the universe of discourse to mimetically encompass the measure and variety of the universe

[7] "Ut non est aliud vel admirabilius, vel magnificentius quam oratio, divite quadam sententiarum verborumque copia, aurei fluminis instar, exuberans.... Unde non paucis mortalibus usu venire videmus, ut divinam hanc virtutem, sedulo quidem, sed parum feliciter aemulantes, in futilem quandam ac deformem incidant loquacitatem." *De Copia* 1:A.

[8] "Neque difficile fuerit, vel temere coeptam orationem commode ad id quod volumus deflectere, tot formulis in procinctu paratis. Praeterea in enarrandis autoribus, in vertendis ex aliena lingua libris, in scribendo carmine, non parum adjumenti nobis attulerit. Siquidem in iis, nisi erimus his instructi rationibus, saepenumero reperiemur aut perplexi, aut duri, aut muti denique." *De Copia* VIII D.

of experience. In the dialogue *Actius*, Giovanni Pontano defended the primacy of poetry as the source of all philosophy, history and law, on grounds of an ideal plenitude that poetic *copia* might achieve, incorporating all human aspirations. Ideally, the copious text would possess encyclopedic fullness of meaning, "magnitude and abundance," containing all "heavenly and mortal matters" (*Dialoghi*, 237).[9] According to a 16th century theorist, Alessandro Lionardi, poetry in the copious style could elicit "un'imagine et un simulacro dell'animo e di tutte le operazioni, di tutti i pensamenti."[10]

The Renaissance experiment with *copia* challenged the existing literary establishment and became the operative principle whereby Renaissance authors began to assert their mastery over classical literary forms, transforming and supplanting the early humanist poetics of imitation. In an effort to approach the encyclopedic inclusiveness and fullness of meaning represented by the ideal of the copious text, Renaissance epic writers ambitiously expanded the magnitude of the text.

It is surprising that a massive fictional narrative in the copious style might have appeared frivolous and nonsensical to some readers, as the *Orlando furioso* did to Ariosto's patron. It should trouble us that texts participating in a stylistic movement that so prized totality of meaning should be understood by anyone as nonsense. We might ask why the development of copious

[9] The entire phrase reads, "Sic assentior, ut semper existimaverim in quacunque ad dicendum suscepta materia atque in dicendi quoque genere maginitudinem sullimitatemque ipsam poetae esse propriam, nunquam mediocritate contentam, quod Virgilii agricultura docere plane potest; utque implere generosos illos spiritus quacunque ratione poetae valeant, coelestes etiam res mortalium rebus inseruisse eos refersisseque carmen suum commentis atque fabulis, quibus ipsa sullimitas ad summum usque, hoc est ad admirationem incresceret."

[10] "Dialoghi dell'invenzione poetica," in Bernard Weinberg, ed., *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 3 vols., (Bari: Laterza, 1970-74) II:218.

literature, in its effort to achieve totality, should have turned to fragmentary, episodic, assymetrical structures, undisciplined to an apparent design or end that would govern the text under a coherent form. Why, that is, in the effort to encompass all meaning, did the Renaissance copious text so often resort to presenting an apparently meaningless surface? The wealth of meaning that an ideal *copia* of words and matter ought to imply became necessarily involved with problems of literary meaning in general, how it is transmitted, how it is perceived. The masters of the copious style answered these questions in ways radically different from those received in classical theories of literature.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle gives a definition of beauty which Western culture largely accepted as accurate. Beauty is the perception of the unity of heterogeneous parts, and in classical literary theory, such unity is expressed in terms of plot. The epic plot, Aristotle says, should not be so long that its constituent temporal structure, its beginning, middle, and end, cannot be readily comprehended.

> Creatures and other organic structures must have certain magnitude and yet be easily taken in by the eye; so too with plots: they must have length but must be easily taken in by memory (51a).

Beauty is perceived when the plot can be considered in its entirety, and its contour can be seen to have been governed by a central necessity. An ideal plot achieves a coherent, unified economy by bringing all of its parts to support this central necessity or purpose, so "if one part is shifted or taken away, the whole is deranged and disjoined, for what makes no difference by its presence or absence is no part of the whole (*holon*)" (51a34). According to this paradigm, the sense of causal determination is threatened by compounding episodes to the extent that the episodes are not subordinated to the whole. If episodes are so numerous or so dispensable that they may be forgotten, then the causal determination of the plot will be violated and its beauty will not be

accessible. From an Aristotelian point of view, then, the problem inherent in a very long plot is that the contour of the whole might become too large to be grasped. "Suppose," he says, insisting on the animal metaphor, "a creature a thousand miles long." It would not be beautiful, because the parts could not be subordinated to the ready perception of the whole.

Theoretically, any narrative may be likened to a "creature a thousand miles long," since the reader perceives text moving in time. Wolfgang Iser introduces the useful concept of "the wandering viewpoint" to describe the relationship of reader to the text, in time. The reader's limited, moving viewpoint, he says, "is caught up in and transcended by the object it is to apprehend." He describes the difference between perceiving an object and perceiving a text as the difference between an exterior and an interior point of view.

> We always stand outside the given object, whereas we are situated inside the literary text.... Instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend. This mode of grasping an object is unique to literature (109).

The reader's moving viewpoint is fundamental to describe how we perceive narrative. The problem of grasping a narrative lies in the fact that the whole text is never available at any one moment during the reading. It can only be conceived as whole by an act of synthesis of the phases that have been read, the process Aristotle referred to as memory. This synthesis takes place in the consciousness of the reader in a continuous fashion, throughout every phase of the reading. The activity of synthesis, according to Iser, is equivalent to interpretation, as narrative structures are reassembled within the reader's consciousness, or memory. In the course of a narrative, what is being read constantly modifies the interpretation or assembly of what has already been read by evoking it in the changing context of the continuing narrative. The

past syntheses undergo continual restructuring. The material input of ongoing narrative may challenge the reader's capacity, to the point that, as Iser notes, "what has already been read shrinks in the memory to a foreshortened background" (111), with a corrupting result on the ability to interpret past narrative competently. Thus "every moment of reading is a dialectic of protension and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled" (112).

In spite of Aristotle, the tradition of copious texts favors the plot's variety over its unity. These narratives exploit their structural heterogeneity, exhibiting an assortment of literary styles. Their larger scale sometimes frustrates their coherence, and they often confirm that frustration thematically by posing hermeneutical puzzles at the narrative level. The reader's viewpoint in the midst of such a narrative is even more limited than usual, often restricted to the episode at hand. The imposition of such limited perspective in Renaissance copious texts, with the interpretive difficulties it involves for the reader, is a fundamental structural characteristic and an essential component of their textual meaning. In *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode discusses an innate readerly urge to enlarge the perspective and to seek the work's coherence.

> Men in the middest (*in medias res*) make considerable imaginative investments in coherent patterns which, by the provision of an end, make possible a satisfying consonance with the origins and the middle (17).

Classical epic narrative, with a coherent beginning, middle, and end, tends to repay these investments in coherent patterns. Such works, in which the progression of episodes is determined by an overall necessity, suggest an ordered and determined universe, implicitly confirmed in the determined structure of the narrative. In the Aristotelian tragic paradigm, the work's

formal coherence becomes emblematic of causality as an operative force, as Paul Ricoeur observes,

> To the extent that in the ordering of events the causal connection (one thing as the cause of another) prevails over pure succession (one thing after another), a universal emerges that is, as we have interpreted it, the ordering itself erected as a type (*Time and Narrative* 1:69).

The Renaissance copious tradition opposes the assumption of coherent patterns and the comfort we might take in them. The length of the works and the complex variety of their ornamental structures add up to a burden the Aristotelian causal paradigm cannot support without undergoing elemental distortion. The complication and extension of narrative surfaces result in a wandering, *post hoc* plot configuration as opposed to the Aristotelian figure governed by a principle of teleological necessity. When the epic form is deprived of its causal prerogative, it forfeits its ability to symbolize a sensible, ordered universe. "Great epics," wrote A. Bartlett Giammatti, "celebrate what man can make.... But these very poems also tell of the futility of man's efforts to subdue and contain the same potent forces he has trapped" (3). A situation emerges that admits the possibility of an absurd world in which action does not appear to be meaningful in respect to a larger design. Personal responses interfere with public responsibilities, and desire is more irresistible than obligation. The erotic dominates the heroic, and the immutable world is replaced by a world in flux. The Virgilian order of irreversible fate is lacerated by detours for variation, for dalliance, games, error, and for the pleasure of storytelling. The episodes constitute an open series of events in which anything may happen. The notion of the *holon* in these works is based less upon an Aristotelian definition of a causally disciplined hierarchy of moments in time than it is upon a notion of *discordia concors*, an inclusive harmony in which nothing is neglected or omitted.

A tension arises between the aimless string of episodes in the foreground of the work and the overarching design which they obscure. The successive moments do not pattern themselves in accordance to an overall architectonic design as they do in medieval works like *The Divine Comedy* or the *Romance of the Rose*. Denied the assurance of secure narrative coordinates, readers are thrown off balance. The indetermination of a construct not governed by causal necessity seems to produce an anxiety of aimlessness, of being caught up in an uncertain pattern, and this aspect of the copious style was frequently perceived as a threat. Tasso found it so menacing that, along with many of his contemporaries, he drew the doctrine of his *Discorsi dell'Arte Poetica* against such a purposeless form.

> Aggiungo che de la moltitudine delle favole nasce l'indeterminazione: e può questo progresso andare in infinito, senza che le sia da l'arte prefisso o circonscritto termine alcuno. Il poeta ch'una favola tratta, finita quella, è giunto al suo fine: chi più ne tesse, o quattro o sei o dieci ne potrà tessere; né più a questo numero che a quello è obligato: non potrà aver, dunque, determinata certezza, qual sia quel ove convegna fermarsi (*Scritti*, 28).[11]

The tension finally involves perceiving the textual world as either wandering or determined. A text that seems destined toward no particular objective throws the reader into a perpetual condition of being *in medias res*, unable to grasp the boundaries of the textual enterprise. Often, the intimation that we face a pattern is clearer than exactly what the pattern is. And on the scale of one of these 30,000 line poems or multi-volume prose narratives, the urge to seek the overarching design is stronger than the chance of achieving such a

[11] See also Giovan Giorgio Trissino, *La poetica*, part V, in Weinberg, *Trattati*, II:18, for a terse restatement of the doctrine of causality and the offense of indetermination. These polemics are discussed at length in Weinberg's *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, and in brief in Ralph C. Williams, "Epic Unity in 16th Century Italy," *Modern Philology* 18 (1920): 383-400.

reading. The all-encompassing perspective, however desirable it may be, remains remote.

Renaissance copious texts toy with the possibility of transcending a merely sequential comprehension. An overall design is often implied in the text, held out before the reader as a tantalizing goal. The narrator of *Orlando furioso* assures the reader that every episode of the tale is interconnected, that a unified contour should be sought, even if the poem feel different in each part. The reader, thus prompted, will at least try to read synthetically as well as sequentially. But the large formal structure of the these poems is almost never the operative structure of the reader, who must take the narrative line by line, moment by moment. The moments do not tend to build a circumspect form in the reader's consciousness, but rather, as Iser notes, they tend to disintegrate. One of the innate properties of copious narrative is that it takes longer to read, which allows time for the reader to forget, for the decomposing aspect of memory to enter into effect. The narrative expands beyond the reader's ability to comprehend it, projecting, in that sense, an overwhelming fictional world larger in scope and variety than the reader's personal world, an entirety beyond grasp. The tragic paradigm fails when it reaches this incomprehensible size. Details can be forgotten, and the forward movement of the plot in such a paradigm cannot afford their loss. The copious narrative, to be devilish, may provide more details, more episodes, more narrative *peripeteia* than the reader, trained in the aristotelian mode, can assimilate. The assertion of formal organization which cannot be made part of one's experience with the poem is bound to seem beside the point, and failure to perceive a controlling order sends the reader back to the poem's frivolous surface, with all of its incoherences, to the appearance of "nonsense," as the place where the text's potential meaning is located.

This study will examine four moments in the tradition of the copious style to discover how the principles of *copia* were used to determine (or deny) textual meaning. The tradition described by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Politian's *Sylvae*, the *Orlando furioso*, and the books of Rabelais explores *copia* as an ideal fullness of literary meaning, which may simultaneously appear to be meaningless nonsense. The Renaissance accorded great prestige to great abundance, admitting an ideological dimension to monumentally long and complex poems. In the works by Ovid, Ariosto and Rabelais, the prestige implied by the work's *copia* is offset by the apparent frivolity of the text, and the ideological status of the copious text is turned inside out. The monumental vision is replaced by an anarchistic, anti-ideological vision, in which sense and nonsense appear ultimately indistinguishable. The comprehensive variety of styles, the careful blurring of generic codes, and the apparent formlessness of the wandering narrative contour are emblematic of their subversive relation to the social order.

The anarchic property of the copious text is pronounced in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a poem which provided a classical model for the Renaissance literary movement. With its theme of mutability conspicuously reflected in its variety of plots and styles, the *Metamorphoses* may be read as a generic counterstatement, the expression of a ideological vision set in opposition to the one represented in the *Aeneid*. Ovid's vision of Rome is one consolidated by a collection of stories, not by a single epic myth of origin in association with universal fate. In the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid does not differentiate between the succession of events in his poem and its ultimate meaning and unity. He merely declares the poem complete and unchanging, itself an immortal form distinct from the world of change that it narrates. Thus the *Metamorphoses* ends by calling itself an immutable "opus," incorruptable in time.

The *Metamorphoses* receives full treatment in the following pages as a key text for understanding its Renaissance descendents. In the late 15th century, the wandering contour and poetic virtuosity characteristic of Ovid's poem informed the Renaissance practice of *copia* through the commentary of Raphael Regius, who presented it as a comprehensive encyclopedia of all knowledge. Ovid's narrative form was freely grafted onto the popular romance tradition to which it already bore a family resemblance, and it became the fountainhead and source of the copious genre.

In the flush of the expansive optimism that characterized the early Renaissance, Politian articulated the ideal of encyclopedic *copia*, the totalizing, all-meaning text. A master of poetic *copia*, according to Poliziano, might include all the breadth of the experienced world within the scope of the textual world. Indeed, priority belongs to the text, and the world of experience can only be revealed to human understanding through the textual world, that is, in poetic forms. Thus the expansion of the real world, so fundamental to the Renaissance project, begins in poetry that expands the linguistic world. Politian's generation also perceived *copia* as a means to assert the age's literary independence against strict adherence to classical forms.

The power to expand the horizons of human knowledge which Poliziano hopefully attributed to copious poetry became a subject of irony in works, like Ariosto's, which questioned the possibility of comprehensive understanding. Arguments for or against the unity of the *Orlando furioso* would seem to miss this important point: however unified it may or may not prove to be under rigorous study, its effect is to beguile the reader into seeking structural unity *and* to deny its apprehension. Ariosto encourages the reader's appetite for discovering the secret glue of the poem, while the reader who traverses a thousand miles of text is likely to find that satisfaction to be

an ever receding possibility until the very end. The reader's quest for order is an important component of the poem, as is the poem's deflection of it. Even the aerial view of the *Furioso*'s labyrinthine world fails to provide a key to its order. That remains the exclusive property of the poet, whose command over the text's *copia* proves that the integration of apparent chaos is a virtuoso poetic act. Unless the reader's conceptual skill equal the poet's, the multiplicity of the poem's elements will seem nonsensical.

The hermeneutical problems posed in terms of plot unity by Ovid and Ariosto were restated on an even more fundamental level by Rabelais. Dispensing with the plot as the location of textual meaning or interpretive activity, Rabelais brings the the opacity of language itself, the subjective and contingent nature of all linguistic understanding, into sharp relief. His text is patently disordered, and consists largely of a series of episodes in which the problems of linguistic communication are variously confronted. The entire ensemble recommends itself in conflicting passages as replete with inexhaustible significance, or as "tant folastres," so much nonsense. Both possibilities inhabit the same text in a reciprocal relationship that continues to baffle its readers.

The tradition of Renaissance *copia* engages the paradoxical presentation of erudition and entertainment, virtuosity and frivolity, sense and nonsense. The copious texts manipulate our natural interpretive response to seek meaning where meaninglessness is a given possibility and where such a long narrative might be no more than a massive waste of time, at least from a deterministic point of view. It is impossible to say whether our interpretive effort, whose failure is insured by the text, is intrinsically more valuable than the entertaining and fantastic stories that have been its object.

Chapter 1

The Ovidian Image of Time

The *Metamorphoses*, in 12,000 hexameters, illustrated to its Renaissance descendants the potent forces of plurality and integrity fused in a massive structure. Ovid's poem provided a classical model for the copious narratives of the 16th century, not only in the fabular material it furnished to them but also in its formal aspects, its virtuoso style and its variety of stories drawn through a seamless narration. At one pole of its dynamics, the poem undermines its own formal stability in an apparently purposeless sequence of rapidly changing narrative coordinates. At the other, it coheres and presents itself as a complete and autonomous form, a textual world possessing attributes of fullness, totality, and even transcendent meaning. The restless self-contradiction and strange interdependence of these two aspects is the source of the poem's mystery, its peculiar identity, and its usefulness to the Renaissance tradition of poetic *copia*.[1]

Like a frame tale, to which it bears formal affinity, the *Metamorphoses* continually changes its plots and characters. The stories are strung together in an extratemporal and, in effect, infinite series that has no necessary internal limits to make them cohere. Ovid pretends to unite them into a temporal frame describing the history of the world from the beginning

[1] With regards to the poem's enduring "mystery," Leo C. Curran wrote ("Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," 71), "There can hardly be another major work of antiquity ... which has remained such a mystery, so misunderstood, so difficult to comprehend. No one has yet been able to solve with any degree of acceptance by others the enduring and fascinating question of just what the *Metamorphoses* is all about." The record of recent attempts can be read in two bibliographical compendia: R.J. Gariepy, Jr., "Recent Scholarship on Ovid (1958-68)," *Classical World* 64 (1970): 37-56; and Alison Goddard Elliot, "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: A Bibliography, 1968-1978," *Classical World*, 74 (1980): 385-412.

down to his own days. The stories, however, do not reconfigure historical time: they leave no sense of the days and hours that a tragic narrative might attempt to describe, nor is a framing calendar provided as in the *Decameron*. They seem rather estranged from time, following one another in a sequence that is not apparently determined. Mikhail Bakhtin likened this fragmentary appearance of the *Metamorphoses* to the Greek romances, which proceed in discrete instances or episodes that are superficially vivid but without connection to one another. In Ovid, "time breaks down into isolated, self-sufficient temporal segments that mechanically arrange themselves into no more than single sequences" (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 114). The difference is that the Romances are ordered by a plot, however loose, and by a constant cast of characters, while in the *Metamorphoses* these coordinates change with each tale.

While these characteristics of the "low" genres of romance and frame tale contribute to the instability of the narrative, the *Metamorphoses* also possesses characteristics of development customarily reserved for the aristocratic epic genre. It is composed in epic hexameters, and, more important, the *Metamorphoses* pretends to deliver the same cultural package as Virgil's *Aeneid*: the mythical foundation of the Augustan empire. An account of the origins of the nation is traditionally the province of epic. It is not immediately apparent in a casual reading that the poem covers the ground of a foundation epic, not even in a parodic sense. While our attention is drawn to the individual stories, the coherent foundation epic (in which the transformation of Julius Caesar into a star is the climactic conclusion) emerges gradually from a synthetic reading. This synthesis opposes the tendency of the episodes to break down into single sequences. The identity of the

Metamorphoses occupies the tension between these poles, continually shifting between a narrative that is proposed as a *carmen perpetuum*, an unbroken song, and one which functions as a disjunct collection of myths.

Virgil's integrated order

The kinetic identity of the *Metamorphoses* might best be illuminated in comparison to the *Aeneid*. Kinetic and complex as the *Aeneid* may be in its own right, the narrative strategies of the two poems are so different that it is sometimes difficult to imagine how they might occupy prominent places simultaneously in the same canon. They invite comparison, and the critical tradition has supplied it by posing the two poems against each other in terms of their metrical style, their poetic compression, their gravity or their depth of vision. Where such comparisons undertake to decide which is the better poem, it is usually awarded to aristocratic Virgil, while Ovid is usually criticized for his "lack of seriousness" (Quintilian X, i, 88: "lascivus quidem in herois quoque Ovidius"). The *Aeneid* preceded the *Metamorphoses* by little enough to be called roughly contemporary. Yet the works represent such divergent stances, not only toward Augustan culture, but also toward the larger problems of cultural identity and the nature of literary meaning, that some contemporary critics see the *Metamorphoses* as a radical revision of the *Aeneid*.[2] Both poems ostensibly relate the mythological foundation of Rome,

[2] Brooks Otis calls the poem "anti-Augustan," remarking that it "parodies, deflates and debunks Virgil," in *Ovid as an Epic Poet* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) 133, 350-51. Among others who read the *Metamorphoses* as a challenge, at least, to the achievement of the *Aeneid*, see Daniel Javitch, "The *Orlando furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid*," *MLN* 99 (1984): 1023-1036; W.R. Johnson, "The Problem of a Counter Classical Sensibility and Its Critics," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 3 (1970): 123-51; R. Lamacchia, "Ovidio interprete di Virgilio," *Maia* 12 (1960): 310-30; Peter E. Know, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 1986); W.S. Anderson, "The Orpheus of Virgil and Ovid: flebile nescio quid," in *Orpheus: The Metamorphosis of a Myth*, ed. John Warden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) 25-50;

yet, broadly compared, the *Aeneid* presents an ethical, eschatological, and ultimately ordered universe, while the *Metamorphoses* calls the notion of a comprehensible order into question. This judgment is based on a comparison that opposes the principle of narrative symmetry which informs the *Aeneid* to the wandering shape that characterizes the *Metamorphoses.*

The form of the *Metamorphoses* has little to do with the Aristotelian notion of epopoeia as a unity of parts based upon a *propter hoc* sequence. The theoretical tension between the plot and its digressive episodes described by Aristotle is absent in the *Metamorphoses*, because there is no apparent plot that mediates, according to Ricoeur's definition of "emplotment," between the individual episodes or cycles and the whole story.[3] Through most of the poem there doesn't seem to be a whole story. The sense of an epic *holon* is not only submerged in the succession of episodes, it is annihilated. There is nothing but continual digression and renewal as each episode comes to a point of closure which in turn marks the beginning of the next one, "ut una ex alia nasci videat," as the 15th century commentary of Raphael Regius so aptly states. This is the primary feature opposing the *Metamorphoses* to the model of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which informs the dominant strain of the Western artificial

J.D. Ellsworth, "Ovid's 'Aeneid' Reconsidered (*Met.*13.623-14.608)," *Vergilius* 32 (1986): 27-32; and Richard Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), discussed in greater detail below. By contrast, Otto Steen Due, *Changing Forms: Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Copenhagen: C&M Dissertationes X, 1974), argues that Ovid's "revision" was not so radical as we now see it, because the *Aeneid* was fresh and not so canonical.

[3] "Emplotment" refers to any linguistic form, historical or fictional, "where the episodes would clearly be held together by the configuration" (*Time and Narrative*, II:9); elsewhere he calls emplotment "the triumph of concordance over discordance" (I:31).

or literary epic tradition. Epic narrative modeled after the Virgilian paradigm has a strong teleological orientation; its closure is usually prepared in the opening passages of the poem.[4] All or practically all of its episodes are related to the teleological intention, described by the ultimate goal of the hero. This type of epic is usually concerned with a central hero or group of heroes who carry out the teleological intention announced in the beginning of the poem. The prefiguration of closure early in the narrative remains active throughout the text, and contributes to the sense of progressive development and coherence that integrates the incidents of the story. The expectation of closure disciplines the story's episodic development to the authority of the end. It endows the episodes with explicit intentionality, and bestows on each unit a factor of delaying the end while simultaneously carrying the narrative closer to the end according to its internal necessity. Thus, the sequence of episodes stands between the hero at the beginning of the narrative and the accomplishment at the end, and they proceed according to a causal logic imposed by the outcome. In the order of events the causal (*propter hoc*) connection so prevails over pure succession that, as Ricoeur has noted, "a universal emerges that is ... the ordering itself erected as a type." The structure of the poem reflects a harmonious, ordered, purposeful world whose coherence is determined by its degree of orientation toward a manifest end.

The *Aeneid* exemplifies this strategy. In the *Aeneid*, a strong teleological principle governs the poem from its opening lines ("dum conderet

[4] Two studies of poetic teleology, very different in their approaches, are Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), and Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968).

urbem," I, 5; "tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem," I, 33). The hero suffers personally in the service of this universal purpose. Virgil allows the reader to witness the transcendental Olympian perspective on the poem's teleology in the conversation between Venus and Jupiter early in book I. Venus wants from Jove the assurance of an end ("quem das finem, rex magnae, laborum?" I, 241) that will make sense, incidentally passed along to the reader, for the meandering Aeneas and his band. Jupiter's reply, "volvens fatorum arcana" (I, 262), is so far-seeing that it sees beyond the close of the poem's action to reveal the ultimate consequences of that action. The participle "volvens," unrolling, implies an image of fate as a scroll or book, and determines that the poem's action is told within this book of fate, conceived as a prior text. The poem will unfold a necessary chain of events in a longer chain that will lead with ineluctable intentionality toward an ordered end. Aeneas will establish city walls and a way of life ("contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet" I, 264), which will be carried on in his heritage until the establishment of the endless Roman order ("imperium sine fine dedi" I, 279), which is an end in itself, an eternal state removed from the corruption of time and change. This apocalyptic revelation in the narrative takes place outside of the action of the *Aeneid*, that is, the revelation to Venus does not help Aeneas one bit. It discloses to the reader, however, a point of closure and provides a grasp of the whole, what Umberto Eco calls a macroproposition, with which the reader may synthesize and bestow sense on the poem's action.[5] From this perspective the reader dominates the poem's

[5] The notion of the "macroproposizione" is developed in *Lector in fabula* (Milano: Bompiani, 1979), 102 ff. Eco cites Teun Van Dijk for originating the term in a mimeograph paper, "Recalling and Summarizing Complex Discourses" (1975).

forward movement, understanding it in a way which is denied to the characters, who lack such a macroproposition. The reader is allowed share the viewpoint of the gods. Knowing the eventual end, the reader makes sense of each episode in relation to that end, understanding how it determines the hero's forward movement, and how it offers more or less resistance to the hero.

The macroproposition provided in Book I is gradually enlarged until Book VI, the poem's structural midpoint, where the universal and temporal organization of things hidden in the underworld is revealed. This is the centripetal focus of the *Aeneid*, where the action narrows to a passage through the diaphragm of a cave-entrance and poem's scope broadens to reveal its ultimate, diachronic, teleological vision. There, Aeneas sees the future Augustan empire as the fulfillment of order in the sublunary world, a final, whirling conjunction of the eternal, the temporal, and the political. Together with the reader, he learns there to understand the cyclical design that connects mortal life and world order, his own destiny and the history of Rome. Aeneas's vision is inclusive enough to provide a direct connection to the events and politics of reader's time. Ideally, this enables the reader to make sense of the present through Virgil's account of its origins in a fatal order which embraces both origin and end. Such a reading produces the effect of integrating and unifying diverse moments in time. Thus, when the tragic paradigm of causality is imposed upon historical events, present and past reciprocally confer meaning upon each other. The present seems to be a direct consequence (*propter hoc*) of the past, the past a direct cause of the present, and both are bound into a mutual and eternally stable construct. In order to understand how this effect is achieved, it may be helpful to consider

Ricoeur's view of symmetrical narrative as a configuration of time bound into a comprehensible unity.

> The recollection of the story governed as a whole by its way of ending constitutes an alternative to the representation of time as moving from the past forward into the future, according to the well-known metaphor of the arrow of time. It is as though recollection inverted the so-called natural order of time. By reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, we learn also to read time itself backward, as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences ("Narrative Time", 180).

The reader is never denied awareness of the fact that the poem's ultimate, ultranarrative point of closure involves the reader's identity as a consequence of the action of the poem. Aeneas will have left Troy in order to provide the possibility for a Roman identity in an Augustan empire. The macroproposition delivered to the reader is therefore absolute. Aeneas may feel lost, but the reader cannot. The *Aeneid* confirms the stable identity and unity of the self by providing a configuration of narrative symmetry whose order and stability is the universal that it presents as true. It proposes a pattern of internal coherence and correspondence around an apocalyptic center in which the wayward or endless nature of time is comprehended. Perhaps this is why the *Aeneid* has always occupied a prominent place in the Western canon, in spite of the different reasons that different ages have used to justify that place. It answers affirmatively the Western notion of a universe in which identity is determined within the coordinates of an overall design, of a structured world in which all parts majestically interconnect, and in which individual selfhood is realized through personal suffering and loss sustained in the service of its order. To be part of a design, whether classical or Christian,

makes suffering meaningful.[6] Pöschl's encomium of the poet in the final lines of *The Art of Vergil* reaffirms the idea that the poem's meaning to Western culture lies in the extraordinarily complete symmetrical design that it presents.

> He strives to make the whole plan present in every moment.... Moreover, Vergil expresses a religious feeling which precludes the isolation of any one part of life, any one individual or national destiny, any one life force or sensation.... He assumes a cosmic and historical continuity in which neither darkness nor light is dominant, but where the contrasts are united in a higher entity. This entity is given as a balance (172-3).

The wandering shape of Ovidian time

The *Metamorphoses* has been moralized (sometimes desperately so), but, unlike Virgil, Ovid has never been admired as an *anima naturaliter christiana.* Ovid's poem does not proceed in accordance with a prefigured point of closure, so there can be no *kairos* available for Christian appropriation, no analogue for Christian suffering implied in its design (hence the need for moralization). The contour of the *Metamorphoses* proceeds through a linked chain of discrete narratives, a strategy that seriously confounds discussion of unity and closure. An organic *propter hoc* connection between true metamorphosis stories is rarely possible because such stories by nature end in themselves, with a transformation. Brooks Otis frames the problem lightly: "after a woman has turned into a tree or a man into a stone, what more is there to do than to go on to another man or woman?" (*Ovid as an Epic Poet*, 45). From this perspective, if the *Metamorphoses* has identity as a whole, it is described only by the successive compilation of episodes, and apparently not by their active interdependence. Aristotle's criteria for unity

[6] See Kermode, "There is a need to speak humanly of a life's importance in realtion to a larger form--a need in the moment of existence to belong, to be related to a beginning and to an end" (*The Sense of an Ending*, 4).

cannot apply: the dramatic progression of the *Metamorphoses* would not be destroyed if one or many episodes were transposed or removed. Through most of the poem, the sequential order does not seem to matter. The first book opens in a historical and chronological mode, beginning at the world's beginning, but it soon shifts into a mythic, amorphous time frame, in which the succession of events does not proceed according to a strictly causal order.

In the *Metamorphoses*, the exordium is emphatically unconfining. When the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid* begin *in medias res*, according to epic convention, we understand that the narrative will describe a critical series in a larger, fatal chain of events. Significantly, the *Metamorphoses* does not establish that sense of crisis or fatality which an opening *in medias res* might imply. Ovid conspicuously avoids that convention by the widest possible margin. He begins the poem at the beginning of time.

> In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
> corpora. di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
> adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen! (I, 1-4)[7]
>
> My mind is bent to tell of bodies changed into new forms. Ye gods, for you yourselves have wrought the changes, breathe on these my undertakings, and bring down my song in unbroken

[7] More has been written on this tightly constructed, resonant exordium than on any other single moment in the *Metamorphoses*, but not in terms of the "medias res" conventions discussed here. On the *carmen perpetuum*'s apparent challenge to the opening of the *Aetia*, see R. Coleman, "Structure and Intention in the *Metamorphoses*," *Classical Quarterly* 21 (1971): 461-76 and C.D. Gilbert, "Ovid, *Met.*1.4." *Classical Quarterly* 26 (1976): 111-12. E. Mensching, in "Carmen perpetuum novum," *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969): 165-69, reads "novum" as belonging to "carmen perpetuum," arguing that the prologue proposes a new poetic genre. Citations from the *Metamorphoses* come primarily from the Loeb Classical Library edition, ed. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), with reference to the editions of Raphael Regius (Venice, 1493), Jacobus Pontanus (Antwerp, 1618; rpt. New York: Garland, 1976), and the Nicholas Heinsius text annotated by Cornelius Schrevelius (Leyden, 1661) and Borchardius Cnippingius (Amsterdam, 1683).

> strains from the world's very beginning even unto the present time.

It is noteworthy that the proem releases the poem's forward movement to wander. No initial macroproposition is provided that might shape the narrative from the reader's perspective. There is no announced point of arrival to keep the narrative on course, indeed, there seems to be no course to keep. The consequence of the open exordium of the *Metamorphoses* is to carry the poem outside of our causal understanding of historical time.

At first, the subject of time is introduced in the exordium as a formal ordering device, as if the poem would follow a historical order of events from the origin of the world to the poet's present. It will indeed maintain a more or less strict chronological order, as Otis has diligently mapped and proved,[8] but, after the first events of Book I, the time sequence will be obscure to less fastidious readers. After the invocation, it begins *ab origine mundi* with the creation of the quadripartite world out of chaos and proceeds swiftly through the four successive ages to the second creation of the world out of the flood (I, 5-312). Causal order is manifest in the succession of these episodes, and the reader is set on the path of a *propter hoc* mythic history. The four ages clearly follow the creation, the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha clearly cannot come before the flood. But the necessity of this order becomes more ambiguous as the poem narrows into a personal focus. Then the emphasis on personal responses gradually overcomes the emphasis on temporal order, and stories about individuals gradually replace the representation of history. The reader is led off the path of causal order as narrative succession becomes less a matter of necessity, and more a matter of poetic convenience. The great

[8] See *Ovid as an Epic Poet*, 47.

bulk of the *Metamorphoses* shifts the narrative outside of any sense of time, into an order of succession which seems merely the order of narrative telling, which does not respect any order prior to the textual order. The transitions between episodes rely increasingly on connective terms such as "post haec" or "interea" that imply random contingency.

The prologue can also be seen to introduce the subject of time as an object of transformation. Time, the medium of change, must itself undergo mutation in order to bring out (*deducere*) a form that will resist change. Time must be denatured, as it were, if the poem is to survive the world of impermanence that it narrates. Ovid proposes to replace time with poetry: to refigure time will be to transform it into song (a *carmen perpetuum*), into language (*dicere*). The poem will lead from its opening lines, which coincide with the beginning of the world, to an epilogue which declares its own status of timelessness and permanence, ending with the apotheosis of the poet; thus the poem will begin with chronology but end outside of time.

With no strict point of closure given to govern the shape of the poem other than the arrival "ad mea tempora," an open form results, a form which can accept, theoretically, infinite expansion, as long as episodes can be generated for it.[9] And Ovid generated lots of them, in an astounding variety of styles. The strategy of enchaining discrete stories shifts the authority of closure away from the *holon*, and it becomes a governing property rather of each individual episode. A new episode arises out of each passing one, and Ovid is not responsible either to a hero or to a heroic plot. Thus the scope of the poem is not determined by causality: as long as there are transformations

[9] See Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta*, 4th ed. (Milano: Bompiani, 1962).

to be narrated, the poem can continue without eschatology, apocalypses, or internally necessary limits.

The structural indetermination of a poem with no prefigured point of closure has the odd effect of making many readers nervous. We are comforted by the sense of definition that a stable textual environment confers, and even twentieth-century critics, who ought to be accustomed to anxiety, have been troubled by the blind perspective imposed upon the reader of the *Metamorphoses*. "It is apt to irritate us," Wilkinson says. "We lose the thread, forget the situation, or who is speaking to whom" (*Ovid Recalled*, 147). And Galinsky corroborates that "it is a disconcerting feeling to be caught up in the movement of the poem and not to be sure where it is taking us, or whether indeed it is supposed to take us anywhere" (*Ovid's "Metamorphosis"*, 89). These complaints result from the limitations imposed on the reader's perspective by the denial of closure, of any macroproposition or central orientation. Such structural indetermination destabilizes the reader's interpretive control over the course of the poem by effectively obscuring the coordinates that make sense of the poem's forward movement or give it meaning with respect to an end, and the final aim remains beyond understanding. In the *Aeneid*, the reader was invited to share in the perspective of the gods. In Ovid's poem, the reader is forced to share in some of the precariousness of the characters, who exist in a context where identity is transient, and selfhood is a mere temporary occurrence, never a universal or eternal fulfillment. If the *Aeneid* imposes an epic order around a central vision (revealed in the center of the narrative), the *Metamorphoses* subverts that order by counterposing its wandering configuration, its approximation of literary formlessness. Each individual episode is highly unified and

exquisitely structured, but Ovid's nameless genre avoids marshalling them into the symmetrical image which brings the presence of the center into relief. George Simmel has remarked that one effect of asymmetrical composition is to draw attention away from the interdependence of elements which together form a structure. "Asymmetrical forms," he says, "give each element more individual right, and allow more room for free and far-reaching connections" (*Brücke und Tür*, 205).[10] And Viktor Shklovsky notes that the system of piling up story after story "in an infinite series, until we have absolutely forgotten the first," is an "oriental" form in which our forgetting functions to draw attention away from any sense of development, either of plot or character. "Our attention stays fully on the present action, and the characters become nothing more than playing cards that render its manifestation possible" (*Teoria della prosa*, 66, 93). The current episode not only tends to obscure our perception of the whole, but to displace previous episodes in our memory (a phenomenon which must have been even more severe when texts were read from scrolls; it is easier to refer to previous text in a paginated codex). Once an episode is past, it drops from the text almost as if it never happened. The readerly tendency to form a macroproposition of one's own, whether the text provides it or not, is frustrated by the resulting fluid contour as well as by the sheer volume of narrative. The stories pile up, as Shklovsky said, until we lose track of them, and the boundaries that normally determine a coherent

[10] Compare Eco, "La poetica dell'opera aperta tende ... a promuovere nell'interprete atti di libertà cosciente, a porlo come centro attivo di una rete di relazione inesauribili, tra le quali egli instaura la propria forma, senza essere determinato da una *necessità* che gli prescrive i modi definitivi dell'organizzazione dell'opera fruita" (*Opera aperta*, 27). The interpretive subjectivity imposed by an open form will become a primary concern of Rabelais.

literary form drift away. Such a text will not reflect the Western ideal of a stable identity in a self-contained, coherent, structure.

Textual memory

The image of time which results from such a progression seems to deny the conclusively fatal shape of the Virgilian paradigm. The *post hoc* succession of episodes provides no comfort of unity, and no recapitulation of the present as a consequence of the past. The sequence of episodes evokes randomly advancing time, ungoverned by a configurational aspect. It is a world of continuous mutation where things come to be and pass away, as the episodes of the poem come and pass without recapitulation. When an episode is over in the text, it is supplanted by succeeding episodes. With rare exceptions, no episode holds consequences in the poem beyond its own closure. No textual memory institutes the recollection of previous episodes into a historical sensibility. The much praised transitions between episodes contribute to the dismantling of the expected function of textual memory, that of coagulating the text into a conceptual whole. Georges Poulet's concept of transitions as "instants de passage," is useful for understanding the way in which the episodic structure supplants memory and the transitions particalize the text. The "instant de passage" is the humanizing aspect of time

> Only angelic thought could pass from idea to idea and from instant to instant without a temporal medium to support the passage and join them. To this discontinuous angelic time there was opposed the continuity of human time. In mind as in body, in order to shift from one position to another, man was necessarily obliged to use the medium of continuous time.... The instant of passage is precisely what keeps different times from joining while nevertheless making it possible that they exist in succession.... Man lives in a present rooted in nothing, in a time that nowise relates to an earlier time (*Studies in Human Time*, 6; 148; 151).

The transitions between episodes serve the double function of providing a seamless continuity between any two successive parts of the poem while they

insure by their contingent nature that each segment remain autonomous and separate from any other. De Man suggests compellingly that in such constructions "memory becomes important as failure rather than as achievement" (*Blindness and Insight*, 90). The insertion of transitional moments between autonomous textual segments, he says, "supplants the naive illusion that memory would be capable of conquering the distance that separates the present from the past moment" (89). In Iser's terms, what Aristotle (and De Man) refer to as "memory" is equivalent to interpretation, in the sense that the text reconstituted in memory amounts to the reader's individual restructuring of the textual past.[11] A text like Ovid's that forgets its own past narrative procedure and encourages a similar process of forgetting on the part of its readers, insures against the reader's interpretive control of the text. The failure of memory confounds and resists the reader's attempts to keep the text whole. A text that continually forgets its own past describes a continually passing present time to the exclusion of a sense of historical time. In other words, events do not add up into a meaningful and all-embracing eschatological climax. The past lends no support to the meaning of the present. In this sense, the time scheme of the poem can be characterized as non-Christian. Rather, the past collects into a mythological pool which bears upon the present not as a sequence of causes, but merely as its cultural inheritance of stories. The identity of Rome is not the result of a series of heroic events; it is, like its real history, the result of a wandering, heterogloss collection of stories, so many that it is impossible to remember them all.

[11] See Iser, "Grasping a Text," in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

The structural indetermination of the *Metamorphoses* resolves into a text that breaks down at the hinges, at the "instants de passage," the transitions between episodes, and sets up the possibility for a dynamic and shifting identity. It is almost as if two different poems, the *carmen perpetuum* on the one hand and the prismatic variety of fables on the other, occupy the same words; and the coterminous identities exist in conflict with each other. The poem's tendency to fragment into an variety of myths prevails in the way the episodes have been treated as more or less self-contained narratives. Episodes have been excerpted for students since the Renaissance.[12] When we teach particles of the *Metamorphoses* in Great Books classes, or when we consult the poem ourselves in particles rather than reading it through, then the waywardness of the *carmen perpetuum*, its fluid contour, remains latent and inaccessible. There is nothing disconcerting about a desultory juxtaposition of episodes when it results from our own threadless reading habits, when we read episodes as if they were dictionary entries. We can follow Daphne with Galatea, and feel we have done the text no violence, when in fact we have denied the poem's property of confusing us.

The autonomy of the episodes encourages the particalization of the text and the reader's forgetfulness of its shape. Only rarely does the text refer back to previous episodes, and there is a distinct lack of cross-references among them. In Book III, however, a sort of textual memory is brought into play with dire results for one of the characters. Pentheus knows his textual

[12] See Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France*, 40: "One almost suspects that it was better known to the average student in the form of extracts than as a continuous narrative. The sheer length of the of work poses problems for the school timetable." In fact, abbreviated school editions survive from as early as 1542.

history. When the disrupting force of Bacchus threatens the order of Thebes, Pentheus attempts to preserve that order by invoking (in Virgilian strains!) the memory of episodes told by the poet a few hundred lines back.

> vosne, senes, mirer, qui longa per aequora vecti
> hac Tyron, hac profugos posuistis sede penantes,...
>
> este, precor, memores, (sc. iuvenes,) qua sitis stirpe creati,
> illiusque animos, qui multos perdidit unus,
> sumite serpentis! (III, 538-39, 543-45)
>
> You, ye elders, should I give you praise, who sailed the long reaches of the sea and planted here your Tyre, here your wandering penates.... Remember now, I pray, (sc. young men) from what seed you are sprung, and show the spirit of the serpent, who in his single strength killed many foes!

One of the traditional functions of foundation epic is to be a repository of the names and deeds of those heroes who established the civilization. The history of the people is used by Pentheus as an organizing force, invoked in defense of the selfhood of the nation. That selfhood is defined by the memory of stories which exist for Pentheus (and for the reader) in the text of the poem, and it is threatened by the current episode, the appearance of Bacchus. Pentheus strikes a possessive relationship with the text in which he appears. He treats Ovid's text with the care due to the historical record of his nation: his identity and the identity of Theban civilization depend on the currency of a mythic foundation which, up until the appearance of Bacchus, the text of the poem has provided. At the king's bidding, the slaves bring before him a captured Bacchant, Acoetes. The narrative progression that will bring Pentheus to his firsthand experience of Dionysian disorder is interrupted for the story Acoetes tells. Pentheus listens as Acoetes relates how the god turned a crew of sailors into dolphins. His narrative runs a little over one hundred lines. Pentheus reacts curiously:

> "Praebuimus longis" Pentheus "ambagibus aures,"

> inquit "ut ira mora vires absumere posset.
> praecipitem, famuli, rapite hunc cruciataque diris
> corpora tormentis Stygiae demittite nocti" (III, 692-5).
>
> Then Pentheus said: "We have lent ear to this long, rambling tale, that by such delay our anger might lose its might. Now hurry him away, you slaves, and rack his body with fearsome tortures, and so send him down to the Stygian night."

The remark is meant to underscore Pentheus' resolve, which is so fixed that storytelling cannot mollify it, not even long, rambling stories like the one Acoetes has told. The remark also illuminates a property of Ovid's poem, which is also long and wandering. Pentheus sees forgetfulness and the softening of intent as dangerous properties of such narrative. A long, intricate tale becomes a ideological threat. The order of the state could be seduced into anarchy by stories that do not reconfirm the purpose and form of the state.

Pentheus always speaks in Virgilian tones, and the direct verbal echoes from the *Aeneid* in his speeches are no accident. The continued success of his regime depends on a heroic, end-oriented, Virgilian concept of history. Acoetes, on the other hand, delivers an Ovidian tale in which beauty persuades resolve, and destinations are forgotten in the course of wandering. Pentheus collects himself against the danger ("perstat Echionides," the use of the patronymic here further serves to underscore an identity rooted in the character's sense of his past). The opposition lies between one character's sense of self collected in a patrilineal memory, and the other character's threat to that sense of self represented by the Acoetes's Ovidian narrative in which all selfhood is threatened with change. The long and rambling narrative that Acoetes tells actively undermines the epic sense that Pentheus seems to want, the monument to selfhood in which the deeds and lineage of the heroes are preserved and invested with meaning. Narrative which is "ambages" promotes

instability and forgetting (rather than identity rooted in the memory of the past heroes) because such narrative tends to wander away from any expressed teleological shape; it indulges in changes. Such wandering away from the expressed end is a prominent feature of Acoetes's story, its subject as well as its technique. Acoetes tells how he was willing to change the itinerary of his fishing boat at the whim of Bacchus, who asked to go toward Naxos, in the opposite direction of the fisherman's original destination. Acoetes lightly gave up his teleological intentions. And unlike Pentheus, Acoetes is not encumbered by a sense of patrimony. His father was a pauper, "moriensque mihi nihil ille reliquit/ praeter aquas: unum hoc possum adpellare paternum" (III, 590-91). His lineage fails to achieve epic standards, just as the *Metamorphoses* participates in popular literary genres. Acoetes is thus much better equipped than Pentheus to surrender to the Dionysian imperative that Pentheus so resists. Pentheus tries to hold out aristocratically against the dissolution of selfhood, against the relegation of his existence in the poem to the status of episode in a narrative which is long and rambling, rather than that of an epic hero, rooted in an unchanging past and carrying his identity into a *propter hoc* future. Ovid could not announce his point of arrival in the exordium because the very idea of a terminus falsifies the nature of a narrative that could end up anywhere, that is not bound to a single shape or necessity.

Even in the midst of his demise, Pentheus is notable for his memory of the text that has preceded him. When he is about to be torn to bits by his aunt Autonoe (III, 720), he tells her to remember and to draw a lesson from the shade of Actaeon, her son, whose dismemberment had been rendered shortly before Pentheus came into the poem. We remember Actaeon, but

Autonoe does not. "illa, quis Actaeon, nescit dextramque precanti/ abstulit" (III, 721). She does not know who Actaeon is, and she tears off the suppliant's right arm. Actaeon is available to Pentheus as an analogue to himself from the text's past, but to the frenzied bacchantes, there is no past to inform the present or upon which to base an idea of selfhood. Pentheus, in turn, is utterly deprived of his selfhood.

Pentheus is a bad reader of the *Metamorphoses*. He reads the poem as a Virgilian epic, collecting the narrative isotopes into a series of events of which he is himself the product. He is anxious to remain in the poem, have it be a Thebaid, an epic about his lineage. But a notion of selfhood based on the memory of what came before, the notion of integrated form, is against the nature of a poem in which mutability is the order of things, and selfhood is only a temporary form subject to sudden change. Pentheus does not respect the autonomy of the episodes. He works against the text's fundamental indifference to its own past, its tendency not to collect into a narrative development in which the meaning of the present is occulted in the past. In a sense, Pentheus tries to hold out against his passage from the status of epic hero to the status of episode. The nature of the *Metamorphoses* is such that no one character or plot can be central, no episode may dominate or endure. The remembrance of a Pentheus is no more ensured than that of any other episode in the poem. Pentheus reacts against his own brevity in the poem, and in his demise he is not even recognized by his mother.

The "Metamorphoses" as Rome's history

If the Aristotelian criteria for unity of action are laughable when applied to the *Metamorphoses*, it is nevertheless true that the narrative possesses continuity of action. It never breaks, not even between books. The

episodes are melded into each other so seamlessly that praising the poet's skill in transitions became, after Quintilian, a scholarly commonplace, present through the Renaissance, in the 17th century editions of Heinsius and Schrevelius, in Tiraboschi, and persisting into modern criticism. Praising the transitions, it seems, is an oblique manner of declaring that the poem holds together in a way that is obscured when its identity as a treasury prevails. The *carmen* does not merely proceed from story to story through ingenious transitions without an overall shape. If the poet's claim is taken at face value, the *Metamorphoses* is as much a history of Rome as the *Aeneid*. It is true that the history of Rome only enters into the poem explicitly in the third from last book, but it is not improper to suggest that the gradual emergence of the matter of Rome in the historical section of the work focuses the wayward text and provides it with a destination. The blind perspective of a wandering narrative progression helps to obscure the outline of Roman history which the poem subtly builds. The poem's function as a subversive history of the empire is only available to the reader in review from a position near the end of the work, and only when the reader interprets the text in a retrospective embrace that the text itself does not provide. That is, in order to apprehend the work as a foundation epic, the reader must actively oppose the tendency of the text to particalize into a bunch of autonomous stories, and supply the recapitulating intelligence that the text denies. However, even the reader who makes the effort is likely to find it repaid in ironic ways. It is difficult to turn the *Metamorphoses* to the glorification of Rome.

One of the functions of the poem's length is to place the episodes on an equal footing, to allow them, according to Shklovsky's characterization of "oriental" forms, to decay in the memory of the reader so they lose any claim

to centrality. Brevity is an important characteristic of episodes relative to the enormity of the text surrounding them. Richard Lanham's claims for a politically current Ovid may have some validity in this light. Discussing Ovid, Lanham tends to be playful. He creates a political persona for the poet to account for the generic peculiarities of the *Metamorphoses*. The resemblance the persona bears to Berkeley countercultural activists of the early 1970s does not make the fabric of Lanham's main argument less persuasive. He proposes that Ovid "saw through" the imperial propaganda represented by Augustus and disseminated by Virgil. The *Metamorphoses* stands as his anarchist vision of Rome, consolidated by a collection of stories, not by a single epic myth of origin in association with a universal plan. Lanham sees the poem's indefinite genre as a counterstatement, and therefore the expression of a political vision set in opposition to the one represented in the *Aeneid*. The poem accuses the Augustan appropriation of history. To the extent that the poem denies a causal temporal order, it could be seen as an anti-ideological vision, one that might delight in dismembering a Pentheus. History, as Ovid presents it, can only appear causally determined through vain self indulgence. Lanham argues that Ovid felt Rome lacked unifying principle, and that as it was a lie to propose a unifying principle to the world of flux and change, it was an even greater lie to associate that principle with the state. Lanham's Ovid sympathizes with the oppressed victims of Roman expansion, victims of Augustan self-glorification and self-divinity.

> The *Metamorphoses* is a compendium of attitudes, possible responses, a future as well as a past. Ovid might have put the argument this way: "Rome was not founded. The very idea of foundation, so basic to the *Aeneid*, and the city, conveys a false conception of how cultures grow. Civic nature no more than human nature comes into being this way...." Thus the very need for an authenticating myth, Augustus's need for a

> theatrical reality to make his Rome seem real, itself bespeaks a crisis (*The Motives of Eloquence*, 62).

Lanham does well to compare Ovid's poem to Virgil's as the subversive anthem of Roman civilization. The *Metamorphoses* certainly denies the presence of a central myth and even of a myth of centrality. In spite of the desires of a Pentheus or an Augustus, no entity of plot or character exists in the poem beyond the status of episode. Each episode presents an instance of closure. By implication, no temporal ruler or state will last longer in relation to time than one episode does in relation to the whole poem. Lanham says that Augustus was right to exile Ovid. "Ovid paid a political penalty for a political crime," that of undermining the state's fiction of itself. The Augustan program was built on the (fictional) premise that Rome is unique, "imperium sine fine." But the matter of Virgil's poem is subsumed in the *Metamorphoses* and made small by the plethora of myths and styles in which it is embedded. The wandering contour of the *Metamorphoses* provides Rome with a past that does not encourage the idea of a fixed place in the universal order, but rather of an episode among others, barely distinguishable in a world of flux. When the poem ends, time continues in the world.

While it is true that the story of the *Aeneid* enters into the *Metamorphoses* in miniature in the latter books, its place and function in the poem are uncharacteristic of the other episodes. The story of Aeneas does not exactly take on the status of episode. The routine episode in the *Metamorphoses* narrates a dramatic intrigue which results in the transformation of one or more characters. The sections of Books XIII and XIV which tell the Aeneas story are decidedly undramatic. They merely narrate a change of location while they provide the matrix for various embedded stories, a strategy Ovid used elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*.

Aeneas furnishes a means by which the narrative present of the poem may move from the Aegean westward toward Rome. The poem narrates Aeneas's westward movement, but only schematically presents his character and omits most of the heroic incidents familiar from Virgil's poem. Aeneas enters the *Metamorphoses* (XIII, 623) in a vignette sketched from the *Aeneid*:

> Non tamen eversam Troiae cum moenibus esse
> spem quoque fata sinunt: sacra et, sacra altera, patrem
> fert umeris, venerabile onus, Cythereius heros.
>
> And yet the fates did not permit Troy's hopes to perish with her walls. The heroic son of Cytherea bore away upon his shoulders her sacred images and, another sacred thing, his father, a venerable burden.

Then follows an itinerary of place names leading to Delos, where the consultation of the oracle is reduced to a half line, while the digressive metamorphosis story told by Anius, the priest of the oracle, is given forty lines. When the narrative of Aeneas resumes, it is told again in the *post hoc* terms of itinerary, a richly sonorous series of place names moving west to Sicily. Each place name marks an allusion to a potential (but untold) Ovidian tale of metamorphosis.

> et iam Dulichios portus Ithacamque Samonque
> Neritiasque domus, regnum fallacis Ulixis,
> praeter erant vecti: certatam lite deorum
> Ambraciam versique vident sub imagine saxum
> iudicis, Actiaco quae nunc ab Apolline nota est,
> vocalemque sua terram Dodonida quercu
> Chaonisque sinus, ubi nati rege Molosso
> inpia subiectis fugere incendia pennis.
> Proxima Phaeacum felicibus obsita pomis
> rura petunt, Epiros ab his regnataque vati
> Buthrotos Phrygio simulataque Troia tenetur;
> inde futurorum certi, quae cuncta fideli
> Priamides Helenus monitu Praedixerat, intrant
> Sicaniam: (XIII, 711-724).
>
> And now Dulichium's anchorage, Ithaca and Samos, the homes of Neritos, the false Ulysses' kingdom--past all these they sailed. Ambracia next, once object of heaven's strife, they saw, and the image of the judge once changed to stone--

> Ambracia, now famed for Actian Apollo's sake; Dodona's land, with its speaking oaks; Chaonia's sheltered bay, where the sons of King Molossus on new-grown wings escapes impious fires. Next they sought the land of the Phaeacians, set with fertile orchards, and landed at Buthrotos in Epirus with its mimic Troy, a city ruled by the Phrygian seer. There, having learned all that awaited them from the friendly prophecies of Helenus, Priam's son, they came to Sicily.

The story of Aeneas functions here as a continuing transitional device that allows the geographical focus of the poem to narrow toward Rome. When Aeneas reaches Sicily, it opens the opportunity in the narrative to introduce the contingent stories of Galatea, Acis and Polyphemus, Scylla and Glaucus. The matter of Aeneas and Dido is reduced to three lines, and the account of the itinerary of Aeneas resumes in the mode of "fugiens." While Book VI of the *Aeneid* comprises the revelatory centerpiece of Virgil's poem, it is consistent with Ovid's stress on personal as opposed to transcendental perspective that the entrance of the Cumaean Sybil into the *Metamorphoses* does not reveal universal order, but rather the Sybil's own personal sorrow. Ovid glosses the Virgilian Sibyl's famous "hoc opus, hic labor" line ironically when he says that Aeneas "cum duce Cumaea mollit sermone laborem" on their way up from Avernus. Again, a mollifying effect on resolute intentions is attributed to the activity of story telling.

The action that in Virgil's poem formed the central myth of Augustan civilization, then, appears in the *Metamorphoses* as transitional glue, and not even in such a fully realized form as to constitute "one episode among so many others," as Daniel Javitch has suggested (in "The *Orlando furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid*"). In a sense, Ovid managed to avoid the matter of the *Aeneid* among his tales. However, the story of Aeneas carries the poem toward its eventual closure, which becomes imminent for the first time in the *Metamorphoses* in the itinerary of Aeneas's journey. Ovid's

declaration in the exordium that his poem would be organized according to temporal order deflects perception of the poem's geographical organization. Between Book I and Book XIII the temporal order has been shadowy at best. The poem had shifted into mythic time. The narrative also gives the impression of having no geographical center. Although its audience would consist of urban Romans, the *Metamorphoses* avoids urban settings, and most of the episodes take place in indeterminate natural settings, in woods crossed by rivers. The blind perspective that the poem's wandering shape imposes on its readers is confirmed in a limited geographical perspective, with abrupt shifts of location which are made harder to justify with real geography by the use of obscure place names for familiar places. However, through the first thirteen books the narrative had not left the world of Greek cultural influence. And with the entrance of Aeneas into the poem, a geographical teleology is introduced. Aeneas's story is essentially not told, but Aeneas's voyage carries the location of discourse out of the East and toward Rome, where the poem will end. A subtle shift of perspective wreaks consequences over the entire poem as it is seen by the reader in retrospect. The stories that had accumulated in a timeless sequence, in an episodic rhythm of coming to be and passing away, are suddenly thrust into a historical mode. In a broad sense, the poem's temporal sequence spirals down from the creation of the world, the four ages and the events of Book I, it narrates the passions and the personal responses of the gods and their intermixtures with humans, it wanders through the world of Greek culture in the East, travels west with Aeneas, and eventually focuses on the poet's city and on his own self. As this focus narrows, the poem's function as a foundation epic comes into view. Fate is increasingly invoked in the final books as the agent that draws the

narrative toward its (much debated) Augustan ending, while memory emerges as the basis of knowledge and, in the case of Romulus, of salvation.

The hidden meaning

As the poem draws toward closure, Pythagoras delivers a lecture which has been seen in the past as the discursive summation of the *Metamorphoses*, its lesson, as it were. The figure of Pythagoras is now accepted as ironic, even clownish, although some critics have argued that Pythagoras's oration presents significant thematic correspondences with Book I, recapitulating the theme of the quadripartite universe, and that it justifies the wandering shape of the bulk of the poem.[13] The Pythagorean episode is important precisely because of its failure to recapitulate the poem and to install restrospective intelligence that might interpret the previous text. The lecture is distinguished from the rest of the text by its discursive (as opposed to fabular) presentation, and by its appearance close to the end of the poem, in the place where the secret pattern of the narrative conventionally might be revealed. Pythagoras promises the long awaited, long hidden aerial viewpoint of the labyrinthine

[13] Harold Skulsky goes so far as to call Pythagoras "a harlequin figure" in *Metamorphosis: The Mind in Exile* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). The hazards of taking Pythagoras seriously are also pointed out by Frederick Ahl, *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); and P. DeLacy, "Philosophical Doctrine and Poetic Technique in Ovid," *Classical Journal* 43 (1947): 153-161. The irony of the episode is less certain to Charles Segal, "Myth and Philosophy in the *Metamorphoses*," *American Journal of Philology* 90 (1969): 257-292; and Maria Colavito, "Pythagorean Philosophy in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*", diss., SUNY Stony Brook, 1987. 20th century readers who take the episode without irony tend to see it as a structural recapitulation of the poem, as D. Little, "The Speech of Pythagoras in *Metamorphoses* 15 and the Structure of the *Metamorphoses*," *Hermes* 98 (1970): 340-360; and Gregson Davis, "The Problem of Closure in a Carmen Perpetuum: Aspects of Thematic Recapitulation in Ovid *Met.* 15," *Grazer Beiträge* 9 (1980): 123-132, whence "the significant fact remains that the cosmogony which provides a grand overture to the poem is here regurgitated by a *persona* who figures prominently in the grandiose finale of the poem."

world of the *Metamorphoses*, the fixed and exterior viewpoint that will frame the thousand-mile-long creature. The reader is told that Pythagoras will provide this lofty perspective, and that he will teach the true nature of things, and reveal the obscured order hidden in Ovid's fictional universe.

> et rerum causas et, quid natura, docebat,
> quid deus, unde nives, quae fulminis esset origo
> Iuppiter an venti discussa nube tonarent,
> quid quateret terras, qua sidera lege mearent
> et quodcumque latet (XV, 68-72)
>
> He would teach the causes of things and what their nature is: what God is, whence come the snows, what is the origin of lightning, whether it is Jupiter or the winds that thunder from the riven clouds, what causes the earth to quake, by what law the stars perform their courses, and whatever else is hidden from men's knowledge.

But from his transcendental viewpoint, the world seems to take on the same wandering shape that we have described as the poem's narrative contour. The promised revelation of hidden order returns the reader to the poem's surface appearance.

> iuvat ire per alta
> astra, iuvat terris et inerti sede relicta
> nube vehi validique umeris insistere Atlantis
> palantesque homines passim et rationis egentes
> despectare procul trepidosque obitumque tementes
> sic exhortari seriemque evolvere fati! (XV, 147-153)
>
> It is a delight to take one's way along the starry firmament and, leaving the earth and its dull regions behind, to ride on the clouds, to take stand on stout Atlas's shoulders and see far below men wandering aimlessly, devoid of reason, anxious and in fear of the hereafter, thus to exhort them and unroll the book of fate.

Indeed, the lofty perspective reveals the image of narrative succession that has been described in the order of the poem: "homines palantes passim," men wandering around, "rationis egentes," without order. The "seriem evolvere fati," the unrolling of the sequence of fate that constitutes the subject of his sermon, is problematic. The echo of Jupiter's "volvens fatorum arcana" from

Book I of the *Aeneid* is unmistakable. But where the divine perspective in the *Aeneid* provided a unifying macroproposition early in the narrative, Ovid has saved for nearly last a human reading of the book of fate that will not help the reader to know more than the text of the poem has already demonstrated. Using a linguistic formula that will be contradicted in the poem's epilogue, Pythagoras declares that time, slowly gnawing with its teeth, destroys all things, and no identity resists death ("tempus edax rerum, tuque, invidiosa vetustas,/ omnia destruitis vitiataque dentibus aevi/ paulatim lenta consumitis omnia morte," XV, 234-5). In conjunction with this formula, the lecture delivers in spades the sort of facile *sententiae* to which the poem might be reduced. It does not seem to matter that the pronouncements sometimes contradict each other.

> omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc
> huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus
> spiritus...
> nihil est toto, quod perstat, in orbe.
> cuncta fluunt, omnisque vagans formatur imago;
> ipsa quoque absiduo labuntur tempora motu,
> non secus ac flumen (XV, 165-67; 176-180).
>
> All things are changing; nothing dies. The spirit wanders, comes now here, now there, and occupies whatever frame it pleases.... There is nothing in all the world that keeps its form. All things are in a state of flux, and everything is brought into being with a changing nature. Time itself flows on in constant motion, just like a river.

These lines are a mere sample. The lecture becomes repetitious with Stoic commonplaces, and especially with the notion of impermanence, a notion which should come as no surprise to anyone who had read the preceding fourteen books of the poem. The banality of the revelation is profound. Pythagoras claims to know the "seriem fati," and the fruit borne of his insider's knowledge is only an old saw about time like a river and, to quote Harold Skulsky's clever remark, anecdotes worthy of Ripley's Believe It or

Not. The lecture reflects upon the narrative that precedes it as if it contained the apocalyptic knowledge that would make sense of the poem's peripeteia. The sense it makes might have been bought more cheaply.

Pythagoras also glosses the vision of metempsychosis that Virgil provided in Book VI of the *Aeneid*, but with the difference that it here lacks the comforting force of intentionality that ordered Virgil's world. Souls occupy "quoslibet artus," and cities and empires come and go. The essential equality of the episodes, the device which denies centrality to Aeneas, to Augustus and to Rome, is made explicit here. Virgil's poem gestures toward an idea of "imperium sine fine," but Pythagoras points out, confirming Pentheus's lesson, that all that remains of the urban civilizations of the past are their names ("Oedipodioniae quid sunt, nisi nomina, Thebae?/ quid Pandioniae restant, nisi nomen, Athenae?" XV, 429-30). The oblique message of these lines is that language, and in particular "nomen," is a form that might resist the mutability to which all material is subject.

If Ovid is ironizing the place of deferred narrative revelation in the oration of Pythagoras, the irony rests in the philosopher's futile claim to transcendent knowledge of the mysteries of the textual world in which he appears. At this point, the difference collapses between the intratextual explicator of the poem (the poem's character, Pythagoras, explaining the poem's meanings) and the poem's textual procedure. Pythagoras cannot explain the fictional world in which he participates. He finally gives up the effort, realizing that he will never truly unroll the book of fate without eventually weaving a text of his own as long and detailed and full of stories as the *Metamorphoses* itself. He admits his failure in lines which deliberately echo the lexical components of the exordium, "In nova fert animus mutatas

dicere formas/corpora." The philosopher/clown's lecture cannot "capture in words" (consequar verbis) the theme of transformation. He cannot match the poet's achievement.

> Desinet ante dies et in alto Phoebus anhelos
> aequore tinguet equos, quam consequar omnia verbis
> in species translata novas (XV, 418-20).
>
> The day will come to an end and Phoebus will bathe his panting horses in the deep waters of the sea before I tell of all the things which have assumed new forms.

As much like a river as time is, it cannot be summarized or reduced by merely saying so. A vast narration is required if time is to refigured and the truth about the world is going to be told. The river is an apt metaphor for the *Metamorphoses*, with its meandering shape and its limited perspective. Yet, to tell us that time is like a river concedes only abbreviated knowledge of the world of the poem. The wisdom of Pythagoras is limited and human. The *vagans imago* that Pythagoras describes is a human perspective, the one Iser said is the lot of all readers, to have "a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend." The moving viewpoint perceives a *vagans imago*, corresponding to the pluralistic pole of the poem's identity. Pythagoras, wise as he may be, is unable to stand outside of the world of the *Metamorphoses*, which flows over him like a river. In order to explain it, he admits, he would have to reproduce a version of it, he would have to tell all the stories.

The record of fate

His admission of failure is a key to understanding Ovid's project, which is nothing less than to unroll a simulacrum of the book of fate. In fact, the image of fate as a book is offered in the text as the very model of the formless genre of the *Metamorphoses*. Paradoxically, it does not seem to

imply fatality in the eschatological sense, as it did in the *Aeneid*. The book of fate in the text of the *Metamorphoses* possesses the same vast size, the same disjunct configuration the poem does, and, like the poem, it denies any notion of fatality or closure. The image of fate in the *Metamorphoses* is nothing more than episode leading into episode with barely any causal connection, only a *post hoc* series of events that can go on forever.

In Virgil's work, the book of fate appeared very near the beginning of the poem, cited by Jupiter as a prior text of divine origins which enclosed the text of the epic. Virgil told the vatic truth to the extent that he accurately reproduced or quoted a segment of this prior text. In the *Metamorphoses*, the citation of the book of fate comes very near the last lines. Immediately prior to the transformation of Julius Caesar into a star, the reader witnesses a conversation on the topic of the fate of Rome between Venus and Jupiter which again reproduces the occasion of the Jupiter's "volvens fatorum arcana" in Book I of the *Aeneid*. Jupiter's revelation is considerably less far-reaching in Ovid's treatment, spanning only two generations and not the three + thirty + three hundred extension given in Virgil's poem. He describes the book to Venus as *tabularia rerum molimine vasto*, the record of things in a massive structure.

> cernes illic molimine vasto
> ex aere et solido rerum tabularia ferro,
> quae neque concussum caeli neque fulminis iram
> nec metuunt ullas tuta atque aeterna ruinas (XV, 809-812).
>
> Thou shalt there behold the records of all that happens on tablets of brass and solid iron, a massive structure, tablets which fear neither the crashing of the sky, nor the lightning's fearful power, nor any destructive shocks which may befall, being eternal and secure.

Jupiter declares that he has read this massive structure, memorized it, and assimilated it in his *animus* ("legi ipse animoque notavi"). A stable, written

record of all fate's changes, the primal text, stands in its entirety before the divine mind, *sub specie aeternitatis*. As in the first book of the *Aeneid*, the source of the god's knowledge is a prior text that includes the text of the poem. But here the record of fate is presented as the only immutable structure in a world in which mutability governs all things. Although Venus is told that nothing keeps her from reading it ("intres licet ipsa sororum/ tecta trium"), it is curious that Jupiter alone among all the characters of the *Metamorphoses* has done so. We are not told whether the knowledge he gains there is a function of his divinity and of his place in the hierarchy of gods or vice versa. Nevertheless, to read, understand and memorize this primal text is to possess divine knowledge. The tablets stand opposed to Pythagoras's wisdom, which was overheard, received in the cultural parcel of stories into which he was born, and which consists in passing the stories along. Pythagoras had provided simple commonplaces and bizarre examples asserting the *vagans imago* and the mutability of all things. The "massive structure" is presented as written and immutable, an internally stable narration existing outside of time. It is the source of transcendent knowledge.

This record also stands in opposition to the ecphrasis on the palace of Fama in Book XII, 39-63, where knowledge is vocal ("fama" in the sense of "rumor") and hence ephemeral.[14] The palace and the *tabularia* are both vast structures of brass which promise a totalizing revelation (it is situated "inter

[14] Nancy Zumwalt reads this passage as casting doubt on the rewards of heroic repute and, by extension, the authority of heroic poetry. Her conclusions are not incompatable with the examination of the Pentheus episode above. "In Book 12 Ovbid will undercut the notion, long fostered by both poets and historians, that lasting *fama* is the reward conferred upon *virtus*, by discrediting both. He will also discredit the reliability of *fama* in the sense of tradition" (212). See her "*Fama Subversa*: Theme and Structure in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 12." *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10 (1977): 215-217.

terrasque fretumque/ caelestesque plagas, triplicis confinia mundi" 39-40; 'twixt land and sea and sky, the meeting-point of the three-fold universe). But in the palace of Fama knowledge such as Jupiter possesses is ultimately unavailable because it is confused and inarticulate. The palace is a network of caverns, "innumerosque aditus ac mille foramina tectis/ addidit" (XII, 44). The language which would reveal knowledge there ultimately resolves into an unintelligible hum, "qualia de pelagi, siquis procul audiat, undis," (XII, 50) and the stories that are told only get longer with each retelling ("mensuraque ficti/ crescit, et auditis aliquid novus adicit auctor" XII, 57-8). The information provided by Pythagoras, that time is like a river, might end in such unintelligible waves as these. The medium of communication in Fama's palace is the spoken word. The knowledge in the *tabularia rerum*, however, is "incisa," engraved with written language, and does not change. Its record is exact.

The *topos* of fate as a book is a fundamental and pervasive metaphor that spans not only Western culture but, it would seem, all literate cultures, including Semitic and Oriental cultures.[15] But the correlation between fate and script acquires special significance in the context of Ovid's poem to the extent that the book of fate might resemble the text of the *Metamorphoses*. As in the *Aeneid*, the poem is offered as a quotation of the primal text, and the status of the poet is raised from that of a spinner of frivolous fictions to that of a *scriba fati*. The identification between fate and script carries as its corollary an identification between fate and language. Fate is the medium which describes the course of events, which, in effect, brings events into

[15] See Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 309, 342.

existence, much as the poet brings the events of his poem into existence through the medium of poetry. In this sense, the *Metamorphoses* displaces its prior text, the *tabularia rerum*. The prior text cannot be read or understood except through the mediation of the present text, which circumscribes the limits of our knowledge. The *Metamorphoses* interprets the book of fate by an act of re-creation, and by substituting the enchained sequence of stories for the temporal sequence of events. In this way, it fulfills the promise of the exordium, to replace time with language.

Yet we might imagine the *tabularia rerum molimine vasto* reads very much like the *Metamorphoses*. Unlike the one in the *Aeneid*, Ovid's vast book of fate leads to no conclusion, and not even the thread of the Julian *gens* lasts more than a couple of generations. The essential identity of this *tabularia rerum* with the *Metamorphoses* is manifest in the parallel lexical and rhetorical formulations that relate the description of the tablets and the poem's epilogue. The tablets are eternal, so that "neque concussum caeli neque fulminis iram/ nec metuunt ullas ... ruinas." The *Metamorphoses* is likewise so resistant that "nec Iovis ira nec ignis/ nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas." Along with the repetition of the "nec...nec...nec" anaphora, there is a thematic repetition. The poem that narrates the vicissitudes of mutation is presented as a paradoxically immutable structure that, like the tablets of fate, exists outside of the world of time and change. The "edax vetustas" formula explicitly contradicts Pythagoras's assertion that age devours all things (tempus edax rerum, tuque, invidiosa vetustas,/ omnia destruitis). The analogy between the tablets of fate and the *Metamorphoses* carries alluring implications. If Jupiter alone of the poem's characters has read the tablets (although, as he says, anyone may do so), and gained divine wisdom from his reading, are we to

understand the *Metamorphoses* as a book of transcendent knowledge? Could Quintilian have been so wrong about Ovid's "lack of seriousness"? From this perspective, the less obvious pole of the poem's dynamic takes precedence. The *Metamorphoses* claims to be no less than a revelation of the procedure of time, recalled in its entirety *sub specie aeternitatis*. The fact that the wandering shape of the poem and its multiplicity of episodes make it virtually impossible for the reader to gain such an expansive perspective on it only serves to further confirm the essential identification between the poem and its model. Like the procedure of fate, the procedure of the poem is too vast to be contained in a synthetic reduction. Not even Pythagoras could do it.

The claim here is that Ovid has achieved the role of the *vates* by reproducing in written and immutable hexameters a simulacrum of the written and immutable *tabularia rerum*. The record of fate maintains the same relationship to the *Metamorphoses* as it did to the *Aeneid* in Virgil's poem, that of the prior text which the vatic poet has dared to copy. Of course, the prior text is merely a projection of the fictional world of the *Metamorphoses*, and the vatic status that its presence affords the poet is part of the code of meanings that poem invents for itself. In the self-contained world of the poem, reference to a fated and organized structure of meaning outside of the text is impossible precisely because the text constitutes its own truth value by correspondence to a fictional prior text of its own invention. The poem is true by virtue of its conformity to the *tabularia rerum*, a key that the poet invents. This fictional structure serves as the interpretive instrument to the text of the poem which constitutes it. Nevertheless, within the fictional world of the poem, its eternal status confers prophetic significance on the poem, making it no less than a transcription of divine knowledge. The prior text is

a text that we cannot read or consult except as it is presented to us by the *Metamorphoses*. We are thus returned to the wandering, impenetrable surface of the narrative, its status as a collection of disjoined stories, as the substance of a divine revelation. Having read the *Metamorphoses*, we know what Jupiter knows: a wandering, *post hoc* series of events comprising all the passions, styles, tropes and literary conventions Ovid had available to him.

The poet surveys his work

The final image of transcendence is narrated in the closing lines of the epilogue, where the poem is tied off into a complete "opus," and poet is said to leave his "better part" in the text of the poem, which will provide the poet's immortality.

> Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
> nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.
> cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
> ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi;
> parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
> astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum (XV, 873-876).
>
> Now I have made a work that neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire nor sword, nor the gnawing tooth of time shall ever be able to unmake. When it will, let that day come which has no power save over this mortal frame, and end the span of my uncertain years. Still in my better part I shall be borne immortal far beyond the lofty stars and I shall have an undying name.

Ovid's epilogue is a self-fulfilling prophecy--the reader fulfills it each time it is read (in much the same way that each reader of the *Aeneid*, coming upon the lines "imperium sine fine dedi," confirms Jupiter's prophecy in the act of reading it). The expression of the work of art as a creation which challenges and surpasses human time is a popular *topos*, best known perhaps in the closing lines of the *Georgics* and in Horace's "exegi monumentum aere perennius" (C.III, 30), which Ovid is clearly elaborating here. The poem's ability to survive time as a linguistic form, quite apart from its truth or

falsehood, acquires significance that exceeds that of any part of its text. The poet has accomplished what his Pythagoras was unable to do, that is, to convert the procedure of time into language, a long series of stories without closure, fixed and entire. The apparent paradox between the subject of the *Metamorphoses*, which would seem to contradict the very idea of fixity, and the epilogue, forces a distance between the epilogue and the rest of the poem. The epilogue, in fact, stands outside of the narrative and comments on it from an observational standpoint. It asserts the quality of the *opus* as the poet's indelible victory chant for having conquered the nature of matter with language: "materiam superabat opus" (II, 5).

In the epilogue the poet momentarily stands outside the work as an observing consciousness, in a position resembling that of a reader in the act of retrospective observation. The text applies a reader's consciousness to the finished work. It is this observational, reflexive standpoint that furnishes the conceptual relationship among the diverse parts that makes the poem cohere. The ongoing narrative seems to take no notice of its own procedure or to ever recollect itself into a coherent unity. It finally depends on the mediation of a reader's understanding to bring a sense of formal totality to the poem. Indeed, the text performs this act of consciousness for the reader by standing outside of its own narrative and considering it whole. The poem becomes its own best reader by furnishing the consciousness that will make its temporal movement cohere into an atemporal and finished form, the "opus" that survives the world of change that it narrates. The effect of the epilogue on the poem is not terribly different from the that of the final constellation image of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés*, which seems to escape from the destruction to which everything else has succumbed. Interpreting the image

of Mallarmé's constellation, Blanchot said that in the poem "the dispersion takes on the form and appearance of unity" (*Le Livre à venir*, 286). In the *Metamorphoses*, this external viewpoint, disclosing the overview of the poet surveying his poem, lasts for only two lines before the poet alchemically occults himself into the text in a final act of transformation, in which he literally joins the constellation he has made, borne off among the lofty stars.

Ovid's poem closes with the transformation of the poet into the poem that he has written, the work's final metamorphosis and a consummate appropriation by the poet of his work. The epilogue refers back to the *animus* and *corpus* established in the opening line of the exordium. The poet's body (*corpus*) will participate in the world of change that is the poem's subject. The poem carries the poet's *animus* (the faculty that in the first line of the prologue expressed the intention of narrating the world of changes), his "pars melior," into a permanent body conceived as language, as nomen. The apotheosis of the poet takes place in vertical space, "super alta perennis/ astra ferar." In a sense, the poet achieves in the closing lines the aerial perspective that Pythagoras had attempted ("iuvat ire per alta astra"). Unlike Pythagoras, he does not draw from the astral perspective homiletic conclusions on the conduct of life or point out the chaotic nature of human activities. He calls attention, rather, to the poem as an autonomous linguistic form possessing its own totality and permanence apart from the world that it describes. As a character in the *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras cannot stand outside the poem or perceive it as a poetic universe the way the poet does in the epilogue. On the other hand, in order for the poet's apotheosis to take place, the poet must enter the poem as a character and join the linguisitic universe that he has created. Participating in the measure of totality manifest in the poetic form,

the poet projects himself into a new experience of temporality, into a time that is no longer the fallen temporality of mutable existence. The artist is suspended, carried aloft in the time structure of the work that he has made. This final transformation underscores the authenticating function of the work, the literary enterprise as a project of self-realization, that elevates the writer above his original identity, in this case, literally to the stars. From his lofty perspective, the poet perceives a textual world that does not participate in the material world and so is not susceptible to temporal corruption. The price the poet pays for realizing himself in such a form is that in order to escape the temporality of the material world, the poet too must join the linguistic universe as a particle of language, which he does by becoming, in the poem's last transformation, a "nomen."

It is remarkable how often the loss of speech on the part of the character undergoing transformation is underscored as a primary condition of change. To cite a few examples, Io, taking on the form of a cow, attempted to voice her complaints, but could only moo ("conatoque queri mugitus edidit ore/ pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est" I, 637-8). Cadmus, changing from old man to serpent, calls to his wife and finds his tongue already cleft, and words fail him ("ille quidem vult plura loqui, sed lingua repente/ in partes est fissa duas, nec verba volenti/ sufficiunt" IV, 585-87). Myrrha prays to be annihilated and she is changed into a tree; "even as she spoke earth closed over her legs" ("nam crura loquentis terra supervenit," X, 489). The poet Philammon, shot by Diana in the tongue with an arrow, perishes trying to speak ("conatemque loqui cum sanguine vita reliquit" XI, 327). Actaeon longs to cry out, but words fail his desire ("verba animo desunt" III, 231). The narration of the character's loss of the speech faculty is

so frequent that variations on the formula "loqui conatur" become a common formula announcing the closure of a metamorphosis. There is a pattern in which each transformation describes the loss of language. The loss of speech marks the end of the character's existence as a character, as a speaking part of the poem. In an important sense, the character's existence depends upon the possession of speech. A correlation of the equation between script and fate, the equation of language with ontology provides the foundation for the enigma of the epilogue. The ongoing language of the poem overcomes the loss of speech entailed in many or most of the individual episodes. The poem outlasts its characters by always going on, providing more language. In the epilogue, the poet may die, yet in his better part shall he be borne immortal far beyond the lofty stars and shall have an undying *nomen*, a status that has been denied by everything that has come before it in the text. Upon a world in which all form is mutable, the poet has imposed the enchained hexameters of his poem. In a world in which existence depends upon the possession of language, the poet has insured his existence by generating language, which, in the final transformation, becomes the poet's self: "nomenque erit indelebile nostrum," I shall have an undying name; "ore legar populi," I shall have mention on men's lips.

The epilogue's controlling idea, that only language endures and survives the world of mutable forms, is prepared in the image of the *tabularia rerum molimine vasto*: an endless narration of changes that reproduces the world's store of wisdom. The Pythagoras episode emphasizes the ironic fact that the transcendent wisdom contained there cannot be reduced to an aphoristic moral or a systematic ethics. The omniscient perspective of the *tabularia rerum* adds up to nothing more than the procedure of the

Metamorphoses itself, a perpetual song whose bewildering succession of episodes and anarchical formlessness finally mirror the very procedures of fate. The poem's enchained hexameters fix language into a permanent order whose shape, like that of the primal text, is impossible to determine. Its truth value lies in the identity it establishes between fate and the poem, fate as a text that imparts wisdom to those who read it, and the poem as its simulacrum, which presents a perpetual sequence of episodes. In order to be true, it must be massive, detailed, inclusive, narrating an endless succession of events which nevertheless cohere into an unbroken song.

Chapter 2

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Renaissance *Copia*

The *Metamorphoses* exercized a powerful fascination over Renaissance readers. Humanist scholars engaged in recuperating their classical heritage understandably regarded the *Metamorphoses* as one of the canonical texts, an encyclopedic store of ancient knowledge and poetic or rhetorical ornament, incorporating the whole range of classical literary insights and styles. They often cited it as a model of *copia* for its rich poetic texture and for its stories, lore and information that might have disappeared had Ovid not provided for its survival. There is no need to rehearse the direct fortune of the *Metamorphoses* in Renaissance literature: it would be redundant to demonstrate the presence of the poem as an important subtext in Renaissance poetry. Even in the 16th century, scholars were quick to show how Ariosto and other poets mined Ovid's poem for narrative material.[1] It is necessary to show, rather, how the dynamic tensions of the *Metamorphoses*, at once a vast, shapeless collection of stories and a fixed record of divine knowledge, a catalogue of literary styles and a subversion of literary meaning, informed and modeled Renaissance ideas of *copia.*

[1] One of Ariosto's earliest editors, Lodovico Dolce, appended a "Brieve Dimostramento di Molte Comparationi et Sentenze Dall'Ariosto in Diversi Autori Imitati" to his 1542 edition published by Giolito. For studies of 16th century appraisals of Ariosto in relation to his sources, see Daniel Javitch, "Sixteenth Century Commentaries on Imitations in the *Orlando furioso*, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 34 (1986): 221-250, and "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 215-239.

Ovid's Christian poem

Scholars in the Medieval period sought Christian allegories in the *Metamorphoses*.[2] Since the *Metamorphoses* does not offer an image of eschatological time that might coincide with the Christian program, their propagandistic interests favored dividing the poem into a treasury of discrete stories. In other words, to apply a monist interpretation to the poem's plural surfaces, Medieval commentators passed by its salient narrative continuity and broke the poem down into its parts, seeking to articulate the "hidden" Christian sense that each Ovidian episode might conceal. Under such a program, the allegories superceded the text in importance, and, when they were printed autonomously, in fact.

Moralizations of the stories such as those collected in *Ovidius moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius (Pierre Bersuire, d.1362) were popular

[2] For Ovid's Medieval fortune, see Lester K. Born, "Ovid and Allegory." *Speculum* 9 (1934): 362-79; Giovanni Pansa, *Ovidio nel medioevo e nella tradizione popolare*, (Sulmona: Caroselli, 1924), and especially Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. Barbara F. Sessions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953). For the Renaissance Ovid, see R.H. Coon, "The Vogue of Ovid Since the Renaissance," *Classical Journal* 25 (1929-30): 277-290; M. Doran, "Some Renaissance 'Ovids'," in B. B. Sloate, ed., *Literature and Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964) 44-62; Bodo Guthmüller, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare: Formen und Funktionen der volkssprachlichen Wiedergabe klassischer in der italienischen Renaissance*, (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1981), including a survey of Ovidian texts in Renaissance libraries; Henri Lamarque and G. Soubelle, eds., *Ovide en France dans la Rennaissance*, (Toulouse: Publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1981), which compares the relative number of editions of Ovid (300), Virgil (100), and Horace (90) that appeared between 1490 and 1610; Christina Montagnani, "Il Commento al 'Teseida' di Pier Andrea De' Bassi e la tradizione di Ovidio nel primo Quattrocento," *Interpres* 5 (1983-84): 7-33; and Ann Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France*, (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1982), to which some of the following comments are indebted. For a cogent discussion on the differences between medieval readings of the *Metamorphoses* and Ariosto's appreciation of the poem, see Daniel Javitch, "Rescuing Ovid from the Allegorizors," *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): 97-107.

through the 16th century.[3] The publishing house of Badius Ascensius revived Berchorius's commentary in Paris in 1509, extracting it from its setting as the 15th book of the massive *Reductium morale*. It was later widely disseminated in cheaply produced editions, often wrongly attributed to the 14th century Welsh Dominican friar Thomas Walleys, and printed on undistinguished paper in crowded, heavily leaded (and arcanely abbreviated) Gothic type, with minimal margins on the page.[4] These circulated widely among a conservative yet forward-looking clergy that required plausible moral legitimization before consenting to consider the use of pagan texts.[5] The prefatory letter defines the work as a handbook for preachers ("opus videlicet ipsum predicatoribus"), who might make use of the moralized tales to ornament their sermons, thus appropriating Ovid's tales for doctrinal purposes.

Allegorical poetics depend upon a pre-literary idea of truth, a constant and objective abstract truth to which language seeks to conform. Interpreting a text as alien to the idea of prelinguistic truth as the *Metamorphoses*,

[3] *Ovidius Moralizatus*, a Latin prose commentary, should not be confused with the vernacular *Ovide moralisé* in verse, which was enormously popular in various versions in the 14th and 15th centuries, or the *Bible des poetes*, a vernacular commentary that has also been attributed to Thomas Walleys. Other "moralized" Ovids include the 12th century prose *Narrationes fabularum* by Arnolphe d'Orléans, the 13th century *Integumenta Ovidii* by John of Garland, and the 14th century *Allegoriae* by Dante's friend, Giovanni Del Virgilio. For a full text and critical discussion of the Berchorius commentary, see Fausto Ghisalberti, "'L'Ovidius Moralizatus' di Pierre Bersuire," *Studj romanzi*, 23 (1933): 5-136. For other studies of Berchorius see the bibliography compiled by J. Engels, "Berchorius I," *Vivarium* 2 (1964): 62-124.

[4] The copy in the Pierpont Morgan Library, *Methamorphosis Ovidiana a magistro Thoma Walleis Anglico professione praedicatorum sub SS. Dominico explanata*, Lyons, 1511, is one such cheap edition. All citations below are from the Lyons, 1511 text.

[5] For a comprehensive history of the late Medieval incorporation of Ovid and other pre-Christian texts into the Christian tradition, see Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*.

Berchorius reveals the enormous exertion that was necessary to discipline the poem to a single, exterior meaning. No tale escapes the canny interpreter's Christian intentions. While Ovid's myths are claimed for the true faith, his text is alarmingly betrayed. We learn that unveiling the poetic dissimulation of Diana, Actaeon, and the hounds, for instance, uncovers the true forms of the Madonna, Christ, and the Jews:

> Iste actaeon significat dei filium: qui una cum comitibus suis id est patriarchis et prophetis canes plurimos is est iudeorum populum gubernavit qui propter rabiem crudelitatis dici canes a principio potuerunt.... Ista dea que erat virgo significat virginem gloriosam: que tenebrarum id est peccatorum et sylvarum id est istius mundi propter suam misericordiaque dicitur gubernatrix.
>
> This Actaeon signifies the Son of God, who is unique among his companions, that is, the patriarchs and the prophets; he governs the pack of dogs, that is, the Jewish people, who because of their rage of cruelty could be called dogs from the beginning.... This goddess who was a virgin signifies the Glorious Virgin: who is said to be ruler of darkness, that is, of sin, and of the woods, that is, of this world, because of her compassion.

The operative term that makes the allegory possible is "id est" (that is), which can plug the prior signified into the given signifier at the slightest available analogy. In Berchorius's gloss, the signified varies little, and all the varied episodes mean roughly the same thing. A culture intent upon finding Christian application for Ovid's poem is constrained to allegorize the fables into moral homilies such as Berchorius's. These readings attempt to conflate Ovid's mythology with the Christian myth, to discipline the chaotic multiplicity of the *Metamorphoses* to a single-minded ritual end, trapping the range of their signification into a monologic discourse. They indicate that the Medieval West felt Ovid ought to have provided a univocal, Christian vision of changeless eternity.

Berchorius's commentary, like many other Medieval allegorizations of the *Metamorphoses*, was issued autonomously from the poem, effectively replacing the poem with gloss, as if the extraction of true meaning might be more appropriate to Christian readers than the text itself. Allegorization denies the multiplicity of meanings inherent in the poem's open form and actually suppresses the text that would allow such various interpretation. The *Metamorphoses* cedes its mythic episodes to allegorization readily (as even recent archetypal interpretations might confirm), but only under conditions where the poem is cut into particles, seriously violating the integrity of the text as a continuous narrative.[6] The Christian allegorizer is forced to displace the poem with its proposed meaning by substituting it altogether with explanatory commentary. Individual stories can be retold in whatever form might be useful, but the lengthy, pluralistic, interlaced fabric of the narrative was not significantly available to Christian purposes.

The Regius edition

The rise of *copia* as a dominant stylistic force in Italy and France was accompanied by a distinct shift in attitude toward the *Metamorphoses*. Humanist readers came to regard the poem primarily as a linguistic model and as a supply of information about the ancient world. As a catalogue of styles, it exhibited a rich variety of forms and conventions with vivid energy. Its "hidden meanings" became the object of historical and philological investigation, rather than the application of allegorical analogies to a prior standard. The emphasis on stylistic aspects restored the language of the text

[6] Richard Lanham surmises that Ovid was cunningly aware of his poem's allegorizability. "We allegorize spontaneously, as Ovid knew.... But Ovid makes us aware that this level of meaning comes from us not from the poem. We hasten to make meaning" (59).

itself as the essential object of study and admiration, as opposed to the allegorizors' tendency to pass through the text, considering it a cifer to a prelinguistic message.

A few years before the Berchorius revival in France, the first humanistic annotated edition of the *Metamorphoses* was prepared in Italy by Raphael Regius. The *Ovidii Metamorphosis cum integris ac emendatissimus Raphaelis Regii ennarrationibus*, (Venice, 1493) presents a sophisticated annotation attached to the complete text, meant to illuminate, rather than displace the poem.[7] Indeed, Regius warns against cribs and paraphrases printed, like Berchorius's, autonomously from the text, "qui ea que ... nulla indigent enarratione: ita exponunt: ut infantibus cibos nutricum more mandere velle videantur." The annotator's role was to translate the poem's allusions into prosaic factual information, laying bare the abundance of material (*copia rerum*) contained there. Regius attempts to explain the obscure proper names, the references to ancient geography, history, and philosophical and scientific theories, based on classical authorities. With astounding detail, he glosses practically every line, even ones that would seem to stand by themselves.

To the humanist, textual meaning remained linguistic in character, available through painstaking, line by line examination of the text. The annotation serves the pedagogical objective of presenting the *Metamorphoses* as the basis of a sound liberal education, requiring a sure knowledge of history, geography, astrology, military arts, music, rhetoric, moral and natural

[7] Prior Renaissance editions of the *Metamorphoses* were published either without annotation, or with perfunctory *argumenta* preceding each book. Bartolomeo Merula pirated Regius's text and twice printed it without authorization (1492 and 1493), resulting in legal action by Regius against Merula and his publisher. All citations are from the "corrected" edition printed in 1493 by Bernardinus de Bernaliis.

philosophy. Regius claimed in the dedicatory letter to Francesco Gonzaga, "Nihil est ... cuius illustria exempla in Ovidii Metamorphosi non habeatur." From such a perspective, the poem assumes the gravity of an encyclopedia of ancient knowledge, a *summa* of classical erudition, a text that achieves fullness of meaning and moral efficacy in its *copia* of poetic styles and in the great wealth of information encompassed by it, a work whose "maximam rerum cognitu pulcherrimarum copiam e nostra lingua." Regius goes so far as to evaluate its moral and practical value, finally, as a function of its *copia.*

> Exemplar mihi ut semel dicam totius humane et civilis vitae esse videtur, adeo plane, adeo copiose: quecunque non eruditum modo: verum dicendi quoque et agendi peritum efficere possunt: a facundissimo poeta explicantur.... (Ut) cui Ovidii Metamorphosis bene percepta sit, facillimum ad omnes disciplinas aditum habiturus neque difficultatis quicquam in ullo fere poeticorum operum inuenturus esse videatur (A ii *verso*).
>
> (The *Metamorphoses*) seems to me, in brief, the exemplar of the whole range of human and civil life. It is so full, so copious, it can bring about expertise not merely in all kinds of erudition, but in speech and conduct as well, modelled by a most eloquent poet.... Whoever reads Ovid's *Metamorphoses* diligently, it seems, ought to gain from it easy access to all the disciplines, and will never encounter difficulty reading any other poetical work.

In other words, Ovid's mastery of the copious style was perceived as the most positive and exemplary aspect of the *Metamorphoses*, offering educational benefits in its contents (*copia rerum*), a model of eloquence in its style (*copia verborum*), and a moral example in the discipline of its inclusivity. Regius presents it as the key text to the understanding of both contemporary and classical literature and life.

Glossing the opening lines, Regius made Renaissance readers aware of the poem's polarities. He read the seamless continuity of the *Metamorphoses* as a property of its encyclopedic comprehension ("nulla praetermittatur"), a

fullness that expresses the Renaissance notion of *discordia concors* in a textual coherence that might nevertheless offer the appearance of an indeterminate procedure. He astutely observed the thematic principle of metamorphosis enacted in the poem's form ("fabulam fabula annectit ut una ex alia nasci videatur"). He saw this fullness and integrity as a mystical property, achieved by grace, and to violate it by separating the stories would defile its fabric:

> *Perpetuum.* Continuum, sic ut nulla transmutatio praetermittatur: alteraque alteri concinne apteque connectatur. Id quod facile a diis impetravit poeta. Ita namque fabulam fabula annectit: ut una ex alia nasci videatur: tametsi quidam non minus insulsus quam temerarius quarundam ineptiarum interpositione ea in multis exemplaribus separare conatus sit: quae deorum benignitate tam eleganter fuerant copulata. Id vero flagitium quo totum opus inquinabatur: in primus curavi tollendum (B i *verso*).
>
> *Unbroken.* Continuous, so that no transformation can be omitted: each thing is elegantly and properly connected to each other. The poet achieved easily what comes from the gods. For he so joined story to story that one seems to be born from another. Nevertheless there are some, no less tasteless than thoughtless, who tried to separate what was so elegantly joined by the goodness of the gods into many examples with the insertion of certain absurdities. Indeed, this is a disgrace by which the whole work is defiled: I have made it my primary care to remove it.

Although the critical polemics inspired by the revival of Aristotle's *Poetics* were yet to begin, Regius's argument is interesting for the non-Aristotelian value that he lends to the notion of the *holon*, the "totum opus." Here the *holon* is not so dependent on the idea of progressive development according to internal necessity, as it is on a synchronic, almost mystical poetic integrity, "quae deorum benignitate tam eleganter fuerant copulata." The gods to which he refers here represent a different order of divinity than those of Berchorius's allegorical extractions. Far from the allegorizers who would

anachronistically seed the poem with Christian purposes, Regius is willing to allow a pre-Christian poem to maintain its pre-Christian muses. In this case, they stand in as figures of the source of the preternatural artistry of the poem (id quod facile a diis impetravit poeta), and hence they exist as a function of the poem, rather than a prior, preliterary existence to which the poem must conform. The poet's participation in their divinity is demonstrated by the poem's coherence, which the editor singles out as an especially delicate property to protect. Removing or transposing one or many episodes may not affect the forward movement of the *Metamorphoses*, and so the poem fails to meet Aristotle's criteria for unity. But, according to Regius, any restructuring would defile the divine integrity of the form, the *concors* resulting from the sum of the poem's discordant elements, the "totum opus" that the text declares itself to be in the epilogue. Regius thus incidentally declares a notion of the *holon* that does not depend upon temporal causality, but rather one based upon encyclopedic comprehensiveness, an achievement of the ideal fullness of meaning embodied in the Renaissance notion of *copia*.

An encyclopedia with an index

Medieval commentaries popularly divided the *Metamorphoses* into 232 discrete episodes, according to the gloss of the sixth-century scholiast Lactantius Placidus (sometimes confused in the Renaissance editions with the Church Father Lactantius Firmianus), apparently as a mnemonic aid to locating particular episodes. Early editions of the poem were printed with a table summary of the episodes in sequence based on Lactantius preceding each

separate book (e.g. Milan, 1475, ed. Bonus Accursius).[8] With the Regius edition of the *Metamorphoses*, more elaborate indices to the poem's various stories began to develop. The Regius edition broke ground by indexing almost 400 distinct transformations in sequential order as front matter. The sheer amount of information that the poem might hold for the Renaissance reader was schematized and externalized in the index to Regius's edition, expanded over previous editions by as many as 200 entries. The endowment of the poem with such replete indices, in effect, treats the poem as if it were an actual encyclopedia and measures the poem's *copia* in objective terms. The apparatus quickly gained popularity and was much copied in the sixteenth century. The 1516 Aldine edition included two indices, one of the episodes in sequence and the other in alphabetical order, the order later adopted for the modern encyclopedia. The indices were commercially successful and were advertised on the title pages of many editions (e.g. Lyons, 1518) with *copia*'s passwords, practically quoted from Regius, "et rerum verborumque cognitu dignissimorum alphabetico indice." Such publicity can be seen to present the poem's *copia* as a selling point, as the printers attempted to outdo each other in expanding the detail of the index to include not only episodes in sequential

[8] A comprehensive descriptive bibliography of Renaissance editions of the *Metamorphoses* has not yet been compiled. Apart from the usual bibliographies (Brunet, the British Museum *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century*, Graesse, and so on), see Grundy Steiner, "Source-editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1471-1500," *Transactions of the American Philological Association 82 (1951): 219-31, for a fuller account of the six Italian incunabula. See also the partial list of French editions in Lamarque and Soubelle, eds., Ovide en France dans la Renaissance.* A handlist of editions published in Venice between 1560 and 1590, compiled by Bodo Guthmüller, appears in Daniel Javitch, "The Influence of the *Orlando furioso* on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Italian," *JMRS* 11 (1981): 2n. Steiner reports that the Regius edition effectively superseded the five previous editions in popularity. It was the only incunabule edition of the poem to be reprinted after 1500.

and alphabetical order, but also the *sententiae*, rhetorical commonplaces and *res memorabiles* (Lyons, 1572).[9] Publishers routinely advertised such indices into the 17th century. Mention of them gradually disappeared from the title pages when professional interest in Ovid began concentrating on textual emendation, and Ovid's copiousness was no longer a commercial concern.

In one edition the index was offered specifically in the interest of making the poem's coherence more evident by presenting it in schematic terms. The Dutch classicist Cornelius Schrevelius, whose variorum edition of the *Metamorphoses* was published in 1661, proudly calls special attention to his sequential index with a prefatory note which shows full awareness of the conflicting demands of the poem's shifting identity. His preface provides an idea of how the apparatus was perceived and how it was meant to be used. He declares that like many readers, he could never admire enough "perpetuam illam & nunquam interruptam narrationum tam variarum connexionem" that the poet "artificiocissime deducat."[10] Delighted by the poem's continuity, he admits that it is practically beyond comprehension without the aid of a critical apparatus.

> Quae quidem res ita me semper delectavit, ut temperare mihi tandem non potuerim, quin Opere toto semel pervoluto, ordinis rationem per singulas fabellas considerarem, atque adeo totum opus quasi in Epitomen quandam redigerem; ut quam ex partibus singulis olim voluptatem ceperam, eam tunc e toto poemate breviter sub oculos posito, longe pleniorem perciperem & Poetae ingenium cum in aliis rebus multis, tum in haec praecipue non vulgare fuisse deprehenderem (II:vi).
>
> This has always so delighted me that I have been unable to restrain myself finally, having perused the whole work once

[9] See the Gryphius editions of the mid- to late-16th century discussed by Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France*, 39f.

[10] Ovid, *Opera*, 3 vols., ed. Cornelius Schrevelius (Leyden, 1661-62) II:6.

> through, from considering the plan of order by single fables, or even reducing the whole work practically in epitome; so that as much pleasure as I once took from the single parts, I then perceive far more fully from the whole composition made small before my eyes, and I would judge the poet's ingenium, as in many other things, so chiefly in this, to have been uncommon.

As Regius before him, Schrevel translates the Greek notion of narrative *holon* into the Latin term "totum opus," and takes particular care to bring this integral aspect of the *Metamorphoses* into evidence. He means the index to work in the service of perceiving the poem's *dispositio* in its synchronic entirety by miniaturizing its sequence of parts. Having noted the conflicting demands of the *carmen perpetuum* and the discrete narratives which compose it, he proudly presents the index as a way of perceiving the "totum opus," the whole composition, disengaged from its massiveness and from the time that it would normally take to apprehend it.

> Visum est hoc loco Transformationes Ovidii, quam brevissime fieri potuit excerptas, Lectori, tanquam in tabella spectandas proponere; earumque methodum omnem velut digito commonstrare (II:vi).

> It seemed right to display Ovid's *Metamorphoses* here to the readers as concisely as it could be broken down, as if seen on a small canvas, and to point out its whole plan as if with a finger.

Apart from advertising the poem's *copia*, the index tries to solve the structural problem that inhabits the copious style. It supplies a visual reduction of a poem whose encyclopedic breadth is too large and complicated to manage. Schrevel claims that this has been carried out in his index with greater subtlety and greater concision. The sequential index seems necessary to him precisely because the narrative lacks an operative shape that can be comprehended without such apparatus.

A champion of copia

The Regius edition of the *Metamorphoses* survived longer than any other 15th century edition. It was reprinted frequently from 1493 through the 1580s, and it maintained its status as the standard Ovidian commentary through the end of the century (Shakespeare is reported to have consulted the Regius commentary alongside the Golding translation).[11] It was common for 16th century editions of Ovid to combine the Regius commentary with that of two or three other editors. Thus the Lyons, 1518 edition includes the Regius annotations alongside the the moralizations of Petrus Lavinius (possibly the famous "Frere Lubin, un vray croque lardon" of the prologue to Rabelais's *Gargantua*) and the scholia of Lactantius. Editions as late as Schrevel's quote from Regius and include selections from his glosses among the annotations. Whether alone or in combination with other commentary, Regius informed Ovid's readers through the latter part of the 16th century, and the 16th century read Ovid through the mediation of his commentary.

A few years ago, Edward Mendelson distinguished what he called an "encyclopedic genre" in literature, and he defined it in terms that accord very well with Renaissance *copia* and its ambitions. He named the genre for the comprehensiveness with which its examples "attend to the whole social and linguistic range of (the author's) nation," and "make use of all the literary styles and conventions known to his countrymen." Mendelson noticed the encyclopedic genre's "peculiar indeterminacy of form" resulting from its tendency to include various generic formulae within its scope.

[11] See L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955) 420. Wilkinson cites T.H. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latin and Lesse Greeke*, II, 439, for this fact.

> An encyclopedic narrative is, among other things, an encyclopedia *of* narrative, incorporating, but never limited to, the conventions of heroic epic, quest romance, symbolist poem, *Bildungsroman*, psychomachia, bourgeois novel, lyric interlude, drama, eclogue, and catalogue.... Encyclopedic narrative identifies itself not by a single plot or structure, but by encompassing a broad set of qualities ("Encyclopedic Narrative," 1270).

Mendelson did not include the *Metamorphoses* among his examples of the genre, but it is clear that Renaissance readers saw in it the features that Mendelson describes: an inclusivity of known subject matter and styles, an indeterminacy of form and genre, and a multiplicity evident in the structure. The fastidious efforts to index the poem indicate that it was consulted as an encyclopedia in fact. The fortune of the *Metamorphoses* as a *summa* was prepared in the way that Ovid arranged to use "all the literary styles and conventions known to his countrymen." In the Renaissance, this encyclopedic stature became an object of imitation, a quality that Renaissance authors wished to reproduce in their own works. It became the foundation of the copious style of poetry.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the *Metamorphoses* supplanted the *Aeneid* or the Homeric poems as objects of critical adulation, or even as models of *copia*. In fact, it is remarkable how seldom Ovid is discussed in Renaissance treatises on poetics, even where the topics of multiplicity, variety, and formal indetermination would seem to call for reference to the *Metamorphoses*.[12] One might speculate that Quintilian's judgment of Ovid as not sufficiently serious may have contributed to the

[12] See the documents collected in Bernard Weinberg, ed., *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 3 vols. (Bari: Laterza, 1970-74), where the virtues of eloquence are exemplified in Virgil and Homer almost exclusively, with exceptions discussed below.

exclusion of the *Metamorphoses* from the serious business of Cinquecento *trattati*, where Ovid's style is generally treated with some reserve. In spite of this official reticence in critical literature, Ovid's poem can be seen to have exerted a formative influence over Renaissance textual ideals. The vernacular poets demonstrated their pleasure in the *Metamorphoses* in the way they assimilate it into their own work with direct borrowings, or with attempts to reproduce Ovid's tone, attitude and language. Not only did it vigorously impress Rennaisance narrative forms, but the poem itself achieved a status of popular literature unique among the classics. Henri Lamarque suggests that 900,000 copies of Ovidian texts may have been printed in France before 1600, and that there were three times as many editions of Ovid as there were of Virgil or Horace; Bodo Guthmüller's inventory of Italian court libraries demonstrates the universal presence of the *Metamorphoses* in Latin, not to mention the numerous *volgarizzamenti* that flooded the Renaissance market.[13]

Regius ushered Ovid into the 16th century as a triumphant master of the copious style, and the critics who did discuss him tended to appraise him in terms drawn from the Regius commentary, that is, as a champion of *copia*. They draw attention to the features of his text that Regius had made explicit: its unified diversity (*discordia concors*), its comprehensive breadth of styles and wealth of information. For instance, a 1529 treatise in French calls Ovid a "fontaine de fluantes et doulces parolles latines et poetiques;"[14] another calls

[13] See Lamarque, "Editions d'Ovide," in Lamarque and Soubelle, *Ovide en France dans la Renaissance*; Guthmüller, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare*; the reverberation between the *Metamorphoses* and the vernacular texts that it inspired is discussed by Daniel Javitch, "The Influence of the *Orlando furioso* on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Italian."

[14] Geoffroy Tory, *Champ fleury* (1529). Quoted in Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) 28n38.

it the source of all poetry, a *cornu copiae*.[15] The preface to one French translation of the *Metamorphoses* (by Bernard Aneau, 1556) compresses a number of Regius's insights into a single paragraph, concluding with the reflection of the metamorphosis theme as the salient characteristic of the poem's structure, an emblematic figure of *discordia concors*. But in addition to what Regius had said, Aneau perceives the poem's narrative structure as a pattern reflecting the natural experience of time.

> Or est il vray que entre toutes les Poësies Latines n'en y apoint de si ample, ne de tant riche, si diverse, et tant universelle que la Metamorphose d'Ovide qui contient en quinze livres composez en beaux vers Heroiques toutes les fabulations, (ou à peu pres) de Poëtes, et scripteurs anciens tellement liées l'une à l'autre, et si bien enchainées par continuelle poursuyte, et par artificielles transitions: que l'une semble naistre, et dependre de l'autre successivement, et non abruptement: combien qu'elles soient merveilleusement dissemblables de diverses personnes, matieres, temps, et lieux. Par toutes lesquelles fables il ne veult autre chose faire entendre sinon qu'en la nature des choses les formes se muent continuellement, la matiere non perissante: comme luy mesme le demonstre au quinsiesme et dernier livre soubz la personne et en l'opinion de Pythagoras.[16]

The application of Ovid's *post hoc* narrative sequence to "la nature des choses" indicates awareness of a reciprocation between narrative structure and perception of the experienced world, an ideal upon which Ovid's defenders would also insist in the context of the critical discourse generated by the debate between the moderns and the ancients.

The expansion of the text

Giraldi Cinthio spoke for the modern approach to the question of poetic *copia*. In the *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi* (1554), he

[15] Jacob Micyllus (1503-1558), quoted in Coon, "The Vogue of Ovid," 281.

[16] Quoted in Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, 175.

attributes to Ovid the liberation of Renaissance poetry from the Aristotelian rules and epic norms. He invokes Ovid as the classical innovator of a modern genre, the romance. The romance, like the *Metamorphoses*, is characterized by its multiplicity of stories, its frequent narrative digressions, and its sheer variety of matter contained in a form where individual sequences of episodes are given priority over the whole. Giraldi defines the episode as the primary unit of narrative, and the whole romance as an amalgamation of episodes, which are available to the poet from the pool of literature. The classical preference for a *holon* based on causality is seen by Giraldi to be a matter of historical taste rather than of hard and fast literary law, and he argues that tastes had changed to allow for the romance genre's expansion beyond a causally unified concept. Romance freed from the rules of tragic unity may more closely resemble the *post hoc* procedure of real history, since poems that, according to the tragic paradigm, are "of a single action," are unlike "the style and manner of history." When he speaks of "history," Giraldi is thinking specifically of the *Metamorphoses*, which begins with the creation ("come la composizione della istoria si comincia dal principio delle cose"). He cites Ovid as "an ingenious poet" who can compose a poem "in the style of a history" that begins at the creation and extends to the moment of the poem's completion, and who can yet maintain the illusion of continuity.

> E che ciò sia agevole a fare da ingegnoso poeta, l'ha mostrato Ovidio nelle sue Mutazioni, il quale togliendosi dalle leggi dell'arte di Aristotile, con mirabile magistero, cominciò l'opera sua dal principio del mondo, e trattò con maravigliosa catena tanta varietà di cose; e nondimeno scorse in minor numero di libri, che non fe' Omero nella Iliade, e che non fece nella Odissea quantunque l'una e l'altra di esse contenessero una sola azione (*Scritti critici*, 56).

Freed from the constraints of causality, the romance genre possesses the capability to mimetically encompass all varieties of experience within its

burgeoning confines. Giraldi justifies the size, the multiplicity of action, the variety, in short, the *copia* of the romance by citing the precedent of similar structural features in the *Metamorphoses*.

> E quivi è da por mente che in queste digressioni che contengono giostre, tornei, amori, bellezze, passioni del'animo, campo, edifici e simili altre cose, è molto più largo lo scrittore dei romanzi che non è stato né Virgilio, né Omero. E in queste parti è più simile ad Ovidio (parlo delle sue Mutazioni) che non è ad alcuno altro poeta, sicché pare che la qualità di questo componimento ricerchi tale vaghezza (79).

Not only partisans of the modern style cited Ovid as its foundation. A natural affinity between the *Metamorphoses* and the vernacular *romanzi* was remarked upon frequently, from sympathetic and hostile points of view.[17] Ovid was acclaimed (or dismissed) as the classical poet whose style most resembled the modern forms, conceived in terms of their *copia*. The hallmarks of *copia* were appropriated as the identifying factors of the modern genre, and in particular magnitude, variety, ornamentation, inclusiveness, and a quality of diffusion across a braod range of styles that Renaissance critics favored with the term *vaghezza*.[18] Montaigne explicitly associated Ovid with Ariosto as the sort who could pleasingly connect "dix mille tres-belles histoires... (comme Ovide a cousu et r'apiecé sa Metamorphose, ou comme Arioste a regné en une

[17] Daniel Javitch has studied this phenomenon in "The Influence of the *Orlando furioso* on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Italian," and in "Sixteenth Century Commentaries on Imitations in the *Orlando furioso*."

[18] The term *vaghezza* carried a variety of meanings in Renaissance discourse related to Latin "vagari," some of which are discussed below. Renaissance writers fashioned it as a rhetorical term, like *copia*, from Cicero. See *De Oratore* III, xxxi, 124, also quoted in note 5 of the Introduction above, which associates *copia* with expansion of discursive territory: "In hoc igitur tanto tam immensoque campo cum liceat oratori vagari libere atque ubicumque consisterit, consistere in suo, facile suppeditat omnis apparatus ornatusque dicendi." See also *De Oratore* III, xxx, 120: "Ornatissimae sunt igitur orationes eae quae latissime vagantur...."

suite, ce grand nombre de fables diverses)" (*Essais* II, 35). And Giason Denores, in a 1586 *trattato*, maligns poems "onde per la moltitudine della azione rendono il poema confuso e non lasciano tempo a comprenderle tutte in un tratto," and he cites among his examples "le Trasformationi di Ovidio e molti de' Romanzi de' nostri tempi" (*Trattati*, III, 399). In opposition to the orthodoxy of the strict Aristotelians like Denores, Giraldi associates the lengthening of the romance with the fledgling modernist ethic of the *novum*, in which the good is more or less explicitly defined as that which provides a surpassing development over what has come before.[19] The multiple action plot is thus seen as a means to greater inclusiveness, expressing the expansion of knowledge in the modern world. The new material requires updated form. Giraldi associates the lengthening of romance with this notion of the new surpassing the magnitude of the old. The accretion of mass is finally distinguished as an intrinsic factor in the romance:

> si può dire che tale larghezza in questa lingua sia propria di questo componimento; e nel vero grande ornamento si torrebbe a tal sorte di poesia, se gli scrittori di essa se ne passassero in simile cose con quella strettezza con la quale se ne'è passato Virgilio.

In this sense, length is not seen as a significant end in itself, but rather as a condition of the ambitious project of greater and more totalizing *copia*, necessitating a departure from the classical "rules." To pedigree this concept of modernism, he reaches again to Ovid, "l'ingegnoso," who succeeded in being a "vago e gentil poeta" even though he worked outside of the orders of

[19] For this definition and a discussion of modern ethics as "oltrepassamento," see Gianni Vattimo, *La fine della modernità: nichilismo ed ermeneutica nella cultura post-moderna* (Milano: Garzanti, 1985) 174-177; see also *Il pensiero debole*, ed. Gianni Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1983), and my review article on that collection in *Differentia* 1 (1986): 281-287.

Virgil and Homer, because he devoted himself "to writing something that did not exist under those laws and examples."

> Veggiamo Ovidio, l'ingegnoso, avere lasciati gli ordini di Virgilio e di Omero nelle sue Mutazioni, e non avere seguiti gli ordini di Aristotile datici nella sua Poetica; e nondimeno essere riuscito vago e gentil poeta, con tanto utile della lingua latina, ch'è stata una maraviglia: e nondimeno non è egli ripreso, perché egli si diè a scrivere di cosa che sotto quelle regole e quegli esempi non stava, ... si levasse dagli esempi e dagli ordini dati in tutta l'opera a tali componimenti (70).

Giraldi further associated Ovid with the modernism of the copious style of the romance genre in a letter to Bernardo Tasso. Here he indicates the wide-ranging capacities of the genre in a catalogue of disparate pairs.

> E così ne' canti di questa parte ho cercato che il giovare ... sia stato accompagnato dal diletto delle descrizioni di bellezze, di bruttezze, di atti et abiti varii, di vani e di onesti, d'affetti ora dogliosi ora lieti, ora compassionevoli ora miserabili, ora amorosi ora gravi, e delle altre cose che sono occorse da essere o principalmente o per aggiungimento descritte in tutta l'opera. Le quali cose, per conformarmi così con l'uso dei poeti dei nostri tempi come con la maniera dello scriver di questa lingua, ho più largamente trattate che se le avessi avute a descriver latinamente, seguendo in ciò più tosto Ovidio che gli altri latini scrittori, avendomi egli più paruto in queste parti convenirsi con la maniera dello scriver d'oggidì che qualunque altro ch'abbia scritto poeticamente (*Trattati*, II, 467).

The letter ends by extolling Ovid as the greatest master of ornament, "che tutta volta è stato sulle vaghezze e sui fiori più che poeta che sia mai stato." The use of the term *vaghezza* deserves attention. Its primary meaning by convention can be translated as "graceful" or "pleasurable." But it implies spatial magnitude. It carries a direct etymological inheritance from Latin *vagari*, to wander or ramble, to be lost, to be diffused. It's first association with the concept of *copia* occurs prominently in Cicero's discussion of the territorial expansion implicit in the orator's discipline, "In hoc ... tanto tam immensoque campo cum liceat oratori vagari libere" (*De Oratore* III, xxxi, 124). The Zingarelli dictionary explains the inheritance in the verb

vagheggiare as the act of gazing with pleasure, allowing the eye to wander liberally over what it sees. In Renaissance literature, the term *vaghezza* frequently describes the beauty of the desired lover's body, over which the eye may wish to wander and atomize into its parts, an activity frequently reproduced in the form of the *blason*. A term which denotes an errant gaze is particularly apt when it describes the sort of pleasure which is derived from wandering liberally through a diffuse narrative. It became the preferred term among the Renaissance *trattatisti* to describe the pleasure of the text. With its connotations of diffusion among parts, of indetermination in the act of wandering or rambling through a vast space, it is easy to see how the defenders of *copia* seized on this synonym of beauty to describe the readerly effect of the copious text. *Vaghezza* implies a sort of beauty and pleasure that contrasts significantly with the Aristotelian notion, often repeated in Renaissance criticism, that memory ought to grasp a literary work the way the eye takes in an object, in a single glance. *Vaghezza* belongs to the creature a thousand miles long! Ariosto joined marvelous *vaghezza* to his composition. Politian, "con mirabile vaghezza," described the palace of Venus. "It seems," Giraldi concludes, "that the quality of this kind of composition seeks such *vaghezza*" (*Scritti critici*, 79). Aristotle's definition of beauty consists in the priority of the whole, of the compositional form, over the attraction of its parts. The peculiar Renaissance notion of *vaghezza* seems to reverse that notion and give priority to the immediate focus of attention on the parts, and to the meandering quality of the composition.

The poetics of *copia* made it possible for writers in the Renaissance to regard classical antiquity as a stage in an ongoing tradition, a tradition which the 16th century felt obliged to carry forward. The notion of a tradition

differs radically from the notion of a standard that demands conformity. A tradition is an ongoing process, ever unfinished, ever evolving in different ways. Thus Erasmus introduced his *De Copia* with a remark to the effect that "had the ancients concluded their work, there would be no need for these precepts of mine."[20] The remark betrays a shift away from lending authoritarian status to classical rules, and implies that the classical forms represent only an inconclusive stage in a larger process, and that they might provide the grounds for further development. Just what the development of the classical program meant for the Renaissance is demonstrated in the copious style, based upon the Ovidian model, as a virtuosity that encompasses the possible repertoire of literary styles and realizes language's capacity to reflect the breadth of human knowledge. Girolamo Muzio's *Dell'Arte Poetica* (1551)[21] fixes the objective of the copious style as an image of the universe:

> Il poema sovrano è una pittura
> De l'universo, e però in sé comprende
> Ogni stilo, ogni forma, ogni ritratto (185).

And in Lionardi's *Dialoghi dell'invenzione poetica* (1554), the *persona* of Sperone Speroni introduces *copia*'s aims and capabilities with rhetorical flourish that proposes *copia* not merely as fullness of meaning, but as the source of civilization.

> Questa sola è cagione che l'uomo esprime meglio i suoi concetti, perciò che l'abondanza e copia dell'invenzione fa che convenevolmente e di leggeri si può trattare di qualunque materia a pieno. E perciò furono ritrovate le scienze e discipline, acciò che si potesse di ogni cosa copiosamente e con discrete e dotte ragioni ragionare.... Quindi ebbero origine le

[20] Mentioning sophistic doctrines of *copia*, "Quorum si libri extarent, aut si quod admonuit Fabius, ad plenum tradere voluisset, non admodum futurum erat opus iis meis praeceptiunculis." *De Copia* II E.

[21] In Weinberg, *Trattati*, II, 165-209.

> leggi e tutte le divine et umane istituzioni. Quindi nacquero tutte le opinioni che disputate poi ci diedero conoscenza del vero. Quindi uscirono le virtù morali e tutto quello che è regola,... e finalmente di quindi si trae tutto quello che ad ogni stato e condizione di cose o di uomini è utile e convenevole (*Trattati*, II, 217).

These ideals were expressed in numerous 16th century *trattati*, with or without reference to Ovid, long after their direct debt to Regius's presentation of the *Metamorphoses* had been obscured by the intervening factor of the age's admiration for Virgil. In order to produce texts that would approach this lofty responsibility, Renaissance authors first had to contend with their historical situation through the poetics of *imitatio*.

Chapter 3

The Poetics of *Imitatio* and the Poetics of *Copia*

Early humanist writers often characterized their age as one involved in recovering the dismembered ruins of its lost classical heritage.[1] A. Bartlett Giamatti has suggested that this endeavor was deeply involved with the period's assumed sense of its own origins and destiny.

> For the Renaissance, integration of self and culture meant seeing Origin or the Original as distant and lost, so that one could imitate and emulate and thus make oneself a new copy or assert a genuine revision. A seminal tension in Renaissance culture ... stems from the conviction that, on the one hand, origins so distant were also for the first time clearly perceived after the darkness, but that, on the other hand, what was recreated on that clear model would never be truly authentic. The Renaissance, for all its assertive, expansive, cultural imperialism ... would never completely shake its sense that it was not quite worthy of the original (13-14).

Humanist zeal to reflect an image of the classical source manifested itself in the arrogation of classical *latinitas* in contemporary letters, a poetics of *imitatio*. The age adopted a classical *persona* for itself, translating personal and contemporary concerns into the forms and styles of the classical models. Quintilian had recommended the imitation of models as an important stage in the acquisition of *copia*, agonistically urging the imitator to "rival and vie with

[1] Among the rich literature on *imitatio* and the Renaissance sense of the past, see A. Bartlett Giamatti's essay, "Hyppolytus Among the Exiles," in *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) 12-32; Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), with bibliography, 312n.34; G.W. Pigman III, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980): 1-33 (see n.1 for extensive bibliography); Ferruccio Ulivi, *L'imitazione nella poetica del rinascimento* (Milan: Marzorati, 1959); and David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). See also the surveys by Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); and Robert R. Bolgar: *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (London: Cambridge Unviersity Press, 1954).

the original in the expression of the same thoughts" ("circa eosdem sensus certamen atque aemulationem volo," *Institutiones* X, v, 5). While the classical mantel allowed its bearers to dramatize their participation in a sort of intellectual aristocracy, it, like any artificially cultivated elitism, also betrayed their painful sense of imperfection. The classical canon functioned as an absolute criterion that Renaissance authors applied to themselves as the measure of their success, replacing, in a sense, the ecclesiastical authority that left its stamp on so much Medieval intellectual activity. A genuine and culture-wide sense of inadequacy naturally occurred, where the central texts were held unattainable models of style and procedure. Unwilling to smother texts in Berchorius-style allegory in order to appropriate them, humanists could not escape the conclusion that, compared to the model, contemporary eloquence had drifted below standard. According to Giamatti, "the Renaissance's constant quest to create an authentic identity was always hindered by the sense of being a mere reproduction of the ancient culture upon which one wished to pattern one's literature and life" (x).

The history of Quattrocento literature could be read as a struggle to find an authentic voice in which to constitute its individuality within the classical tradition: a pursuit of eloquence.[2] The problem boiled down to how

[2] For evaluations of humanism as "the pursuit of eloquence," see Marc Fumaroli, *L'âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1980); Hannah H. Gray, "Renaissance Humanism: the Pursuit of Eloquence," *Renaissance Essays from the Journal of the History of Ideas*, eds. Paul O. Kristeller and P.P. Weiner (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 199-216; Nancy Streuver, *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: the Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Eugenio Garin, *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano: ricerche e documenti*, 2nd edition (Firenze: Sansoni, 1979). See also the essays by various hands in *Tradizione classica e letteratura umanistica: per Alessandro*

the modern idiom (whether in Latin or vernacular forms) could assert its uniqueness and yet maintain continuity with the classical vocabulary of styles. As the Renaissance world expanded its physical and intellectual boundaries, the imitative rewriting of Ciceronian diction ceased to reflect its changing relationship to the classical past. In a process remarkably similar to the educational procedure Quintilian recommended, in which *imitatio* prepares the student for the achievement of *copia*, the Renaissance poetics of *imitatio* was gradually supplanted by a poetics of *copia*, expressing an impulse to accommodate the broadening horizons of the age and assert its authority over the vocabulary of its classical inheritance. Angelo Poliziano dedicated much of his academic career to formulating a poetics of *copia* that was conspicuous in his teaching and in his own poetry. In epistles and lectures, Poliziano explicitly promoted poetic *copia* to his contemporaries, exploding the canon of *imitatio* to include a wide variety of models, and appealing for an encyclopedic range of mythological and scientific knowledge in poetry.

The silent response

Humanists were aware of the linguistic basis of their malaise as early as Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum* (1401), a work dedicated to the author of the first humanist treatise on education, and modeled closely

Perosa, 2 vols., eds. Roberto Cardini and others, (Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1985); and *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) with bibliography; and the bibliographical note on the Ciceronian debates, below.

upon Cicero's *De Oratore*.[3] Bruni perceived the danger of being struck silent in contemplation of the model's unattainability, and turned to *imitatio* as a means of legitimizing discourse. The dialogues are set at the home of Coluccio Salutati, Chancellor of Florence and the leading humanist scholar in the city. Bruni, Roberto Rossi and Niccolò Niccoli drop by one day during Holy Week. The three visitors represent the younger generation of humanists; Salutati is an older man who knew Petrarch. After greetings are exchanged, an uncomfortable silence sets in before the discursive section of the dialogue begins.

The silence is pregnant with the humanist sense of inadequacy in the face of classical literature, and it gives birth to discourse which prominently expounds this for its subject. Coluccio, in the dialogue, reprimands his visitors for their silence, for not demonstrating their eloquence by engaging him in disputation the way he did on similar occasions when he was a young student, that is, for not supplying the matter of a dialogue. Niccoli responds (resembling Antonius's reasoning in *De Oratore*, I, xviii, 80) that "the fault is

[3] The text of the dialogues is reproduced in *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1952) 44-98. Citations are from the English translation by David Thompson in *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni* (Binghampton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987) 63-84. For concordance between the *Dialoghi* and *De Oratore*, see Jerrold Seigel, "'Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni," *Past and Present* 34 (1966): 3-48; and David Quint, "Humanism and Modernity: A Reconsideration of Bruni's *Dialogues*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 423-445. See also Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (1955; rev. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 225-271; Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) 123-137; David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980) 24-37. Niccoli's famous invective against the *tre corone fiorentine* is based on their poor semblance of classical Latinity. Quint argues persuasively that his "recantation" in the second dialogue (modeled on Antonius's recantation in *De Oratore*) is loaded with irony that only confirms the terms of the invective.

not ours but the times," and develops the theme that makes *imitatio* and philology so central to the humanist project: the great historical gap that separates the classical age from the present. The collapse of eloquence, the deterioration of texts, Latinity, and general knowledge that has taken place in that gap make silence preferable to speaking. The anxiety of his argument clearly stated in the proposition.

> If we have been born in a time when so great a disturbance of all learning, so great a loss of books has occurred that no one could talk about the least thing without great impudence, you will certainly excuse us if we have preferred to seem silent rather than impudent.... In this wretched age and amid such a dearth of books, I do not see what power of disputation any one could achieve. At this time what art, what learning can be found which has not been displaced or completely corrupted? Place before your eyes whichever of them you wish, and consider what is now and what it was formerly; then you will understand that they have all been reduced to the point where one must utterly despair (64-65).

The silence is emblematic of the historical "corruption of eloquence," which early humanists felt had eroded their "power of disputation" and rendered them helpless to speak. Coluccio is quick to point out that Niccoli's proposition, that elegant discourse is impossible in the impoverished present age, is falsified by his very speech. This is the central lesson, as it were, of the dialogue itself, and of its stylistic basis in *De Oratore*. In Cicero's dialogue, the younger interlocutors are instructed by the elder, accomplished orators in the achievent of *copia*, "in rerum abundantia ad orationis ornamenta" (III, xxxi, 125), after a program of long study based on the imitation and appropriation of models. In Bruni's version, the younger men are coaxed out of silence and into Ciceronian practice. The persons of the dialogue speak in spite of their anxieties. Their only alternative to a despairing silence is demonstrated in the methods of the dialogue itself: adopting a *Tullianius stylus*, a more Ciceronian style, "telle," according to

Fumaroli, "apparaît à l'humanisme italien la tâche régénératrice par excellence" (77).

In a culture that perceives itself as primarily literary, silence is analogous to non-existence. If the humanist anxiety before the imposing elegance of the classical age were to be indulged, and if Salutati's visitors were to remain silent, there would be no *Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum.* Like Niccoli in its text, the work disproves what Niccoli argues by generating the form and diction of a venerated text. Appropriation of the Ciceronian model legitimized expression, established a sense of continuity with the classical past, and lent Golden Age authority to the speaking self.

Politian's anti-Ciceronian letter

Between the time that Bruni wrote his *Dialogi* at the beginning of the 15th century and Politian's pedagogic career in the latter third of the century, the poetics of *imitatio* reached a point of saturation. The Roman Curia had officialized humanist Latin, making it the language of peninsular diplomacy. "The way to professional advancement," says Quint, "now began in the grammarian's classroom" ("Humanism and Modernity," 423). In a sense, the Curia had purloined the elegant, literary Ciceronian Latin for its own bureaucratic and political purposes.[4] The curricular imitation of a limited number of standard classical models stifled the literary movement, and the

[4] See also the comments of John F. D'Amico: "We may posit a parallelism between the orthodoxy that pervaded the religious climate of Rome andd the orthodoxy represented by the Ciceronian movement. As used by the Roman humanists it had the advantage of providing a means of praising and exalting the established authority in a language that made historical comparisons to the ancient Roman world and culture obvious.... The more perfectly one mastered Ciceronian form, the more deserving one was of patronage." "Humanism in Rome," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, 3 vols., ed. Albert Rabil, Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) I:282.

crisis latent in continuing a program of *imitatio* finally surfaced. At its least creative extreme, the practice of imitation could mean replacing one's own self (or, in this case, the vocabulary of self-expression) with that of the model in the interests of the state, resulting in a sort of self-annihilation. René Girard says that in relationships of this pattern the disciple is in a position of such subordination to the master that the disciple "no longer chooses the objects of his own desire. The disciple pursues objects which are determined for him by the model" (*Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, 2). Ideally, the classical models would activate a desire for greater and more eloquent virtuosity. Quintilian frequently proposed the possibility that the student might surpass the master, that the imitator might do away with the model ("Utile igitur habere quos imitari primum, mox vincere velis. Ita paulatim et superiorum spes erit" I, ii, 29; It is useful therefore to have someone to imitate at first, and then to surpass: thus there will be some hope for higher achievement). Pontano, Poliziano, Marullo, Mantuan and Sannazaro were all praised for having equalled or surpassed their models, the Latin elegists, and their works show strong evidence of a struggle to assert the value of individual divergence from the tradition. They began to resist the sort of subservient imitation that until then had legitimized letters and passed for cultural progress, and their success was appreciated by their contemporaries. In 1551, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi wrote of Pontano, "cum omni fere antiquitate conferam, tametsi non idem, ut quibusdam videtur, in omnibus praestat;" and of Politian, "florere et quasi regnare visus est; huic enim me puero a multis primae deferebantur" (*Dialogi duo de poetis nostrorum temporum*, I). Politian paid the highest compliment to Pontano when he wrote to him, "Bone Deus, tibi ne uni licitum est heroicis Vergilium, elegis Ovidium, Flaccum lyricis, epigrammatis

Catullum provocare: dicerem et vincere."[5]

Poliziano was instrumental in instituting the shift from the 15th century poetics of *imitatio* to the poetics of *copia* that would inform the 16th century. He crystallized his thoughts about their conflicting demands around 1480, the year of his anti-Ciceronian letter to Paolo Cortese and of his lectures at the Florentine Studio on Statius and Quintilian. In the letter on imitation to Cortese, the problem of the self in relation to the thing imitated emerged as crucial.[6] Cortese had sent a stack of letters composed by various authors in imitation of Cicero to Poliziano for approval. Poliziano's animated reply charged that such exercises lead to an inevitable dead end; the self remains suppressed, and whatever eloquence is achieved by the imitator lacks authenticity, remains stifled and false. The end of the first paragraph explains in terse and caustic terms the extent to which Poliziano felt the strict *imitatio* of Cortese's examples arrived at self-suppression, rather than self-expression.

> Mihi certe quicumque tantum componunt ex imitatione, similes esse vel psittaco vel picae vedentur, proferentibus quae nec

[5] Vat. Capp. 235, dated 8 May 1493; reprinted in Mario Martelli, "Il 'libro delle epistole' di Angelo Poliziano," *Interpres* 1 (1978): 209.

[6] The text of the epistle to Cortese is reproduced in *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento*, 902-904, whence all citations. For studies of the Ciceronian controversy, of which the Cortese/Poliziano exchange was an early symptom, see Remigio Sabbadini, *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'età della rinascenza* (Turin: Loescher, 1886); Izora Scott, *Controversies over the Imitation of Cicero* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1910); G.W. Pigman III, "Imitation and the Renaissance Sense of the Past: The Reception of Erasmus's *Ciceronianus*," *JMRS* 9 (1979): 155-77; A. Grafton, "On the Scolarship of Politian and its Context," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 150-58; John O. Ward, "Renaissance Commentators on Ciceronian Rhetoric," in *Renaissance Eloquence*, ed. James J. Murphy, 126-173; Greene, *The Light in Troy*, 147-55, 172-196; and Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 35-77.

> intelligunt. Carent enim quae scribunt isti viribus et vita; carent actu, carent affectu, carent indole, iacent, dormiunt, stertunt. Nihil ibi verum, nihil solidum, nihil efficax. Non exprimis, inquit aliquis, Ciceronem. Quid tum? Non enim sum Cicero; me tamen, ut opinor, exprimo.
>
> Those who compose only on the basis of *imitatio* strike me as parrots or magpies bringing out things they don't understand. People who write that way have no strength, indeed, no life. They lack energy, feeling, character; they stretch out, go to sleep and snore. There is nothing true in them, nothing solid, nothing effective. Someone says, "You don't represent Cicero." So what? I am not Cicero. I think I represent myself.

Thomas Greene is right to warn against "an anachronistic reading of this document that would see in it a manifesto of modern expressionism" (150). Nothing in Poliziano's letter or in his career would lead to the conclusion that he calls here for a rupture with classical models or with humanist education. Nevertheless, Poliziano's letter does postulate a close commerce between individual eloquence and independence from the authority of the model. He acknowledges the place of inferiority which the self may hold in relation to the model, at the ultimate risk that through imitation only the model is expressed, and not the speaker. He sees this as the case with Paolo Cortese's Ciceronian letters, by writers who lack strength, as Poliziano says, and life. Individual *ingenium*, a problematic term which it might be best to translate as "mind," becomes the authenticating component of language. Without it, words cannot approach truth ("Nihil ibi verum, nihil solidum, nihil efficax"). Language and style which merely re-enacts its model remains dead language and dead style ("carent viribus et vita"). The professional curriculum of *imitatio*, whereby the approximation of the style of select classical models could insure a grammar student's entry into an upwardly mobile literate bureacracy, had, in these terms, stultified the humanist movement.

The suppressed self is figured, in Poliziano's letter as it was in Bruni's dialogue, as reduced to silence. For Bruni, the poetics of *imitatio* offered a

legitimized vocabulary of forms, a way of speaking in an accredited style. But for Poliziano, imitation figures as another species of silence, a manner of not speaking. He characterizes Ciceronians to Cortese as "attoniti," thunderstruck, dumb, in contemplation before the model. In order to achieve an authentic eloquence, Poliziano argues, the individual must broaden out and rise independently above the models he has assimilated.

> Sed cum Ciceronem, cum bonos alios multum diuque legeris, contriveris, edidiceris, concoxeris et rerum multarum cognitione pectus impleveris, ac iam componere aliquid ipse parabis, tum demum velim quod dicitur sine cortice nates, atque ipse tibi sis aliquando in consilio, sollicitudinemque illam morosam nimis et anxiam deponas effingendi tantummodo Ciceronem tuasque denique vires universas pericliteris.
>
> But when you have abundantly read Cicero and other good authors for a long time, and you have studied them, learned them, and digested them; when you have filled your breast with the knowledge of many things, and you decide finally to compose something of your own, then finally I want you to swim, as they say, without a life-preserver, take counsel with yourself for once, abandon this neurotic preoccupation with reproducing Cicero, and finally try to use your entire capacity.

Poliziano describes the relation of the imitator to the model as "effingens," a term compounded of "ex-fingo," implying contrivance and inauthenticity. For Quintilian, the term "effingere" usually implied slavish copying ("Nec vero ... sufficiat imaginem virtutis effingere;" X, ii, 15), amounting to no more than a superficial resemblance to the model. Imitation of models, like swimming with a floatation device, confesses a limited skill. Models ought not to dictate forms that we fill, they ought to provide, rather, a varied supply of material ("cognitio rerum multarum") that the writer can deploy. In this manner, a liberal education ought to lead toward the acquisition of *copia*, which is implied in the idea of "using one's entire capacities" ("vires universas"). The letter ends with a summary statement, "Postremo scias infelicis esse ingenii nihil a se promere, semper imitari" (And remember finally that only unhappy

ingenium always imitates without drawing anything from itself). In Poliziano's lectures on Quintilian and Statius that same year, he developed the association of *copia* with pleasure (*voluptas*).

"Crebrior voluptas, multi flores

Politian's choice of texts for the first course he taught at the Florentine studio (1480) indicate that he considered the development of a poetics of *copia* a matter of primary concern for the culture's health. The texts were Quintilian's *Institutiones Oratoria*, a work rediscovered in Bruni's generation by Poggio Bracciolini, and the *Sylvae* of Statius, a group of occasional poems that were also recovered by Poggio, but were largely neglected because of their departure from Augustan style, and even belittled as degenerate, corrupt Latin.[7] In the introductory lecture, Poliziano felt obliged to explain his choice of subject matter, aware that among his students there would be some who consider Statius "unworthy to even be published." He develops his praise of the *Sylvae* in terms that anticipate 16th century treatises on the poetics of *copia.*

> Nihil in illis non sagacissime inventum, non prudentissime dispositum est, nullus non tentatus locus atque excussus, unde aliqua modo voluptas eliceretur. Elocutionis autem ornamenta atque lumina tot tantaque exposuit, ita sententiis popularis, verbis nitidus, figuris iucundus, tralationibus magnificus, grandis resonansque carminibus esse studuit, ut omnia illi facta compositaque ad pompam, omnia ad celebritatem comparata videantur; tantumque abfuit quominus tam multiplici materiae

[7] For the fortune of Statius in the Renaissance, and an account of Poliziano's annotations to the poems, see P. Papini Stati *Sylvae*, ed. Aldo Marastoni (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1970) vii-xvi, lvi-lxxxix; and Ida Maïer, *Les manuscrits d'Ange Politien* (Geneva: Droz, 1965). The lecture notes for the entire course were recently authenticated and edited by Lucia Cesarini Martinelli, *Commento inedito alle Selve di Stazio* (Florence: Sansoni, 1978); see also her study, "In margine al commento di Angelo Poliziano alle 'Selve' di Stazio," *Interpres* 1 (1978): 96-145.

> omnibus locis suffecerit, ut eam quoque quasi Phidias aliquis aut Apelles insigni operis artificio superavit (872).[8]

> There is nothing in these poems that isn't masterful, that isn't most intelligently put, nothing that hasn't been put there for the sake of eliciting pleasure. He displayed so many and grand and luminous ornaments of elocution, he was so democratic in his ideas, bright in his vocabulary, joyous in his figures, magnificent in his metaphors, grandiose and resonant in his lyrics, that it appears he composed it all festively, for the public. And so well did he bring out such a great variety of material as to command it like a new Phidias or an Apelles, with marvelous artifice.

In the midst of an age that undertook for itself the reinstitution of Augustan Latin, Poliziano extols the Silver Age poet for the multiplicity of matter and the variety of styles ("argumentorum multiplicitate, vel dicendi vario artificio" 872), and for the precise linguistic ornamentation, resulting in a poetic sense of pleasure. The *Sylvae* pertain to an indistict genre, not ode or epigram or elegy, but "materia indigesta," as Poliziano would say elsewhere,[9] a poetic genre that seeks the appearance of improvisation, and embraces a variety of tones, styles and material. Statius himself associated the *Sylvae* with pleasure and with improvisation, "...hos libellos, qui mihi subito calore et quadam festinandi voluptate fluxerunt" (*Epistolae* I, 3).

Poliziano's reading of Statius represents an expansion of what could form the basis of imitation. He effectively enlarges the canon to include poetry with a richer surface texture, a higher degree of ornamentation, and a more "Asiatic" style. This expansion of the canon would elevate not only Statius, but all the Silver Latin poets, and Seneca and Ovid as well as model practitioners of a copious style.

[8] Citations are from the text in *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento*, 870-884.

[9] Codex Magl. VII, 973, f3r; quoted in Ida Maïer, *Ange Politien: La formation d'un poète humaniste (1469-1480)* (Geneva: Droz, 1966) 211.

> ...nam si rectius inspexerimus, non tam corruptam atque depravatam illam, quam dicendi mutatum genus intelligemus. Neque autem statim deterius dixerimus quod diversum sit. Maior certe cultus in secundis est, crebrior voluptas, multae sententiae, multi flores, nulli sensus tardi, nulla iners structura, omninoque non tantum sani quam et fortes, sunt omnes et laeti et alacres et pleni sanguinis atque coloris (878).
>
> If we examine the situation carefully, we will understand that rather than being corrupt and depraved, (late Latin) had changed its style of language. Nor should we immediately call 'worse' what is merely different. Certainly there is more sophistication in these late authors, denser pleasure, many *sententiae*, many flowers, and nothing slow, no inert structures, and they are not only entirely sound, but strong, bright, lively, and full of blood and color.

Poliziano admires "tam multiplex materia" and "tantae res de quibus ageretur varietati" (such a multiplicity of material and so many things subjected to variations). The reference to "multi flores" punningly attributes "many delights" to Statius, while it participates in the familiar apian metaphor that was commonly invoked in reference to *imitatio.* Its lineage can be traced through Macrobius and Seneca to Virgil's *Georgics.*[10] In the context of a lecture whose explicit purpose is to broaden the canon, the point of the metaphor is not the bees' ability to transform pollen into honey, but their collecting pollen from many different flowers, rearranging previous material from a variety of sources. Also, we are told that there is (in contrast to the unhappy Ciceronian) an immanent pleasure in the copious style, "crebrior voluptas," which is the pleasure of discourse itself, and which can be adopted into our own lives according to the principles of the other author central to the lecture, Quintilian.

> quid tandem est in hoc ocio atque in hac privata vita iucundius, quid dulcius, quid humanitati accomodatius, quam eo sermonis

[10] See Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, praefatio, 8, and Seneca, *Epistulae morales*, 84. The use of the apian metaphor by Petrarch and other Renaissance authors is discussed by Pigman, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," 4-11.

> genere uti, qui sententiis refertus, verbis ornatus, facetiis urbanitateque expolitus, nihil rude, nihil ineptum habeat atque agreste? In quo omnia comitate, omnia gravitate et suavitate condita sint (882).
>
> What finally can be more joyful in a quiet and private life, what sweeter, what more fitting to an educated person, than to use discourse full of thought, adorned with words, witty and urbane, never rough, and never inept; replete with every courtesy, every gravity and grace?

The terms of praise lavished on Statius and Quintilian in this lecture betray an incipient desire in Renaissance letters to transcend the sober constraints of *imitatio* and its tendency toward self-negation, and to begin to take pleasure (*voluptas*) in the potential fullness of language. *Copia* became the principle by which the 16th century might liberate itself from the burden of copying the antique self. The 16th century found in *copia* a way to take possession of its own imaginative forms in its own vernacular languages. In the various treatises on the worthiness of the vernacular languages for literary purposes, the inherent potential for a vernacular *copia* is frequently mentioned. "Né sia però nessuno che questa toscana lingua come poco ornata e copiosa disprezzi," goes the preface to the *Raccolta Aragonese*, probably written by Poliziano. The initial sense of inferiority to classical letters could be supplanted by poetic *copia* that might express a virtuoso's self-possession, and a newly confident literary culture in the vernacular.

The poem that reveals the world

Although the poetics of *copia* found their full expression in 16th century vernacular works, Poliziano seems to have worked out his thoughts on the matter in his Latin *Sylvae*, a series of four didactic poems deeply indebted to Statius, all of which were written as introductory lectures ("prolusiones") for

the courses he gave at the Studio.[11] While developing a theory of *copia* as the goal of a literary education, the poems incorporate some of the distinguishing characteristics of the copious style, an energetic virtuosity displayed, in Emilio Bigi's estimation, in "puro gusto linguistico." In *Manto*, the introductory lecture to Poliziano's 1482 course on the *Eclogues*, Virgil is portrayed as the consummate master of the poetics of *copia*. The poem is an extended encomium of Virgil's domination of all genres, and it proceeds to catalogue in rich detail the topics and memorable moments in turn of the minor poems, the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*. The encomium depends for part of its effect on the impression it gives of *copia rerum*, of there being a vast abundance of material to be covered. The poet acknowledges the inherent resistance to closure and formal determination that a *copia rerum* presents, asking, "Aut qua fine sequar? Facit ingens copia rerum/ incertum" (40-41; What end shall I follow? The huge abundance of material renders me uncertain).[12] The poet's labor is to provide a form that will embrace such vast contents. Poliziano catalogues the subject matter and praises the achievement of each of Virgil's poems. The poetry goes to great lengths to imitate the style that it praises, implicitly offering *copia* as an model of imitation rather than any particular form or any single work of Virgil. The catalogue culminates in a panegyric of the copious style itself, apart from any particular subject matter. Uncertain at the beginning, the poem finds its way

[11] On Poliziano's *Sylvae*, see Giovanni Ponte, "Poetica e poesia nelle *Sylvae* del Poliziano," *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* (1959) 390-416; and the introduction by Perrine Galand to his bilingual edition, *Les Silves*, (Paris: Société d'Edition Les Belles Lettres, 1987).

[12] Citations are from *Prose volgari inedite e poesie latine e greche edite e inedite*, ed. Isidoro Del Lungo (Florence, 1867; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976).

to an outcome which is the praise of *copia* as an end, representing the conjunction achieved between the linguistic universe of Virgil's poetry and the vast *copia* of the natural, real world.

> Et quis, io iuvenes, tanti miracula lustrans
> Eloquii non se immensos terraeque marisque
> Prospectare putet tractus? Hic ubere largo
> Luxuriant segetes; hic mollia gramina tondet
> Armentum; hic lentis amicitur vitibus ulmus;
> Illinc muscoso tollunt se robora trunco;
> Hinc maria ampla patent; bibulis hoc squalet arenis
> Litus; ab his gelidi decurrunt montibus amnes;
> Huc vastae incumbunt rupes; hinc scrupea pandunt
> Antra sinus; illinc valles cubuere reductae:
> Et discors pulchrum facies ita temperat orbem.
> Sic varios sese in vultus facundia dives
> Induit: et vasto nunc torrens impete fertur
> Fluminis in morem, sicco nunc aret in alveo;
> Nunc sese laxat, nunc exspatiata coercet;
> Nunc inculta decet, nunc blandis plena renidet
> Floribus; interdum pulchre simul omnia miscet.
> O vatum presciosa quies! o gaudia solis
> Nota piis, dulcis furor, incorrupta voluptas,
> Ambrosiaeque deum mensae! (351-370).
>
> And who, oh youths, perusing the miracles of this great eloquence, would not suppose that he was looking out over the immense tracts of the land and the sea? Here the grain richly flourishes; here the herd grazes on the soft grass; here the elm is married to the slender vines; on that side the oaks rise up with mossy trunks; on this side the vast sea lies open; here the shore lies barren with its thirsty sands; from these mountains the chilly rivers flow down; over here tower huge cliffs, and here great caves open their folds, while over there lie hidden valleys; and in all this a variegated beauty tempers the lovely world. So his rich eloquence takes on differing aspects: and like a river is now carried rushing with great impetus, now shrinks in its dry bed, now it is relaxed, now stepping proudly forth it is compelling; now negligence befits it, now it shines filled with lovely flowers; and sometimes it beautifully mingles all. Oh, the precious peace of the poets! O joy of the sun known to the good, sweet madness, unmixed pleasure, and ambrosia on the tables of the gods!

The optimism in the passage lies in the possibility it raises for a linguistic universe that is equal in beauty and variety to the natural universe ("discors pulchrum facies ita temperat orbem"). In this sense, the poet is elevated from

imitator of texts to creator of worlds, from disciple to lord. A great poet, by mastering the poetics of *copia*, might create a linguistic universe that would correspond in variety and breadth to the natural universe. Poliziano will argue in a later poem that in doing so, the poet alone reveals the natural universe to man. The passage praises Virgil for this virtue, and incidentally participates in the same poetics that it praises. The motifs of the passage are modeled on those of another encyclopedic text, the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (also in praise of Virgil),[13] and its exuberant embrace of the world in turn becomes commonplace in later Renaissance codifications of the copious style, notably in treatises and dialogues by Lionardi, Giraldi Cinthio and Tasso. As late as the 19th century, Ugo Foscolo will borrow from it in honor of Ariosto.

The equation between copious poetics and the natural universe also implies that the Creator is a master of *copia*. In this sense, poetry in the copious style has divine *copia* as its referent, and in fact divine *copia* is available to human perception only by virtue of poetry, which teaches rough humanity to realize its inherent capacities to know the world. In the introductory section of *Nutricia* (1486; a historical survey of poetry from Orpheus to Politian's erstwhile student, Piero De Medici), the all-embracing capacities of poetic *copia* are brought to bear in praise of the civilizing power of poetry. Poliziano elaborates a myth of the origins of civilized society out of bestial, primitive human beings based upon the acquisition of poetry. The "terrisque marisque" of the passage quoted above in the context of the scope

[13] See Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970) 5.1.18-20, "atque adeo non alium secutus ducem quam ipsam rerum omnium matrem naturam, hanc praetexuit velut in musica concordiam dissonorum." At 1.24.12, Macrobius praises Virgil for the breadth of knowledge encompassed in his poems, "nec in his Vergilii verbis copia rerum dissonat...."

of poetic ambition is echoed here in the context of the scope of human awareness, which is the defining property of human nature. Concordant with Neoplatonic elevation of contemplation to the highest good, man's awareness of the divine *res* in the universe constitutes his participation in divinity.

> Intulerit terris nuper mundoque recenti
> Cura dei sanctum hoc animal, quod in aethera ferret
> Sublimes oculos; quod mentis acumine totum
> Naturae lustraret opus, causasque latenteis
> Eliceret rerum, et summum deprenderet aevi
> Artificem nutu terras maria astra regentem; (35-39).
>
> Divine care had recently brought onto the land of this young world this holy animal, capable of lifting his sublime eyes toward the sky, capable of embracing with the acumen of his mind nature's totality and of discovering the hidden causes of things and of recognizing the vast artifice of time, he who can govern the land, sea, and stars with a nod.

These capacities of awareness, according to Poliziano's myth, remained potential and unavailable until they were revealed through poetry. Inarticulate, man exists in an alienated state, "visque insita cordi" (48; his power locked in the heart), far removed from his proper understanding and participation in the sacred. People lived "sine ulla lege" (46), scattered like animals, in other words, without society or civilization. They lacked a poetic vocabulary to articulate and integrate the world around them.

> Et nunc, ceu prorsus morientem, vespere sero
> Ignari flevere diem; nunc, luce renata,
> Gaudebant ceu sole alio; variosque recursus
> Astrorum, variam Phoeben sublustris in umbra
> Noctis, et alternas in se redeuntibus annis
> Attoniti stupuere vices; insignia longum
> Spectabant coeli, pulchroque a lumine mundi
> Pendebant causarum inopes, rationis egentes (59-66).
>
> And now, unaware, they wept for the daylight every evening, as if it were dying forever; now at daybreak they rejoiced as if for another sun; Stunned, they were dumbfounded by the various courses of the stars, the various phases of the moon that shown in the shadow of the night, and by the alternate return of the annual seasons; They contemplated the signs in

> the sky and, ignorant of causes, devoid of reason, everything depended on the beautiful light of the world.

Their inability to comprehend the world coincides with their voicelessness: rough humanity stands before nature "attoniti," struck dumb. The potential synergy and harmony of the universe is obscure to them. Unable to achieve an integrated understanding of nature, they perceive it only in meaningless, unconnected segments (as "nonsense"). They are even ignorant of the continuity between the setting and the rising sun. The inspiring totality of the divine *res*, in other words, seems chaotic, confusing, separated into parts. Poliziano's myth assigns the task of revealing the universe's concealed accord to vatic poets. Without a poetic language, there would be no means to illuminate the world and or to realize its potential meaning, man's divine inheritance. By virtue of inspiration, poets alone grasp the harmony in what appears chaotic to other men, and reflect its formal coherence in verse.

> Nec tamen in nullis hominum simulacra refulgent
> Mentibus, arcanam coeli testantia musam
> Permixtumque Jovem. Nam ceu tralucet imago
> Sideris in speculum, ceu puro condita vitro
> Solis inardescit radio vis limpida fontis;
> Sic nitidos vatum defecatosque sonori
> Informant flammantque animos modulamina coeli (156-62).
>
> And yet the images (of the spheres) reflect in the minds of some men, revealing the hidden muses of heaven and complex Jupiter. For just as the image of the stars shines in a mirror, just as the limpid power of the fount fixed in pure glass shines in the rays of the sun, so poets' measures inform and inflame clean and shining souls with the sounds of heaven.

The divine matter exists prior to language and apart from it, but *res* remains confused and meaningless until poetic *verba* provides a linguistic form to make it available to human understanding. *Verba* becomes the means to human apprehension of *res*; poetry engenders recognition. In the terms of Politian's fable, primitive humanity receives Poetry from God. "Genitor," the Creator,

caused Poetry to descend from Mount Olympus, in order to "extundere duro/ abstrusam cordi scintillam" (73-74; awaken the spark concealed in their hard hearts). Savage and primitive humans, like the interlocutors of Bruni's dialogue in their sudden awareness of classical eloquence, are struck silent by this, their initial exposure to measured verses:

> Nam simul ac, pulchro moderatrix unica rerum
> Suffulta eloquio, dulcem sapientia cantum
> Protulit, et refugas tantum sonus attigit aures,
> Concurrere ferum vulgus; numerosque modosque
> Vocis et arcanas mirati in carmine leges,
> Densi humeris, arrecti animis, immota tenebant
> Ora catervatim:...
> Agnorant se quisque feri, pudibundaque longum
> Ora oculos taciti inter se immotique tenebant.
> Mox cunctos pariter morum vitaeque prioris
> Pertaesum; ritusque ausi damnare ferarum,
> Protinus exseruere hominem. Tum barbara primum
> Lingua novos subiit cultus arcanaque sensa
> Mandavere notis,...(75-80; 95-102)
>
> As soon as Wisdom (the only controller of things), with the help of beautiful speech, brought forth a sweet song, and as soon as that sound touched their recoiling ears, it assembled that fierce crowd who, admiring the verses and the sounds of the voice and the arcane laws of poetry, shoulder to shoulder, their souls aroused, remained immobile with their mouths shut.... The savages recognized themselves for what they were and, silent and immobile, they remained there a long time ashamed with their eyes cast down. Then they all suddenly felt disgusted by the customs of their life before and, casting off the ways of beasts, they finally revealed their humanity. Then for the first time their barbarous language underwent a new refinement, and they set down in writing their arcane thoughts.

After much difficult poetic labor, humanity is able to overcome its initial silence, learns the poetic skills, and actively realizes its contemplative potential. The divine *res* revealed in poetic forms culminates in civilization and human self-awareness, "Sic species terris, vitae sua forma suusque/ dis honor, ipsa sibi tandem sic reddita mens est (114-15; thus the world took on appearance, life was endowed with form, the gods were given their deserved honor and so consciousness became aware of itself). *Nutricia* thus lends a

mystical imperative to the notion of *copia* in poetry. As *verba* is the only means to self-awareness and to the apprehension of the divine *res*, poets have a moral responsibility to reveal the "totum opus" ("totum/ naturae lustraret opus"), that is, the integrity and the entirety of the creation. The copious style seeks this totality of revelation, confirmed in the variegated landscape of *Manto*'s closing lines where the whole world is brought poetically into being. Without poetry, men are beasts in fact. They are unique for their capacities to understand the world, but this understanding only takes place in poetry, in language under the discipline of meter that provides a form in which the world might be articulated.

Tasso's near-quotation of *Manto* in his *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* almost a century later reaffirms the poet's responsibility to the "totum opus," to a synchronic notion of the world's integrity. The heroic poem in particular reveals the mysteries by involving in a single form all the variety of nature.

> Però che, sì come in questo mirabile magisterio di Dio, che mondo si chiama, e 'l cielo si vede sparso o distinto di tanta varietà di stelle; e, discendendo poi giuso di mano in mano, l'aria e 'l mare pieni d'uccelli e di pesci; e la terra albergatrice di tanti animali così feroci come mansueti, nella quale e ruscelli e fonti e laghi e prati e campagne e selve e monti si trovano; e qui frutti e fiori, là ghiacci e nevi, qui abitazioni e culture, là solitudini ed orrori: con tutto ciò uno è il mondo che tante e sì diverse cose nel suo grembo rinchiude, una la forma e l'essenza sua, uno il modo dal quale sono le sue parti con discorde concordia insieme congiunte e collegate; ... così parimente giudico che da eccellente poeta (il quale non per altro divino è detto se non perché, al supremo Artefice nelle sue operazioni assomigliandosi, della sua divinità viene a partecipare) un poema formar si possa nel quale, quasi in un picciolo mondo, qui si leggano ordinanze d'eserciti, qui battaglie terrestri e navali, qui espugnazioni di città, scaramucce e duelli, qui giostre, qui descrizioni de fame e di sete, qui tempeste, qui incendii, qui prodigii (etc.) (*Scritti*, 41).

The poem functions as an index to the world, not unlike Schrevel's index to the *Metamorphoses*. The "totum opus" (che mondo si chiama) is reduced in

the poem "quasi in un picciolo mondo," in which all events take place in a small space, just as Schrevel's index reduced Ovid's poem "as if seen on a small canvas." For Tasso (and for his contemporaries), such totality, such *copia* of material disciplined to poetic form, represented the pinnacle to which epic poetry aspired. To grasp all the variety of the world in the course of a poetic act meant to reveal the order and integrity that underlies the world's apparent chaos.

The transformation of the model

Poliziano experimented in the copious style in his youthful vernacular poetry as well. The description of the realm of Venus in the *Stanze cominciate per le giostra*, occupying fifty octaves (nearly half of the first book) is a sort of triumphal procession of creatures and plants and abstract qualities associated with love. This section of the poem is notable for the long catalogues it contains. First there is a catalogue packed with the names of deities and sub-deities and allegorical figures from the rhetoric of love who are deified here for the first and only time, (Inganno, Riso, Cenni and Sguardi are among the company). There follows a list of flowers and plants with their properties, and then a catalogue of small animals and their association with Venus. There is a catalogue of types of fishes, and then of birds. All this before approaching the central ecphrastic description of the Palace of Venus and the friezes and sculptures contained therein, culminating with the goddess herself. The performance is remarkable for the sheer number of things that it names in an encyclopedic display of *copia rerum* communicated with "gusto linguistico."

There is another aspect of the poem's *copia* that is equally important to the development of the style in the 16th century, and that is the abundance of

classical and modern subtexts that appear allusively on the verbal surface. The lexicon is extraordinary for the infusion of Latinisms alongside popular language, and for subtle verbal echoes of Latin as well as Italian poets. Its primary literary source is Claudian's *Epithalamium*, but, as Thomas Greene has shown, the verbal texture is drawn from myriad Greek, Latin and Italian sources. Poliziano's achievement here is no less than to utterly transform the poetics of *imitatio* by compounding sources, exploding the variety of models to strike rich chords of intertextuality that emerge as new poetic structures, indeed, as a new poetics. Greene demonstrates that "l'usignuol sotto l'amate fronde/ cantando ripetea l'antico pianto" (I,60), a verbal allusion to Petrarch's sonnet CCCXI ("Quel rosignuol..."), alludes likewise to that sonnet's subtext in the *Georgics*, and conflates it with an allusion to another bird, the "augello intro l'amate fronde" of Paradiso, XXIII,1. The same stanza also quotes Dante's source for the image in Claudian. After demonstrating how the subtexts are incorporated and set off against each other with such astounding complexity, Greene concludes:

> The *Stanze* compose a mosaic, each of whose stones are likely to prove a tiny composite of still smaller elements. The effect of this subtle and haunting intercontaminaton of a hundred subtexts is a kind of alchemical quintessence of the European poetic tradition" (*The Light in Troy*, 158).

Of course, it was the classical poets themselves who first demonstrated the feasibility of Poliziano's method of *imitatio*, interweaving strands of allusion in a manner of "docta varietas," as Poliziano referred to it. For Poliziano, then, imitation did not depend upon a single classical form or a single masterpiece, as it did for Bruni's generation. Rather, it involved conventions and verbal formulae from a variety of sources into an original formulation, rewriting the sources by placing them in a new context. For Bruni and the

early humanists, *imitatio* was an avenue to appropriating the authority of the classical voice. For Poliziano, rather, authority was constituted by a display of mastery over an entire network of models in the service of enriching the text. Emilio Bigi concurs that

> non solo egli non perde la facoltà di usufruire dei tesori degli scrittori classici, ma può inoltre compiere tutto un sottile lavoro di combinazione e di adattamento dei moduli greci e latini con quelli della nuova e moderna lingua, e tentare quindi tutta una serie di accordi e contrasti di nuovo e più vario e prezioso sapore. (*Dizionario biogrfico degli Italiani*, II, 694).

This early example of a copious text, then, presents not only a dense succession of names of things in an energetic descriptive style, but also a dense interweaving of inherited texts. The abundant intertextuality shows how skillful Poliziano had become with the classical canon. He was able to display his mastery of the literary tradition and at the same time assert his independence of its authority. Yet, in addition to rivaling the past and asserting domination over the inherited vocabulary of styles, the allusive recombination of textual elements within a single imitation might be seen as a type of diachronic *varietas* in the copious style, a display of virtuosity by varying well-known achievements of the literary tradition. The inventive capability of ever finding new ways of retelling the already told extends the received literature along the axis of *copia verborum*, the principle of generating synonyms and paraphrases. No longer obliged to repeat or even to rival the classical tradition, Poliziano had mastered it to the extent that he could play in it and vary it to effect. The new poem would not only mirror the magnitude and variety of the natural world within its textual fabric, it would also rewrite and include the literary world to which it is heir. This assertion of mastery may be set in sharp distinction to the feeling of

inferiority in relation to classical letters that humanists of Bruni's generation often expressed.

The 16th century achievement

Ariosto adopted and amplified the transformed notion of *imitatio* demonstrated in Poliziano's octaves. If the 15th century defined its relation to classical letters in terms of discipleship, the 16th century became more clearly aware of its role in an ongoing literary tradition. An encyclopedic poem would require the poet's mastery over the literary inheritance to the extent that no province of the literary past lie outside the empire of the present. As with everything else in the *Furioso*, the practice of imitating and varying fragments from the entire canon of Western Literature takes place on a grander scale.[14] Ariosto occults lexical and narrative elements into his poem from vernacular and near contemporary sources as well as the from the classical canon; echoes of Petrarch and Dante, Poliziano and Marullo are frequently interwoven with those poets' classical models. Sometimes they are conflated with allusions to the chivalric romances, so we are always in two or three places at once on the intertextual map. He similarly compounds the generic coding of the poem itself. Not only does the *Orlando furioso* splice the generic traditions of Virgilian epic and vernacular romance, it also recombines features of Silver Latin epic, pastoral and lyric traditions, and especially the Ovidian genre that tends to include within itself instances from all generic possibilities, a catalogue of literary styles. Ariosto involves and rewrites nearly every trope and set piece available to a 16th century mind

[14] Daniel Javitch has examined the phenomenon of Ariosto's multiple *imitatio* in "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 215-239.

somewhere in the course of the *Furioso*'s 32,000 lines, availing himself of the entire Western literary tradition.

Mendelson suggests that examples of the encyclopedic genre occupy a special social and historical position in the culture in which they appear, "a fulcrum, often, between periods of history that later readers consider national pre-history and national history." Such moments, he says, take place when "a culture becomes aware of itself as a separate entity" ("Encyclopedic Narrative," 1268). Mendelson is referring to political and social events, but it is difficult to attribute the rise of the *copia* in the 16th century to any political occurence. On the contrary, the Italian sense of national history might be said to have been stronger in the 15th century than in the 16th, when foreign powers occupied the principle seats of political power. Nevertheless, a manifest literary culture in the 16th century became "aware of itself as a separate entity." As humanist *imitatio* gave way to a poetics of *copia*, vernacular literature became better able to assert its own individualty in a literary tradition continuous with but distinct from its classical inheritance. As much as the 15th century had concerned itself with imitating classical examples, the 16th century began to concern itself with surpassing them. The poetics of *copia* coincide with a culture that has not only overcome the astonished silence that threatened nascent humanist literature, but that celebrates its own voice in stylistic virtuosity and in the very expansiveness of its texts.

Chapter 4

The Poetic Way of Knowing

One of the perennial critical problems encountered by readers of the *Orlando furioso* lies in the apparent waywardness of its episodic structure, a problem linked in important ways to the poem's colossal size.[1] When narrative's syntagmatic axis extends so far, it tends to break apart into paradigmatic components. The sense of a sequence based upon causal necessity is difficult to maintain. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid concealed the formal unity of the *carmen perpetuum* behind the appearance of a casual variety of autonomous stories. The *Orlando furioso* presents itself as both things at once: a conclusive, causally motivated epic and a meandering collection of tales. The epic coordinates of a hero, a task, and a plot prepare a closed structure, and the Poet's voice prominently asserts responsibility to an organized design; but the poem continually defers closure, straying from the declared end, introducing scores of characters and wandering through a

[1] Ariosto's poem immediately inspired polemics over the question of "appropriate magnitude" and the relative validity of "single" or "multiple" plots which occupied the latter half of the 16th century, discussed in detail in Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961) II, 991-1073; Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 207-211; Peter M. Brown, "The Historical Significance of the Polemics over Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*," *Studi secenteschi* 11 (1970): 3-23; Giuseppe Venturini, *Orazio Ariosto e la polemica intorno alla superiorità del Tasso sull'Ariosto* (Ferrara: SATE, 1972); and Daniel Javitch, "Narrative Discontiuity in the *Orlando furioso* and its Sixteenth Century Critics,"*MLN* 103 (1988): 50-74. For full bibliographies of Ariosto criticism, see G. Fatini, *Bibliografia della critica ariostea (1510-1956)* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1958); D. Medici, "La bibliografia della critica ariostesca dal 'Fatini' ad oggi," *Bolletino storico reggiano* 27 (1974): 63-150; Raffaello Ramat, *La critica ariostesca dal secolo XVI ad oggi* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1954); Robert J. Rodini and Salvatore Di Maria, *Ludovico Ariosto: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1956-1980* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984); and an update of that bibliography by Rodini, "Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism, 1980-1987," *MLN* 103 (1988): 187-202.

labyrinthine succession of episodes. The Poet's control over the text's vast meandering stands in sharp distinction to the reader's calculated bewilderment. The focus of the poem continually shifts orientation between the overall design (declared in the Poet's direct discourse to the reader) and the present episode, always seductive, engaging and full of energy.

All of the constituent features of the copious style are evident in the *Orlando furioso.* Ariosto's poetic virtuosity commands a full spectrum of styles and literary conventions in a rich variety of settings. In the context of *copia*'s totalizing impulse, the *Orlando furioso* can be regarded, like the *Metamorphoses*, as an encyclopedia of poetic and fictional *loci*, comprehending all literary forms in the fabric of an all-embracing narrative. Its very inclusiveness, however, challenges readers to equal the poem's comprehension. The reader is required to withstand the plot's apparent indetermination and integrate its disparate parts, and by this effort arrive at the meaningful order the Poet so frequently asserts. The apparently chaotic, *post hoc* procedure of events suspends meaning, and encourages--even constitutes--*copia*, defined, in Terence Cave's terms, as "the ability of language to generate detours and deflections" (111). Textual abundance expressed in the extension of textual surface allows an indefinite plurality of possible senses.

Organizational Procedure

The *Orlando furioso* opens in a centrifugal mode. The major characters are introduced in the course of their dispersal through a "selva" that will provide the background for the first half of the poem, in quest of (or flight from) one or another object of desire or fear: a helmet, a woman, a horse. In each case, the quest for the object of desire becomes modified by intervening quests, and the original object becomes an increasingly distant end. The various quests fan out through an ever-widening *entrelacement* of

plots, and the quest theme reaches its ironic climax in the madness of Orlando, which takes place at the poem's midpoint. The second half of the poem slowly resolves the uncompleted and misplaced actions of the first half, the fugal mode is replaced by a gradual narrowing of the action, and the quest theme changes key. The objects of desire which characterized the first half of the poem are replaced by conceptual goals: honor, victory, sanity, knowledge, and civilization, culminating in the foundational marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante. The marriage is deferred with a number of inventive interferences (it requires no less than the introduction of a new major character, Leone, two cantos before the end). The poem will near its closure with the marriage scene, which finds all the surviving characters gathered in Paris (the poem's ostensible geographical center), in a festive celebration. The final battle between Ruggiero and Rodomonte effectively ties up the one end that had been left dangling, and the poem closes with Rodomonte's death.

The poem sets two categories of organizational procedure against each other. On the one hand there is the epic category, corresponding to the poem's closed structural qualities, associated with *destino*, *disegno*, *sentiero*, *dritta via*, all implicating a causal arrangement. On the other hand there is the romance category, corresponding to the poem's open structural qualities, associated *sorte*, *fortuna*, *selva*, *ventura*, *errore*, all implicating an arbitrary, wandering, uncontrolled *post-hoc* succession of events. These two categories co-exist throughout the text, quite apart from the poem's bipartite structure. The significance of their mixture for readers (and especially for first-time readers) lies in the conflicting signals they emit about how the reader is to understand the poem. On the one hand, we seek its epic organization, on the other, we become passively immersed in the wayward mass of events, and in the apparently ungoverned sequence.

By continually deferring the arrival at the declared point of closure, following the procedure of romance that, as Patricia Parker has said, "constantly quests for and postpones a particular end," the poet opens the possibility for generating and compounding narrative in "the threshold before the end" (4). The poem fights for its life against closure, and it will go on as long as the poet can resist. As in the *Metamorphoses*, the poem's resistance to closure permits its vast variety of episodes and literary conventions in the copious style. The Poet's frequent invocations of the poem's teleological orientation serve to highlight by contrast his actual procedure with continual straying from that orientation. Episodes seem to bear little relation to one another, and scene changes are swift and frequent. The sense of plot development becomes lost in the variety of episodic sequences, the prolongation of suspense into indifference, and the multiplication of characters, plots and styles. These factors conspire to give the impression of disorder, of a fictional world that is out of control and whose parts cannot cohere.

Early in the first canto, the theme of "error" is announced not only discursively ("Ecco il giudicio uman come spesso erra" I, 7),[2] but also in the plot's wandering procedure. The action opens at the scene of a battle between Charlemagne's Christian troops and Agramante's Saracens. The war between these factions would form the central focus of epic action, in the manner of the *Iliad* or of the second half of the *Aeneid*. But the poem's unpredictability asserts itself in Charlemagne's initial defeat, "contrari ai voti poi furo i successi" (I, 9). Most of the characters disperse from the scene of battle and they wander lost "per selve oscure e calli obliqui" (I, 22), pursuing their

[2] All citations are from the *Orlando furioso*, ed. Cesare Segre (1976; Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1979).

various objects of desire. Readers inevitably share a similar plight. Denied the reliable coordinates of a central hero and a fixed setting, the reader is presented with many characters involved in various interlocking pursuits in a vague and shifting setting. The analogy between the situation of the characters and that of the poem's audience is reinforced by their common sense of determination. The wandering of the characters reflects ironically on the resolute intentions of each of them to directly obtain a desired object, and the same irony is passed along to the reader who intends to ride a traditional plot sequence through to the end.

Ariosto's variety of interlaced plots presents a bewildering multiplicity of stories woven into a continuous and seamless narrative surface very much like that of the *Metamorphoses*. In stark contrast to Ovid, Ariosto pretends to consolidate his narrative into a progressively developing plot line in epic profile that describes the vicissitudes of a central group of heroes. Ovid was free to "deliver himself from Aristotle's laws of art," as Giraldi Cinthio correctly remarked, by removing any sense of teleological organization from his epic. Ariosto, no less than Ovid, is a storyteller with encyclopedic ambition, but the imposition of a plot paradigm on the collection of stories that make up the *Orlando furioso* obliges him to restore the impression of a teleological orientation to the sequence of episodes. The plot line develops a combination of no less than four primary branches (that rarely intersect): the romance of Orlando and Angelica, the destined marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante (which holds encomiastic epic overtones), the Odyssean maneuvers of Astolfo, and the war between the Christians and the Saracens. These main actions frame myriad episodes that involve many scores of characters, hopelessly complicating the linearity of the epic profile. The digressions and excursions interspersed among the main narrative threads frequently have little

bearing on how the main actions develop; in fact, they often seem to draw the narrative away from its end rather than toward it. The resulting narrative ensemble is so episodic and multilateral in its development that its epic intentions seem ill-served, the end is obscured, and it imparts the rhythm and surface texture of an Ovidian treasury of autonomous stories. The sequential coherence of these stories is virtually impossible to apprehend in an initial reading, much like Caligorante's net, "chi prima nol sa, non la comprende" (XV, 44). Yet the poem emerges in its latter stages as a closed, plotted epic, and not as a treasury of unhinged stories after all. Perception of the work changes from the perspective of the end. What had seemed an "opera aperta" turns out to be the closed structure that it had all along pretended to be. The wandering narrative comes under proper discipline, and its parts, in retrospect, all fall into place. Carne-Ross interpreted the poem's inevitable narrowing of scope as Ariosto's grafting a closed structure ending onto an open-structured poem, and he went on to call this a "radical and disastrous mistake." He saw the closed ending as a failure of nerve on the part of the poet, who "may have lacked the courage to carry his highly original conception through to its logical conclusion" (204). It might be said, rather, that part of Ariosto's highly original conception involved exactly what the end demonstrates: the sudden revelation of a continuous, teleological organization to what had appeared to be an open-ended, Ovidian encyclopedia; a Renaissance *sfida*, going Ovid one better by binding the variety of stories into an epic superstructure.

Copia rerum and the topos of control

The *Orlando furioso* extended the totalizing ambitions of poetic *copia*. In Ovid's open form, each episode constituted a discrete unit and produced its own sense of closure. In Ariosto's, the episodes are causally interdependent,

increasing the stakes. The poet measures virtuosity against the ability to organize such a vast *copia* of material. Giamatti noticed the challenge that *copia rerum* represents to the poet.

> The great length of the epic, the vast meandering, is meant to communicate the laborious and perhaps futile effort of the hero and the poet to master all the stuff of history and experience.... One is attempting to limit the seemingly limitless, striving to control and master the seemingly endless (6).

A plot is an ordering device, delivering a progression of causes and effects in a temporal framework, with the emphasis falling on causality. It organizes time and events into a cohesive unit that can be apprehended and contained. Narrative organized according to a causal procedure presupposes an agent of absolute control and a clear sense of direction which disciplines the narrative's events, and this sense of control is potentially available to the reader. David Hume discussed the factors that might organize and unify narrative (in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*) in terms of a causal procedure that establishes control over the textual universe. According to Hume's 18th century lights, the establishment of causality is equivalent to a sort of knowledge by which events are brought under human domination, and is therefore the preferred style of narrative unity.

> But the most usual species of connection among the different events, which enter into any narrative composition, is that of cause and effect....(The historian) chooses for his subject a certain portion of that great chain of events, which compose the history of mankind,... and always, he is sensible that the more unbroken the chain is, which he presents to his readers, the more perfect is his production. He sees, that the knowledge of causes is not only the most satisfactory, this relation or connection being the strongest of all others; but also the most instructive, since it is by this knowledge alone, we are enabled to control events, and govern futurity (*Enquiry*, III: "Of the Association of Ideas").

The plot, to recall again Ricoeur's terms, is an image of domination over the chaos of its events. It forms the trajectory that connects the beginning, middle, and end of a narrative in a way that will bestow sense upon its

procedure. In escapist literature and action narratives in general, readers are happy to abandon themselves to the plot line, embracing the sense of order that it metes out. In such cases, readers "follow" the plot as it leads through the text, reading along in order to find out what happens next, until all the loose ends are resolved in a sense of closure. Reading for the plot is the most obvious point of departure for comprehension, and, to adopt a metaphor that will prove to operate in the *Orlando furioso* as well, it is the most direct route through a narrative. An ordered plot, one that mediates and unifies a beginning, middle, and end, implies a sensible universe that can be known and understood. A narrative whose procedure does not appear to be causally linked or destined toward a determined end might, in Hume's terms, deny the reader interpretive domination of the text.

The *Orlando furioso*'s chaotic surface challenges its readers' interpretive capacities, and the challenge has not always been accepted in good faith. The 16th century critical orthodoxy showed hostility to the poem, in spite of its popularity, on grounds of a perceived lack of any meaningful structural organization or "unity of action." Many critics tended to restate Aristotle's formulation that the length of an epic should not exceed the apprehension of its unity in the reader's memory, a problem to which Tasso devoted much attention. Tasso indicates that he expects narrative not to exceed the reader's understanding of the causal connections between episodes as they occur, and also that the focal attraction of the narrative ought to be found in its design (the causal connections) rather than in its fabularity.

> Ma sì come l'occhio è dritto giudice de la grandezza del corpo, così il giudicare la quantità de' poemi s'appartiene a la memoria. Grande dunque sarà convenevolmente quella poesia in cui non se perda né si smarrisca, ma tutta unitamente comprendendola, possa considerare come l'una cosa con l'altra sia congiunta e da l'altra dependente. Ma viziosi senza dubbio sono quei poemi che sono simili a i corpi che non possono esser rimirati in un'occhiata, ed in buona parte perduta è l'opera che

> vi si spende: ne' quali di poco ha il lettore passato il mezzo che del principio si è dimenticato (*Scritti*, 226).

It is interesting that Tasso singles out memory as the faculty of understanding narrative. He is not far in this regard from Iser's notion of the way we perceive literary texts. Iser's theory of a "wandering viewpoint" takes account of the fact that only a limited amount of narrative is available to the reader at any given moment. Availability can never equal the text in its entirety. The reader is forced to maintain a moving viewpoint, by the simple fact that the frame of mind is smaller than the frame of text. The activity of accommodating a full text into one's "memory," according to Iser, is equivalent to interpreting the text, to integrating its parts. Tasso's approximation of this theory of reception is accompanied by an aesthetic imperative (directed against poems like the *Orlando furioso*) that betrays his anxiety over indeterminate fictions that enforce suspended conclusions. A fictional universe ought to reflect the organic integrity and the causal determination of the Christian universe, and Tasso clearly felt that the *Furioso*, in its ambition for greater *copia*, failed to hold together.

Two centuries later, however, Ugo Foscolo would regard the same difficulties as a positive aspect of the *Orlando furioso*. Employing the models and metaphors that Politian used to describe Virgil's *copia* in *Manto*, he likened the poem to a network of rivers whose mutations are as difficult to recall as they are to predict, leaving the reader "pleasantly confused."

> L'Ariosto ci padroneggia ognor più tra per la sospensione nella quale ci tiene una serie tanto variata di casi, e per la confusione che questi producono nella memoria. Nell'istante medesimo che la narrazione di un'avventura ci scorre innanzi come un torrente, questo diventa secco ad un tratto, e subito dopo udiamo il mormorio di ruscelli di cui avevamo smarrito il corso, desiderando pur sempre di tornare a trovarlo. Le loro acque si mischiano, poi tornano a dividersi, poi si precipitano

> in direzioni diverse, talché il lettore rimansi piacevolmente perplesso....[3]

The wayward aspects of the poem's development that obscure its closed structure have often been simplified into schemata like the reference a few pages ago to "four main branches" (actually, the poem is traditionally reduced to three principle actions, as in C.P. Brand's formulation and even in the jacket blurb on the Oxford paperback translation; these do not regard Astolfo's journey as a principle action).[4] Marginal apparatus that might guide readers through the poem's tortuous procedures became a common feature of printed editions as early as 1556. These editions feature marginal notes at the breaks where Ariosto suspends one thread of plot and splices in another, directing the reader to the canto and octave where the first thread resumes.[5] Such apparatus, added in the interest of delineating a conventional plot, would encourage a linear reading of the poem's forward movement, a direct route through a complete action, allowing the reader to skip the intervening narrative. But the *Orlando furioso* is, at some level, about interference with direct routes and complete actions.

In the poem's fictional projection, the persona of the Poet has responsibility for orchestrating and controlling its expansive *copia rerum*. In the introductory exordium, the Poet defines his ambition ("Dirò d'Orlando.../

[3] Quoted in Caretti, *Ariosto e Tasso*, 69.

[4] In "L'entrelacement nell'*Orlando furioso*," *GSLI* 154 (1977): 509-32. See p. 513. See also *Orlando furioso*, trans. Guido Waldman, "The World's Classics" series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) back cover.

[5] The marginal apparatus was introduced by the Venetian publisher Vincenzo Valgrisi, and it remained a popular feature in subsequent editions. Harington carried it over into his English translation. For a bibliographical description of 16th century editions of the *Furioso*, see Giuseppe Agnelli and Giuseppe Ravegnani, *Annali delle edizioni Ariostee* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1933).

cosa non detta mai in prosa né in rima" I, 2), and he calls upon his *ingenium* to carry him through the endeavor. There is a shade of doubt.

> che 'l poco ingegno ad or ad or mi lima,
> me ne sarà però tanto concesso,
> che mi basti a finir quanto ho promesso (I, 2).

Politian had marked *ingenium* as the authenticating component of authorship, the means to the sort of control over language and material implied in the definition of *copia.* The poet's *ingenium* is his faculty of control, of mastery over the art of poetry. It liberates him from the poetics of imitation and will allow him to produce "cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima." The Poet is fictionally constituted as improvising to his audience. The reader who participates in this fiction is essentially eavesdropping after the fact by reading the record of the Poet's recitation. Within the scheme of this fiction of an oral improvisation, the poem begins as an unwritten text, awaiting the Poet's skill, his *ingenium*, to bring it into being. The weight of the printed book accentuates the fictionality of the Poet's doubt, which will continue to surface in his discourse from time to time. He faces the task of comprehending all the parts of his tale.

> Ma perchè varie fila a varie tele
> Uopo mi son, che tutte ordire intendo,
> Lascio Rinaldo e l'agitata prua
> E torno a dir di Bradamante sua (II, 30).

In Poliziano's *Nutricia*, poets bore the burden of perceiving order and integrity where less inspired humans might see chaos. The comprehensive view of divine *copia* requires poetic *copia* to reflect it. Ariosto's Poet must, between the opening lines and the end of the poem, master the copious style, capable of integrating the fictional universe in which he appears. The task holds cosmothetic implications. The weaver/narrator image allows an implicit analogy to the Parcae, authors of Ovid's *tabularia rerum.* Robert Durling, in his chapter on Ariosto in *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic*, argued

convincingly that the Poet's stance of absolute control reinforces the analogy "between the poem and the cosmos and between the artist and God."[6]

The assertion that he meticulously controls an overarching plot is rarely absent from the Poet's discourse. His voice often breaks in to remind the audience that the organization of the various threads of plot are determined by necessity. While such reminders set the events of the poem in the context of the Poet's omniscient understanding of them, they also serve to keep the double perspective of the narrative emphatically present. They not only assert the Poet's absolute command, they also distinguish his understanding of the poem's causality from that of the reader, who is in a position to doubt that a rational procedure exists in the midst of such a confusing sequence of events. The Poet appeals to an explicitly determined and causal organization which the reader cannot understand, which in procedure seems indeterminate and random. He possesses the unique perspective of prior knowledge of the sequence of events, of understanding them in advance of their occurrence in the narrative. He owns the privilege of telling the story in the past tense, even though he doesn't always use it. By the *ingenium* that he invokes in the opening exordium, he must be able to remember the vast terrain of his material and arrange it into the proper sequential order of the poem. His virtuoso delivery begins in *inventio*, but embraces *memoria* and *dispositio* ("che tutto ordire intendo") in its copious style, in short, all the parts of rhetoric.

The Poet's control of the poem's procedure sets up a hierarchy of knowledge in which he stands at the apex (the position from which he

[6] See Durling, p. 123. His view is shared, with modification, by Giorgio Petrocchi, *I fantasmi di Tancredi* (Caltanissetta and Roma: Sciascia, 1972), who argues that the narrative flies out of the narrator's control, as the 16th century world seemed no longer under God's control.

discourses to the reader on the poem's design), and the implied reader is at the nadir. The Poet's presumed control is at odds with the disorder of the text. To the reader's understanding, the apparently formless procession of episodes, especially through the early and middle sections of the work, would undermine the Poet's discourse. The *Furioso*'s plot minimizes its function of describing the development of an epic action (participating in a fated world) with the incomprehensibility of its causal procedure (its affinity with Ovid's genre, which replaces epic action with various stories). This occurs structurally in the many episodes that seem to carry the action away from its declared end, interfering with the poem's progress toward its intended conclusions. It occurs thematically, too, in the wandering of the individual characters away from their heroic obligations to one another and to the Christian cause. The text itself wanders along with its characters and wayward plot away from its own teleological obligations, declared in the encomiastic theme. It is difficult to perceive the operation of a destined procedure, no matter how the Poet insists, among the tangled threads. Reading for the plot, we share Foscolo's "confusione che questi producono nella memoria," facing a poem whose procedure is as unpredictable as it is difficult to recall. Closure will only occur when all the wild aspects of the action will have been disciplined to the Poet's principle of order, and that might never happen. Ariosto recognizes the anxiety of indetermination that his oversized poem can inspire. Invoking the topos of navigation to describe the moment-by-moment procedure through the poem, the Poet allows that after "tanta via," readers might have been threatened "o di non tornar col legno intero,/ o d'errar sempre" (XLVI, 1). Through most of the narrative, the Poet's ostentatious authority only aggravates the anxiety of indetermination that the poem is expected to produce. Yet, after being immersed in the

Furioso's world through the time it takes to read the poem (and it could add up to a considerable amount), the reader might gradually come to share the Poet's knowledge. From the perspective of the end of the poem, the reader, too, can take advantage of the past tense. Reader and Poet might potentially arrive on equal terms, when the reader discovers the conclusion that bestows meaning on the procedure.

Such a reader will feel suspense over the outcome of interrupted episodes, will read on in order to find out what happens next until the inexorable end. Between such a reading and the satisfying conclusion it seeks, the poem's most famous formal attributes insert themselves. The desultory narrative strategy openly ridicules the rhythm of suspense and resolution that it mimics. The episodic "multiple plot," so abhorrent to neoclassical sensibility, effectively scrambles the linear succession of actions that a plot might normally be expected to offer. And the sheer length of the poem and the time that is required to read it insert a significant barrier to fulfilling the teleological expectations that the plot arouses. There is so much plot, so many events, that to the credulous reader they do not seem to add up into a contoured structure governed by an end, but into an amorphous and endless succession of events, into "so much nonsense."

This credulous reader is fictionally constituted in the text as Ariosto's sometime patron, Cardinal Ippolito D'Este. The historical Ippolito made the remark about "coglioneria" that provides the title of this study. The encomiastic theme which provides the poem's ostensible teleology places the patron in a narcissistic relationship of identity with the end. The *Orlando furioso* pretends to end in the existence of Estense Ferrara in a deliberate analogy to the way the *Aeneid* ends in the existence of Augustan Rome. The cardinal is named as the poem's audience; the rest of us merely eavesdrop.

The Cardinal bears the burden of regarding himself as the ultranarrative consequence of the poem's action, and thus he occupies the ultimate readerly macroproposition that will make sense of the poem's forward movement. This position obliges him to regard the poem as the plotted epic the Poet presents it as being, as a closed structure in which he is himself the point of closure, deriving meaning from and bestowing meaning upon the beginning and the middle. In the encomiastic key, the poem flatters Cardinal Ippolito with a structured unfolding of installments. These direct the cardinal-reader's attention to the plot line, to read in order to find out what happens next, to discover how it comes around to himself. Every canto ends with a *congedo* that invites him to read on, to hear the next installment. The text invites Ippolito to regard plot in the same way that Pentheus regarded the plot of the *Metamorphoses*, as a personal history that will ultimately congeal into his own selfhood. In effect, the deferral of its conclusion continually postpones the Cardinal's apotheosis.

The immensity of the plot of the *Orlando furioso* precludes the possibility of the sort of reading one would normally devote to a closed structure. Eco's idea of a macroproposition is telling in this regard: a closed structure makes sense when its boundaries are present to the reader, when the reader has prior possession of the frame in which the action develops. Ariosto cheerfully gives this macroproposition away in canto III, where the encomiastic theme is elaborated in Merlin's revelation to Bradamante. But he then proceeds to devalue its significance in the enormity of text that looms between reader and closure, even though the reader knows the point of closure in advance. The reader with one eye on the end and the other on the plot's procedure toward the end will have fallen for the trick and will end up, with the cardinal, reading nonsense throughout most of the poem (the closed-

structure ending will come, if the reader makes it there, as a surprise). A different sort of reading is enforced by the formal properties and the size of the text. The reader's attention is directed toward the splendid *enargeia* and copiously ornamented surface of any given segment of text, that is, the current episode takes precedence over the whole. This was the operative structure for the reader of the *Metamorphoses* as well. To borrow a term from Roland Barthes that incidentally recalls Foscolo's watery metaphor for the poem, the *Orlando furioso* forces the reader to drift (*dériver*) among the episodes. "Drifting occurs whenever *I do not respect the whole*," Barthes wrote, "and whenever, by dint of seeming driven about by language's illusions, seductions, and intimidations, like a cork on the waves, I remain motionless" (*The Pleasure of the Text*, 18; author's italics). Barthes notes that drifting is an unheroic manner of reading ("No need to throw out one's chest"), implying that the drifting reader cannot subjugate the text to the confines of a strong, totalizing hermeneutic. Rather, readers go adrift when they cannot contain the text within interpretive boundaries, or dominate a macroproposition based upon an understanding of causality. This is the lot of the reader who encounters Aristotle's "creature a thousand miles long," and it is the deliberate strategy of the *Furioso*. In spite of the text's insistence on its overall organization, and in spite of the frequent presence of the encomiastic theme, the comprehensive, bipartite design is not made available to the reader. The narrow focus of the individual episode remains the reader's usual perspective, according to the limits imposed by the size and complexity of the text. Throughout most of the poem, apprehension of the comprehensive order is a remote possibility, an object of desire as unattainable as the objects that the poem's characters so vainly pursue. The wandering pursuit, rather than the direct procedure toward the end, takes the more prominent place as the

ground of the poem's existence, its strategy for continuation, the element which keep the story going.

Interpretation and the subversion of memory

In the tension between the episode and the whole, Ariosto skillfully maintains the current episode as the center of attention by the technique of "cantus interruptus" that Daniel Javitch described (and named) in 1980.[7] The term refers to the poet's procedure of suspending the action of one narrative thread before it has been completed and splicing in another. There is practically no episode in the poem that begins and ends without such an interruption and temporary suspension of its action. With this technique, Ariosto creates the impression of many actions taking place simultaneously. Suspending one action and weaving in another allows the temporal justification and simultaneity of the various actions to take place. Thus Angelica is offered to the Orca on the island of Ebuda in Canto VIII,66-68, but the outcome of her predicament must remain suspended until Ruggiero can catch up with her on the hippogryph, a conjunction that does not take place until two cantos later. The Poet explains the necessity of temporal order, and often justifies his interruptions on those grounds. He likewise accounts for the interruptions on aesthetic grounds, motivated by *copia*'s rule of *variatio.* The multiple scenes simultaneously deployed enlarge the spatial illusion, contributing to the poem's *copia.* "Questa varietà di luoghi," Caretti wrote, "questo mutare continuo di prospettive, constribuiscono a creare quell'impressione di vaste orizzonti e di distanze illimitate che è uno degli aspetti più suggestivi del poema" (35). The Poet also claims the interruptions increase suspense, so the reader won't become weary. It is amusing to note

[7] See his article, "Cantus Interruptus in *Orlando furioso*," *MLN* 95 (1980) 66-82.

that the poem's 16th century defenders, chiefly Giraldi-Cinthio and Giovan Battista Pigna, took the suspense topos at face value and considered it exempt from the sense of irony that pervades the *Furioso*. Justifying the interruptions and deferrals to neoclassical critics, Giraldi-Cinthio appealed on the grounds that they arouse the reader's desire to find out what happens next, and so prompt the reader to continue through the poem to the end.

> Perocché in questo lor troncar le cose, conducono il lettore a tal termine, prima che le tronchino, che gli lasciano nell'animo un ardente desiderio di tornare a ritrovarla: il che è cagione che tutto il poema loro sia letto, rimanendo sempre le principali materie imperfette insino al compimento dell'opera (*Scritti*, 68).

Pigna concurs that the interrupted episodes leave the reader's soul full of "un desiderio che fa diletto: essendo che un certo ardore è causato, che è di dover la fine della cosa sentire" (quoted in "Cantus Interruptus," 69.) In spite of the good faith shown by Ariosto's early admirers, Ariosto's interrupted plot components and deferred conclusions stretch the suspense topos to a point of mockery aimed at the implied credulous reader who hangs on the plot and yearns to find out what happens next. It readily deconstructs itself if one examines the length of the gaps between the interruption of some strands and where they resume. Mandricardo's romance with Doralice, for instance, is developed in Canto XIV, interrupted there at the 64th octave, and only resumes again in Canto XXIII,70. Javitch formulates the problem of considering such a long interruption in any way suspenseful.

> The sequel to a narrative interrupted within a canto comes much too late, or is deferred by too many intervening distractions, to gratify the desire aroused at the moment of rupture.... What prevents the reader from remaining interested in the outcome of an interrupted action is the captivating narrative in the segment or segments that replace the one interrupted and that will, in turn, be interrupted at a premature and frustrating moment (70).

Far from determining the reader's rhythms of curiosity and resolution, the suspense value of such interrupted narratives tends to disintegrate in memory,

depleting the appetite to know the outcome and producing, rather, an impression of discontinuity. The gaps between the interruption and the resumption are so wide that the less-than-perfect reader virtually forgets what was taking place in the episode so long abandoned, absorbing though it was at the time.

More than once, Ariosto makes forgetfulness explicit at the textual surface. At XVI,20, the Poet suggests that the reader has forgotten Rodomonte, whose Iliadic assault on Paris had been interrupted for Astolfo's more Odyssean exploits only a canto earlier. In a more extreme case, Angelica comes upon an unidentified wounded man at XII,65, where her story is interrupted, and seven full cantos later, at XIX,17, that wounded man turns out to be Medoro. The Poet supposes that the readers have not only forgotten that Angelica was last seen approaching a wounded man, but that they have forgotten about Angelica's existence altogether:

> Gli sopravenne a caso una donzella,
> avolta in pastorale et umil veste,
> ma di real presenzia e in viso bella,
> d'alte maniere e accortamente oneste.
> Tanto è ch'io non ne dissi più novella,
> ch'a pena riconoscer la dovreste:
> questa, se non sapete, Angelica era,
> del gran Can del Catai la figlia altiera.

The reader's struggle to remember the story is mocked in the text, and becomes useful to the double identity of the poem. In Tasso's *Discorsi*, memory was postulated as the measure of a narrative's appropriate size, since memory is the human faculty where a poem's coherence is finally realized. The strategy of enlarging the gap between deferral and reprisal beyond the normal scope of the suspense topos serves to shatter comprehension. It forces the current episode or segment into a position of primacy independent of the process of episodes that have led to it. Episodes proliferate and fall away into

the textual past, where they seem to lose their distinction from the other episodes.

Ariosto compounds the disintegration of the textual past by duplicating segments of his own text. Ruggiero saves Angelica from the Orc on the island of Ebuda in canto X, for instance, and Orlando saves Olimpia from the same Orc on the same island one canto later. The lingering blazon on Olimpia's beauty following the rescue scene varies a similar description of Alcina's body from canto VI. Orlando's rescue of Zerbino in canto XXIII mirrors Ruggiero's simultaneous rescue of Ricciardetto, which begins in canto XXII and ends, after interruptions, in canto XXV, bracketing its twin. This replication of episodes becomes almost predictable: if something works once, it will work twice. Thus there are two catalogues of warriors, two sieges, two hymns to the goddess Fortuna, multiple storms at sea resulting in shipwreck, multiple jousts and combats, two oracles from the dead and two excursions into the world of allegory. While such textual iteration displays Ariosto's (and the Poet's) virtuosity in the technique of *varietas*, so fundamental to the copious style (a great source of pleasure to readers in Ariosto's time), it also has the effect of making it more difficult for the reader to recall the episodes with distinction and especially difficult to recall the order in which they take place. The repetition promotes a condition of casual interchangeability among the episodes that further assaults the reader's capacities of retention, and further commends the displacement of the textual past by the current episode.

The Poet, too, pretends to forget where he was after some interrupted sequences. In the midst of a description of the arrival of Grifone in Damascus, the Poet notes that in those days the Syrians wore armor just like the Europeans. This sends him off on a tangent in which he exhorts the nations of Europe to fight Islamic nations and not each other. The

exhortation lasts seven octaves, and then the Poet resumes with a pretended stumble,

> Ma d'un parlar ne l'altro, ove sono ito
> sì lungi dal camin ch'io faceva ora?
> Non lo credo però sì aver smarrito,
> ch'io non lo sappia ritrovare ancora (XVII, 80).

The droll idea that not even the Poet's memory might be strong enough to integrate the ongoing narrative pattern is amplified in the exordium of canto XXXII. Here the cantus interruptus strategy is directly implicated for the pretended loss of control. The intervening situations have been so engaging that the Poet nearly forgot an important strand of narrative:

> Soviemmi che cantare io vi dovea
> (già lo promisi, e poi m'uscì di mente)
> d'una sospizïon che fatto avea
> la bella donna di Ruggier dolente,
> de l'altra più spiacevole e più rea,
> e di più acuto e venenoso dente,
> che, per quel ch'ella udì da Ricciardetto,
> a divorare il cor l'entrò nel petto.
> Dovea cantarne, et altro incominciai,
> perché Rinaldo in mezzo sopravenne;
> e poi Guidon mi diè che fare assai,
> che tra camino a bada un pezzo il tenne.
> D'una cosa in un'altra in modo entrai,
> che mal di Bradamante mi sovenne:
> sovienmene ora, e vo' narrarne inanti
> che di Rinaldo e di Gradasso io canti.
> Ma bisogno anco, prima ch'io ne parli,
> che d'Agramante io vi ragiono un poco... (XXXII, 1-3).

The Poet reviews the interruptions that interfered with the story of Bradamante, his lost point of departure, and then he suddenly departs again, postponing Bradamante still longer while he takes up a strand of Agramante. All the "che fare", the "business" of the passage, brings the latent readerly confusion explicitly to the surface of the text. If the Poet's memory can be corrupted by the story's ambages, how can the reader be expected to maintain all the interwoven strands of plot in mind?

Apart from their manifest irony, these feigned lapses serve a double function. Like all the disclaimers of control, they serve to emphasize the

Poet's absolute subjection of the poem, exhibiting the various elements the Poet has to juggle at once. But they also prompt textual memory by recalling into the narrative present segments of the text that had been displaced. The conventions of the epic plot line prevent episodic displacement from taking place in the *Furioso* as categorically as it does in the *Metamorphoses*. They require the reader to attempt, at least, to maintain a continuing sense of plot development through the medium of the passing episodes. The episodes constitute an extended processional, practically a parade. In the *Metamorphoses*, the passing of each episode and its replacement by another formally embodied the poem's concept of time as constant mutation, of time passed as time forever lost. The *Orlando furioso*, by contrast, requires the reader to integrate the parade of episodes diachronically, to actively consider the progressive interrelations of all the parts of the procession at once, in a superhuman exercise of memory that might transcend the limited, moment-by-moment perspective. Ariosto coaxes the reader's appetite to share the Poet's knowledge of the poem's overall design.

The Poet's enormous memory is evident in the skillful unfolding of the disjoint sequences that so confuse and challenge the reader's capacities of retention. The quest that the poem enforces upon the reader is effectively a quest for synthetic knowledge of the poem's fictional universe equal to that of the Poet, a quest to perceive the underlying design. What do readers find out if they simply allow text to displace previous text? When such mechanical readers get to the end, they will have lost the beginning and the middle, as Tasso feared. When the Poet emphasizes the *entrelacement* of the various plot lines, he requires the reader to struggle against textual displacement, against the tendency for the current episode to drown out its textual past. The text expects the reader to fail in this regard, so by the end of the poem, reader

and Poet are not, in fact, on equal terms. Both enjoy the perspective of the past tense, but for the reader, that perspective remains limited by the poem's bewildering multiplicity. The reader may have learned the desired outcome, but the *propter hoc* causality of the poem's *post hoc* procedure is little more than vague. The reader is likely to realize that causality has been demonstrated, that all the parts finally fit together, but unlikely to recall how.

The reader's forgetfulness can be seen as a failure of skill, an inability to integrate the parts of the poem. Admiration for the Poet's skill (and even for Ariosto's, since their virtuosity is interchangeable) might increase. More than simply an inert storehouse of knowledge, memory functions actively to review and recollect the events of the past for present cognition: otherwise, the universe of the poem will not hold together. It will disintegrate into a mere collection of stories no greater than the sum of its parts. Unless the procedure of the poem is recalled, the reader would know only individual "presents" (such as the individual episodes) and would not profit from the cumulative knowledge, the "totum opus," that puts the individual element in a context and gives it meaning. In this sense such readers are similar to the verseless wretches in Politian's *Nutricia*, who could perceive no connection between the sun setting and the sun rising. The reader who forgets parts of the poem (that is, all readers of the *Orlando furioso*) faces a lack of availability that must be compensated. In order to keep the work present as anything more than a series of detached fragments, the reader has to continually recall the textual past and synthesize it into a coherent interpretation, no matter how private or personal the result may be. The eventual structural unity of the text, then, comes about as the reader responds to this challenge. The reader resists, each according to individual understanding, being lost in a fragmentary world, and seeks to bind the text.

"O per fortuna o per ingegno" (XV, 1)

The wandering procedure that the *Orlando furioso* shares with the *Metamorphoses* appears at the poem's thematic level in terms of "error." The ductile verb "errare" and its many variants describe the geographical wandering of the characters as well as their misapprehensions of reality, punning on the term's senses of "to wander" and "to err." In the world of the *Furioso*, error is the mark of the human condition abandoned to the vicissitudes of fortune, and limited by imperfect knowledge. It is the organizational force of the poem's open structure. In a world where future events cannot be guessed in advance, human judgment is problematic, and acquires an extraordinary measure of relativity. In the system of values that characterized humanist moral philosophy in the 15th century, categories of judgment such as prudence, reason, *ingenium* and *virtù* were the faculties that might provide some resistance to the errors of fortune and make sense of the disordered appearances of daily life. Pontano typically defined fortune in opposition to reason or "prudence," in terms which resonate with the errant procedure of the *Orlando furioso*. In a chapter of *De Fortuna* (ca. 1500) entitled "Fortunam non esse rationem," he opposes fortune to reason as a category of disorder, disproportion, and instability.

> Quid enim ratione ordinatius? Rursus quid fortuna minus compositum? Rationis quidem proprium est modum adhibere ac mensuram regulamque in cunctis sequi; at fortunae excessus plurumque est aut defectus. Haec ubique mutabilis atque inconstans, illa stabilis ac certa; a rato enim ratio dicta. Ad haec ratio cuncta metitur disponitque atque aptat singula, fortuna vero minime circumspecta est (*Opera*, I, 798).

> What then is more ordered than reason? And on the other hand what is less composed than fortune? Indeed, it is the mark of reason to impose appropriate measure and proportion and rules to be followed in the whole; but greater excess and failure are the mark of fortune. And where the latter is mutable and inconstant, the former is stable and sure; indeed, the word *ratio* is derived from *rato* (in proportion). Accordingly, reason

> measures and arranges and adjusts all these single things, and fortune indeed is far less circumspect.

Pontano's argument might be seen to accord the categories of fortune and prudence with the shifting orientations of Ariosto's poem. *Ratio* applies to closed structural procedures, "adhibere ac mensuram regulamque in cunctis sequi." *Fortuna* applies to the poem's open structure, its "excessus plurum," its indetermination and its aimlessness. Pontano argues in a separate chapter that these categories are not natural absolutes, but modes of perception ("prudentiae ... ab intellectu, cogitationeque ortum ducant;" 803). Order and *ratio* originate in intellection, in the measurement and arrangement of disparate parts ("ratio cuncta metitur disponitque atque aptat singula"). When skill is not competent to the task, the mind will fail to perceive order ("vero minime fortuna circumspecta est"). The point is driven home in chapter vi, "Fortunam adversari prudentiae," where Pontano argues that "fortune" is perceived as detached from any rational origin, unless it be a divine prudence beyond understanding.

> Causam tamen et vehementissimam, et acerrimam quidem esse negare potest nemo, dum recte philosophetur, et sentiat, nisi qui ad Dei fortasse sententiam referre vim eam velit, gubernantis quidem res nostras suopte arbitrio, eodemque ignoto nobis, atque etiam incomperto (803).

> No one can deny that the causal principle is most vehement and indeed most penetrating, provided he perceive and philosophize correctly, unless perhaps who wishes to refer judgment to the power of God, indeed the matter of controlling our lives to his will, unrecognized by us and unknown.

The term "fortune" names our own inability to understand or determine action. Events may appear to be meaningless, that is, they may appear to have no relation to a causal principle, but meaninglessness may be the product of a perceptual failure ("dum recte philosophetur, et sentiat"). Without such a failure of intellection, "fortune" would not exist. A divine "prudence,"

possibly unavailable to human understanding, underlies all that appears chaotic.[8]

Selva oscura and diritta via

Ariosto imposes the perceptual failure that sees "fortune" where it cannot understand order. The poem's wandering procedure actively limits perception of its underlying order, and error prevails, perceived as aimless fortune. Its intellectual horizons are defined by the forest where much of the action takes place. The "selva oscura" of the *Commedia* becomes the *res ipsa* of the *Furioso*.[9] In contrast with the *Comedy*, the "selva" of the *Furioso* is less a moral category than a perceptual limitation, Pontano's "fortuna," related to the restricted limits of knowledge and control the characters and the readers share. The setting of the "selva" closes the amount of space that can be perceived and hence the amount a character (or reader) can know about the textual landscape. The selva represents a limitation of knowledge about outcomes, ends and procedures, that is reflected (indeed, enforced) in the desultory and zig-zagging narrative.

The characters and the reader together get lost in this forest, in contrast with Dante's poem, whose structure never fails to let characters and readers know where they are in the scheme of the poem. The narrator of Dante's poem had lost the "diritta via." The characters of Ariosto's poem find

[8] For variant, if fuller, critical appraisals of Pontano's trilogoy of moral essays, *De Prudentia*, *De Fortuna* and *De Immanitate*, see Mario Santoro, *Fortuna, ragione e prudenza nella civiltà letteraria del Cinquecento*, 2nd. ed., (Naples: Liguori, 1978) 27-69; Victoria Kahn, "Giovanni Pontano's Rhetoric of Prudence," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983): 16-34; and Francesco Tateo, *Astrologia e moralità in Giovanni Pontano*, (Bari: Adriatica, 1960).

[9] Luigi Blasucci, *Studi su Dante e Ariosto* (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1969), develops a working inventory of Ariosto's allusions to the *Divina Commedia*. See also Cesare Segre, "Un repertorio linguistico e stilistico dell'Ariosto: la Commedia," in *Esperienze ariostesche* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1966).

themselves in a world where a "dritta via" does not seem to exist, at least not from a human perspective. The idea of a direct route opposes the predominant principle of "error" that informs the geographical meanderings as well as the bad judgment of the characters, to say nothing of the wayward and wandering procedure of the plot. According to the economy of motion that the text sets up for itself internally, the direct route or the straight line becomes a fleeting category of desire no more obtainable than the elusive Angelica. Bradamante, Ruggiero, Astolfo, and Orlando are each instructed at different points with revelation of their purpose in the narrative. In the first two cases, the revelation would provide the characters with special foreknowledge, a possession that could hurry them through the otherwise unpredictable and errant procedure of the plot. But the knowledge they receive is quickly dissipated as the characters discover that the direct routes that have been outlined for them in revelation do not correspond to the reality of the text's procedure. In Orlando's case, revelation sends him into madness.

The pursuit of a direct route is one of the primary motivations for the characters. Melissa, as Patricia Parker reminds us, is "the spirit behind the single epic intent of bringing Ruggiero, like Aeneas, to a destined marriage" (24). Every time she appears, Melissa renews the poem's sense of direction. She always brings the encomiastic intentions of the text into focus, and with them the teleological orientation of the plot. In the encomium of the Estensi that occupies much of Canto III, Merlin and Melissa first give Bradamante a sense of her fate. She will be the mother of the Estensi line. Merlin's voice, speaking from beyond the dead, commands her, "Acciò dunque il voler del ciel si metta/in effeto per te... seque animosamente il tuo sentiero" (III, 19). In a context of pathless confusion, Bradamante is endowed with a "sentiero," an ordained path. According to the codes of the encomiastic epic, the

prophetic revelation of Bradamante's fate unveils the teleological orientation of the whole poem. Her mission will lead directly to the present existence of Ippolito D'Este. The primary subtext for this episode is from Book VI of the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas enters the underworld and learns from the shade of Anchises the essential revelation of his destiny. Aeneas's descent into the underworld is a turning point in the *Aeneid*, as Odysseus's descent into the underworld is a turning point in the *Odyssey*. In the conventions established by those epics, the descent signifies the acquisition of new knowledge, leading to the character's increased awareness of the text's procedure and destiny. Bradamante's descent likewise alludes to a symbolic death, and ought to occasion the acquisition of transcendent knowledge: Pinabello pushes her into the "antiqua e memorabil grotta" with the intention of murdering her. But it is not a true descent into the underworld in the Virgilian or the Homeric sense. It is only a cave, a grotto. And it would be well to notice that Merlin's voice, and the presentation of a purpose to Bradamante, is a deliberate spectacle, performed with smoke and mirrors:

> O che natura sia d'alcuni marmi
> che muovin l'ombre a guisa di facelle,
> o forza pur di suffumigi e carmi
> e segni impressi all'osservate stelle
> (come più questo verisimil parmi)
> discopria lo splendor più cose belle
> e di scultura e di color, ch'intorno
> il venerabil luogo aveano adorno (III, 15).

Unlike Anchises's kerygma in the underworld of the *Aeneid* VI, this encomium takes place in a context of artistic preparation, "forza di suffumigi e carmi/ e segni impressi," and in a chamber artistically adorned with sculpture and paintings. In the *Aeneid*, the shades are the actual souls of the descendants of Aeneas. In Bradamante's revelation, demons and spirits of dubious origin ("non so se da l'inferno o da qual sede") perform the roles of the Estensi in costume, "sotto abiti diversi e varii volti" (III, 20). We are also

told that the demons emanate from Melissa's book. When she opens the book, demons proceed from it, and when she closes it, the demons disappear. These are textual demons, and they appear periodically throughout the *Furioso.* Bradamante's fate, perhaps all perception of fate, is a function of art, and Ippolito's heroic past is, after all, Ariosto's fictional invention.

Throughout the poem, the characters perceive the idea of fate in close association with the idea of a straight line or a fixed pathway. Melissa, in language that associates her with Dante's Virgil, invites Bradamante to travel on direct routes, in contrast to the prevailing errant motion of the poem through "selve e boscherecci laberinti."

> Tosto che spunti in ciel la prima luce
> piglerai meco la più dritta via
> ch'al lucente castel d'acciai' conduce,
> dove Ruggier vive in altrui balìa.
> Io tanto ti sarò compagna e duce,
> che tu sia fuor de l'aspra selva ria:
> t'insegnerò, poi che saren sul mare,
> sì ben la via, che non potresti errare (III, 63).

She endows Bradamante with a sense of destiny, and immediately sets her in the Dantean mode, "piglierai meco la più dritta via." But it does not take long for Bradamante to discover that even when she is aware of a direct route, she is humanly unable to follow it. The direct route to Atlante's steel castle is only available to winged creatures like the hippogryph, who "avea dritto il sentiero" (IV, 5). Bradamante is constrained to labor "di monte in monte e d'uno in altro bosco" (IV, 11) to arrive finally in sight of the castle, thinking "non faccia, chi non vola, andarvi" (IV, 12). Direct routes are apparent to Melissa by virtue of her knowledge of future events, "ch'era presaga/di quanto de'avvenir, dico che tenne la dritta via" (VII, 45).

Melissa's prescience and her diligent instruction to Bradamante and other principle characters do not effectively hurry the poem's conclusion. She may announce the poem's point of arrival early in the narrative, and thus

supply the reader with an instrument to make sense of the episodic action, but possessing a macroproposition helps the reader no more than it helps the characters. The point of arrival is announced, but the poem does not go there. Every episode interferes with arrival, it seems, to a greater extent than it approaches arrival. In the course of a narrative procedure where closure is continually deferred, the declaration of a macroproposition is a calculated absurdity.

Where Melissa is "presaga," the milieu of the other characters is "selva opaca" in which they wander. Their errors, in both senses of the term, are the result of their not knowing in advance the outcome of their actions. The difference, again, is one of perception. What appears to Melissa to be a direct route appears to the characters to be a destiny lost to the vicissitudes of fortune. A pattern emerges in which characters learn the consequences of their errors painfully in retrospect. In this pattern, characters who have erred in judgment, who have misread reality either by another's fraudulent intention or by their own stupidity, reach a point of critical retrospect where suddenly they become aware of their misplaced belief or misplaced desire. This is the case, for instance, of Olimpia, at the moment that she wakes from sleep and discovers herself abandoned by Bireno, and mutilates herself in the classical mode of grief, "presaga e certo ormai di sua fortuna" (X, 22). Likewise, Grifone wakes from sleep and wakes up to his misapprehensions about Orrigille and her lover,

> Poi che fu desto, e che de l'ora tarda
> s'accorse, usci di camera con fretta,
> dove il falso cognato e la bugiarda
> Orrigille lasciò con l'altra setta;
> e quando non gli truova, e che riguarda
> non v'esser l'arme nè i panni, sospetta;
> ma il veder poi più sospettoso fece
> l'insegne del compagno in quella vece.
> Truova Grifone a poco a poco l'orma
> ch'ascosa gli avea Amor fin quel giorno (XVII, 115-16).

The idea emerges that knowledge, painfully, follows error, as it does for Norandino after he learns of his own misjudgment of Grifone in the following canto, Norandino "che temperato e saggio divenuto era dopo un tanto errore" (XVIII, 94).

The motif that patterns have existed even where they were not perceived is brought to the surface in the episode of Astolfo' voyage to the moon. Astolfo's voyage on the hippogryph describes a planless route. The text gives a series of place names spanning six and a half octaves that describe a trip through Spain, across North Africa to Egypt, back again to Morocco, and back toward Egypt again before landing at the Nubian court of Senapo. The route is far more convoluted and tangled than the itinerary of Aeneas described in the *Metamorphoses* (XIII, 711-724), prominent among Ariosto's subtexts for Astolfo's journey. Yet, these bizarre excursions are referred to offhand by the narrator as a "camin dritto" (XXXIII, 98)! Inconsequential as the route may seem, Astolfo's arrival in Ethiopia at the court of Senapo leads him indirectly to the waiting arms of Saint John in the terrestrial paradise. John's first words to Astolfo tell him that although Astolfo may have been unaware, his errant route was, in fact, ordained.

> --O baron, che per voler divino
> sei nel terrestre paradiso asceso;
> come che né la causa del camino,
> né il fin del tuo desir da te sia inteso,
> pur credi che non senza alto misterio
> venuto sei da l'artico empisperio.
> ...
> venuto meco a consigliar ti sei
> per così lunga via, senza consiglio.
> Né a tuo saper, né a tua virtù vorrei
> ch'esser qui giunto attribuissi, o figlio;
> che né il tuo corno, né il cavallo alato
> ti valea, se da Dio non t'era dato (XXXIV, 55-56)

Astolfo learns that from the divine perspective, what seemed like mortal meandering had been, in fact, directed motion, proceeding according to

design. The poem's categories of fortune and error turn out, in the end, to have been destiny and fate misunderstood. From the standpoint of human perspective, "né la causa del camino,/ né il fin del tuo desir da te sia inteso." Astolfo arrives at the point of revelation without foreknowledge, and finds out that foreknowledge would not have helped him if he had it (Né a tuo saper, né a tua virtù vorrei/ ch'esser qui giunto attribuissi, o figlio.).

The closed system

Coming at the culmination of an extended parody of the *Divine Comedy*, the lunar episode would seem to occupy a position of revelation for the reader. Indeed, the episode on the moon has often been regarded as the interpretive key to the *Orlando furioso*, an aerial viewpoint from outside of the labyrinthine procedure of the text. This brings the Pythagorean episode in the *Metamorphoses* to mind, since it, too, was considered the interpretive key to the poem in which it appeared. Although there are no evident textual echoes from the Ovidian episode in the lunar sequence of the *Furioso*, there are significant similarities and parallel constructions between the two passages. Both episodes are distinguished from the rest of their poems by a shift into a discursive, rather than active, mode. Pythagoras promises to reveal the hidden meanings of things ("docebat...rerum causas et quid natura, quid deus... et quodcumque latet"). Saint John, author of the Revelation, initiates Astolfo into the hidden heavenly mysteries. The speech of Pythagoras eventually centers on a vision of metempsychosis, and Saint John's moonscape also reveals how earthly lives come to be and pass away. The world that Pythagoras was able to discern from his lofty standpoint ("iuvat ire per alta/ astra") turned out to look very much like the world of the *Metamorphoses* as Ovid had presented it to us all along, "homines palantes passim et rationis egentes." On the moon, Astolfo gains inside knowledge of a world of

confusion that, in appearance, differs not at all from the earth ("altri piani, altre valli, altre montagne,/ c'han le cittadi, hanno i castelli suoi"; XXXIV, 72). The difference is that on the moon, Astolfo has a textual explicator to guide him through the confusing jumble of signifiers that he beholds there: bulging bladders, spilled soup, bird shit. Saint John, who acts as both Virgil and Pythagoras for Astolfo, leads a guided tour of heaps of stuff, initiating the confused knight in their significance. In the guided tour sequence, Astolfo is continually confronted with a *copia* of opaque and unreadable signifiers, and then learns from Saint John the proper interpretation into a meaningful signified. The tumid bladders are the crowns of kings; verses written in the praise of patrons (such as the *Orlando furioso*) appear as exploded crickets; spilled soup is posthumous charity. Nothing Astolfo sees is interpretable without Saint John the allegorizer.

> Quivi ad alcuni giorni e fatti sui,
> ch'egli già avea perduti, si converse;
> che se non era interprete con lui,
> non discernea le forme lor diverse (XXXIV, 82).

The Saint's most startling revelation is that the trusted books do not tell the truth. Astolfo finds out that Aeneas was not so pious, Achilles not so strong, Hector not so fierce as the poets would have us believe. Furthermore, Augustus was a boor, the Greeks lost the Trojan War, and Penelope was a whore. Poets lie, we find out, in order to satisfy their patrons and get better pay from them than they would if they told the truth. This revelation holds devastating implications for Ariosto's encomiastic epic in which the patron himself appears as the less-than-ideal implied reader, and the patron's ancestor, Ruggiero, is portrayed as an Aeneas figure as well as Aeneas's direct descendent.

When Saint John admits the essential mendacity and bad faith of all texts, including his own gospel, the arbitrary nature of meaning comes into

clear focus. Texts manufacture their own truth by virtue of the fact that they are closed structures, representing coherence between their beginnings, middles and ends. David Quint's exemplary explication of the segment, in *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature*, effectively arrives at a deconstructive reading of Ariosto's poetics, in which "meaning remains a sheerly literary property," and all texts are presented as "intratextual systems of meaning" (90). Yet, the *Orlando furioso* only takes on the attributes of a closed system in its latter stages. Through much of the poem, meaning remains suspended by meandering. The questing characters quest an end that will provide their wayward adventures with meaning. Indeed, the arcane order of the poem's open-ended sequences resembles, at times, Astolfo's convoluted route to Ethiopia. The knowledge and understanding that Astolfo comes to acquire on the moon (including the discovery that his wanderings were ordained) reveals more about the ability of a closed system to create a retrospective sense of its own meaning than about the correspondence between the poem and an external truth to which it might refer. In the textual world of the poem, the earth and the moon together form such a closed system.

> Tu dèi saper che non si muove fronda
> là giù, che segno qui non se ne faccia.
> Ogni effetto convien che corrisponda
> in terra e in ciel, ma con diversa faccia (XXXV,18).

The moon exists in allegorical relationship to the earth. In this sense, the moon functions as a text whose meanings depend upon the explications provided by Saint John, Astolfo's interpreter. Indeed, the moon is a copious text. Astolfo is surprised at its size, almost equal to that of the earth (XXXIV, 70). And although it seems to him at first approach to be as smooth as stainless steel ("come un acciar che non ha macchia alcuna"), he is soon bewildered by the overwhelming amount of rich surface detail.

> Quivi ebbe Astolfo doppia maraviglia:

che quel paese appresso era sì grande,
il quale a un picciol tondo rassimiglia
a noi che lo miriam da queste bande;
e ch'aguzzar conviengli ambe le ciglia,
s'indi la terra e 'l mar ch'intorno spande
discerner vuol; che non avendo luce,
l'imagin lor poco alta si conduce.

Altri fiumi, altri laghi, altre campagne
sono là su, che non son qui tra noi;
altri piani, altre valli, altre montagne,
c'han le cittadi, hanno i castelli suoi,
con case de le quai mai le più magne
non vide il paladin prima ne poi:
e vi sono ample e solitarie selve,
ove le ninfe ognor cacciano belve.

Non stette il duca a ricercare il tutto;
(XXXIV, 71-73)

The moon exhibits all the attributes associated with *copia*: magnitude, variety, detail, and especially incomprehensiblity. Without Saint John, the array of things on the moon would make no sense to Astolfo. Like the most famous copious texts, the nonsense on the moon depends upon interpretation to reveal its occult, all-encompassing meaning.

The text will mean what the Poet says it will mean. The world of the *Orlando furioso* turns out indeed to be a fated world, offering a configuration of time in which the end reflects back upon the beginning. Looking back from the conclusion to the episodes leading up to it, we have to be able to say that this ending required these sorts of events and this chain of actions, and that the sequence of episodes was not, after all, nonsense. The fated end emerges organically from all the stages of error that had seemed a disorganized procession. But the Providence which governs the action, to which all the vicissitudes of fortune and destiny finally refer, is the *ingenium* of the poet that can produce such a virtuoso performance, and arbitrate its meaning. Like Merlin's prophecy to Bradamante, the fated intentionality of the text is a function of art, of the text's responsibility to closure. Art will

follow the patterns out, even where they are unperceived by the characters, the patron and the reader.

To perceive the *Furioso* as a "system" at all marks Ariosto's achievement in the poetics of *copia.* Only a closed form has the privilege of meaning, even if that meaning be arbitrary. The latter part of Ariosto's poem, like Ovid's, narrows in scope, and brings all the stray elements of the poem into patterned consequences, ending, finally, with all the major characters gathered in festivity in Paris, the geographical center of the textual world. The text's progressive tendency toward organization in the latter parts is signalled by the virtual abandonment of the "cantus interruptus" procedure, by gradual attrition of characters from the text, and, significantly, by disappearance of the "selva" as the field of action. The individual plot sequences lengthen: Astolfo's voyage, for example, is related all in one piece between cantos XXXIII and XXXV. Rinaldo's eventful journey from Paris to Lipedusa distends uninterrupted across two very long cantos, XLII and XLIII. The problems that were raised in the early cantos are solved one by one: Orlando is restored to the status of pristine Christian soldier; Rinaldo drinks from the fountain that will cure him of his infatuation with Angelica; Agramante's forces lose the war to the Christians and Agramante himself is killed, along with Gradasso, his principle warrior.

The gradual narrowing of scope resolves the various plots and accommodates the apparent chaos into an ordered conclusion. In what some have called a reversal of stategy,[10] Ariosto ends the *Orlando furioso* in a closed form that endows all the nonsense of its procedure with a sense of meaningful unity. The conclusion that bestows intentionality upon the

[10] See especially Carne-Ross, "The One and the Many," p. 204.

preceding episodes completes the poem's unarguable sense of abundance with one of totality, the ultimate aim of ideal *copia*. All the poem's *varietas* falls into place, and the overarching, all-inclusive scheme on whose presence the Poet always insisted turns out, in fact, to have been described. But the unified form can only materialize completely for the reader in retrospect, in an act of studious memory, recalling the determined purpose of each episode. The more carefully a reader reflects, the more seamless and determined will the poem appear.

The sense of confusion that had been the reader's lot turns out to have been a calculated function of the copious style. Ariosto amplified Poliziano's theory of the inspired poet's understanding of order by demonstrating an equal understanding of chaos. Through the poem's expansive energy, he elaborates such an abundance of plots and episodes that the reader can only perceive them the way the uncivilized people of *Nutricia* perceived the universe: as an unconnected and bewildering series of parts. He draws the reader finally to a point of initiation where it is possible to appraise the integration retrospectively. The closed-structure ending provides access for the reader to pass through bewilderment to knowledge, from not understanding the poem's disjunct sequence to becoming able to realize its underlying necessity, from readerly drifting to intellection.

By means of the poem's action on the reader, Ariosto allows the possibility that a meaningful sense of unity might underly the apparent chaos of the the real world as well as the text. The reader's education becomes the grounds for correspondence between the textual world and the experienced world. Textual meaning is autonomous, as Ariosto takes pains to demonstrate, and the daily world has no place in it. Yet the reader, after finishing the poem, has lived in both worlds. The fact that the textual world's confusing

procedure resolves into a contained order, that a series of events that seem unconnected reaches a point of unity, reflects through the reader onto the daily world. The succession of lived moments, chaotic and meaningless in appearance, might also be perceived, by genius or over time, to make sense.

Chapter 5

Rabelais's Inexhaustible Text

None of the works that have been examined to this point assemble such an apparently disorganized, anarchic heap as the books of Rabelais. To consider them in a study of large scale forms may be self-defeating. The scale is certainly large, but the status of "form" is more problematic. In distinct ways, the previous texts invoke form and insist on formal determination in the midst of their confusing procedure. Ovid provided the image of a "massive structure," and a readerly consciousness detached from the ongoingness of the *Metamorphoses* that pronounced the stable coherence of the preceding "opus." In the *Orlando furioso*, an apparently chaotic plot was counterbalanced by the assurance of a controlled order and a grand design. In Rabelais's text, no such assurance or mediating consciousness ties the form together for the reader. The simple plot structures are fragmentary, and the sense of order that they impose on the text is practically negligible. They serve primarily as a place to hang the serial episodes which are the vehicle for Rabelais's elaborate comedy. The work resists the assumption of overarching coherence to such an extent that, as Nichols points out (in "Generating the Unwritten Text," 9-10) we do not even collect all five books under a single title, although they survive together as a single work. Nor has Rabelais's text attracted the indices that Renaissance scholarship attached to Ovid's and Ariosto's texts in the service of perceiving their wholeness ("toto poemate breviter sub oculos posito," Schrevelius said of his index to Ovid). To this day, we lack a comprehensive index and a title for the Pantagrueline books. For the sake of convenience, we refer to the "oeuvre," we substitute the name of the author for the work, or we call the five books by the names of the first

two, *Gargantua et Pantagruel*, and we number the succeeding sections sequentially.

In spite of the uncertain prospect of treating the formal characteristics of deliberate formlessness, a study of Rabelais's large-scale work may do much to illuminate the trends in Renaissance copious texts toward the paradoxically simultaneous presentation of sense and nonsense and the radical investigation into the nature of literary meaning already demonstrated in Ovid and Ariosto. Indeed, Rabelais carries Ovid's and Ariosto's studies in double perspective to a more drastic degree, producing a text that subversively obtains the Renaissance epitome of encyclopedic abundance. If Rabelais depends less upon the intricacies of plot structure to achieve his effects than the earlier works, the text's careful destabilization of the reader and the consequent problem of interpretation that it poses are developed formally (or rather, formlessly!) and thematically. The great size of the work is no longer intended to confuse the reader with forgetfulness, but rather with its abundance of material and multiple avenues to interpretation. The literary principles of *copia* are exploited in a text of inexhaustible fertility, and the sense of endlessness is extended to embrace not only the proliferation of language, but the proliferation of meaning as well. Politian's generation had expressed the optimism of its nubile modernity in the *copia* topos, looking toward ideal fullness of meaning in a universe of discourse as rich and large as the universe of experience. In *De Copia*, Erasmus likewise recommended this ultimate correspondence between discourse and meaning, a full supply of things (*rerum*) circumscribed by a full supply of words. The perfect copious text would fulfill the desire for ultimate meaning. Rabelais undermines this

ideal in his text by generating not too little, but too much meaning, deeply linking the principles of *copia* to the problems of the pursuit of sense.

Text in excess of purpose

Like the *Orlando furioso*, the Pantagrueline books grew to their enormous measure over time. Ariosto's first version of the *Furioso* in 40 cantos (1515) was only less filled out than the final 46 canto version, not less complete. In contrast, Rabelais's five books were compiled in a serial fashion, as well as expanding from within. When *Pantagruel* was published in 1532 (the same year as Ariosto's final version) it was a slim volume not much longer than the popular chapbooks from which it drew some of its characters. The succeeding sections carried the work beyond the first book's predictable ends. As Rabelais appended the prequel, *Gargantua* (1534), and later, the Third and Fourth Books (1546 and 1552), he also revised and expanded the previous texts, excising a few offensive particulars to stay out of trouble but adding significant portions as well. The Pantagrueline books even continued to grow after the author's death, until the posthumous publication of the *Cinquiesme Livre* (1564). Taking the five books as comprising a single composition, certainly it is one of the longest and most copious efforts the 16th century produced.

Although a central set of characters spans the books, Rabelais's extratemporal, episodic structure recalls Ovid's in important ways. Rabelais's episodes tend to stand as closed narrative segments. He avoids Ariosto's conventions of suspense and the *Orlando furioso*'s figure of the Poet controlling the various threads of a plot toward a grand conclusion. Like the *Metamorphoses*, the Pantagrueline books observe a continuing present, rather than describing a coherent block of time in novelistic development. The

episodes in the *Metamorphoses* tend not to recapitulate into a causal sense of history. Rather, they continually supplant each other, indifferent to the configurational pressure of the ongoing narrative, compiling into a potentially infinite series. Ovid's episodes avoid textual memory. Rabelais also neglects the configurational tension of narrative by suspending textual memory. Working by scene rather than by narrative progression, the requirements of the present episode disregard the previous narrative groundwork. The *post hoc* series of episodes multiply, one after the other, without submitting themselves to an organizational discipline or formal unity governed by an end.

The narrative segments are so buoyant and detached that Gargantua, once "translaté au pays des Phées" in *Pantagruel*, reappears alive in the *Tiers Livre*; and Frere Jean, Gymnaste and Ponocrates, prominent in *Gargantua* but absent in *Pantagruel*, show up again in the *Tiers Livre* without textual preparation or any sign of aging. Not even the physical attributes of the characters can be relied upon as a constant point of reference. Rabelais draws the giants' dimensions to fit the needs of the narrative moment, and they change from episode to episode. After Pantagruel sticks out his five-mile long tongue in the second book, the *Tiers Livre* gives no indication of his size (he seems to have suddenly assumed normal human dimensions). Panurge and the other satellite characters may or may not be giants, the text does not specify. The narrative coordinates that determine a reader's perspective are as unstable here as in the *Metamorphoses*. Alfred Glauser coins the term "lopinisme" to describe Rabelais's narrative scheme, that moves along by chunks. "Même si la conception de l'oeuvre es globale chez Rabelais, elle s'apparente à la conception par lopins" (79). Its continuity in the earlier books disintegrates even further in the *Quart Livre*, where the action takes place

from island to island in the midst of a sea voyage that recalls the second book of the *Argonautica.* It is as if the fragments of action (and of meaning) were separated in the way that islands are separated from each other, each one a self contained unit. The transitions become more abrupt and arbitrary. If the geographical devices that Ovid and Ariosto used to make the readers' limited perspective on their texts concrete (Ariosto's "selva," Ovid's "nemora avia," a pathless network of rivers and forests) are missing in the vast open air countryside of the Pantagrueline books, the limitations on the reader's perspective is nevertheless enforced in the unreliable narrative coordinates, and in the text's disobedience to any governing genre. The reader is denied the comforts of form as a channel of understanding. We are left with chunks of episodes, thousands of references to all kinds of texts, catalogues of disjunct information, and bewildering, virtuoso exploitation of language, but no formal paradigm that would impose sense on it all. Emphatically anti-Aristotelian, the books could contain fewer or more episodes, or transpositions of their order, without any superficial loss of meaning or beauty.

This anti-Aristotelianism entitles Rabelais to his Ovidian pseudonym. Reshuffling the determined order of the letters of his own name into the anagrammatical "Alcofribas Nasier," Rabelais refers himself to the school of Ovidius Naso, a declaration that for the purposes of the text, "Naso magister erat." No doubt Rabelais read the *Metamorphoses* through Raphael Regius's presentation of it as the copious text par excellence. Rabelais did not mine it for fabular material the way the Italian *romanzieri* did, but his books reflect Ovid's inclusivity and his disregard for generic codes. In works which respect their generic codes, the assumption of a form carries responsibility to an implied closure, an end that will embrace its beginning and middle, according

to the tragic paradigm. In this sense, form acts as a determining factor, the finite boundaries that would condition a text's "proper" meaning. It brings its inevitable conclusions about. Rabelais and Ovid shuffle generic codes. The Pantagrueline books assume the genre of the *Grandes Chroniques*, one unrelated event after another. But the text goes on to summon the conventions of epic, Lucianic dialogue, medical treatise, legal disputation, grail romance, and even rhetorical treatise. Once again, we are clearly in the midst of an encyclopedic text,[1] one that will attempt to exhaust the possible combinations of voices and styles available in its textual inheritance. Richard Lanham remarks on the "dizzying" effect of the generic mixture, in which practically all the known genres surface at one time or another. He observes that in its liberal inclusivity of forms, Rabelais's work refuses to be any one thing,

> refuses to find a center in a single genre, however broadly defined. It works in the opposite way, invokes the patterns of expectations for every genre, seemingly, that ever was. It plays games with genre (165).

The games it plays with genre are games of survival. Formal conventions such as Romance heroic exploits, the Cyropaedeian education of the prince, the Platonic symposium, and the epic quest are invoked at various times, but they are inevitably mocked and they never seriously pattern the narrative according to their determined ends. A fixed literary form, such as a battle epic or symposium, renders a determining influence on the roles the characters adopt within that form, and upon the text that adopts that form. The text's

[1] See Edward Mendelson, "The Encyclopedic Narrative: From Dante to Pynchon." Mendelson in fact cites Rabelais's five books in his short-list of seven encyclopedic narratives.

responsibility is to outwit the necessities of the form in which it finds itself and continue in its search for truth. Each of the genres provides a form that can be exploited for a ride but which must be eventually discarded. If the assumption of a course of narrative carries the possibility of a determined end and threatens closure, Ovid and Rabelais leave it ridiculed by the narrative that continues after. Just as Ovid's text demonstrated its ability at every transition to survive the closure of its episodes, Rabelais's work is marked by a generative capacity that continues past the implied ends of all of the various forms it takes. The text surpasses the limits of one form and, like Proteus, casts itself into another form. No single form can be considered final.

Pantagruel's advice to Panurge on prophetic dreaming in the *Tiers Livre* 13 cites Proteus, the god who will only speak truly when tied down into his true form, in the role of the cornucopia, the source of an inexhaustible change.

> Car, comme jadis le grand vaticinateur Proteus estant desguisé et transformé en feu, en eau, en tigre, en dracon et aultres masques estranges, ne praedisoit les choses advenir, pour les praedire force estoit qu'il feust restitué en sa propre et naïfve forme: aussi ne peult l'homme recepvoir divinité et art de vaticiner, sinon lorsque la partie qui en luy plus est divine (c'est Nous et Mens) soit coye, tranquille, paisible, non occupée ne distraicte par passions et affections foraines.[2]

In this sense, the generic forms in which this Protean text indulges are all nonessential, assumed shapes, which are subject to change as the literary form of the work changes. The characters act out the roles demanded of them within the temporary generic codes, and they do not develop inner lives or psychological refinement the way characters in a novel might. The war in

[2] All citations are from *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols., ed. Pierre Jourda (Paris: Editions Garnier, 1962).

Gargantua conforms to the codes of the chivalric battle epic. Frere Jean takes the role of the invincible knight, and he assumes it so thoroughly that, like Orlando, his skin is impervious to steel. Gymnaste is fancier in the saddle, in *Gargantua* 35, than Astolfo. But in the *Tiers Livre* Frere Jean becomes a comic counsellor, and in the *Quart Livre* his role is to offset Pantagruel's learned wisdom with steadfast common sense.

The ordinal titles of the latter three books are, in a way, accurate indicators of how the work proceeds. A series of sequential numbers describes a linear, potentially infinite set, and Rabelais's work likewise assumes a potentially endless serial form. Certainly the text furnishes no point of arrival or macroproposition early on to govern the text. The doubted authenticity of the *Cinquiesme Livre* underscores the the work's inherent resistance to closure. The bipartite symmetrical shape of the *Orlando furioso* is supplanted in the Pantagrueline books by an open series of segments which is severely asymmetrical, if not actually unfinished, depending on the attribution of the *Cinquiesme Livre.* The voyage of inquiry described in the Third and Fourth books might have continued to expand into 78 books, as the title page of the *Tiers Livre* comically suggests, if the author's death did not require a posthumous reviser to flesh out its potential teleology. In the Pantagrueline books, the mammoth proportions and boundless capacities of the text become a subject of its discourse, demonstrated in the way the giants, like the text, have inexhaustible resources of learning to which to refer their wisdom, "l'entendement à double rebras, et capacité de memoire à la mesure de douze oyres et botes d'olif" (*Pantagruel* 8). They have entire worlds inside their mouths and their bellies, endless wealth and property. Endlessness becomes a primary feature of this text, whose serial form threatens to go on

forever (or at least to the 78th book). As no book contained within covers goes on forever in fact, Rabelais turns the notion of inexhaustibility to embrace the text's internal capacities, what a reader might be able to bring out of the books, or what the text might be able to mean. This internal concept of endlessness is made textually explicit at a number of key points in the image of the cornucopia. The prologue of the *Tiers Livre* likens the text to an inexhaustible barrel of wine.

> Autant que vous en tireray par la dille, autant en entonneray par le bondon. Ainsi demeurera le tonneau inexpuisible. Il a source vive et vene perpetuelle.... C'est un vray Cornucopie.

Graces endowed with cornucopia decorate the Abbey of Theleme as a fountain, that is, as a perpetual source (*Gargantua* 55). The cornucopia forms the terms of comparison for Gargantua's copious codpiece (*Gargantua* 8), and the interpretive key to Panurge's dream (*Tiers Livre* 14). Under the sign of the open-ended cornucopia, the books struggle against the finite nature of a closed structure, and even, in a sense, against the finity of words that the end of a work necessarily represents, "excedentes le nombre des syllabes resultantes au couplement de toutes les consonantes avecques les vocales," as Panurge says in praise of debts (*Tiers Livre* 3). The text seeks a providentiality that exceeds that of its language, that is, in effect, more infinite than the words of the text, and it finds that providentiality in the hermeneutical polyvalence that it proposes.

The order of things in the text makes no sense, or more aptly stated, it makes nonsense. Bakhtin's important study of Rabelais's affinity with popular culture stresses the carnival aspect of the text and the "coercive socioeconomic and political organization" that it reverses, "suspended for the time of the festivity" (*Rabelais and His World*, 255). Rabelais sets up a carnivalesque

fictional world. The text leaves no doubt about its foundation in popular and oral traditions, many of them historically related to the celebration of Carnivale. The careful construction of a formless or chaotic appearance animates the reader's participation in the carnivalesque world. The work's presentation of formlessness is profound and studied in its minutiae as well as in its breadth. The premise of order that inhabits the metrical shape of Ovid's hexameter and Ariosto's octave has dissolved into prose composition. The clarity of the prose narration occasionally degenerates into a jumble of voices (as in the symposium of drunkards in *Gargantua* 5), or into macaronic language, or into long lists that interrupt narrative progression. And although the real catalogue of books at the Abbey of Saint Victor in Rabelais's time conformed to alphabetical order, the fictional list in *Pantagruel* 7 collapses even that most arbitrary of designs and takes no traditional order whatsoever.[3] But the celebration of disorder does not relieve the reader of the charge to take the text, at some level, seriously, and engage the pursuit of a "plus hault sens." The carnival text's carefree disregard for order cannot be trusted or shared by the reader. The fictional world is constituted as a world without constraints where forms (and formalities) are mocked and where anything goes, while it soon becomes clear that survival in this carnival requires a constant vigilance, and its risks entail no less than the pursuit of truth. That risk will turn out to be treacherously involved with literary form, as the text seeks a language that may be adequate to truth, not predetermined by fictional

[3] See Frederick Amory, "Rabelais's Hurricane Word Formations and Chaotic Enumerations: Lexis and Syntax." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 17 (1983) 61-74. Amory points out that the Renaissance preference for alphabetical order replaced the Medieval hierarchical order demonstrated in Isidore's Etymologies and other Medieval encyclopedic compilations.

codes or subject to hermeneutic elaboration.

Rabelais's manifest comic intentions differentiate the Pantagrueline books from its forebears. If the text does not make you laugh, it means that the transmission of energy from text to reader has failed. The text is aware of its own fictionality. Its steadfast assertion of the absolute veracity of its most outrageous inventions assures as much, "et, si ne le croyez, le fondement vouse escappe!" (*Gargantua* 4). The carnivalesque formal anarchy is an essential component of that fictionality, and not, as Glauser would suppose, a reflection of 16th century proto-enlightenment tendencies, "correspendent bien à l'ésprit d'un siècle curieux, indécis dans ses croyances" (11). Robert Garapon specifies a type of comedy that he finds particulary prevalent in Rabelais, "la fantaisie verbale," that depends for its effect on the deflection of purpose in language. "La fin du langage est l'utilité que nous retirons de la communication avec nos sembables," he sensibly remarks. "Nous parlons pour agir sur ceux qui nous entourent, aussi bien en poésie qu'en prose." The usefulness of language as an agent to effect action is replaced, in verbal comedy, by language that deflects its ulterior purposes and replaces them with its own ends, that is, by language as an end or thing in itself. La fantaisie verbale, in Garapon's definition, occurs when language avoids its communicative purposes, and liberally wastes itself.

> celle-ci apparaît dès que l'on détourne le langage de sa fin normale de communication, dès que l'on utilise les mots sans mettre au premier plan de ses préoccupations cette communication avec les autres hommes que les mots ont pour objet de procurer.... D'une manière générale, la fantaisie verbale peut donc se définir comme étant ce qui, dans un texte donné, constitue un jeu libéré du souci de la signification et placé sous le signe de la gratuité.... Tandis que le langage se caractérise normalement par une stricte économie en vue d'une fin, la fantaisie verbale est essentiellement gaspillage. Le

> prodigue, à condition qu'il soit riche, arrive à assurer sa subsistance malgré sa prodigalité (9-10).

The presentation of apparently ungoverned "gaspillage" functions, among other ways, as an adjunct to the comic. Language that draws away from the purposes that a form might determine draws us into laughter. The narrator often states flatly that the text should draw the reader away from the affairs of daily living, and he serves the book with the instruction "que chascun laissast sa propre besoigne, ne se souciast de son mestier et mist ses affaires propres en oubly" (*Pantagruel* Prologue). Its fictional world is meant to push the coercive quotidian world aside, setting up a distinct separation between the text and experience. The experienced world is contaminated by sober purposes, while the text proclaims its essential disinterest and detachment from any purpose. It is "pour passe temps joyeulx" (*Pantagruel* 34), a bemusing pastime, dedicated to enthusiasts of the grape, "beuveurs tresillustres." And when Alcofribas Nasier interrogates Panurge on the purpose of his various Parisian pranks, "Et à quelle fin?," the reply mocks the very idea of purpose. Panurge tells our narrator, "tu ne as passetemps aulcun en ce monde. J'en ay, plus que le Roy" (*Pantagruel* 17). Taking these statements without complication, the text presents itself at the simplest level as a disorganized, purposeless series of narrative sequences, explicitly designed to make us laugh when we are drunk (drunkenness, in my experience, cares little for formal coherence).

A surface with an interior

The cheerful intention of delighting our drunken senses of humor is complicated by the text's insinuation of monumental gravity and of the presence of layers of meaning. The nearly instantaneous introduction into the

text of the problem of interpretation will remain one of the constant concerns of the Pantagrueline books. The prologue to *Gargantua* (printed first in the collection since 1542) proposes a series of metaphors for the text that differentiate a surface and an interior. The metaphorical figures have in common a disinterested or playful surface that contains a purposeful or useful interior. Socrates is invoked as the drinking fool who possesses divine interior wisdom, together with the apothecary Silenus figurines to which Socrates is compared in the *Symposium*, silly boxes that contain fine drugs and "autres choses precieuses." Then the text's meaning is likened to "sustantificque mouelle," marrow inside a bone for the philosophical dog who might work at bringing the inside out (a reference to Cynics?). In the same way, Alcofribas Nasier explains, the matters of the text may appear to be "tant folastres" (so much nonsense) if the reader fails to open the book and carefully weigh up what is drawn out there ("ce que y deduict," the same verb used by Ovid to describe the unfolding of the *Metamorphoses*). The text invites the reader to consider a meaningful content apart from the apparently absurd surface, and hints at the presence of interiority lurking in "symboles Pythagoriques." Here, as in the *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras stands in as the figure who potentially reveals hidden meaning ("quodcumque latet"). This invitation to consider the inside of the text backs into its very reversal in the following paragraph, where the narrator ridicules allegorical interpretation. He insists that he composed the work as he drank and ate, just as Homer and Ennius did, poets who had no intention of loading their texts with the allegorical correspondences that have been drawn from them. This is where Rabelais introduces a Berchorius figure, "Frere Lubin, vray croque lardon," who so anachronistically allegorized Christian intentions into the *Metamorphoses*. The

denial of meaning on grounds of thoughtless eating and drinking is loaded in turn by the extensive, allegorically significant eating and drinking that takes place in the text, of course. Elsewhere, the work will be cheerfully passed off as "balivernes et plaisantes mocquettes," nonsense and empty fiction, (although this remark, from the closing chapter of *Pantagruel*, is placed in the mouth of a fictional reader).

These contradictory declarations place the reader uncomfortably between the supposed philosophical plenitude suggested by the interior/exterior dialectics on the one hand, and the emptiness of simple entertainment suggested by the narrator's denial of intentional meaning on the other. The opposition arranges itself between a serious reader and a frivolous writer. The text shifts the responsibility for its meaning onto the reader, while declaring its essential indifference to what that meaning may turn out to be, whether the book turns out to be a poultice or a caballa (according to the *Pantagruel* prologue). In these terms, the reader's doggish engagement of the text or comparative apathy can also be seen to participate in the governing inside/outside metaphor. The reader who soothes a toothache with a copy of the *Grandes Chroniques* wrapped in hot rags need never open the book or regard its interior in any way, and the book remains a purely physical object, a purely exterior and enclosed phenomenon of the experienced world. The contents of the text fit inside this non-reader's mouth. The relative sizes of reader and text exactly reverse those of Alcofribas Nasier and Pantagruel in the famous episode where the author enters Pantagruel's mouth and discovers

a vast world there (*Pantagruel* 32).[4] The other reader, the one who would memorize the text for oral transmission, "ainsy que une religieuse Caballe," has a much larger text to negotiate, and will have a much more difficult time fitting the text inside his or her mouth. The text of the Pantagrueline books will always outsize its interpreting reader and always exceed the reader's grasp. Rabelais insures that no reader will exceed the text in learning or in wit, unless that reader be fluent in Lanternois and the language of the Antipodes, and have read the entire bibliography of nonexistent books to which text often refers.

Whether the exhortation to interpret the amusing Pantagrueline books "a plus hault sens" is a serious indicator of occulted meaning in a neo-platonic vein, or whether Nasier's "symboles Pythagoriques" will correspond in patent futility to the lecture delivered by Naso's Pythagoras, the burden of meaning falls squarely on the reader. Responding to the challenge of the Prologue, readers have not been unwilling to disengage various patterns of hidden meaning from the text. Claude Gaignebet's monumental study, *A Plus hault sens: L'Esotérisme spirituel et charnel de Rabelais*, nearly equal in size to Rabelais's oeuvre, discovers a full register of hermetic significance in the wordplay and in the fabric of the language alluding to esoteric oral traditions and folkloristic Christianity. Likewise, G. Mallary Masters bases a wealth of abstruse and neo-platonic significance on the association between Rabelaisian drinking and the wine of the sacrament. David Quint, among others, worries

[4] See Erich Auerbach's essay, "The World in Pantagruel's Mouth," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953); and Alice Berry's analysis of the same passage, *Rabelais: Homo Logos* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

the work's biblical allusions to extract an apocalyptic and sacramental Christian marrow, "a progressive unfolding of spiritual knowledge" underlying the apparent frivolity of the books (*Origin and Originality*, 180). Edwin Duval has studied the symmetries underlying the work's apparent formlessness, arriving at an interpretation of Pantagruel "as a type of Christ whose specific messianic mission is to reverse the effects of Cain's murder" ("Pantagruel's Genealogy," 171; a reading to which Quint also subscribes). Wayne Rebhorn falls in a tradition of critics who attempt to decipher in Rabelais's "nonsense" a full exposition of his contemporary political and ecclesiastical conflicts. And Michael Screech, who has contributed much fundamental philology to our understanding of the Rabelaisian text, inevitably characterizes the books as "a work of Christian scepticism" (*Rabelais*, 216).

While it would be foolish to argue against the presence of the elaborate systems of signification that such distinguished critics have detached from the text, it is important to register the essential subjectivity of interpretation and the ambivalent and arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign as one of Rabelais's primary subjects of discourse. In this sense, one might observe the predominance of Christian readings as indicative of a preponderance of Christian readers. The books might be characterized, rather, as primarily philosophical, and perhaps particularly alluring to those who approach philosophical questions in a Christian frame of mind. The text in its enormity admits all the interpretations that have been or can be generated for it, an indefinite plurality of possible senses. The work taps biblical, classical and popular sources all with equal generosity, rarely differentiating among them. Pantagruel's genealogy (*Pantagruel* 1) might attest to this syncretism. Among Pantagruel's ancestor giants one finds Goliath next to Eryx, Nimrod as sire of

Atlas, Fierabras, Offot, Ferragut and Morgante from Medieval cycles and the historical Indian king Porus, all of these interspersed with names as unfamiliar to the footnote writers as they are to me. Commentators tend to reconstitute their Rabelais depending upon one of these textual families to the exclusion of the other two, as Duval does when he bases his interpretation of *Pantagruel* upon the biblical elements in the giant's genealogy. Thus, also, A.J. Krailsheimer, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, bases his argument for Rabelais's "above all positive Christianity" on the abundance of "New Testament, and especially Pauline quotations" that "stress the religious basis of Pantagruelism." The Pauline strain is there, but to base Rabelais's thought upon it necessarily ignores many quotations of other sorts. Gaignebet and Bakhtin follow what is perhaps the path least traveled, the oral and folkloristic sources cited and implied in the text, although Bakhtin's research stresses social history more than the individual folk motifs that form the substance of Gaignebet's study. But surely mixing these sources as opposed to hierarchizing them was the very point. The enormous capacity of the text has room enough to admit them all and enforce no regimentation among them. The various positions taken in debates over the shape of Rabelais's "thought"[5] are all allowed within the syncretism of his encyclopedic vision. Rabelais's supposed Christianity and his supposed atheism both filter down from a text whose *copia* allows these mutually exclusive points of view to exist. The text will not, however, admit the pretense such readings might claim to an

[5] The classic texts in the debate over Rabelais's belief are Abel Lefranc's introduction to *Pantagruel* in *Rabelais: études sur Gargantua, Pantagruel, Le Tiers Livre* (Paris: A. Michel, n.d.), proposing Rabelais as an unbeliever, and Lucien Fevre's response, *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle: La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: A. Michel, 1942).

exclusive status or to a single authorial view.

The hermeneutics of the inexhaustible text

The text's endlessness is its most emphatic denial of an exclusive hermeneutic key. It multiplies phenomena and enlarges reality to as many points of view as there are things to see--a cornucopia of signification. It is the inside/outside opposition that makes the text's endless signification operative. Rabelais was heir to a long tradition that conceived language as constituted by a sensible exterior, *verba*, containing an intangible interior, *res*. Correspondence between the two categories provides the possibility for meaning; but in Rabelais's textual world this ontology of meaning becomes problematic. Rabelais's working theory of language is expressed in the dialectics between interior and exterior. It assumes a gap between inside and outside, between signifier and signified, which betrays the correspondence between word and thing and makes room for nuance, allegory, occulted or subjective meaning that cannot be made explicit without the mediation of explanatory gloss. Specific meaning in this text depends utterly on the manner in which the reader chooses to bridge the hermeneutical gap, to find a proverbial "couvercle digne du chaudron," as the prologue to *Gargantua* warns. The reader is made aware that possibilities for falsification of the signifier face the interpreter at every turn. Yet the attempt to assign meaning, to postulate an inside that corresponds to the outside, is unavoidable given the terms in which the text presents itself. The text generates its reader's interpretive activity. Inviting the reader to think about the problem of meaning, the text intermittently calls out, "Avez vous bien le tout entendu?" (*Pantagruel* 1).

The opposition of an inside and an outside to the text reproposes and transforms the hermeneutic problems of the *Orlando furioso.* Ariosto inspired the reader's interpretive activity by endowing an impenetrable plot procedure with suggestions of order. That text expects the reader to try to anticipate its procedural coherence the way its characters do, while it insures failure by flying off in every direction. By distinguishing between a textual surface and interior, Rabelais places the reader in a similar position of feeling the imperative to interpret the text at hand, to find an inner gravity to the comic surface, while every access to interpretation eventually loses itself in the mass of language and intertextual networks, or encounters impassable resistance in the form of other possible interpretations. As language multiplies, meaning becomes less specific, more subject to the operation of selection and exclusion by the interpreting reader. Rabelais effectively replaces the chaotic appearance of Ariosto's plot (which left the reader in a perpetually unstable position with regards to the text) with an invitation to interpret a text that consistently swallows up any interpretation within its inestimable boundaries, and shows it to belong to the reader rather than the text. The Pantagrueline books own the possibility that Quint's apocalyptic Christian Rabelais of 1983 does not differ categorically from Berchorius's (or Frere Lubin's) Christian Ovid of the 13th century.

Many episodes are devoted to narrating hermeneutics manqué or to discussions among various characters on the nature of language and on the generally unreliable nature of the linguistic sign. The "Fanfreluches antidotées," through which the reader must pass in order to enter the Pantagrueline books, requires the pains of Nasier's philological groundwork in order to be presented even as an imperfect text, and its obscurity remains its

most impressive characteristic. The "enigme en profetie" that closes *Gargantua* may contain "le decours et maintien de verité divine" as Gargantua suggests, it may allude to the events of the Protestant Reform (Rebhorn), or to the apocalyptic closure of time (Quint), or it may, as Frere Jean believes, be an allegory of a tennis game. In a similar vein, the entire central section of the *Tiers Livre* procedes through variations on Panurge's faux readings of the oracles, all of which would seem to tell him clearly that if he marries he will be cuckolded, beaten and robbed. The point is that the text places the burden of interpretation, of reaching the proposed inside of the text where its apparent nonsense will deliver exquisite sense, on the reader, while it simultaneously presents episode after episode of characters who are unable to open satisfactorily the opaque surfaces of the texts they encounter.

The status of the linguistic sign as a tangible or sensible exterior that contains a prelinguistic interior is continually brought into question. Pantagruel reveals in the *Tiers Livre* 19 his scepticism toward the notion of a natural language and his belief in the autonomy of the linguistic sign. The passage is frequently quoted in Rabelais criticism.

> C'est abus, dire que ayons languaige naturel. Les languaiges sont par institutions arbitraires et convenences des peuples; les voix (comme disent les dialecticiens), ne signifient naturellment, mais à plaisir.

In the various quests for truth that take place in the Pantagrueline books, the characters face the arbitrariness of language as their primary obstacle. Language, being a human creation rather than an accident of nature, insures no natural correspondence to a putative content that is not likewise subject to human intention. Even when content is evident, as Panurge's hunger is evident in his initial encounter with Pantagruel, language seems to impede

understanding rather than transmit it. Panurge insists in thirteen languages, not all of them obscure to the company, that words are superfluous when the facts are patent, yet his interlocutors do not respond sympathetically until Panurge declares his condition in French, "ma langage naturelle" (a naturalness rendered ironic by the preceding demonstration of the cultural specificity of linguistic conventions). Pantagruel and his company devote their attention to the opacity of Panurge's discourse rather than to his condition, even after its meaning has been made clear to them in Hebrew, Greek, Utopian and Latin, all languages they claim to understand.

When language is generated that has no evident content (recall Garapon's definition of verbal fantasy, "souci de la signification"), the signified goes up for grabs, and interpretation "a plus hault sens" begins to take place in earnest. This is the case in the legal dispute between Baisecul and Humevesne (*Pantagruel* 10-13), which might be taken as a sort of lesson in how to read the inexhaustible Pantagrueline books. The dispute, presented in nonsense discourse, had confounded a council of four hundred judges with its endless possibilitites for signification. The wisest and most expert judge recognizes this unconfined possibility for signification in terms of bottomlessness and boundlessness, "ne pouvons trouver fond ny rive en ceste matiere, et, tant plus y estudions, tant moins y entendons" (*Pantagruel* 10). The predicament of the judges is passed along to the reader in the following chapters when the disputants are called forth to present their cases in their own words, duly warned by Pantagruel not to depart from the truth. The reader, of course, can make no more sense of their arguments than the four hundred judges could, the judges in this case standing in as textualized readers and commentators of the absurd text in which they appear. Their

briefs and documents, numerous enough to load down four jackasses, might be likened to the load of commentary and gloss, including the present dissertation, that has built up around Rabelais's work (Lanham has already discussed the way in which Rabelais foresaw and foremocked the learned commentary that his text would gather, commentary that would intensify the comedy).[6] Pantagruel solves the case by tossing out the judges' interpretive efforts and entering directly into the language of the disputants. His resolution is delivered in the same nonsense terms in which the case had been presented, a stroke of wisdom that leaves the judges transported in ecstasy until some vinegar and rose water is brought in "pour leur faire revenir le sens et entendement acoustumé" (*Pantagruel* 13). They return, one assumes, from an unusual state of understanding, a "plus hault sens," to which they had been transported by Pantagruel's entry into the purposeless language of the contestants.

Given the problematic nature of the signified, the characters in the text make numerous efforts to arrive at an understanding of prelinguistic truth that might transcend language altogether. This is the declared intention of Thaumaste, the English scholar who shows up to debate higher philosophy with Pantagruel not long after the nonsense court case. The arrival of Thaumaste (*Pantagruel* 18) signals the beginning of a long quest for truth that,

[6] See *The Motives of Eloquence*, p. 176: "Never was a text so carefully arranged to demand diligent grooming from generations of commentators." Lanham demonstrates by citing Jourda's footnote to Rabelais's fictional title, the *Supplementum Supplementi Chronicorum* in *Gargantua* 37, "Titre de fantaisie. Rabelais se moque des auteurs de commentaires." Mendelson also remarks that encyclopedic narratives in general invite gloss, and they tend to become "meal tickets for academics" with "organized critical industries" that "provide food and shelter for many hundreds of scholars and critics" (1274).

after disappearing from the narrative intermittently, will resurface in Panurge's consultations of the various oracles and sources of wisdom through the *Tiers Livre* and into the voyage of the *Quart Livre*. The quest for truth assumes the form of a quest for a truth-bearing text, for a prophetic language that might close the gap between *verba* and *res*, an exterior conducive to its interior. Rejecting sophistic, academic and neoplatonic forms of discourse, Thaumaste means to escape the opacity of the signifier by debating silently, by signs only. It will be a disputation in pure signifiers.

> Mais voicy la maniere comment j'entens que nous disputerons. Je ne veulx disputer *pro* et *contra*, comme font ces sotz sophistes de ceste ville et de ailleurs; sembleblement, je ne veulx disputer en la maniere des academicques par declamation, ny aussi par nombres, comme faisoit Pythagoras et comme voulut faire Picus Mirandula à Romme; mais je veuilx disputer par signes seulement, sans parler, car les matieres sont tant ardues que les parolles humaines ne seroyent suffisantes à les expliquer à mon plaisir (*Pantagruel* 18).

The danger of language that Thaumaste wishes to avoid, voiced by Pantagruel in his courteous reply, is again the contingency and the endless possibility of signification that lurks in the gap between *verba* and *res*. "Nous confererons de tes doubtes ensemble," says Pantagruel, "et en chercherons la resolution jusques au fond du puis inespuisable auquel disoit Heraclite estre la verité cachée." Checking sources in Diogenes Laertius (IX, 72), one finds this saying attributed to Democritus, not Heraclitus, and one discovers, significantly, that the term "inexhaustible" (inespuisable) was added by Rabelais. Pantagruel's oxymoronic version of the citation places truth ever beyond reach, on the far side of endless interference, at the bottom of a cornucopia. The "puis inespuisable" is another of the images of interior/exterior dialectics that Rabelais has been elaborating, related especially to the cornucopia of the Third prologue, where the same property of inexhaustibility is attributed to

the text in the same terms ("ainsi demeurera le tonneau inexpuisible" *Tiers Livre* prologue). In that passage, hope (rather than truth) lies at the bottom of the cornucopian text. When the text's meaning will seem to have been exhausted, the hope for more enigma, more possibility of meaning, for signification without end, will find its reward in the text's inexhaustibility.

The endlessness of signification will not be eluded by Thaumaste's scheme to bypass the contingency of human language. Silent signs participate no less in the nature of language than verbal signs, as Panurge well understands. Pantagruel prepares for the contest with a vigil of deep study in books on the topic of signification, some of them historical and others fictional, with a clear emphasis on the neoplatonic tradition in which so many modern critics have sought the key to the Rabelaisian mysteries. When Panurge convinces Pantagruel to pass the responsibility for the disputation to him, he too prepares for the contest, but by playing games rather than by studying. Following the model of Pantagruel's strategy in the lawsuit, Panurge throws out the books. For Panurge, the debate itself is also a game whose required skills depend less on the interpretation of signs than on the generation of them. Panurge need only invent a rich text of signs; the burden of interpretation will rest with Thaumaste, and he will not fail to supply it. Lanham observed that "we can never surmount the urge to find significance," and sure enough, witnessing the elaborate dance of gestures between the contestants, the members of the audience, too, join in the business of interpretation, each according to their own preparation.

> Les theologiens, medicins et chirurgiens penserent que par ce signe il inferoyt l'Angloys estre ladre. Les conseilliers, legistes et decretistes pensoient que ce faisant, il vouloyt conclurre quelque espece de felicité humaine consister en estat de ladrye, comme jadys maintenoyt le Seigneur (*Pantagruel* 19).

While it is clear that Panurge draws the vocabulary of his sign language from the vernacular, the audience, Thaumaste and Pantagruel refer their interpretations to a prior set of texts or prior beliefs. (The point is reiterated in *Tiers Livre* 20, when Pantagruel interprets out loud the gesticulations of Nazdecabre in a similar demonstration of signs by referring them to a pretextual, Pythagorean key.) Meaning is assigned to the signifier "a plaisir."

We never learn the unspeakable wisdom that Thaumaste reads in Panurge's signs ("Ha, j'entens, dist Thaumaste, mais quoy?"); Rabelais does not interpret the signs for the reader. Instead, he shows their transporting effect on Thaumaste, how they make him happy. Thaumaste declares that, properly interpreted, Panurge's gestures "m'a ouvert le vrays puys et abisme de encyclopedie," that is, they have opened the inexhaustible well Pantagruel cited from Heraclitus. Thaumaste does not say that the well had been drained and truth exposed. How could an inexhaustible well be drained? Once opened to interpretation, discourse produces no end of discourse. Indeed, Thaumaste fulfills his promise to gloss Panurge's gestures and convert them to a copious text, "un grand livre, imprimé à Londres, auquel il declaire tout sans rien laisser." The postulation of meaning in the gap between *verba* and *res* requires that more text be spun in order to objectify that meaning. Just as the opaque language of Baisecul and Humevesne produced four assloads of explanatory legal briefs, Panurge's opaque signs are elaborated into a textual world where, by reference to prior texts, it will result in a text that encompasses an ideal *copia*, telling all, and leaving nothing out.

A generative principle of language is being expounded here that relates directly to the dense *copia* of the Pantagrueline books. If sense is not immediately present in the word, more words become necessary in order to

establish it, resulting in an infinite regression. When language is probed for meaning, it produces more language, another text, that attaches itself to the text it interprets and compounds it, or even, as must be the case in a wordless text, replaces it. Panurge's text of gestures will be replaced by Thaumaste's massive book, printed in London. The readers of Rabelais's text have only the text of gestures, spelled out over pages of detailed descriptive prose. We will never have the benefit of reading Thaumaste's commentary, except to the extent that we interpret Panurge's gestures for ourselves and thus speculatively recreate the unwritten text of Thaumaste's interpretation. Thaumaste walks away enlightened, even happy that his quest for truth has been positively answered. But what truth? The generation of more text.

The reproduction of meaning in the form of further text poses problems for the interpreter who intends to crack the text's metaphorical exterior in order to arrive at a putative interior. If *verba* is regarded as a form of exteriority, then interpretive commentary merely extends the exterior nature of the original text. The proverb quoted in the first prologue's invective against allegory, "couvercle digne du chaudron," describes how the process of generating explanatory text falsifies the interior *res* latent in the original text. The proverb reverses the relations of interior and exterior which commentary proposes to clarify. The commentary becomes the "couvercle," and the original text the "chaudron." Comentary does not reveal meaning, it covers it, and becomes additional proof of the text's generative principles, its capacity to produce a further extension of its linguistic universe. In this sense, the fruitfulness of Rabelais's encyclopedic enterprise may be read in the library of criticism and interpretation, Christian and otherwise, that has attached to the text.

The quest for the ultimate text

In the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge takes Thaumaste's place as the quester after truth, and the problem of interpretation becomes a primary subject of discourse. No longer an intermittent concern, the elusiveness of truth in language becomes the very condition of the philosophic quest. In its series of questions and answers, the *Tiers Livre* takes the form of a Platonic dialogue, a form traditionally deployed to work through interrogation from *doxa* to *aletheia*, from false assumptions to truth. But the philosophical nectar, the "verité seule" that was the declared object of Thaumaste's inquiry is replaced in Panurge's pursuit by the rather burlesque question of whether he should marry, and if he does, will he be cuckolded, beaten and robbed. The profane nature of the truth that Panurge seeks does not change the nature of the inquiry or the tenacious passion with which it is carried out. In fact, Panurge's appetite for a prophecy adequate to his desires motivates the remaining action of the Third, Fourth and Fifth books.

The entire series of episodes in which Panurge consults the oracles might be seen as variations on the theme of the interpretability of signs. For Thaumaste, the primary adversary and obstacle to arriving at the truth was the arbitrary conventionality of the linguistic sign. Here the limits of human perception are represented by human inability to know the future outcome of contingent events. Panurge faces the additional difficulty of his own unwillingness to accept the veracity of the oracles, and he turns to Thaumaste's conundrum, the arbitrary nature of language, for ways to avoid the message he receives. Where Thaumaste was willing to supply meaning to an enigmatic text, Panurge uses the same principles to deny meaning to a painfully transparent message. Panurge dramatizes interpretation as a way to

equivocate meaning, and much of the book's humor depends upon the far-fetched readings he invents in accordance with his desires. In scene after scene, the oracle delivers a text whose meaning seems clear enough, Pantagruel or another character will interpret the text's most obvious implications for Panurge's future marriage, and Panurge will contradict that interpretation with a more favorable one. The scenes proceed as a series of displacements in a search for greater authority: the divination of dreams replaces the *Sortes Virgilianae*, the gestural wisdom of Nazdecabre replaces the prophecies of the Sibyl of Panzoust, the symposium of wise professionals replaces the last words of the poet Raminogrobis. The repetition of Panurge's queries, always with the same answer, participates in the Erasmian tradition of *copia verborum*, the principle of saying the same thing in a variety of ways, which possesses the danger of falling into empty loquacity. The long catalogue of possibile means of divination cited in *Tiers Livre* 25 by Herr Trippa (all of which, we are assured, will deliver precisely the same message) indicates the potential infinity of this principle. Empty repetition forestalls the achievement of a positive abundance, it is *copia* in its negative sense of "copy," without the plenitude of *res* that would characterize an ideal encyclopedism.

Panurge's interrogations eventually lead him to a voyage in search of the ultimate text, the Dive Bouteille, a vessel that will contain truth. Thus deflected from its traditional patterns, the dialogue form will metamorphose into a grail romance, a quest for the elusive object. This final oracle is signified initially when the fool Triboulet presents Panurge with an empty bottle, a container without contents (an exterior with no interior), that Panurge calls "le neu de la matiere" (*Tiers Livre* 47), the nucleus, the very nutmeat of the matter.

Before pursuing this further, let us return to the description of young Gargantua's clothes that was mentioned briefly above. The center of attention in his costume is, of course, the bedazzling codpiece. The braguette is compared, significantly, to a cornucopia.

> Mais, voyans la belle brodure de canetille et les plaisans entrelatz d'orfeverie, garniz de fins diamens, fins rubiz, fines turquoyses, fines esmeraugdes et unions Persicques, vous l'eussiez comparée à une belle corne d'abondance, telle que voyez es antiquailles, et telle que donna Rhea es deux nymphes Adrastea et Ida, nourrices de Jupiter; --tousjours gualante, succulente, resudante, tousjours fructifiante, plene d'humeurs, plene de fleurs, plene de fruictz, plene de toutes delices. Je advoue Dieu s'il ne la faisoit bon veoir! Mais je vous en exposeray bien d'advantaige au livre que j'ay faict *De la dignité des braguettes* (*Gargantua* 8).

In language that recalls the rhetorical treatises on *copia* (remember Politian's "crebrior voluptas, multae sententiae, multi flores"), Rabelais describes this item of clothing that repeats the governing metaphor of the text: the codpiece is an outer surface that contains something of importance inside of it. The cornucopia is not physically embroidered on the codpiece the way the Androgyne device decorates Gargantua's cap. It is a textual term of comparison ("vous l'eussiez comparée...), a verbal surface that describes a physical surface that is itself a garment that both conceals and signifies its interior. Here, the inner meaning might be associated (allegorically) with the text's own principles of generation, its ability to beget further text. But the emphasis in the description is clearly on the signifier, endowed with the properties of dampness and sap that one might associate with the signified. The adjectives "succulente" and "resudante" modify the "corne d'abondance," which replaces the codpiece itself as the subject of discourse, where such adjectives might more appropriately be attributed to the organ that the codpiece conceals. Through the subtle verbal transposition, the cornucopia

assumes the properties of the codpiece's inner contents and replaces it, and in fact turns the sappy penis into an emblem of the cornucopia. The covering, the outside, takes on the significance that it guarantees to the interior. Later, Panurge delivers a discourse on the origin of braguettes that likens the codpiece to the husks of seeds that protect the generative properties of the species and insure their unending survival.

> Voyez comment nature voulent les plantes, arbres, arbrisseaulx, herbes, et zoophytes, une fois par elle créez, perpetuer et durer en toute succession de temps, sans jamais deperir les especes, encores que les individuz perissent, curieusement arma leurs germes et semences, es quelles consiste icelle perpetuité, et les a muniz et couvers par admirable industrie de gousses, vagines, testz, noyaulx, calicules, coques, espiz, pappes, escorces, echines poignans, qui leaurs sont comme belles et fortes braguettes naturelles (*Tiers Livre* 8).

Salient in Panurge's genealogy of codpieces is the governing inside/outside metaphor, where what lies within is the cornucopian principle of perpetuity and ongoing variety. A prior reality is assumed to exist on the inside, but it rests in a pure potentiality that can only be expressed in generation and proliferation. In this sense, the "meaning" of the seed lies in the growth of plants: the inside results in the bringing about of further outside.

Applying this principle to the realm of discourse, the text might be said to authenticate and replace its own generative principle when it comes into being. The outer surface of the text is more significant in itself than the contrived inner meaning. The assumed priority of meaning to discourse, of *res* to *verba*, undergoes a complete reversal, and meaning redounds to the comic exterior, the discontinuous surface with all its transgressions and incoherences, as the place where the potential productivity of the text is located. A hypocritical text, barren within, would not be generative in the ways that Rabelais's text multiplies itself in sequential books on the one hand

and four centuries of commentary on the other. The ornamented *copia* of the Pantagrueline books guarantees its truthfulness, then, in the wealth of its capaciousness and in the inexhaustibility of its meanings. But what of Panurge's empty bottle, that he called the very "neu de la matière"? In what way can the emptiness of the container signify the "sustantificque mouelle" that would be the object of Panurge's quest as well as the reader's? The answer to this question lies in the text's location of meaning in the reading subject's interpretive activity.

Rabelais complies with a neoclassical rule

In a text that assumes the subjective and contingent nature of understanding, the successful drawing out of meaning depends ultimately on the reader's adequacy in relation to the text. In order for the books to be understood in the deeper sense that they promise, a transformation of the reader must be brought about. To look at the nonsense, the groiny humor and purposeless wordplay, and perceive there profound and transcendent sense, requires a subjective shift in perception that alters the reader's point of view and "entendement acoustumé." While it divests itself of all responsibility for meaning, the text does assume the responsibility for bringing this subjective shift in the reader about. The text takes on the transformation of the readers's understanding by having the reader laugh, learn, and drink while considering the problems of interpretation that are posed. These three activities might be seen to correspond to the three cardinal virtues of literary texts according to the lights of neoclassical literary theory, an establishment Rabelais managed to avoid in nearly every other respect. Italian critics contemporary with Rabelais had expanded upon the Horatian appraisal that poetry ought to teach and delight by recovering a third category from the

classical tradition, that of transporting or moving the audience. Rabelais's text conforms to these in its explicit intentions: to produce laughter, to increase the reader's education, and to transport the reader out of normal understanding. Its principle agents are the scatalogical comedy, a great deal of intertextual references and classical erudition, and wine.

We encounter perceptual alteration frequently in the course of the narrative. Even before the chronicles begin, Alcofribas Nasier signals a change in perception by putting his glasses on. These enable him to transcribe the buried Franfreluches antidotées, the enigmatic vestibule between the author's prologue, where the question of buried meanings is first presented, and the narrative chronicle. With the aid of his spectacles and "l'art dont on peut lire lettres non apparentes, comme enseigne Aristotles" (*Gargantua* 1; one of Rabelais's false references to a classical authority), the narrator brings the buried Pantagrueline books to light, as we readers may also see ("ainsi que veoir pourrez") in our Pantagruelizing as we drink and read the books. The shift in perception that is objectified in the narrator's eyeglasses, that allows him to see what is not apparent, is passed along and becomes the reader's property, effected by drinking and by digesting the text itself.

One of the ways that the text encourages a perceptual shift in its readers is certainly by the frequent encouragement to have some wine. In fact, Rabelais's favorite term for "thirsty" is "alteré," a word that also means "transformed" (as Thomas Greene has pointed out in *The Vulnerable Text*, 80). The prologues indicate that reading ought to be accompanied by hearty drinking, especially if we are to read the text in the frame of mind in which the author wrote it. This needn't be taken too literally (although there is no harm in it) to grasp the sort of transformation it implies for our readerly

understanding. Wine, no less than spectacles, functions as a key objectification of enhanced vision in this text. An inspired pun in the *Tiers Livre* prologue underscores this obvious point and glosses the dipsomania to which the Rabelaisian characters are subject. Speaking to those readers who may have "seen" Diogenes the Cynic, the narrator says, "Vous item n'estez jeunes, que est qualité competente pour en vin, non en vain, ainsi plus que physicalement philosopher." What is philosophizing "en vin" as opposed to homonymic "en vain"? The parable of Diogenes and his barrel expounds the matter.

The anecdote comes from Lucian, where it occupies two short paragraphs. Rabelais virtually quotes his source, but expands it in the mode of "fantaisie verbal" to go on for a number of pages. The Corinthians are expecting Philip of Macedon to lay siege on the city. All the citizens industriously prepare for the event, each devoting all of their energies to the single purpose of defending the city.

> et ne feurent negligens soy soigneusement mettre chascun en office et debvoir pour à son hostile venue resister et leur ville defendre.

Seeing their labor ("les voyant en telle ferveur"), Diogenes (Plato supposedly called him "the mad Socrates") engages a series of apparently purposeless operations on the jar in which he lives. The catalogue of things Diogenes does to his barrel, a long string of imperfect verb forms, is one of the virtuoso high spots of Rabelais's verbal fantasy, of language that draws away from communicative purposes. The pointless barrel whacking contrasts with the resolute determination of the good Corinthians fortifying the city against impending doom. Diogenes continues thumping and rolling his barrel until one Corinthian inquires into the meaning of it all. The ludicrous answer,

"pour, entre ce peuple tant fervent et occupé, n'estre veu seul cessateur et ocieux," is appropriated straightaway by the narrator as emblematic of his own work. Like the text, what Diogenes does with his barrel appears to be nonsense. Such activities, contributing nothing toward the communal effort, would seem to be executed in vain. They are without application or purpose in a way analogous to the ridiculous language of the list, and to the text's own claims to be a "passetemps," without purpose. The Corinthians, in fact, defended their city in vain (Phillip overran Corinth in 338 B.C.). Diogenes thumps his barrel "en vin," that is, in a way which seems purposeless but which generates inquiry into meaning, which is the beginning of education, understanding and self-knowledge. In the following paragraphs, the barrel undergoes metamorphosis, becoming first a figure for Rabelais's text, and then a barrel of wine from which the author drinks in order to "draw out" ("tirer du creu") his text, and finally the inexhaustible cornucopia from which the reader is invited to drink. Drinking and reading become equivalent activities. The activities of Diogenes (and the author) do not merely defend cities. By virtue of their non-participation in the vain and determined world they become the foundation of civilization, "Ainsi fonda, bastit et edifia Amphion, sonnant de sa lyre, la grande et celebre cité de Thebes" (*Tiers Livre* prologue).

The text conceives itself as a container of wine, analogous to the literal wine that the reader may or may not drink, to alter the reader's understanding of the textual world. The judges in the case between Baisecul and Humevesne experience a shift in their understanding when they witness Pantagruel's virtuoso performance in verbal fantasy. They are said to be transported, "en ectase esvanoys," drunk, until some rosewater and vinager is brought in to help them regain their normal understanding. The rosewater that brings them

back to normal understanding remains enigmatic, but the "vinaigre" may be read as wine's opposite, vin-aigre, anti-wine. Wine releases the possibilities of a "plus hault sens," while its opposite, vinager, aids in the return of "entendement acoustumé." In a similar way, drunken, we might allow the text's extraordinary verbal surface (and not an occulted Pythagorean formula) to transport us, and transported, we might find in that text a purposelessness so profound, a textual world so complete in itself and detached from the experienced world, that we may laugh.

A surface with no interior

The activities of drinking, laughing, learning, and searching for meaning converge in the closing chapters of the spurious *Cinquiesme Livre*, where the subjectivity of interpretation turns out to engage all questers in an epiphany of self-knowledge. Bacbuc's marvelous fountain in the inner sanctum of the Temple of Bacchus delivers a liquor that tastes differently according to the thirst and the imagination of the drinker. At first Pantagruel and his company drink from the fountain and taste only water. They have come to the shrine with insufficient thirst, and Bacbuc brings on a banquet of salty foods before ordering them to drink again. The reception of the fountain's waters depends upon the disposition of the drinker, and after they have altered their preparation by eating thirst-inspiring foods, the water tastes to each of the drinkers like his own favorite wine. "Beuvez, dist Bacbuc, une, deux ou trois fois. De rechef, changeans d'imagination, telle trouverez au goust, saveur ou liqueur, comme l'aurez imaginé" (*Cinquiesme Livre* 42). The liquor is no different than the inexhaustible barrel of wine, the cornucopia that stands for the Protean, copious text in the *Tiers Livre* prologue, "autant que vous en tireray par la dille, autant en entonneray par le bondon" (*Tiers*

Livre prologue). The inexhaustibility of the text depends finally on the inexhaustible depth of the reading subject. If the reader generates meaning, then inquiry into the text must ultimately be accompanied by an inquiry into the self.

Truth finally lies outside the capacities of language, although language can be used as an instrument of truth. Language can provide the stable container for living, fluid, volatile truth. But that truth must be perceived as residing in the reader, the self, and not in the text. The text merely provides a form, an exterior, and the interior of the text is the interior of the person reading it. The text, like the divine bottle, is an empty container that the reader fills with the reader's own inexhaustible consciousness, expressed in an endless appetite for meaning. Appetite naturally seeks *copia*. An episode in the *Quart Livre* spells this out in allegorical terms where Gaster, a figure of appetite, is offered as the source of all industry and art. Gaster is the only figure in the text proposed as unequivocably prior to discourse. He is without a mouth or ears, that is, removed from discourse, yet he speaks by signs, eluding language as Thaumaste and Nazdecabre had tried to do. Prior to discourse, Gaster is the cornucopian source of all discourse.

> Aussi pour recompense il fait ce bien au monde qu'il luy invente toutes ars, toutes machines, tous metiers, tous engins et subtilitez. Mesmes es animans brutaulx il apprend ars desniées de Nature. Les corbeaulx, les gays, les papeguays, les estourneaulx, il rens poetes; les pies il faict poetrides, et leurs aprent languaige humain proferer, parler, chanter. Et tout pour la trippe! (*Quart Livre* 57).

His cornucopian efficacy is marked in the livery of his entourage.

> Vous dictez ... que l'industrie de Nature appert merveilleuse en l'esbatement qu'elle semble avoir prins formant les coquilles de mer: tant y veoyd on de varieté, tant de figures, tant de couleurs, tant de traictz et formes non imitables par art. Je

> vous asceure qu'en la vesture de ces Gastrolatres coquillons ne veismes moins de diversité et desguisement (*Quart Livre* 58).

The passage accounts appetite as the force that moves art from obscurity toward form, expressed in nature in terms of the variety and wealth we have seen associated with the rhetorical principles of *copia.* The deferment of meaning that characterizes the Pantagrueline books ensures that appetite for truth in the text is never circumscribed by an enclitic form, never quite satisfied, and therefore never abandoned. The inexhaustibility of the text corresponds to that of man's desires, and depends upon them for its ultimate meaning.

The optimism of Politian's climactic exuberance at the end of *Manto* lies in its vision of a perfect textual world that corresponds to the experienced world and informs it (affirming a principle cited in Rabelais's text by Bridoye, *Forma dat esse rei*: *Tiers Livre* 42). Ariosto's copious text was able to unite many elements into a grand and overarching form, bringing near to culmination the Renaissance myth that Politian formulated, a text that might include all things. But the Pantagrueline books are far from the Renaissance topos of *discordia concors*, in which an inclusive form joins discontinuous elements and unifies opposites into a syncretic amalgam. Here, the grand embracing form is emphatically rejected, and Politian's confidence is undermined by a text that overflows all of the boundaries that would determine and condition meaning. In Rabelais's world, form is a comfort we can little afford. Fullness of meaning as a utopian goal is replaced by endless meaning, which represents that goal as ultimately unattainable. The universe of discourse here not only brings the world into being, but it generates a chaos of meaning that exceeds the world. The text engulfs the reader's world.

Metaphorically conceived as a container that depends for its inexhaustibility upon the reader's continued willingness to supply meaning, the text contains the reader's consciousness.

We cannot resist the text's fertility. We bring our entire education to bear and the text still baffles us. Like Thaumaste before Panurge's gesticulations, we return from the Pantagrueline books pleased with our interpretation of it, and we write a book.

Conclusion

This study of one classical poet and three Renaissance authors has attempted to distinguish a literary movement based on *copia* as a generative and a formal principle. The study examples gather an unusual variety of texts, ranging from Ovid's mythography through Politian's didactic exercises and Ariosto's chivalric *romanzo* to Rabelais's satiric fantasy. Each case accentuates the author's virtuosity, expressed in his ability to command all the varieties of literary style into a comprehensive work, and to make that work longer and more complete than its predecessors.

In the context of Renaissance rhetoric, *copia* was understood to govern and link the realms of subjects of discourse (*copia rerum*) and the medium of discourse (*copia verborum*). Ideal *copia* meant the domination of both, and the means by which the Renaissance might transcend its historical inferiority to the classical age it admired. Poetic *copia* grew out of this pursuit of eloquence, and came to represent the goal of that pursuit. Translated to literary endeavors, *copia rerum* was expressed as an encyclopedic inclusivity of material reflecting the breadth and variety of the universe; *copia verborum* was expressed as virtuoso mastery of literary styles and tropes, an ability to marshall the entire vocabulary of literary conventions, often by rewriting them in new and interesting ways. The notion of a *copia verborum* that circumscribes a *copia rerum* implies a textual inclusiveness embracing the greatest variety of literary and rhetorical styles conjoined with the greatest volume of subject matter. The ideal of a copious text would thus obtain a universal fullness of meaning, a status as linguistic construct that would correspond in potential scope to the expanding world of things and concepts.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* entered the Renaissance presented by Raphael Regius as the triumphant embodiment of the virtues of *copia*, a model of the full range of speaking and acting, "non eruditum modo, verum dicendi quoque et agendi peritum efficere possunt." These linguistic virtues were envisioned by Politian (and later codified by Erasmus) as humanity's means to understand the essential integrity of the universe. Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* sought to exceed Ovid's achievement by uniting an enormous variety of stories and literary styles into an all-embracing epic narrative. Rabelais carried the ideals of *copia* to the absurd point of collecting an overabundance of signifiers that will readily cede whatever meaning its readers may wish to find in it.

The theorists of *copia* boldly described the possibility of an all-meaning text, a "prima filosofia," in Giraldi's words, that would be emblematic of all the variety of real life. A text that might demonstrate the popular notion of *discordia concors* (as Tasso envisioned, "le sue parti con discorde concordia insieme congiunte e collegate") might also indicate the possiblity of an essential unity to the apparently fragmented world of experience. The practicing authors, on the other hand, produced fantastic literary constructs that contravened the seriousness of their enterprise. At one time or another, the *Metamorphoses*, the *Orlando furioso*, and the Pantagrueline books have all been considered frivolous and less than worthy of professional study. They project fictional worlds far removed from the ordered paradigms codified in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which events proceed according to a central cause. Rather, the boundaries that normally define textual meaning within the confines of a recognized form are deliberately ignored, resulting in the chaotic, sometimes anarchic appearances that have puzzled readers of all three texts.

Thus the application of principles of *copia* became inextricably involved with problems of literary hermeneutics, and the copious texts present themselves ironically as both all-meaningful and at the same time patently meaningless. They admit the possibility that fullness of meaning and meaninglessness might indistinguishably inhabit the same textual space. Perhaps the most conspicuous element the three narrative texts have in common is the hermeneutic reversibility between their entertaining sufaces and their monumental ambitions. With its prismatic variety of styles and plots, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* could fall apart into an entertaining variety of pleasant stories, or collect itself into a transcendent record of the divine perspective on human life; but even that transcendent perspective yields no more than the sum of its parts, a variety of pleasant stories. Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* might appear a benign pastime, or it could take on the gravity reserved for foundational epics that involve national ideology in a universal design; but the "dritta via" of the divine perspective remains, from the human perspective (which is the reader's perpective in the text), the incomprehensible meandering reflected in the poem's theme of "error." Rabelais taunts his reader to find, among "tant folastres," a "mouelle sustantifique" carrying the significance of a religious caballa; but he also goes to great lengths to deny the burdens of intention, and recommends the search for meaning, after all, as a comic recreation. Where the total cumulative design does not yield a significant understanding of the parts, the parts of the composition assert themselves as the location of textual meaning.

The inclusive totality of vision that motivates the copious style tends to reject ideology, which is necessarily partial. The wandering narrative shape of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, repeated in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, expresses an

implicit critique of the ideology of origins embodied in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Ovid's revision of the Virgilian myth of the origin of Rome suggests that from the comprehensive perspective of the copious impulse, meaning is not located in origins (as it is for Augustus through Virgil, or for Pentheus). The wandering narrative disregards the sort of meaning available by appropriating its origins. History is only a *post hoc* series of events, a continuity detached from memory or from any relationship to a foundational truth, implying a world devoid of causality. Ovid's text does not recapitulate the past into the present in order to tie both into a configurational unity. *In medias res* is its perennial condition. It comes from nothing and it goes nowhere. Memory, the recollection of the text's wandering into a sensible destiny, becomes the responsibility of the reader. But even this important conceptual act is not allowed to recall the origin into the end; rather, it collects only the errant procedure of the text and the wealth of *loci* that it contains.

Exceeding human capacities of memory, literary copiousness results in narrative forms that resist comprehension. Yet the integration of a variety of styles into a comprehensive form is one of the distinguishing factors of copious texts. Where meaning is regarded as a property of language rather than a prelinguistic object, the totalizing posture results in an inclusivity of literary styles in a fictional universe, rather than an encyclopedia of positive facts. Where Cicero had insisted on the priority of *res* in the copious style ("rerum enim copia verborum copiam gignit"), Renaissance authors perceived *verba* first as a generative conduit to matter, and later as matter itself. The extension, variety, apparent discontinuity and frivolity that define a copious text become the germ and the proof of the text's potential productivity. The knowledge that a copious narrative offers is textual knowledge, varieties of

poetic expression and the realization of linguistic possibility. The interior relationships of amassed narrative elements in an open form produce infinite varieties of meaning, and in infinite interpretability the ideal of an all-meaningful text is finally realized.

In a comprehensive study, this unusual set of examples would have been joined by many others. The non-fiction branch of encyclopedic *copia* would range from Plutarch's *Symposiacs*, through Aulus Gellius, the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, Erasmus's *Adagia*, Montaigne's *Essais*, and on to Diderot's *Encyclopedie*. A study of fictional narratives might have paused over Nonnus, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, Bernardo Tasso's *Amadigi*, and it might have alluded to *Don Quixote*. After the Renaissance, the tradition of *copia* continues in Marino's *L'Adone* (a text much admired in its day for its copiousness), Sterne's *Tristam Shandy*, Byron's *Don Juan*, Proust and Joyce. Mendelson even names Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* as the latest contribution to this tradition. It is clear, in any case, that the ideal of textual *copia* has remained a perennial ambition in Western literature, the pursuit of a final text that would include all previous texts and reflect the full range of knowledge and beliefs of the culture in which it occurs.

Bibliography

Agnelli, Giuseppe, and Giuseppe Ravegnani. *Annali delle edizioni Ariostee.* 2 vols. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1933.

Ahl, Frederick. *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Amory, Frederick. "Rabelais's Hurricane word Formations and Chaotic Enumerations: Lexis and Syntax." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 17 (1983): 61-74.

Ascoli, Albert Russell. *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Auerbach, Erich. "The World in Pantagruel's Mouth." *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature.* Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Baillet, Roger. *Le monde poétique de l'Arioste: essai d'interpretation du Roland Furieux.* Lyons: Editions l'Hermes, 1977.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination.* Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

------. *Rabelais and His World.* Trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Barkan, Leonard. *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Baron, Hans. *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

------. *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance.* 1955; rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text.* Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.

Battaglia, S. "La tradizione di Ovidio nel medioevo." *Filologia romanza* 6 (1959): 185-224.

Berry, Alice Fiola. *Rabelais: Homo Logos.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Bigi, Emilio. "Il Poliziano critico." *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* (1954): 367-76.

------. *La Cultura del Poliziano e altri studi umanistici.* Pias: Nistri-Lischi, 1967.

------. "Petrarchismo ariostesco." *GSLI* 130 (1953): 31-62.

Blasucci, Luigi. *Studi su Dante e Ariosto.* Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1969.

Bolgar, Robert R. *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries.* London: Cambridge Unviersity Press, 1954.

Born, Lester K. "Ovid and Allegory." *Speculum* 9 (1934): 362-79.

Brand, Charles Peter. "L'entrelacement nell'*Orlando furioso*." *GSLI* 154 (1977): 509-32.

------. *Ludovico Ariosto: A Preface to the Orlando furioso.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974.

Brown, Peter M. "The Historical Significance of the Polemics over Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*." *Studi secenteschi* 11 (1970): 3-23.

Bruni, Leonardo. *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni.* Trans. Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson. Binghampton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987.

Bruscagli, Riccardo. "'Ventura' e 'inchiesta' fra Boiardo e Ariosto." *Ludovico Ariosto: lingua, stile e tradizione.* Ed. Cesare Segre. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976. 107-136.

Cardini, Roberto, and others, eds. *Tradizione classica e letteratura umanistica: per Alessandro Perosa.* 2 vols. Roma: Bulzoni editore, 1985.

Caretti, Lanfranco. *Ariosto e Tasso.* Torino: Einaudi, 1961.

Carne-Ross, D. S. "The One and the Many: A Reading of the *Orlando furioso*." *Arion* n.s. 3 (1976): 146-214.

Catalano, Michele. *Vita di Ludovico Ariosto*, 2 vols. Geneva: Leo S. Olschki, 1930-1931.

Cave, Terence, *The Cornucopian Text.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

Chesney, Elizabeth. *The Countervoyage of Rabelais and Ariosto: A Comparative Reading of Two Renaissance Mock Epics.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1982.

Coleman, Dorothy G. *Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Coleman, R. "Structure and Intention in the *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Quarterly* 21 (1971): 461-76.

Colie, Rosalie L. *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Conte, Gian Biagio. *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets.* Trans. Charles Segal. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Coon, R.H. "The Vogue of Ovid Since the Renaissance," *Classical Journal* 25 (1929-30): 277-290.

Costa, Dennis. *Irenic Apocalypse: Some Uses of Apocalyptic in Dante, Petrarch and Rabelais.* Stanford French and Italian Studies 21. Saratoga, California: Anma Libri, 1981.

Curran, Leo C. "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Arethusa* 5 (1972): 71-91.

Dalla Palma, Giuseppe. *Le strutture narrative dell'"Orlando furioso."* Firenze: Olschki, 1984.

Davis, Gregson. "The Problem of Closure in a Carmen Perpetuum: Aspects of Thematic Recapitulation in Ovid Met. 15." *Grazer Beiträge* 9 (1980): 123-132.

Defaux, Gérard. *Le curieux, le glorieux et la sagesse du monde dans la premiere moitie du XVIe siecle: l'example de Panurge.* Lexington: French Forum Publishers, 1982.

------. *Pantagruel et les sophistes: Contribution a l'histoire de l'humanisme chretien au XVIe siecle.* The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973.

DeLacy, P. "Philosophical Doctrine and Poetic Technique in Ovid." *Classical Journal* 43 (1947): 153-161.

Delcorno Branca, Daniela. *L'"Orlando furioso" e il romanzo cavalleresco medievale.* Florence: Olschki, 1973.

De Man, Paul. *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism.* 2nd. ed. rev. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

Demerson, Guy. *Rabelais: une vie, une oeuvre, une époque.* Paris: Balland, 1986.

De Rocher, Gregory. *Rabelais' Laughers and Joubert's "Traité du Ris".* University: The University of Alabama Press, 1979.

Di Pino, Guido. "Bivalenza dell'ottava ariostesca." *Italianistica* 3:3 (1974): 125-145.

Di Tommaso, Andrea. "*Insania* and *furor*: A Diagnostic Note on Orlando's Malady." *Romance Notes* 14 (1973): 583-588.

Donato, Eugenio. "'Per selve e boscherecci labirinti': Desire and Narrative Structure in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*." *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

------. "The Shape of Fiction: Notes Toward a Possible Classification of Narrative Discourses." *MLN* 86 (1971): 807-22

------. "Topographies of Memory." *Sub-Stance* 21 (1978): 37-48.

Doran, M. "Some Renaissance 'Ovids'." *Literature and Society*, ed. B. B. Sloate, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964): 44-62.

Duval, Edwin M. "Pantagruel's Genealogy and the Redemptive Design of Rabelais's *Pantagruel*," *PMLA* 99 (1984): 169-178.

------. "Panurge, Perplexity, and the Ironic Design of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*." *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (1982): 381-400.

Eco, Umberto. *Lector in fabula: la cooperazione interpretiva nei testi narrativi*. Milano: Bompiani, 1979.

------. *Opera aperta: forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*. Milano: Bompiani, 1962.

Elliot, Alison Goddard. "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: A Bibliography, 1968-1978." *Classical World* 74 (1980): 385-412.

Ellsworth, J.D. "Ovid's 'Aeneid' Reconsidered (Met. 13.623-14.608)." *Vergilius* 32 (1986) 27-32.

------. "Ovid's *Iliad* (*Metamorphoses* 12.1-13.622)." *Prudentia* 12 (1980) 23-29.

Engels, J. "Berchorius I." *Vivarium* 2 (1964): 62-124.

Fatini, G. *Bibliografia della critica ariostea (1510-1956)*. Florence: Le Monnier, 1958.

Ferguson, Margaret. *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Ferroni, Giulio. "L'Ariosto e la concezione umanistica della follia." *Ludovico Ariosto: Convegno internazionale*. Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1975.

Fevre, Lucien. *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle: La religion de Rabelais*. Paris: A. Michel, 1942.

Frye, Northrop. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Fumaroli, Marc. *L'âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1980.

Gaignebet, Claude. *A Plus Haut Sens: L'Esotérisme spirituel et charnel de Rabelais*. 2 vols. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986.

Galinsky, G. Karl. *Ovid's* Metamorphoses: *An Introduction to the Basic Aspects*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

------. "L''Eneide' di Ovidio (*Met.* XIII.623-XIV.608) ed il carattere delle Metamorfosi." *Maia* 28 (1976): 3-18.

Garapon, Robert. *La fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théatre Français du moyen age à la fin du XVII siècle*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1957.

Gareffi, Andrea. *Figure dell'immaginario nell'Orlando furioso*. Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1984.

Gariepy, R.J., Jr. "Recent Scholarshop on Ovid (1958-1968). *Classical World* 64 (1970): 38-56.

Garin, Eugenio. *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano: ricerche e documenti*. 2nd edition. Firenze: Sansoni, 1979.

------. *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*. Trans. Peter Munz. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1980.

------. *Nouveau discours du récit*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1983.

Ghisalberti, Fausto. "'L'Ovidius Moralizatus' di Pierre Bersuire." *Studj romanzi*, 23 (1933): 5-136.

Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Gierczynski, Zbigniew. "La Fonction du non-sens chez Rabelais et les parties 'vides' de son oeuvre." *Le Comique verbal en France au XVI*[e] *siècle*. Eds. Halina Lewicka and others. Warsaw: Editions de l'Université de Varsovie, 1981.

Gilbert, C.D. "Ovid, *Met.*1.4." *Classical Quarterly* 26 (1976): 111-12.

Giraldi Cinzio, Giovambattista. *Scritti critici.* Ed. Camillo Guerrieri Crocetti. Milan: Marzorati, 1973.

------. "Lettera a Bernardo Tasso sulla poesia epica." 1557. *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento.* Ed. Bernard Weinberg. 4 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1970-1974. 2:455-476.

Girard, René. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure.* Trans. Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.

Glauser, Alfred. *Fonctions du nombre chez Rabelais.* Paris: Nizet, 1982.

------. *Rabelais créateur.* Paris: Nizet, 1966.

Glenn, Edgar M. *The Metamorphoses: Ovid's Roman Games.* Lanham: The University Press of America, 1986.

Grafton, A. "On the Scolarship of Politian and its Context." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 150-58.

Gray, Floyd. "Ambiguity and Point of View in the Prologue to Gargantua." *Romanic Review* 56 (1965): 12-21.

------. "Structure and Meaning in the Prologue to the *Tiers Livre.*" *L'Esprit créateur* 3 (1963): 57-62.

Gray, Hannah H. "Renaissance Humanism: the Pursuit of Eloquence." *Renaissance Essays from the Journal of the History of Ideas.* Eds. Paul O. Kristeller and P.P. Weiner. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

Greene, Thomas M. *The Descent From Heaven: A Study in Epic Continuity.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

------. *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

------. *Rabelais: A Study in Comic Courage.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1970.

------. *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Greenfield, Concetta C. *Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1200-1500.* Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981.

Guthmüller, Bodo. *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare: Formen und Funktionen der volkssprachlichen Wiedergabe klassischer in der italienischen Renaissance.* Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1981.

Hathaway, Baxter. *The Age of Criticism: The Late Renaissance in Italy.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962.

Highet, Gilbert. *The Classical Tradition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Huchon, Mirielle. *Rabelais grammairien: de l'histoire du texte aux problèmes d'authenticité.* Genève: Droz, 1981.

Hume, David. *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.* 2 vols. London and Edinburgh, 1767.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Javitch, Daniel. "Cantus Interruptus in *Orlando furioso.*" *MLN* 95 (1980): 66-82.

------. "Narrative Discontinuity in the *Orlando furioso* and its Sixteenth Century Critics." *MLN* 103 (1988): 50-74.

------. "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando furioso.*" *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 215-239.

------. "The Influence of the *Orlando furioso* on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Italian." *JMRS* 11 (1981): 1-21.

------. "The *Orlando furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid.*" *MLN* 99 (1984): 1023-1036.

------. "Rescuing Ovid from the Allegorizers: The Liberation of Angelica, *Orlando furioso* X." In *Ariosto 1974 in America*, ed. Aldo Scaglione (Ravenna: Longo editore, 1976): 85-98.

------. "Sixteenth Century Commentaries on Imitations in the *Orlando furioso.*" *Harvard Library Bulletin* 34 (1986): 221-250.

Johnson, W.R. "The Problem of the Counter Classical Sensibility and ITs Critics." *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 3 (1970): 123-51.

Kahn, Victoria. "Giovanni Pontano's Rhetoric of Prudence. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983): 16-34.

------. *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Kennedy, William J. *Rhetorical Norms in Renaissance Literature.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

Kenney, E.J. "The Style of the *Metamorphoses*." *Ovid*. Ed. J.W. Binns. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. 116-153.

Kermode, Frank. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Klein, Robert. *Form and Meaning: Writings on the Renaissance and Modern Art.* New York: Viking, 1979.

Know, Peter E. *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 1986.

Koppel, Peter. *La coherence du Tiers livre de François Rabelais.* Zurich: Juris-Verlag, 1978.

La Charité, Raymond C., ed. *Rabelais's Incomparable Book: Essays on His Art.* Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum Publishers, 1986.

------. *Recreation, Reflection and Re-Creation: Perspectives on Rabelais's Pantagruel.* Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum Publishers, 1980.

Lamacchia, R. "Ovidio interprete di Virgilio." *Maia* 12 (1960): 310-30.

Lamarque, Henri, and G. Soubelle, eds. *Ovide en France dans la Rennaissance.* Toulouse: Publications de l'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1981.

Lanham, Richard. *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

Lansing, Richard H. "Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and the Homeric Model." *Comparative Literary Studies* 24 (1987): 311-325.

Lionardi, Alessandro. *Dialoghi dell'invenzione poetica.* 1554. *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento.* Ed. Bernard Weinberg. 4 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1970-1974. 2: 213-292.

Little, D. "The Speech of Pythagoras in *Metamorphoses* XV and the Structure of the *Metamorphoses*." *Hermes* 98 (1970): 340-360.

Lorch, Lavinia. "Human Time and the Magic of the *Carmen*: Metamorphosis as an Element of Rhetoric in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 15 (1982): 262-273.

Luck, George. "Vir Facetus: A Renaissance Ideal." *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 107-21.

Maïer, Ida. *Ange Politien: la formation d'un poète humaniste.* Geneva: Droz, 1966.

------. *Les manuscrits d'Ange Politien.* Geneva: Droz, 1965.

Marsh, David. *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Martelli, Mario. "Il 'Libro delle epistole' di Angelo Poliziano." *Interpres* 1 (1978): 184-255.

Martinelli, Lucia Cesarini. "In margine al commento di Angelo Poliziano alle 'Selve' di Stazio." *Interpres* 1 (1978): 96-145.

Masters, G. Mallary. *Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic-Hermetic Tradition.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1969.

Medici, D. "La bibliografia della critica ariostesca dal 'Fatini' ad oggi." *Bolletino storico reggiano* 27 (1974): 63-150.

Mendelson, Edward. "Encyclopedic Narrative from Dante to Pynchon." *MLN* 91 (1976): 1267-1275.

Mensching, E. "Carmen perpetuum novum." *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969): 165-69.

Montagnani, Christina. "Il Commento al 'Teseida' di Pier Andrea De' Bassi e la tradizione di Ovidio nel primo Quattrocento." *Interpres* 5 (1983-84): 7-33.

Moss, Ann. *Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of the Latin Editions of Ovid and Commentaries Printed in France before 1600.* London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1982.

Murphy, James J., ed. *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Musacchio, Enrico. *Amore, ragione e follia: una rilettura dell'Orlando furioso.* Roma: Bulzoni, 1983.

Muzio, Girolamo. *Dell'arte poetica.* 1551. *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento.* Ed. Bernard Weinberg. 4 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1970-1974. 2: 165-209.

Nagle, Betty Rose. "Ovid's 'Reticent' Heroes." *Helios* 15 (1988): 23-39.

Nichols, Fred J. "Generating the Unwritten Text: The Case of Rabelais." *L'Esprit Créateur* 28 (1988): 7-17.

Otis, Brooks. *Ovid as an Epic Poet.* 1966; rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory.* 1924; English trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

------. *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance.* 1939; New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Pansa, Giovanni. *Ovidio nel medioevo e nella tradizione popolare.* Sulmona: Caroselli, 1924.

Parker, Patricia A. *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Petrocchi, Giorgio. "Lettura dell'*Orlando Furioso.*" *I fantasmi di Tancredi.* Caltanissetta-Roma: Sciascia, 1972.

Pigman, G.W. III, "Imitation and the Renaissance Sense of the Past: The Reception of Erasmus's *Ciceronianus.*" *JMRS* 9 (1979): 155-77.

------. "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance." *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980): 1-33.

Plattard, Jean. *L'Invention et la composition dans l'oeuvre de Rabelais.* Paris, 1909.

Pontano, Giovanni. *I dialoghi.* Ed. Carmelo Previtera. Florence: Sansoni, 1943.

------. *Opera.* 4 vols. Basel, 1556.

Ponte, Giovanni. "Poetica e poesia nelle Sylvae del Poliziano." *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* 63 (1959): 390-416.

Pöschl, Viktor. *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the Aeneid.* Trans. Gerda Seligson. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1962.

Poulet, Georges. *Studies in Human Time.* Trans. Elliott Coleman. 1956. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979.

------. *Studies in Human Time.* Trans. Elliott Coleman. 1956. Rpt. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Quint, David. "Humanism and Modernity: A Reconsideration of Bruni's *Dialogues.*" *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 423-445.

------. *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Rabil, Albert, Jr., ed. *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy.* 3 vols. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

Ramat, Raffaello. *La critica ariostesca dal secolo XVI ad oggi.* Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1954.

Rebhorn, Wayne A. "The Burdens and Joys of Freedom: An Interpretation of the Five Books of Rabelais." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 9 (1971): 71-90.

------. "Renaissance Optimism and the Limits of Freedom: Educational Thoery in the Quattrocento, Erasmus, Castiglione, Rabelais." Diss., Yale University, 1968.

Ricoeur, Paul. "Narrative Time." *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 169-190.

------. *Time and Narrative.* Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. 3 vols. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984-86.

Riggs, David. "Plot and Episode in Early Neoclassical Criticism." *Renaissance Drama* n.s. 6 (1973): 161-70.

Rigolot, François. "Cratylisme et Pantagruélisme: Rabelais et le statut de signe." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 13 (1976): 115-32.

------. *Les langages de Rabelais.* Genéve: Droz, 1972.

Rodini, Robert J. and Salvatore Di Maria. *Ludovico Ariosto: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1956-1980.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984.

Rodini, Robert J. "Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism, 1980-1987." *MLN* 103 (1988): 187-202.

Sabbadini, Remigio. *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci nei secoli XIV e XV.* 2 vols. 1905-1914; rpt. with additions and corrections, ed. Eugenio Garin. Florence: Sansoni, 1967.

------. *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'età della rinascenza.* Turin: Loescher, 1886.

Saccone, Eduardo. *Il soggetto del "Furioso" e altri saggi tra '400 e'500.* Naples: Liguori, 1974.

Santoro, Mario. *L'Anello di Angelica: Nuovi saggi ariostesche.* Napoli: Federico & Ardia, 1983.

------. *Fortuna, ragione e prudenza nella civiltà letteraria del Cinquecento.* 1968; 2nd ed. rev. Naples: Liguori, 1978.

------. *Letture ariostesche*. Napoli: Liguori, 1973.

------. *Poliziano e l'umanesimo*. Napoli: Liguori, 1961.

Schwartz, Jerome. "Scatology and Eschatology in Gargantua's Androgyne Device." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 14 (1977): 265-75.

Scott, Izora. *Contoversies over the Imitation of Cicero*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1910.

Screech, Michael. *Rabelais*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979.

Segal, Charles. "Myth and Philosophy in the *Metamorphoses*." *American Journal of Philology* 90 (1969): 257-292.

------. "Narrative Art in the *Metamorphoses*." *Classical Journal* 66 (1971).

Segre, Cesare. *Esperienze ariostesche*. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1966.

------. *Le strutture e il tempo: narrazione, poesia, modelli*. Torino: Einaudi, 1974. Trans. John Meddemmen, *Structures and Time: Narration, Poetry, Models*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Seidel, Michael. *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Seigel, Jerrold E. "'Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni." *Past and Present* 34 (1966): 3-48.

------. *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: the Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Seznec, Jean *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, trans. Barbara F. Sessions. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Shapiro, Marianne. "From Atlas to Atlante." *Comparative Literature* 35 (1983): 323-350.

------. *The Poetics of Ariosto*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.

(Shklovsky) Sklovskij, Viktor. *Teoria della prosa*. Trans. C.G. de Michelis and R. Oliva. Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1976.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End*. Chicago: Universsity of Chicago Press, 1968.

Smith, P.J. *Voyage et écriture. Etude sur le Quart Livre de Rabelais*. Genéve: Droz, 1987.

Spingarn, Joel. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*. New York, 1899.

Spitzer, Leo. "Ancora sul prologo al Gargantua." *Studi francesi* 27 (1965): 423-34.

Steiner, Grundy. "Source-editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1471-1500." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 82 (1951): 219-31.

Streuver, Nancy. *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Tasso, Torquato. *Scritti sull'arte poetica.* Ed. Ettore Mazzali. 1959; rpt. Torino: Einaudi, 1977.

Tateo, Francesco. *Astrologia e moralità in Giovanni Pontano.* Bari: Adriatica, 1960.

Tetel, Marcel. *Rabelais et l'Italie.* Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1969.

Ulivi, Ferruccio. *L'imitazione nella poetica del rinascimento.* Milan: Marzorati, 1959.

Vattimo, Gianni. *La fine della modernità: Nichilismo ed ermeneutica nella cultura post-moderna.* Milano: Garzanti, 1985.

Venturini, Giuseppe. *Orazio Ariosti e la polemica intorno alla superiorità del Tasso sull'Ariosto.* Ferrara: SATE, 1972.

Vickers, Brian. "Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance." *New Literary History* 14 (1983): 497-538.

Vinaver, Eugène. *Form and Meaning in Medieval Romance.* n.p.: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1966.

------. *The Rise of Romance.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Weaver, E.B. "Lettura dell'intreccio dell'*Orlando furioso.*" *Strumenti critici* 11 (1977): 384-406.

Weinberg, Bernard. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance.* 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Weinberg, Bernard, ed., *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 3 vols. Bari: Laterza, 1970-74.

Wiggins, Peter DeSa. *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando furioso.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

Wilkinson, L.P. *Ovid Recalled.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

Williams, Ralph C. "Epic Unity in 16th Century Italy." *Modern Philology* 18 (1920): 383-400.

Wind, Edgar. *The Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance.* 1958; rev. ed. New York: Norton, 1968.

Wulich, Natalia W. "Les 'Metamorphoses' d'Ovide--Nouveau genre d'épopée antique." *Ovidianum.* Eds. N. Barbu, E. Dobroiu, and M. Nasta. Bucharest: Universtiy of Bucharest Press, 1976.

Zatti, Sergio. "L'inchiesta, e alcune considerazioni sulla forma del *Furioso.*" *MLN* 103 (1988): 1-30.

Zetzel, J.E.G. "Re-creating the Canon: Augustan Poetry and the Alexandrian Past." *Classical Journal* 10 (1983): 83-105.

Zumwalt, Nancy. "*Fama Subversa*: Theme and Structure in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 12." *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 10 (1977): 215-217.